



Methods and Strategies for Community Partner Assessment

Developed for the Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation (HPSISN) Program, a national demonstration program of service-learning in the health professions funded by the Corporation for National Service and The Pew Charitable Trusts

From: Shinnamon A, Gelmon S and Holland B. Methods and Strategies for Assessing Service-Learning in the Health Professions. San Francisco, CA: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 1999.

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1. “End-of-Program Survey” Community Partners

Purpose:

The “End-of-Program Survey” for community partners is intended to describe the perspectives and attitudes of community partners on several issues related to their experience(s) as a community site for service-learning course(s). Topics assessed by the survey include the partner's view on the impact they perceive service-learning has had on students, their motivation for participating in service-learning programs, their satisfaction with the roles and responsibilities in the process of teaching service-learning courses, community involvement and the influence of the university-community partnership.

This tool is useful in describing various perspectives and experiences of community partners who supervise students in service-learning courses. In addition, the instrument assesses the impact that service-learning has on the community partners. Questions from the survey pertain to the influence and impact that service-learning has on a community/campus partnership, the community's role as mentor/teacher and student involvement in the community.

The community partner survey is based on three scales. There are two 5-point Likert scales. They ask the partners their level of agreement or satisfaction with statements regarding their service-learning experience. The remaining scale allows the partners to rank, in order of importance, items regarding the process of participating in a service-learning partnership.

This instrument was designed as a post-test tool to assess community partners after they have participated in a service-learning program. As a post-test, the instrument serves to describe the profile of community partners supervising students in service-learning courses. The tool, however, has broader applications than its title would imply. Modification to a pre/post tests allows the researcher assess change in community partners' perceptions over time.

Preparation:

In preparation for using this tool, the following steps are recommended.

1. Administrators of the tool should determine if they are going to use this tool as a pre-post test to assess change in the community partner's perceptions and attitudes before and after the course, or if they are going to use the tool simply as a way to assess general attitudes of the partners after they have taught a course.
2. The most appropriate time to administer the survey is contingent on its purpose. It is suggested that pre-tests are given within the first week of the academic term and that post-tests are completed during the last week.

Administration:

1. The consent and support of community partners should be established before they are presented with the survey.
2. The community partner's anonymity should be assured to them and maintained throughout the collection of this data.
3. The survey can be administered in person and should take about 15-20 minutes. However, the surveys can be administered through campus or U.S. Mail using a self addressed envelope for return purposes.
4. If administered by mail, the community partners should be allowed 2-3 weeks to return the completed forms. Additionally, it should be clearly indicated on the form to whom the instrument should be returned.

Analysis:

Data analysis can be conducted through utilization of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software or equivalent statistical software. In the case of assessing and comparing pre and post service-learning experiences, the analysis could include frequency distributions, descriptive statistics, Chi-squares, ANOVA and Factor Analysis. The descriptive statistics and the frequency distributions can be compiled into a database, providing mean, mode and standard deviation between items. Second, Chi-squares correlate demographic data between student groups. Third, Factor Analysis reduces items into categories that are closely related. Finally, ANOVAs are useful to explore the existence of variation within and among groups on either single items or groups of items that may arise from the factor analysis.

In the case of simply using this tool to assess general attitudes at the end of a program, analysis can be conducted using an EXCEL, or similar, database. The analysis includes frequencies and descriptive statistics that can be compared across sites or student groups.

What has proven most useful to date are the descriptive data that provide a rich profile of the sample both in terms of demographics and responses to individual items.

If using the following instrument, please use the citation below:

Anu F. Shinnamon, Sherril B. Gelmon, and Barbara A. Holland. Methods and Strategies for Assessing Service-learning in the Health Professions. San Francisco: Community Campus Partnerships for Health, 1999.

HPSISN Service-learning -- Community Partner Survey

The Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation program Evaluation Team would like to better understand the impact that service-learning had on the community partners. We particularly want to know how this experience has influenced your view of university-community partnerships. The information collected is anonymous and will only be reported in aggregate. Should you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Anu Shinnamon, Research Associate, HPSISN by phone at 503-725-8354.

