



Putting the Community in the Classroom and the Classroom into the Community – 15 Years of Success

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This workshop will explore the strategies used for incorporating service learning projects into the curriculum by a department that has been doing this successfully for over 15 years. Design is a field that has traditionally used the apprenticeship model for learning before there were formal schools of study. The concept was simple: Learn by doing. This apprenticeship requirement is still required in the design professions and many other professional fields of study such as those in law and the health professions. This workshop will focus on how an age old method of learning is an ideal model for service to the community.

Learning by doing is the oldest and most effective form of teaching and learning. It is the only method used by species other than humans. Prior to the industrial revolution, when productivity was measured by new creations, the use of interns and apprenticeships was the chosen method used for teaching the next generation of craftsmen, artists, scholars, farmers and tradesmen. Students practiced their craft as a method of learning.

AACC has a rich history of using practical experience to engage problems confronting our communities and to give our student the challenge of solving them. This presentation highlights AACC's Architecture Program and its long history of reaching out to the community by incorporating service learning projects into the classroom as learning tools. The program will also focus on the lessons they have learned over the years to sustain a successful and valuable role in the community. Over the past 15 years, the program has faced many challenges of service learning projects (before they were known as service learning) and has been able to respond to these challenges with increased program enrollment. Students have developed designs for non-profit and community based organizations that have been built and acknowledged as outstanding designs.

Both presenters will highlight their successes and outline the models they have developed. A high profile project has the potential to bring a lot of success to the student and program, but can also be a public relations disaster. The risks and rewards will be shared along with recommendations based on past experience. For instance, the department established a policy where the only "real" projects brought into the classroom had to be government, civic or non-profit. This was (and is) in response to numerous community members who continuously call the department and offer to use their own personal project for a classroom assignment as a way to get professional design

assistance. This offer has also come from small developers and business owners also looking for free design assistance.

Another issue that is of special concern in the design profession is one of liability. Similar to design professionals in our field, our students provide design solutions that, if built, have the same liability issues as would be faced by professionals. These issues would include structural integrity, health, safety and public welfare liabilities. For instance, the *Construction Project* resulted in structures eight feet tall made from thousands of stacked cans in the middle of a public food court in a major regional mall. There was concern that simple stanchions would not be enough to deter accidental or purposeful collapse of the structures. Through the contract with the mall, liability for damage to persons or property was clearly defined. The interior design showhouses that our students participated in required an additional insurance rider for coverage in the case of damage or theft of the loaned items used in their designs.

Other service learning projects that our department has successfully completed have ranged in both scope and scale. These have included complex road signs for communities and organizations, design proposals for government organizations such as the Fire Department and the Department of Natural Resources, and consultations for non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Emotionally and Physically Challenged Adult Rehabilitation Center. As these organizations usually have limited funds, our students can provide them with the design assistance they need. In some cases, the students' projects were used for fundraising and public awareness, in other cases, their projects resulted in a physically built structure.

The session will also demonstrate how using the department's model for service learning has helped the department develop and measure outcomes assessment. The college assesses at the course, department and college level. The challenge of most departments is proving that students have learned the course material and are able to apply the learning objectives. In the case of the architecture and interior design department, these service learning projects are perfect ways of proving that our students are able to apply what they have learned in the classroom. These projects result in both a successful physical object and include outside assessment by professionals in the field.

Recently the college established the Center for Service through Learning as commitment from the college's administration. Before this office was established, the department had to find and work with the community partners without any outside assistance. With the establishment of this office, not only has there been additional support and assistance, but it has also helped to generate new community partners and regulate the process. Because they are involved with many different service learning projects, they bring a more global perspective and help organize the project. This has helped our department expand what was started 15 years ago as a simple way to use applied learning to engage students in the classroom.

See how the oldest learning style is the newest way to engage students, involve the community and easily assess student learning outcomes.

