

Todd (01), Megan (02), Ann (03), Joanna (04), Caleb (05), Jamila (06), Adam (07), Alicia (08), Carolyn (09), Dan (10), Jessica (11), Lara (12), ST online feedback (13), Devin (14)

1. What is the value to the community (or the specific organization) of the course, and particularly of the student's work?

And how can we make it more valuable?

A. More of the work of the organization got done because there were more people available to do it. 5x

“Extra hands are always a plus; students got plugged in with my crew. (01)

“We got 6 extra hours of work done each time they came. That was a net-positive.” (01)

“The service work – daily snack preparation - they did was definitely worth it, very helpful. It increased our food production capacity. They did two and a half hours Wednesday and a half hour Thursday. We were able to do things in those classes that I wouldn't have been able to do without them.” (02)

“They helped with a big push, a high priority project.” (04)

“Any help is great. We love all of it. Physical labor, helping when we had a big group of kids. Every Thursday they worked harvesting. I could give them responsibilities. I was grateful for the physical labor. (03)

[This class presented the] opportunity to develop short lessons for two schools. After participating in a 2.5 hour training on the lessons and on key facilitation skills, the students were able to facilitate all four lessons at BJM (in two different classrooms) and 2 out of the 4 lessons at CHES (because of some scheduling challenges).” (12)

B. Balance between the benefits to the organization and the extra work it creates. xxxx

Benefits of the project to the organization were outweighed by the extra work it created

“ I would not have done this if anyone else had asked.” (01)

“What the students did [beyond the on-going work] was not really a priority for our program.” (02)

“It was an extra workload to keep on top of this project. The project was an add-on. I had to carve out 3 hours a week for it. This felt draining. Three hours was impossible.” (04)

“This project was discretionary, not something that we had to do right now. It was one more thing that I had to keep track of.” (04)

“I can't give them something that's critical or immediate for the organization, because then the quality of the work and getting it right the first time is essential. And the supervision and number of hours would go way up. So I have to think of something not critical but useful. I probably need to have been thinking about this months ahead.” (04)

“The work was not brought to completion. The goals were not fulfilled.” (03)

Alicia Swords: “I think it's pretty clear that students benefit a great deal in tangible, measurable ways from these experiences. They learn skills that are very marketable, that build their resumes.

My experience is that community organizations benefit much less because they have to manage and juggle a lot of work to make conventional service-learning experiences work. This usually means supervising students and doing a lot of training. Some community educators / workers really seem to like and appreciate this experience.

However, this imbalance does not have to be the case. We have work to do to change this.”

Hunger Education Coordinator, Southern Tier Food Bank: reported that she did value the work that the students did (for Alicia's class), but that it was a lot of work to make it happen, and she did not think

she would do it again.

“Spencer was my problem child. He didn't want to do any of the tasks I wanted done. He kind of floated for awhile, Looking for something ... thought maybe he would drop the class. He was not committing to anything or interested in doing anything. He was all about efficiency. Let's figure this out. Like the Irrigation roller. There was no money to buy materials. I sent him plans from a website. He got a pogo stick handle and jeri-rigged it. It has already broken, but he thought it was great. He was playing with toys basically. I told him I don't really know if this is going to work. I felt bad he was spending all his tome on it – but we were meanwhile trying to do the task, so that was a waste. It never worked; just wasted time.

Then there was the row-marker. He wanted to make one. I told him what awe needed. He tried to make it secure (better than the pogo stick). But he miscalculated the distance we needed. I felt bad. I shouldn't have to explain this to a senior physics major. The arc and the distance. I don't even know physics. I even mentioned this to him. So we probably can't use it. It wasn't a good use of his time, and he was so proud of himself (it only cost 85 cents!). But it was not solid, not going to last. Spencer wasn't testing his things. I couldn't tell him 'It's totally wrong.' I was glad he got into something, got excited was into something. Higher efficiency is important, but it needs to actually work.” (03)

C. The information the students generated is useful or will be useful. xxx

“The Interviews were very successful. There were a lot of lessons learned – things not to do, not to get caught up in. The information is regionally relevant - information about race, gender, class. [Not clear how / when / by whom this information will get used.]” (06)

“The video and interviews are not useful to us as is. [More work needs to be done on both before they can be useful. No one to do this.]” (04)

“Also beyond Thursdays they designed the interviews, wrote the questions to ask for the interviews of other youth farm projects. And Danielle even helped after the end of the semester. [It wasn't finished, however] I was able to give this work to another intern over January break. She did the transcripts and summarized, pulling out the information we wanted. ” (03) [semester too short]

“Devin and Rob were creating a GIS map. I wanted a map to put on our website showing water sources, field areas, buildings, with a soil overlay, and topographical. They weren't able to get what I really wanted. They needed to be more skilled in GIS [to do what I wanted]. But they were able to create some version of something. It wasn't obvious to me until the end that it wouldn't work. They were working up at a lab at IC and with a town GIS person. They tried. It helped me realize how hard the task really is. I followed up with USDA and got some maps, pdf's.” [wished they had been doing something else that would have been more useful] Maybe part of it was my own fault for not knowing how difficult the task was. (03)

I still see the value in having them pilot this for us. We received their feedback on the training. They enjoyed the interactive nature and hands-on aspects of the training, but needed more on managing the logistics of arranging classroom visits. Also, we learned a lot about the logistics of lending students our materials and setting expectations for communication. One of the teachers gave me very positive feedback, and welcomed students to return again.