I. First, we would like to know some information about you and your organization.

1. What type of organization are you? Hospital/Health System Community Clinic School
 Social Service Agency Community Center Homeless shelter
 Other (please specify): _____

2. What is the focus of your organization? AIDS/HIV Disability services Elderly care
 Homelessness Mental health Substance abuse
 Victim assistance Women's health Youth services
 Other (please specify): _____

3. From what university are your service-learning students? _____

4. Was this your first experience with service-learning students? Yes No

II. Next, we would like to gain your perspective about the service-learning courses.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Service-learning helps prepare health professions students for their careers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The students' experience with service learning helped them to see how classroom material can be used in everyday life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Service-learning should be implemented into more classes at the University.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The goals for the student's service-learning assignment were clear to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Service-learning students were well prepared to fulfil their assigned roles in our agency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

III. The next set of questions relates to your attitude toward community involvement.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. The community served by our agency benefited from the activities of the service learning students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Participation in the service-learning program made the University more aware of the needs in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I felt valued as a teacher by the University faculty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Participation in the service-learning program had valuable social benefits for my organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Participation in the service-learning program produced economic benefits for my organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. Next, we would like some of your personal reflections on the service-learning experience.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. I developed a good relationship with the students from the service-learning course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I developed a good relationship with the faculty from the service-learning course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I see myself as a mentor to the students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Because of this experience, I am more interested in developing an extended partnership with the University.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. This project made more me aware of some of my own biases and prejudices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. In general, the benefits of working with service-learning students outweighed any burdens it may have added to our work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I anticipate that the relationship we have developed with the University will continue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

V. The next set of questions relates to your satisfaction with your roles and responsibilities.

Please indicate how satisfied you were with your opportunities to have the following roles and responsibilities:

	Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
22. Evaluating students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Designing curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Facilitating student reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Participation in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. On-site supervisor of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VI. Finally, we have some questions about the process of participating in the service-learning partnership.

27. What were your reasons for deciding to participate with the University in their service-learning course(s)?
Please indicate all responses that apply and rank them in order of importance (1= most important, 2= next most important, etc.).

- Wanted to try something new _____
- Positive prior experience with students _____
- Curiosity _____
- Needed additional help _____
- Wanted professional recognition _____
- Wanted to make a connection with the University _____
- Incentives from the University _____
- Encouragement from peers _____
- Wanted to influence the training of future health professionals _____
- Other(please specify): _____

(Continued on the next page.)

28. How did you handle the logistics of the students' experience? *Please check the most accurate response.*

- I made the arrangements and placements _____
- The students and I worked together on the arrangements and placements. _____
- Students handled their own arrangements and placements. _____
- University personnel handled the arrangements and placements. _____
- Other (please specify): _____

29. Based on my experience with the service-learning program, my most serious concerns about serving as a community partner are: *Please indicate all responses that apply and rank them in order of importance (1= most important, 2= next most important, etc.).*

- Time constraints of the academic world _____
- Coordination of placements _____
- Supervision of students _____
- Training/orienting students _____
- Communication with the University _____
- Time commitment to supervise students _____
- Trusts/confidence in students _____
- The human, fiscal and physical resources required _____
- Other (please specify): _____

30. Student involvement in our organization has had an impact on the following: *Please indicate all responses that apply and rank them in order of importance (1= most important, 2= next most important, etc.).*

- Saved us money because of the additional help _____
- The students brought new energy to the agency _____
- Raised our public profile because of University involvement _____
- Increased our awareness of organizational operations _____
- Increased our access to University resources _____
- Facilitated networking with other community agencies _____
- Other (please specify): _____

31. Please add any other comments you have about teaching service-learning courses. *(Please use the space below or attach an additional sheet of paper.)*

Thank you for your insights regarding service-learning.

Please return this survey in the enclosed envelope by date to:

2. Focus Groups Community Partners

Purpose:

To generate an open interactive discussion about community-based learning among community partners from multiple agencies who participated in service-learning programs. Focus groups can also be utilized on a course by course basis to discuss the experiences among the community partners of with a particular course. The goals of either focus group are to discover patterns of experience and to generate suggestions for improvement in organizing and supporting the course/program. Additionally, this tool should produce data regarding impacts on community partners according to study variables.

