

*Motivations and Foundations for the Session*

In response to teacher shortages, especially in low-income or developing areas, higher education has supported online education as a means to produce more teachers (Jung, Galyon-Keramidas, Collins, & Ludlow, 2006). Critics of online classes for pre-service teachers note that this type of education places pre-service teachers at a disadvantage by lessening the amount of student and classroom exposure they experience before entering the teaching field (Nielsen, 1997). While technology has grown substantially, delivery methods in online teacher education programs might not be as progressive. Service learning incorporated into online teacher education courses might bridge the gap between the virtual world and the much-needed face-to-face, experiential learning experience for pre-service teachers. The influential importance of this kind of experiential education can be highlighted by research where pre-service teachers surveyed reported that teacher-student interaction experience lead them to develop understandings of multicultural interactions and dynamics of teacher socialization skills (Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004).

*General Description of this Session*

This session describes experiences between an education faculty member and a service learning coordinator from two different higher education institutions. The faculty member describes online student motivation and decisions to participate in Service Learning as part of the course objectives. The Service Learning Coordinator describes obstacles, documentation, and successes related to students participating in her campus Service Learning program from an online class with an instructor from a different city

and campus. The two also reflect on how they will move this partnership forward in the upcoming academic years.

### *Goals of Session*

This session has two goals: to provide the story of a distance education partnership so that Education students can participate in Service Learning opportunities as part of their online class coursework and to engage participants in a discussion for best practices for online Service Learning experiences. Participants will learn about obstacles and solutions associated with this unique type of Service Learning opportunity.

### *Relevant Information*

Both of the college campuses represented within this session received a three-year sub grant through Dr. Rudy Garcia, through a partnership with Learn & Serve America. The focus of this grant, which will end in August of this year (2009) was to establish Service Learning tutoring programs for college Education students. The Service Learning Coordinator and Faculty member met at a sub-grantee meeting in Year two of the grant cycle and began discussions on how to involve the faculty member's online education students into the Service Learning Program.

### References

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Coordinating Service Learning Experiences for Online Students,  
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