“Because of the time and energy that Megan and I invested in the training and preparation of the lesson materials, we decided to try it again with Amy Frith and Matt Moyer's students last week. We focused more on the facilitation skills and logistics than in the last training, and built in more time to explain how to use the materials. Overall, it was a successful training and we hope to match more students at several different after-school programs.” (12)

D. Raise awareness in the wider community about the importance of addressing race and class, thinking about the food system, colleges and community collaborating. x

“The letter to the editor was a gift to the community, both what they wrote (the content of the letter), but also as a reminder to the community of the humanity of our students. That was a gift to the community – that students were writing for our paper, speaking to us. Half of our community is students. Plus this was not an “event” in the news, but was about the engagement, their experience, their perspective; it was more personal than is usual in the paper – especially coming from a young person.” (05)

E. Handbook for future volunteers? x

“The outline of our project and what we do could be useful. Some of the recommendations could be useful. We will be getting more interns through work study. (03)

2. What is the value of the course/projects to the students?

A. Students were engaged and enjoyed their experience, and felt ownership of it. xxx

“They engaged and opened up; they seemed to get joy out of the work. They were trouperers – cold wet, whatever, they kept working.” (01)

“They were clearly engaged. I witnessed them pushing themselves, and realized how difficult this class was for them, how different it was from the normal realities of the rest of their college education, by comparison.” (05)

“They took on responsibilities, and did some actual farming; they were owning it. They knew they had made a real contribution. They were there with the kids.” (03)

“Devin was still contributing after the semester was over. [with IC contact for Ann] Danielle helped after the end of the semester.” (03)

Students reported that they were eager to participate and excited about their interaction with each other and with community members. Most students agreed strongly that the experiential learning / doing was the most valuable part of the course, and that it challenged them to think in new ways.

Students reported that they enjoyed the class discussions, being in a circle, and being able to have open discussions and no lectures.

I had no idea what I was getting into or how much the class would come to change my views. (10)

Students reported that the diversity of learning experiences and class exercises were valuable and made the course interesting. They also appreciated the hands-on work projects and experiences working in the community. (13)

B. Opportunity for students' to experience the organization's work. xx

“We had our priorities that had to get done, and I was not able to give the students a well-rounded experience of our work. They just had to fit in to what we needed to do that day.” (01)

“Seeing an active farm, and one that serves youth [was beneficial]. [new experience for them](03)

“...made me realize the level of planning, time, labor and specialized knowledge is needed to run a berry farm and break even.... made farming less romanticized and less of an abstraction.” (11)

C. Specific Student Learning x

Race and class - Diversity and Inclusion: “This entire experience has heightened my understanding

and appreciation for race and class awareness, cultural identity, and justice advocacy. I have learned that in these situations, it is better to think about systems and structure rather than focusing on individuals.” (09)

“... this class has helped me make more sense of what social justice is and how it is so embedded into the fabric of our society and even our local community.” (09)

Students had varying backgrounds, and learned from each other. [Some] grew a lot during the process, not having had as wide experience as others.” [Experience with racism or classism, and dealing with difference.] (06)

“They had to look at their privilege, look inwardly. Their curiosity drove them, but they didn't realize that how you frame a question can put people off.” (06)

“[Students got] useful information and training about working with young people.” (02)

“[Became able] ... to look at other issues I am presented with in a systematic way.” (10)

“I am more assured in my ability to recognize racism and white privilege and confront it.” (11)

“Before taking this class I was not aware of what white privilege is...[it] made me realize how racism is really about an unwillingness to share power.” (11)

Interconnections – food system, community,

Most students reported feeling that coming to class was important, and that they really appreciated the interconnections among different areas of the food system and different aspects of the community that they learned.

