Establishing A Foundation For eService Through Virtual Teams

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Session Roadmap

• Overview of Service Learning and eService
• Identifying and utilizing eService strategies in teaching and learning
• Assessing eService teams
• Examples of eService team projects
• Questions/Discussion

All attendees will receive a tool-kit of instructional resources to help you get started with an eService project design.
Traditional Service Learning

Traditional service learning has been around since the 60’s and early 70’s and is geographically situated.

Traditional service learning in an academic setting involves combining learning objectives with a community project in a face-to-face setting.

Large body of literature supports the benefits of service learning (Bloom, 2008; Gutheil, et al., 2006; Rutti et al., 2016; Vizenor, et al., 2017)
What comes to mind when you hear eService?
What is eService?

A way of volunteering to help others using a device with internet connection.

- Takes place completely online
- Participate from anywhere with internet access
- Also called online volunteering

Research shows online students can also benefit from service learning in the form of eService (McGorry, 2012; Stefaniak, 2020; Strait & Sauer, 2004; Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012)
Benefits of eService in Coursework

**Significance**
- Makes coursework more meaningful
- Helps students discover new ways to solve problems
- Develops critical thinking skills
- May increase student classroom engagement and interaction

**Community**
- Promotes a sense of community social responsibility
- Over 3 million fully online students (Seaman, et al, 2018).

**Accessible**
- Provides access to those students who otherwise could not participate in traditional service learning
- Flexible with students’ schedule
- Convenient - participation from anywhere with internet access

**Diversification of Learning**
- Provides multicultural experiences through a diverse team population and partnerships with international organizations
eService Projects for Teams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Involves a real world task</td>
<td>• Conducting research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides collaborative opportunities</td>
<td>• Designing web pages</td>
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<tr>
<td>among team members and with a nonprofit</td>
<td>• Performing web analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>partner</td>
<td>• Writing and editing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connects with course content and resources</td>
<td>• Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourages reflection on learning and</td>
<td>• Designing publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>making meaning of the experience</td>
<td>• Moderating discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reinforces the “big picture”</td>
<td>boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coupled with virtual teamwork,</td>
<td>• E-fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>eService learning provides students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>with unique leadership opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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<td>that transcend the traditional classroom</td>
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Which best describes your current position?

- Full/Part time faculty
- Instructional Designer/Curriculum Director
- Administrator
- Executive Leadership
- None of the above
Steps to Identify, Implement and Assess eService
Searching for E-Service Projects

Volunteer Match
www.volunteermatch.org

Create the Good
http://createthegood.org/

United Nations Volunteer Online
https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en
Instructional Design Strategies

Select an appropriate eService project that meets course learning objectives, student learning outcomes (SLOs), and that virtual teams can manage

Option 1
Preselect projects and provide teams with a list from which each team could choose

Option 2
If time permits have teams research potential projects, provides opportunity for the team to develop cohesion

Option 3
Offer a mixed option
Instructional Design Strategies

**Build trust**
- Implement low-stress activities early in the semester to foster early trust formation that will continue through the semester

**Promote Accountability**
- Utilize a team contract that includes roles and responsibilities for every member
- Define team norms
- Establish a conflict resolution process
- Determine a timeline

**Foster Accountability**
- Empowerment policy for teams
  - Give teams power to remove members who are not actively participating

- Journal/Discussion board
  - Implement team members journal their weekly activities (private) or post on discussion board (public)

- Activity Reporter
  - Establish rotating roles on each team
  - Reporter submits a brief, biweekly report about each member’s participation and team progress
eService Team Assessment

• Peer-to-peer assessment
  • Helps students to know the positive and negative elements related to their work
  • Peer and self-evaluations provide an opportunity for students to learn evaluative skills
  • May lessen slacker problems by promoting individual accountability and result in improved perceptions of virtual teamwork

• Peer team assessment
  • Students learn about other projects
  • Develops evaluation skills
  • Sparks ideas and creativity that may not have been considered
eService Team Assessment

• Self-reflection
  • Provides a crucial framework that fosters students’ capacity to learn from service learning experience (Guthrie & Bertrand Jones, 2012)
  • Reflection is important in the experiential learning process (Dewey, 1938)
• eService Partner Assessment – (when possible)
  • Promotes individual and team accountability
  • Provides an opportunity for students to learn evaluative skills
  • Assesses team performance and quality of deliverables
Team and Individual Project Deliverables

• Teams should complete a team contract
• Teams should present their project to the class
• Students should individually write a reflection about their eService experience
• Team presentations may or may not be graded
• Teams assess other teams’ presentations (optional)
Real-world Examples of eService Projects
Examples of Previous eService Projects in Online Teamwork Course

• Initiative through Scripps Howard Center for Civic Engagement
  ➢ Conducted a literary review to compare and contrast best practices for micro-neighborhood-like initiatives across the U.S.
  ➢ Developed a strategic plan for how to gather books for early childhood literacy project
• Developed a database of churches to explore what role they see for the church in the neighborhood
• Developed a database of nonprofits in regional location who serve the areas as a resource for local non-profits
• Developed model for identifying villages in Nigeria (“The Village Concept”) in order to make strategic funding decisions
Reflective Comments from Students

“I gained knowledge about resources and the people that provide them.”

“I learned how to work with a group and the complications that arise.”

“I will seek to find more ways to be involved in the service after graduation.”

“I will seek to find more ways to be involved in the service after graduation.”

“I plan to actually follow up on some of my advocacy ideas.”

“I learned there is no shortage of talented people who are willing to contribute to the betterment of humanity.”
Challenges for eService Projects in Virtual Teams

• Can be difficult to identify a project for the course timeframe
• Nonprofit may not be responsive or delay response
• Most effective for teams with 4-6 members so everyone has a role
• Challenging for instructor to manage numerous team projects
Recommendations for Success in eService
Recommendations

• Introduce eService and pique students’ interest
  ➢ Benefits for them personally, the nonprofit, and those served
• Pre and post-assess students’ knowledge about service learning
• Provide examples and outcomes of eService projects
• Share comments from students who have participated
• Have students research potential projects through websites you provide
Recommendations

• Take time to explore several volunteer websites before the course begins
• Choose a project students feel passionate about and comfortable with the work requested
• Realize the application process can take time and plan accordingly
• NEVER pay to participate in an eService project
References

References


Contact us:

www.ncu.edu/center-advancement-virtual-organizations

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