

How to Make a Difference in the Community

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When I was first introduced to the Service Learning (SL) program, I got so thrilled and instantly made a commitment to explore all opportunities both internally and externally. I knew for a fact the SL program can open up numerous avenues that can be tremendously beneficial to the students and the community.

Throughout my years of teaching, I have engaged in different SL projects. However, a couple of the projects that I incorporated turned out to be so successful that it always remained in my mind!

Despite the fact that I teach both secondary and post-secondary students, I have managed to incorporate and assemble the uniqueness into my curriculum. **(Show samples of my course syllabi)**

With the help of the SL coordinator from my institution, the initial project came alive after I contacted the person in charge from the Guam Girls' Scout organization. The entire class took a field trip to visit the organization and interviewed the organizer to pinpoint the criterion the organizer was hoping to accomplish through the project. As soon as the students defined the problems and needs from the chairperson, the students immediately brainstormed and delivered a plan for my review. **(Intermission with the power point presentation)**

This SL project required the students to put in at least ten to twelve hours of work. The project goal was to ensure the transformation of the retail store met up with the identified requirement and delivered a high quality of the final presentation within the deadline.

Towards the midway of the project, the students were challenged with budget and the unexpected changes of requirements from the organizer. Instead of making the

decision for them, the students stepped up to the challenges and unanimously agreed to utilize the recycling and existing items from the Girls' Scout organization. The students additionally surmounted the last minute changes by selling the organizer with the preliminary plans and ideas.

The students were graded on the progress log sheet they submitted, the execution, and the feedback from the community-based organizer from Girls' Scout. With the given time and materials, the students completed the tasks not only on time, but also the end result was so amazing and incredible. The transformation of the Girls' Scout retail store left the organizer dumbfounded.

Some main comments derived from the SL Girls' Scout project were: 1) the students commented that they would not trade anything from these hands-on experience, 2) the students reacted that they were surprised to find out how much they had accomplished and were able to apply the knowledge they gained from the textbook, 3) they learned to overcome the struggles and challenges from working with students who came from different ethnic background and persisted in engaging with various personalities, and 4) the Girls' Scouts organizer informed us the retail store since then has received great remarks from their clientele.

Even after the project has taken place a couple of years ago, I understand that the Girls' Scout organization still frequently sources out to Guam Community College for the updating and encompassing of its store image and organization needs. With this SL project, it not only recaptures GCC's overall mission statement as an excellent institution, it also encouraged me to set a higher student learning outcome by incorporating the requirement for services in the environment and community.

Another remarkable SL project I completed took place approximately in 2004. The project idea came to me after I stumbled into one of the community services through my involvement with the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA). In order to fulfill one of the requirements for being a DECA member, my class had decided to provide a Thanksgiving and Christmas luncheon for the Guma Trankiladat Senior Home in Tumon, Guam. As I was ironing out the logistics for this community service event, I thought of a better way to lift a traditional community service to another level. Therefore I challenged the students to build a SL project by exercising the skills and knowledge they gained from the classroom and applying it to the senior residents in the community. “How to stay health and in tune with technology” was finally launched.

During the planning process, we encountered some obstacles. For instance, the group had to consider the residents’ daily schedule, and rules and regulations at the senior home facility.

The structure of this SL called for a somewhat different approach from what I was accustomed to. The focal aspect for this SL project preparation was spent literally in matching the course syllabi, the student learning outcomes, and the impact on the elderly, who are most frequently forgotten by the society.

This SL project entailed the participation from both secondary marketing and post-secondary nutrition students. Since the secondary marketing students had chosen to endorse the computer technology to this SL, I had to appropriate sufficient class time for them to task and create steps in maneuvering the computer software programs that can assist the senior folks in keeping track of their daily routine. In preparation for this project, I integrated and modified my teaching methodology. I dedicated more class

lectures in computer software programs, such as Excel and power point presentation. Simultaneously introducing the accounting subject; that is totally foreign and not mandatory for the high school marketing curriculum at this time.

While the secondary students were practicing their new accounting knowledge and fine-tuning their computer skills, the post-secondary nutrition students were busy occupying their time in perfecting their basic skills and knowledge in analyzing food label and providing steps in monitoring the blood sugar and blood pressure level.

This particular SL impacted the students, community, and institution in different dimensions. The students' not only got to develop their leadership skills and expertise, but also satisfied with the course syllabus curriculum requirement. This particular SL project allowed the two separate groups of students to incorporate and share not only their knowledge and skills to the seniors, but also simultaneously create a common learning ground among them.

The experience of communicating with the Guma Trankiladat residents was valuable. The residents always looked forward to welcoming the students who reminded them how important they are to the students and to interact with the students who bring them the latest technology and knowledge!

As for the Guam Community College, this SL project reinforced the institution's prominent reputation and embraced the overall College mission statement. **(End the presentation with the second SL power point presentation)**

There are a lot of challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome throughout the process of the SL project. Some frequent obstacles that I encounter are to endorse information to different parties, to obtain permission from various agencies and

community organizations, to allocate all logistics, and to source out budget that is essential to the completion of the project.

The outcome and experience the students and I gained from the SL program evidently and superiorly surpassed the program challenges and obstacles. Furthermore the SL not only inspires me to constantly seek and renew my teaching methodology, but also encourages me to better prepare students for a profound future!