“I understood how issues of community, food and race are so tightly interconnected...” (10)

“[I learned]... to look at other issues I am presented with in a systematic way.” (10)

Permaculture: “[Learning about] the concept of ecological design and permaculture really drove home some concepts that I had previously learned, and put things into perspective so that I could apply them to my own life.” (09)

Communication skills: “[I] learned the importance of clear communication when there are so many people working together (communication, relationships, and collaboration skills,) towards a common goal.” (09)

Systems thinking: “It constantly amazed me ... so much emphasis on building relationships over time in order find the balance needed for a self-creating, evolving, and regenerative local system.” (09)

D. Exposure to people, communities, and realities that they had never experienced. xxx

“I felt both hopeful and deeply sad that this was their [students] first exposure to Southside. They had not talked with everyday people.” (05)

“Their reflection on having conversations with people who are more vulnerable – that was very valuable to them - both before the conversations happened and after.” (05)

“How difficult it was for them coming in - a hard learning curve, really nothing to prepare them for this.” (05)

“Even at the end some students weren't all the way on board, didn't feel totally safe, were acting a little rebellious in their perspective (for ex 'Racism isn't such a big deal; not fair that white men don't have as good a chance etc.). There wasn't enough safety for them to listen as well, and it made it less safe for the whole class, and they were arguing with each other.” (05)

“I could see their growth in working in the community - their conscious effort. They were choosing their words more carefully, becoming more aware.” (02)

“[students] realized people's challenges, and understood people's needs and desires.” (05)

“They had their eyes opened about the lack of healthy food in many homes, and the lack of information about food choices and what is harmful, about the ignorance about fruits and vegetables, and that people can't afford healthy food, that it's not accessible. [They didn't realize] the inequality of the food system.” (02)

“Students were impressed with the dedication of people who are trying to make a change. They said things like 'How amazing the local community is.' and 'So many people volunteer, are helpful, are invested in change.’” (02)

Students reported that they could see the food system in a new way. They could see the many interconnected parts, see the system emerging from all the parts and people they were exposed to. They appreciated the wide range of topics.

The most valuable aspect of the course, students reported, was the diversity of learning experiences, which kept it interesting. Their experiences in the community, the homework that was relevant to those experiences, learning from so many speakers, doing the field trips, and getting to know Ithaca by having projects in the community and accomplishing community priorities.

They also reported appreciating being able to see the community's struggles first hand, not just reading about them. They appreciated that the course gave them a realistic view of the real world.

“...we actually connected with community members in a meaningful way.” (10)

“I think that the interactions with community members taught us much more about why it is important to engage yourself with your community. ...gave a face to the lessons we had been learning all semester, ” (10)

[I was able to] ..”learn more about Ithaca as a community and the local food system in Ithaca.” (11)

“The guest speakers were awesome! It was great getting the opportunity to listen to so many community members talk about their role in the food justice movement. Along with the guest speakers, it was great having opportunities to work outside of the classroom to get to know greater Ithaca community better. I think that the group project benefited me the most because I got to see first hand the struggles that are prevalent local food system.” (13)

E. Changed the students personally – their identify, their career goals, how the world should work – vision. Students reported that they had a strong sense that this knowledge [from this course] will be applicable to their future, and that they want to continue this learning.

“ Before taking this class I never thought about where my food came from, I just knew it came from a store.” (07)

“...it’s not worth the carbon emissions for me to eat out of season foods!” (07)

“My worldview has been changed, because I used to think that volunteering was boring and not worth my time ...It is easy to sit back and think that someone else will do what needs to be done, but too many people have this attitude and I no longer want to be one of them! Now I have community skills that I plan to use to become engaged in helping build a strong and supportive community that will encourage others to do the same. ” (07)

“I really appreciate you teaching me this [mindfulness] because it is a tool that I have started and plan on using for my whole life.”(07)

“...one thing that I always felt as my previous environmental class concluded was hopelessness. [here I am] learning to apply myself and realizing that becoming involved in the local community, although it may be small, can cause a ripple effect throughout our society.” (09)

“This lesson (value of developing relationships of trust with people who are different from me), along with many others that I have received this semester, will stay with me throughout my life.” (09)

“Recognizing racism in daily life makes it easier to choose not to be perpetuate it.” (11)

F. Students felt successful -

A majority of the students reported that they felt successful, motivated, and did work hard, learned a lot, and participated. They reported feeling strong ownership of their work, and appreciated the opportunity to go beyond coursework and have meaningful experiences in the community.

“...when I was pushed past my comfort zone by being asked to go door to door, I gained so much as a result.” (10)

G. Non-traditional format of the course

The things that I enjoyed most about this class and would not change include the discussion-based classroom setting, the guest speakers, and the group projects. This class would not have been the same if it was in a traditional classroom. I enjoyed sitting in a circle and being able to have open discussions instead of being lectured at. (13)

Wide agreement that the guest speakers and the project-based learning was engaging, worthwhile, important, and full of learning. (13)

3. What is the value of the course / projects personally to the Project Guides and other community members involved in the course?

