Types and Conditions of Service Learning: Associations with Civic Responsibility, Self-Efficacy, and Wellbeing

Jenifer K. McGuire, Associate Professor
Melanie Brown, Director, Center for Civic Engagement
Washington State University

EUCEN Conference Workshop
Graz, Austria
May 10, 2012
Overview

1. Civic Engagement & Psychosocial Wellbeing
2. Center for Civic Engagement
3. The current study
4. Putting it all together
5. Moving forward
Civic Engagement and Well-Being

- Service participation is linked to self-efficacy (Allesandri, et al., 2009) and moral reasoning (Bernacki and Jaeger, 2008)
- Engaged learning is linked to well-being (Keyes, 2007), tolerance of diversity (Flanagan, 2003) and social capital (Swaner, 2005)
Elements of Service Improve Outcomes

- Service matched to preference
  \( \text{(Moely, et al. 2008)} \)

- Structured reflection provided
  \( \text{(Youniss and Yates, 1996)} \)

- Required service is particularly beneficial for those who are less inclined
  \( \text{(Metz & Youniss, 2005)} \)
WSU Center for Civic Engagement

- Comprehensive civic engagement program (community service, service learning, advocacy, debate & dialogues)
- Curricular and co-curricular
- Involves 8000 students per year
- Extensive network of community partnerships
Bringing Theory to Practice – AAC&U
Civic Engagement & Psychosocial Wellbeing

RFP:
Institutional efforts to examine, learn from and to make sustainable initiatives that foster the gains from the relationship between college students’ civic development and their psychosocial well-being
• Research suggests positive relationship between civic engagement and wellbeing

Proposal/Funded Project:
Types & Conditions of Service Learning: Associations with Civic Responsibility, Self-Efficacy, and Wellbeing
• Analysis of student outcome data collected by CCE to determine the conditions that promote positive civic development outcomes
Bringing Theory to Practice – AAC&U
Civic Engagement & Psychosocial Wellbeing

• Survey data collected across four semesters-over 1000 students
• Focus on outcomes related to Civic Knowledge/Responsibility (CKR) and Self Awareness/Efficacy (SAE)
• Types included: Human services, children’s service, environmental stewardship, community development & other; also curricular/co-curricular
• Forms and conditions (from curricular-based SL) included: individual/group project, local/distant, percent of grade, hours, quality of reflection
Measures

• Civic Knowledge and responsibility
• Self Awareness and efficacy
• Satisfaction with CCE
• Satisfaction with CP
## Correlations among measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sat CCE</th>
<th>Sat CP</th>
<th>SAE</th>
<th>CKR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat CCE</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.623***</td>
<td>0.524***</td>
<td>0.500***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat CP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.581***</td>
<td>0.527***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.821***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CKR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*learning...to make a difference*
Findings - Group Types

- Sat CCE
- Sat CP
- SAE
- CKR

Categories:
- Over 22
- Female
- Child Service
- Curricular
Findings: Forms & Conditions
Consolidated Findings – whole sample

• What predicts Self Awareness/Efficacy
  - Over age 22 (+), Sat CCE, CP (+)
  - Environmental project (-)
  - Curricular (-) important until satisfaction included

• What predicts Civic Knowledge/ Resp.
  - Over age 22 (+), Sat CCE, CP (+)
  - Child services project (-)
  - Curricular (+) only important when satisfaction included
Consolidated Findings - Curricular sub-sample

- What predicts Self Awareness/Efficacy
  - Sat CCE, CP (+)
  - Quality of reflection (+)
  - Individual placements (+)

- What predicts Civic Knowledge/Resp.
  - Sat CCE, CP (+)
  - Quality of reflection (+)
  - Individual placements (+)
Putting it all together - a model of engagement

Types of service
+ Children’s and human services
+ Environmental projects

Reasons for service
+ Curricular
+ Co-curricular, personal

Curricular Conditions
+ Individual placement
+ Quality of Reflection
Percent of grade
Number of hours
Local or distant

Civic Knowledge and Responsibility
Self Awareness and efficacy
Summary of Findings:

- CKR and SAE are highly correlated with each other and with the forms and conditions of the service experience.
- Students who engaged in Human or Children’s service were higher in SAE than those engaging in other types of service.
- Students who participated in academic SL had a higher CKR and SAE than those who participated for other reasons.
- Percent of grade, number of hours, and quality of reflection were all positively correlated with each other and with CKR and SAE.
- Individual projects and quality reflections predicted better CKR and SAE, while other factors were controlled.
Future Directions

- Programmatic efforts in both curricular and co-curricular SL
- Vary reflective experiences and group processes
- Enhance group processes in co-curricular settings
- Continue to focus on instructor supports in curricular learning...to make a difference
A Model for Student Development

- Transferring the value of curricular programs to co-curricular service
- Improving the reflective process
- Improving student satisfaction
- Maximizing benefits for student well-being
Social Change Model of Leadership Development*

- Individual
  - Consciousness of self
  - Congruence
  - Commitment

- Group
  - Collaboration
  - Common Purpose
  - Controversy with civility

- Community
  - Citizenship

*Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 1996
Pathway to Improved Well-Being

• Incorporate the social change model into the reflective process
• Goal to strengthen the links between service participation and well-being
• Focus on co-curricular – where initial outcomes are not as strong