Chapter 1

English at Your Service: Community-Based Learning in an Undergraduate Program

Helene Krauthamer
University of the District of Columbia, USA

Matthew Petti
University of the District of Columbia, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses civic engagement and service-learning in higher education at an urban, land-grant, Historically Black College/University, with a particular focus on the challenges and benefits of service-learning for commuter students. After a discussion of service learning and how it exemplifies the Kolb learning model and effective educational practice, the chapter presents illustrations of civic engagement and extracurricular community-based learning in an English BA program through its two student organizations – The Literary Club and Sigma Tau Delta-Alpha Epsilon Rho. The chapter also provides an example of how service-learning has been implemented in a General Education program and specifically in a writing course. The chapter highlights the partnerships with community organizations that have developed, presents reflective testimonials about the impact of these experiences, provides recommendations for strengthening community-based learning, and concludes that service-learning/community-based learning results in a sense of community for all participants.
INTRODUCTION

At the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), an urban, land-grant, Historically Black College and University (HBCU), a significant focus of the mission and vision has always been to encourage students to be civically minded and “service-driven leaders” (About UDC, 2017). This focus falls under the concept of “civic engagement,” as Jacoby (2009a) defines the term, which has a long history in higher education. Civic engagement is inclusive of participation in a multitude of activities, including education and community service, with the ultimate goal of improving society (Jacoby 2009a, p.9). Community involvement is inherent in UDC’s mission, particularly as a land-grant college designated “to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life” (Transcript of Morrill Act, 1862). However, community service goals are difficult to achieve, insofar as almost all UDC students (other than student athletes) are commuter students with jobs, families, and other responsibilities that leave little time for engagement in extracurricular activities. Indeed, there is a long history of the challenges confronting commuter students in general, as described by researchers such as Chickering (1974), Jacoby (1989, 1996), and Bloomquist (2014).

Notwithstanding these challenges, there has been a significant rise in the level of service activities at UDC over the last decade. The 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report for UDC indicated a relatively low amount of service activities, especially as compared with other HBCUs. In 2010, however, the percentage of seniors reporting having participated in high-impact activities that included service went up to 39% (The student experience in brief, 2010), and in the 2015 NSSE report, the percentage of seniors reporting having participated in high-impact activities that included service went up even higher to 66% (NSSE 2015 Snapshot), which compares favorably with the value of 67% among HBCUs overall. What has been responsible for these increases? A key factor has been acknowledging the challenges that face commuter students and finding means of engaging them in high-impact activities such as service, with the hope of increasing their connections to one another, to the discipline, and to the institution.

This chapter provides a brief discussion of the challenges facing commuter students regarding their learning, and service-learning in particular, and provides an illustration of how civic engagement in an English BA program took root despite these challenges, resulting in a positive impact on its participants and the growth of a community.
www.igi-global.com/article/how-technologies-can-enhance-open-policy-making-and-citizen-responsive-urban-planning/169812?camid=4v1a

Educational Technology in a Novice Science Teacher’s Classroom
Selcen Guzey and Gillian Roehrig (2012). Teaching Cases Collection (pp. 145-153).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/educational-technology-novice-science-teacher/61720?camid=4v1a