A. Working with students/young people is a benefit in itself. xxx

“It's great to work with students and see them have their eyes opened and realize things about the food system.” (01)

Working with the students helps me remember the value in the work. It helps me be more persistent. Seeing the students grow is rewarding and worthwhile. (06)

Effect on me personally: hopeful, eager for more, grateful, energized, determined, excited, motivated. (06)

“I got a lot personally out of it.” (06)

“The experience was mostly positive, but frustrating at times.” (02)

“Did this provide a 'satisfying change' from my regular work? No, just extra work.” (04)

B. Fair Compensation xx

Being paid for my work is critical. (06)

“There was no incentive for me to put in the extra time [to make the project more valuable]. I needed to be able to claim these hours, without all the paperwork; maybe call it a stipend or an honorarium.” (02)

Would have been better if I had known that I would have five hours a week of paid time, and know what was expected of me.” (02)

C. Inspired by the work being done at the college. x

“I was inspired by the whole class – the sitting in a circle, the shared food, the projects, the way students spread out into the community and came back together to talk about it. And the fact that they were so engaged.” (05)

D. Learned something personally. x

“I was strengthened [by the experience]. It helped me learn my boundaries, what I am capable of.

What I need to ask for in order to get what I need. How clear I need to be. That I need to be firm.” (03)

“Personally I realized that I have a role, have the capacity in the local community, as an educator, I have the capacity to make a difference [in these students' lives], and I want to continue this role to help others.” (02)

4. How could the course/projects be structured in order to be most effective for the students and for the community?

“our west haven project had no ‘mentor’, it would have been nice to connect more with organization and implementation of farm

A. Minimal requirements on Project Guides, so that they have to do as little as possible outside their regular work. xxxx

“It's possible that I would do it again. We are a small operation. The main thing is that it can't add to my plate. I don't want to have to do anything extra, not paperwork, not scheduling, not checking in, not chasing them if they don't show up.” (01)

“There just is no time for anything extra, like getting together with the other Project Guides or coming into the class, or anything.” (01)

There was a lot of information provided at the beginning, but which is really relevant to me and what I am going to do? (06)

I want the information but I don't have time to go to a meeting or a lunch.” (02)

“Three hours per week was a lot for me to spend with them. To do this again we would need to identify a project that doesn't take so much from us/me. One hour a week is really what I could devote to this.” (04)

“ Maybe we need a separate coordinating function – [to interface between the community organization and the course]; maybe Building Bridges could take this on. Take on some of the communication, supervision, etc.” (04)

Require less support from Project Guides. Maybe 1 hour per week with the Guide and 2 hours to do the work. Simplify the assignments. Maybe at the launch the Guide would have to spend more time, maybe three hours a week, then reduce it.” (04)

B. Quicker and easier way to communicate to Guides what is expected of them and what the course is about. xx

“ I'm not a reader. The invitation to be a facilitator was often long-winded and too detailed all at once. I would prefer something more brief, and bullet points rather than sentences.” (05)

“I know Elan tried, but I didn't have time, even though at times I felt like I didn't know what was going on.” (02)

“I need to know what to expect, and not so much at the last minute. I know Elan is not a professor, and it can not be structured as a regular class.” (02)

C. Very clear expectations communicated to students before the project starts, and some way to keep students accountable without adding to the Project Guide's burden. xxx

What level of responsibility is appropriate for the students, and how can it be reinforced without adding to the burden on the Project Guides?

“It took a couple of weeks for them to get into it. They didn't come twice a week. They probably did 75-80% of what they were supposed to do.” (01)

“Need to define ahead of time the expectations and goals of the project and what assessment will happen. And then do the assessment, which will hold them accountable.” (02)

“One student missed the critical Wednesday session where everything was explained, and then skipped the second three hours the entire semester. I didn't have time to chase him down and make something else for him.” (02)

“I didn't feel like I wanted to (or had the time to) hold them more accountable if they weren't coming through. Also I felt that their grade probably wouldn't reflect this irresponsibility, and they probably knew that.” (02)

[Problem of student accountability. Not enough time to inform Elan of what isn't working, and he doesn't have time to check on everyone.] (03)

“It is a little disturbing that D. took all semester to just write the interview questions. (Especially when Joanna's were all done.) Maybe it was because they were also working on the farm. Maybe it was too

much. I wish we had known earlier; I would have taken them off the farm work.” (03) [too ambitious a project; need more clarity about priorities]

“If the students aren't super motivated it doesn't work.” [need ways to motivate students] (03)

“We had asked the students to compare and contrast their experience at the two different schools, but did not get feedback on this. Further, we had requested feedback on the lessons but did not receive this.” (12)

For it to run smoothly students need to fully understand what is expected from them.

D. More on-going communication with the students about their work in the project, (but not through the Project Guide). xxx

“There was no communication. If they had phoned or texted me to say that they weren't coming it would have been helpful. But I couldn't chase after them. I had to leave it up to them. They needed to act like adults. If they showed up, awesome. If not, we went about our day.” (01)

They didn't look at the syllabus to keep track of scheduling, what's coming up, vacations, etc. so they were winging it rather than thinking ahead. And the end came up really quickly and they weren't prepared.” (02)

[students wasting time, doing things that weren't going to result in anything useful] (03)

Students felt that “they could have utilized us more... [it was] repetitive, simple work.”

