Benefits and Barriers to Incorporating Service-Learning in Landscape Horticulture Courses

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Service Learning

• Educational approach that includes:
  – Community service
  – Curriculum connection
  – Reflection
Methodology

• Population
  – 140 faculty members in landscape horticulture programs
  – 2- and 4-year programs
Methodology

• Survey
  – 27-questions
  – Closed- and open-ended questions
  – Types of questions
    • demographics
    • how SL was implemented
    • the instructor perceived benefits of SL
    • barriers to implementing SL
Demographics

• Respondents
  – 50% 2-year programs
  – 40% 4-year programs
  – 10% offer both 2- & 4-program
Teaching Experience

![Bar Chart showing the distribution of teaching experience. The categories and their responses are: 1 to 5 years (4 responses), 6 to 10 years (6 responses), 11 to 15 years (10 responses), 16 to 20 years (7 responses), 21 to 25 years (5 responses), 26 to 30 years (3 responses), over 30 years (2 responses).]
• Do you currently do SL in any of your courses?
  – 68% Yes
  – 32% No

• Defining SL
  – Authentic hands-on project in the community
How Important are the Following Relative to SL in Your Course

- developing unique projects
- providing time for student reflection
- reporting SL outcomes
- involving students in planning
- assessing SL
- students finding employment
- your teaching
- increasing student civic engagement
- relating SL to course objectives
- positive impact on student learning

Scale 1 to 5 where: 1=not at all important; 5=extremely important
Overall Support

Level of Service-Learning Support
(1=minimally supportive, 10=highly supportive)
Specific Support

• Does your institution offer training on implementing SL?
  – 41% Yes
  – 59% No

• Have you participated in institutional sponsored training?
  – 19% Yes
  – 81% No
Additional Training Needed

- Identifying projects
- Identifying/contacting partners
- I feel confident in my SL knowledge
- Assessing SL outcomes
- Developing student reflection techniques
- Developing projects that fit into allotted class time
- Finding funding sources

Responses (No)
Barriers: Time

Responses

Hours to develop and prepare for SL project

Hours to complete SL project

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Barriers: Resources

How are expenses related to SL covered?

- Course fees
- Grants
- Other*
- Project beneficiaries
- Department/University

Responses (No)
Barriers: Credit

• Do you receive credit for SL as part of your annual performance evaluation?
  – Yes: 30%
  – No: 70%
Credit vs. Support

• Only 30% reported receiving credit for SL work
• Majority felt ‘supported’ in doing SL work
Why do Service-Learning?

“You empower students by getting them involved in community based activities that directly connect to the curriculum. When there is a tangible end goal with a purpose students retain the info better and become more engaged in the activity.”
Special acknowledgement:
Jen Leptien, ISU Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching for assistance with the survey development and data collection

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