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Critical Service Learning

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The practice and the need it addresses

SLICES

Program Description:

Service Learning Initiative for Community Engagement in Sociology (SLICES) is a critical, research-focused, community-based, leadership and knowledge project. By engaging in Community Based Participatory Action Research Projects (CBPAR) students have an opportunity to work multiple semesters, if they choose, to develop research skills, serve in leadership roles, serve and collaborate with local organization, and engage in professional development.

SLICES Goals:

- To connect classroom learning to the larger social environment
- To increase critical thinking and research skills
- To foster life-long community engagement
- To foster a social change model of leadership

SLICES relies on three key assumptions:

- That education can and should be intimately tied to social justice and the work of social change
- That ALL students can make important contributions to the learning space and to learning activities
- That the engaged student is a successful student

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Evidence this practice benefits UNLV Students

CBPAR Projects: Example

Immigrants Justice Initiative:



Provide low cost or pro bono legal aid to asylees

- Las Vegas 2015: 3% asylum verdict
- The literature review:
- Explanations for verdict variations at local court levels

The data:

- Evidence of country conditions in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador

The action:

- Immigration workshops

Successes:

- OUR presentations
- Employment opportunities
- Leadership opportunities
- Special edition in peer reviewed journal
- Connect with immigrant community
- Experience an asylum hearing
- IJI 2016: 2 asylum verdicts



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Resources and where to find them

UNLV Resources

Student Engagement and Diversity, Office of Service Learning:

- Course development support
- Partnership agreements
- Liability waivers

University Libraries:

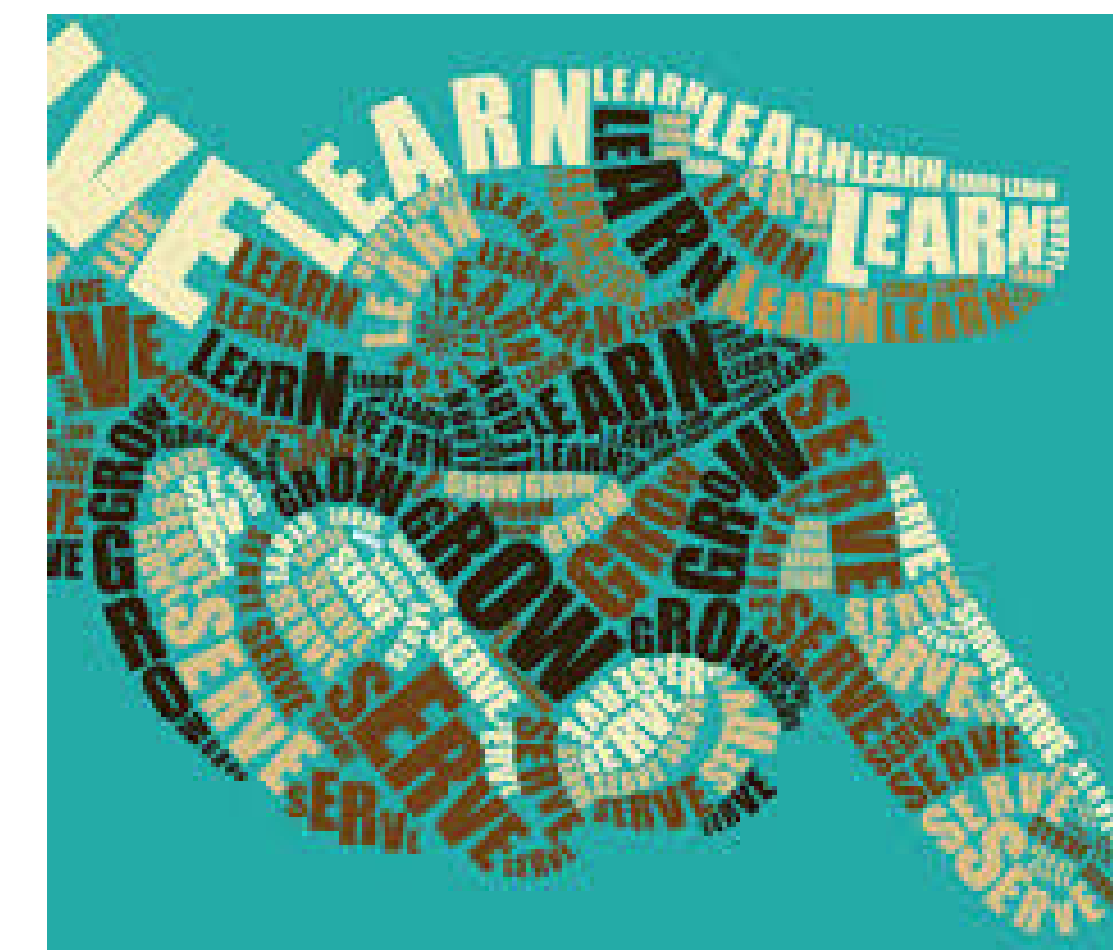
- Library research literacy workshops
- Calvert awards

Office of Undergraduate Research:

- Student resources
- Faculty resources
- Research symposium
- Workshops

Michigan Journal of Service Learning:

- Peer reviewed research on community based service learning



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

How other UNLV teachers might adopt this practice

Adopting Service Learning: Example



Service Learning Framework:

- Identify a community partner
- Align civic engagement with course learning objectives
- Develop reflection activities

Course Theoretical/Methodological Design:

- Feminist Standpoint Theory
- Critical Theories of Race/Racism
- Intersectionality
- Community Based Participatory Action Research

Course Learning Objectives (example):

- Increase culturally sensitive research literacy

Associated Learning Activities:

- Library research literacy workshop
- Critical reading workshop
- Module reading summaries
- Annotated bibliography
- Research workshop
- Data assignment
- Community activities
- Research presentation/presentation

STUDENT SUCCESS