Students commented that “communication could have been better especially in beginning ... what happened to googledocs? & texting; [would have liked] weekly goals.”

E. Transportation needs to be figured out as early as possible. xxx

“Transportation maybe was what make it impossible for them to come twice a week.” (01)

“Transportation was less of an issue than I expected. [One of the students] took it on.” (02)

“Transportation was not a problem.” (03)

Some students mentioned that “compensation for transportation would be nice.”

F. Cultural Competency of students could be improved before they begin the project. xx

“Students always have a range of experiences [with difference] – maybe we can build this into the course.” (06)

“Important to ensure that students get the basics (about racism, affirmative action). Paula, at IC has some data that might be useful, and has done some work that might be useful on responding to common racist arguments.” (04)

G. Student skill level is a problem. xxx

“They needed a little more work with Scott. How to code for major themes in a transcript [from interviews], also the different types of interviews. How to establish a rapport with the interviewees, get some background, build a context.” (06)

“Writing skill was poor [on their report].” (02)

“There is a problem of students being novice and how could they be really useful with their limited knowledge? For example, the real benefit for us would be to help us grow (to be in more schools, at more grade levels), but that would take knowledge and skill the students don't have and couldn't get in a semester (writing grants, lobbying legislature, creating the justification for our growth, etc.).” (02) [GIS project] (03)

“The terms and concepts we used were not familiar to them [students and interviewees], and we had to re-frame. How to frame a question in a way that gets people sharing – with out telling them what we want. It was difficult to push people along the conversational path that we have worked out without telling them what we wanted to hear or putting words in their mouth. Realized the importance of

developing good questions.” [need more prep in interviewing if that is the task, can students get enough skill development in a short time?] (05)

H. Need more time to bring a project to a close and make it useful. xxxxx

“The interview material needs analysis – looking at the material and thinking what it means. Also they needed to deliver the profile back to the interviewees.” (06)

[It took a while for students to get oriented to the Project and the Guide and the work.] “They didn't know how honest they could be as they were getting to know me.” (06)

“The amount of time is too short. We couldn't follow up with local people.” (06)

I wish we could make four mini-projects, one after the other. Listening, and putting out the results, and seeing the reaction, reflecting, asking 'Did that work?' and then doing it again. Investigating what works to engage community people – where, when, how? Try different ways of engaging with different parts of the community.” (05)

“They [students] tried to scramble at the end and get something done, but there was not time.” (02)

“A project like this needs a lot of thinking [in our organization] to plan well.” (04)

“We would need to think about this six months in advance, give it way more thought. Project Guides could have dinners together way ahead of time to plan.” (04)

“The quality is ok [of the video], but it was bad timing for us (all white faces). We learned a lot about doing a video. It was sort of a practice run. [but no one to take it the next step.]” (04)

[couldn't finish interviews] (03)

I. Student Preparation xxx

The most important capacities for students in this collaborative work.

Flexible, work well with other and collaborate, respectful and a good listener and learner, curious. (05)

Self-starter, collaboration, good listener, asks questions, takes initiative, gives Feedback respectfully, good learner shows growth over the weeks. (02)

self-starter, works well with others / good collaborator, hard worker (04)

“Students are coming in with different backgrounds and experience. Maybe you need to think about a 200 level course and a 400 level course. Or someway to address the needs of beginners and more experienced students.” (02)

“Could the students be better prepared? I can't tell much. They are motivated, get what we are doing, but in one semester ... what is realistic?” (04)

“I realized that the students lacked experience, were not comfortable talking about the food system, felt they had nothing to offer, and were afraid to sound dumb or say the wrong thing.” [how to prepare them for these kinds of interactions?] (05)

J. A useful Final Report xx

“We never got a final report, only a draft.” (02)

“Their writing quality was poor on the final report. It was sort of a volunteer handbook, but it was not useful to us. They mostly just fed back or reiterated what I had told them; there was nothing new or useful.” (02)

“I wish they had done a power point of the main points from the interviews. Why did they do a power point about [the organization]? By the time I found out what they had done I didn't feel I could ask them to do more.” (04)

“There was a lack of clarity about what the final report would be. It was not useful to us, not what I expected.” (04)

[might be useful for future interns] (03)

Some students said they “felt like final report did not have any value ... [there was] no new experience,

covering old ground.”

K. Remember the big picture. xx

“We really have to have our eyes on the prize – all of us, and not just be trying to make a dent or change something just a little. We really need to keep in mind that we’re going for the whole picture, the whole reality of food justice.” (05)

“Is the worth to the organization really a possible goal?” (04)

L. Manageable Course load

Students appreciated Elan as an instructor (his enthusiasm for the material, his knowledge of the content and the community, the fact that he is sensitive, listened well to them and heard their concerns, was helpful and always responsive, providing useful feedback.) They reported that there were clear expectations for the work, strong encouragement to participate, and a consistent emphasis on the learning objectives.