Preparation:

Focus groups should be arranged early. An external representative (either the evaluators or a trained facilitator) should facilitate the group, not the students, faculty or other university representative. Arrange for a quality tape recorder (be sure to test the device prior to the focus group to ensure that it is working). One facilitator will be needed for each group of 8-12 participants. If the group is large, it may be necessary to conduct two separate discussions. Each focus group should have a note-taker to accompany the facilitator. The note-taker is responsible for operating and monitoring the recording equipment throughout the focus group and for taking notes of non-verbal communication.

Administration:

- Begin and end on time. Arrange the group in a circular form.
- Read the introductory message on the focus group script that follows to community partners before beginning the questions. Remind the participants of the introductory guidelines as needed.
- Facilitators and note-takers should be introduced and their role explained. The facilitator does not participate, rather s/he guides the discussion ensuring that no one person dominates conversation and encourages comments from those who hold back.
- The discussion should be taped and notes should be taken in case of equipment failure.

Analysis:

Tapes and notes from the focus groups must be transcribed as soon as possible after the session. Additionally, the transcript should be reviewed by both the facilitator and the note-taker to ensure completeness and accuracy. Focus groups generate a large body of rich, contextual data. Analysis consists of organizing the data into meaningful subsections. One can begin organizing the data according to the questions posed. The analysis can be further narrowed by identifying the key words and themes; highlight and organize these by the study variables or indicators outlined in the research design.

For more information on the administration of focus groups, see the following resources:
Morgan, David L. (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
Morgan, David L., editor. (1993) *Successful Focus Groups*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

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HPSISN FOCUS GROUPS: COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Introduction

Thank you for joining us for this focus group. All of the participants are community partners with one of the HPSISN grantees. The purposes of this focus group are two fold: 1) to understand the impact of the partnership on your community-based organization, and 2) to collect feedback -- both positive and negative -- that will assist in improving partnership activities in the future. The discussion is recorded for the purposes of capturing detail, but all comments are confidential and are never attributed to individual participants. As participants, you can make the focus group successful by being both candid and as specific as possible when discussing different issues. A candid focus group will help us document the effects of the partnership efforts, recognize strengths and weaknesses of outreach efforts, and identify areas for improvement. As facilitator, I will offer no opinions; my role is to guide you through a conversation based on a set of relevant questions. I will try to make sure that everyone participates and that no one dominates the discussion. Please be sure to speak one at a time so that the tape will be clear. During this discussion, please be brief and specific. Where there is disagreement, you should talk about your different perspective, but we will not spend time pressing for consensus or reaching agreement. The purpose is not to reach a common view, but to learn about all the possible views.

Questions

1. Please introduce yourself, indicate which HPSISN grantee you partner with, and briefly describe the nature of your partnership with the university, specifically what was done? (10 minutes)
2. What went well? (5 minutes)
 - What factors contributed to successful outcomes?
 - What was the most important factor in achieving success?
3. How would you describe the benefits of the partnership from your perspective? (10 minutes)
 - Any economic benefits? What was the value of the outcome?
 - Any new insights into operations?
 - Impact on capacity to serve clients?
4. How would you describe the burdens of the partnership? (10 minutes)
 - Demands on time or staff?
 - Obstacles or barriers affecting the partnership
 - Coping strategies
5. In future partnership activities, what would you do differently? What might the university do differently? (5 minutes)
 - What one thing would you change?
 - What would you change about the university if you could?

(Community partner focus group continued)

6. What do you know about the university that you didn't know before? (5 minutes)
 - What do you wish you knew more about?
 - Do you see yourself as a stakeholder in the university?
 - Is the university a stakeholder in your organization?

7. How would you describe this experience to a colleague in another community organization or agency? (5 minutes)
 - What would you emphasize?

8. What do you think are the key ingredients for creating and maintaining a successful partnership between a community organization and an academic institution? (10 minutes)
 - Probe for any ideas not previously given.

Total time: 1 hour. **Thank participants.**