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Volunteering in the Community: Combining Service and Learning

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Volunteering in the Community: Combining Service and Learning

The practice and the need it addresses

Ad Hoc Medical Interpreters

Most of the patients who use the services offered by the *Lied Pediatric Clinic* are minorities (70%), and half of those patients are Hispanic. The clinic lacks of professional interpreters to help monolingual doctors and residents to communicate with their patients.

The SPAN 317 course addressed this need

I. teaching nineteen students two interpreting modes (consecutive and sight translation).

II. explaining interpreting techniques, and assigning medical texts and videos/audios to practice (once students have learnt the theory and how the two modes are applied in real life).

III. preparing students to start their 10-hour voluntary work at the clinic (after receiving basic training in medical interpreting, and the tools to solve the problems that may arise).

During the program, students are encouraged to ask, discuss, and share their experiences with the professor, their classmates, and the doctors. In doing this, they gather the feedback needed to improve their skills.

Evidence this practice benefits UNLV Students

Impact on Students

Students have the opportunity to practice what they are learning in class through experiential education.

This real-life experience makes students more aware of issues/needs in the community.

Students develop a sense of responsibility to address those issues/needs.

Some students realized that being a medical interpreter is a career they might be interested in pursuing.

Student Response

“Overall, I was pleased with the experience because it allowed me to gain valuable insight that a classroom cannot necessarily offer.”

“This was my first time volunteering at the clinic, and I can definitely say it was a really big learning experience. I have never done anything like this before or anything even remotely close, so I really had no idea what to expect..”

“This volunteer experience allowed me to learn a ton of new terms and reinforced all that I was learning in the classroom. It was nice to take the new concepts I was learning in class and apply them practically at the clinic.”

Resources and where to find them

Institutions who implement Service Learning methods

University of Nevada Las Vegas Service Learning
Carnegie Mellon University Eberly Center: Service Learning
The George Washington University Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service: Service Learning Projects
University of Nebraska Omaha P-16 Initiative Project
University of Southern Indiana Service Learning
University of Central Arkansas Service Learning
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Service Learning

Bibliography

- Bryant, J. Alison, et al. *Integrating Service-Learning into the University Classroom*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2011
- Dolgon, Corey, et al. *The Cambridge Handbook of Service Learning and Community Engagement*. CUP, 2017
- Rimmerman, Craig. *Service-Learning and the Liberal Arts*. Lexington Books, 2011

How other UNLV teachers might adopt this practice

Collaboration and contact

- ☐ Collaboration with units on campus which share the common goal of community engagement.
- ☐ Open lines of communication between the teaching and administrative faculty to enhance service learning opportunities for students and faculty.
- ☐ Identify one or more community partners who can provide experiences to students in line with your learning outcomes.
- ☐ Contact the community partners to find out if they are a good match, and to discuss the objectives and details of the project.
- ☐ Schedule a meeting and/or informative session with the Service Learning Department.