One student wrote that the course was “exciting but barely manageable.”

“Elan tried to fit too much into the semester – I would've learned more if we would've cut the material covered in half and focused more on that half. I felt rushed all the time.(13)

Most students felt that there was a lack of clarity in the presentation material and that the class was disorganized, and did not make the best use of class time. They wished that Elan was better at returning their work to them in a timely way. [hard to know if they were un-used to a more community-based approach, a more egalitarian approach between students and instructor, or a more change-focused course that did not present all the answers for them to memorize.]

“Way too much time was demanded from us per week. 3 hours of lecture, 3 hours of peoject time, plus an additional 2 hours plus 3 hours of weekly homework ... way too much to handle for 4 credits.” (13)

M. Organization and Timely information

With this much new, this much going on, this many people involved, complexity of the course – necessity of clarity, careful organization, thinking and planning way ahead, and keeping to schedule that is manageable, and expectations – guides, instructor, students. Want to maintain the flexibility to respond to what's coming up, to what's happening in the community.

The organization of the course needs to change. Sometimes it made learning and absorbing the information difficult. Homework assignments were lengthy, sometimes overwhelming, were not well organized and sometimes were difficult to interpret, and were not released a full week before they were due, as promised, to allow adequate time to work on them.

Written guidelines outlining the learning objectives and expectations need to be given [for the projects] before the project is started. Also information about the mid-term presentations and final reports, and communication about requirements, upcoming events, field trips.” The disorganization makes it difficult for us to use our time well.

“I think that the best and quickest way to improve the course is to tackle the organization problem.” remove one source of confusion,(14)

Prepare assignments in advance, clear formatting and layout, easy to understand, (14)

Clarity of language, simplify, formatting consistent and clear.

5. What do Project Guides need in order to able to best take advantage of this resource?

A. Clearer and earlier information about the class, the Project expectations and the goals. xxx

“There was not enough information about how it would all work. Initially I didn't understand what I was getting into or what Elan hoped students would get out of it.” (01)

“I want to know what's going on in class. What's the context into which this project is fitting?” (02)

“The information about the course – verbal and written – can be less complete, less perfect. What do we really need to know? Not enough prioritizing. Think about it from the other's perspective. The information is confusing, more complicated than necessary. You can probably cut it in half.” (04)

“This was my third time around. I knew what had gone wrong before, and spent a lot of time with Elan ahead of time (in the summer) to get prepared. How to make it effective and easy, how to get set up, not so many problems like last time.” (03)

B. Scheduling, communication with students and with Elan all need to work well. xx

Scheduling, communication with students, with Elan, support was all ok. (06)

“Structure of half time with the Project Guide and half time with homework is a good set up.” (05)

“Communication [with Elan] was generally good; some things were last minute, but that was ok. It was an emergent plan.” (05)

“I couldn't communicate quickly (answer emails); sitting in front of a computer is not the best use of my time. A call is better. But the students were only using email to report what they'd done. I got blamed for not communicating with them. But they needed to go beyond email, and do more face to face. I don't have an office. They need to use our time on Thursday to communicate, or call me.” (03)

“Communication with Elan went very well. He would come and wash carrots with me so he could talk to me. I felt very supported by him. I never worked with anyone who supported me this well.” (03)

C. Things that help the project guides succeed. xxx

Create realistic deadlines. Ability to delegate work. Look at individual student's strengths and weaknesses in order to assign them to appropriate work. Send reminders. Keep expectations realistic. (06)

“I had to be diligent about the amount of time I spent on this.” [or it would have taken too much of my time]. (06)

“Scott's training was useful. I would like to see a series of trainings on cultural competency for the students. There are trainings through CCE and also NYS that are useful and could be scheduled.” (06)

“I didn't want to give them much preparation because I didn't want to make them self conscious as they were doing the interviews. I told them it's OK to learn from their mistakes.” (05)

“Has to be exactly the right kind of project [in order to succeed]. This will take some thinking.” (04)

“Continued interaction among project guides would be good, but again would take more time. [If there was a set of on-going project guides and relationships were built among them.] (04)

“[Wish I could] see how other Project Guides are working, but it's just not worth my time right now.” (03)

[Clarify, ask for what I need, clear goals, project designed to the skill level of the students (do not expect them to gain a skill during the project),]

“There were the logistical challenges of scheduling with multiple people [both multiple people in the project organization and multiple students]. [Keep it simple.]

D. Need sufficient time to plan ahead about the specifics of the project. xxx

“It was frustrating that our internal communication was not as good as it needed to be in order to coordinate this project. There was confusion internally about who was in charge, who was the point person.” (02)

“Need to give more thought to what project could work, maybe as much as 6 months in advance.” (04)

“This was year 1, and I put in a lot. It was sort of break-even, a wash. It would have to be a several

year commitment to this class, to plan for it, to think long-range.” (04)

“Better pre-planning, before the students arrive. Wish we had more planning. We just jumped on the available skills [video].” (04)

“I needed to be really organized, with deadlines and outcomes, etc.” (03)

“Fall is a really busy time for me. The workforce is gone, and I'm doing a lot by myself. [I should be really prepared and clear in order for it to work well]. (03)

“People were not receptive [when we went] door to door. We had few successes.” (05)

Some students commented that the “guide relied too much on group members, very disorganized.”

E. Stronger Coordinator function xx

We need a point person – for communication, to hold students accountable – in a way that the Project Guides can't (don't have time for). And Elan can't do this for each of the projects. An intermediary.” (02)

“Feel frustrated and discouraged, but hopeful that it could work somehow.”(03)

Observations

- there are some distinct ways that we could try to create benefits - there is the help with the ongoing work of the organization (chopping vegetables, weeding, filing, making calls, tabling, etc.). And then there is work that moves something forward for the organization (that they haven't found time to do) like make a video, do more publicity or marketing, or interviews. However this kind of work needs to be carefully planned and monitored if it is going to be quality. There is often not enough lead time to do sufficient planning or ongoing supervisory time to assure quality. Then there is evaluation and feedback about how the organization is operating or succeeding. Students do not typically have enough background or expertise to do this kind of work.

Often, it seems, the organization comes up with some kind of make-work that is not really a priority and will not take too much supervision time.

But what I mentioned below of more introductory forms of engagement like reality tours is actually *another* different way (number zero, perhaps to reflect its level). This is more introductory for students, which I find to be appropriate, considering their knowledge and skills. In this model, students' main roles are as listeners. We could talk lots more about orgs' roles and benefits...

- I'd say that as long as faculty and community partners continue to envision **ONLY** the internship-level of engagement as the best and the only available, we're missing a step pedagogically for students, and a way that community orgs can actually touch a lot more students with a lot less effort. other examples of engagement that allow for relationships to be built and benefits to organizations without requiring a ton of effort on the part of the organizations?
- Is there really any way to structure it so that the benefits are equal on both sides? So that it is a real partnership, and not just the community doing a favor to the college or university?

The community is educating the college's students, and what are they getting in return?

- Students want more meaningful experiences and tasks, but this is precisely what is most difficult for guides. The most useful to the guides is the day to day work, but that is not learning enough for some students.
- 10 weeks is not long enough to get to know a project and accomplish much of any significance beyond helping out with the on-going work. Even when students completed something there was not time for feedback or revision or presentation. They were already at the end of their semester. Some students wanted to continue to help, and some did continue, but the dedicated work started to wind down as they got close to the end of the semester (exams, papers, travel plans)
- Intensive project, with a quick turn around was effective. Conceived accomplished, reflected on, and reported within two weeks. Satisfying. Maybe everything doesn't have to be 12 weeks.
- Just doing the on-going work of the organization is consistently the most beneficial to the organization. This work typically does not require a lot of knowledge or skill, can be learned quickly, requires low supervision. But that is not necessarily the most valuable or satisfying work for the students. Less community contact, less critical thinking, less long-term, meaningful contribution.
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Recommendations (put these into categories)

- Intermediary
- Clarify the intentions and priorities of the course. “ If you really want to focus on community engagement, the homework may have to take a back seat” (14)
- Scale down the course expectations – with this much new content and new kinds of experiences, it becomes more of a necessity for the course and each class to have clarity and be well organized – in order for it to not be overwhelming. Remember how much they are absorbing. Simplify, prioritize (choose carefully which things are a priority for readings, homework, project requirements), and as much as possible get them regular feedback (returning their work on time and checking in on their project work).
- Scale down the work load on students. Reduce the time required on the Project. Implications: even less that they can accomplish for the organization, but possible with more quality. Think about the difference between exposure and learning. You may want some of each. Clarity about which things are learning objectives and which things you want to expose them to.
- Prioritize readings and homework to only the very best or most relevant. There is a lot that they could benefit from but it is too much. You solve some of this by having some required readings and some optional. Also good that you give them choices.
 - you could leave perhaps ¼ of the assignment empty for articles related to the class discussion, or recent developments. begin to develop folders for each modules, divided by subject matter or requested work, properly formatted and ready to drag into a new assignment. providing a solid framework for the course
- Spend more time at the beginning in order for students to understand the guidelines and expectation, of the course, and of each project. They need to know ahead of time all the expectations of the project and how it will play out over the semester.
 - The first day of class is often daunting with the amount of packets and syllabi we receive. I would consider really making sure the documents for the class are as concise and reader friendly as possible, each posted on Sakai as

their own folder.

- Simplify students' assignments. "They thought the expectations were high and were overwhelmed by what Elan was asking them to do (to do their work the way he lives!). They need to say something [to me, to Elan], and not count on email." (03) They felt that the readings and assignments were aligned with the course's learning objectives, but that there was just too much.
 - Projects that are service work projects to do the on-going work of the organization, where they could use more hands or more bodies to help out. Put the emphasis on racism, classism, etc into the classroom work, include reflection on their community work, but don't expect capacity-building work to be done in the community (not enough time in a semester, insufficient student skill level.)
 - Maybe allow a "homework skip" if a student is doing extra work in town that week. Or leave weeks without homework just for absorbing it all. Or simpler homework, more like reflection or journals, about their reaction to speakers or field trips, and what impact the work is having on their life or thinking.
 - planning it out ahead of time could be really beneficial to both the student's experience through the class and your time during the semester to make the community time as educational as possible. (14)
 - Rewrite agency checklist
-
- As much as possible all homework assignments up front, at the beginning of the semester.
 - With sufficient planning time on the part of the organization we could do capacity-building work, but only if it could extend beyond one semester. Having a different group of students for each semester might be workable, but the best would be a consistent group of students throughout the year. Could also consider work study money to carry the work over winter break.
 - Continuity would help. A longer arc than one semester. The actual project time is too short. We have to be ready, and all planned and organized [and that's a lot to ask for a few weeks of work.]" (04)
 - "Maybe one "generic" project that could be useful to any organization. Such as telling the story of their work. Students with video skills would always be useful to have." (04)
 - "Maybe not six different projects; maybe different aspects of one project [community-wide]. Fewer different things going on." (04)
 - 1. reduce the "down town" time. Would it be useful to bring Project Guides into classroom once or twice to discuss the project or move it forward during classtime? (and pay them) Just so students won't have to get downtown as much. Offer extra credit for more downtown time?
 - 2. Homework and readings - restrict your choices to only the very best. You can see all the things that they could benefit from, but it is too much. Maybe offer two choices a week, and half of class do each, and discuss in class so all will get at least the overview of both. Or give them choices and then discuss in small groups. Maybe allow a homework "skip" if they are doing extra work downtown

that week. Or weeks without homework or readings just for absorbing it all and discussing that. Or homework about their reaction to a guest or a field trip and what meaning it is building in their own life. Some ways to lighten the HW load. (for them and for you)

3. As much as possible all assignments up front. And all field trip schedules.

4. at the beginning, go over the handbook (I imagine you did do this). Have the Project Guides' needs, project descriptions, etc. in the book.

- Maybe some community experiences that are less intense than a “project” (or internship). From Alicia: My experience has been that there are a variety of ways to set up service-learning and community-based learning experiences besides just internships. Internships or project-based work is often treated as the "best" kind of service learning, but my experience is that there are more introductory level activities that can benefit community organizations in interesting ways.

Here are some less conventional examples:

For example, in student "reality tours" or "peoples' history tours", community organizations tell the stories of their work. Students' main "service" if it can be thought of that way, is to listen and learn from community educators about the realities and histories of the community context. Community organizations that focus on leadership development can use this sort of event as experiences for leaders to develop their skills in communicating to the public. Reality tours can also be set up in such a way that organizations get to meet other organizations doing similar work, so they can benefit through building networks, sharing ideas, and learning from each other.

I think it takes some creativity to devise ways that students' work can be of benefit.

Maybe it doesn't have to be a benefit that the students deliver ... Maybe it needs to be that the college itself needs to provide the benefit directly to the organization - in terms of financial support or shared resources or shared staff time or ???

Opportunities

Westhaven Farm: Could we have an arrangement with several different courses where students would come over and help out? We need the most help on harvest days, but could take extra help almost any time. We could develop an online calendar with slots for students to sign up. They would need to call if they were not coming. It's better if we can have at least 24 hours notice, to be prepared. The optimum would be a week's notice. If we could find a coherent system that was efficient it would be great to have the help. Anyone can plug in anytime, but of course, consistency is most efficient; not having to orient people constantly. If we could get a commitment from students to come throughout the Fall, regularly, then we don't have to explain things over and over. Spring semester wouldn't work as well because there is really not anything until April.

How would it be possible to pay Caleb to follow up on the interviews with local people, with or without students?

“This 'community surveying' is a model for other work. Others could do this. Ask people what they think, what they want.” (05)

Consider the options of working in different media – video, speaking (for ex. to City Hall), art work, music, writing / publishing.

What are the opportunities to work with other classes – like Amy Frith's?

“The importance of schools as a place for change – because it reaches people when they are young, it reaches all people, all socio-economic backgrounds.” (02)

Another 2 ideas to consider, the second may be redundant

1) If you received **payment** for project guidance, how significant was the payment in affecting your motivation, the quality and consistency of your work, your sense of worth/being valued, and the outcomes for the community and the students?

or to be more concise: How did receiving payment affect your motivation, satisfaction, and the educational and community outcomes

(This sub-question would be hard to do if you haven't explicitly asked it already : If you were doing this as part of your agency work, would receiving some payment, probably "honorarium" level, in recognition of the extra effort involved, have made a significant difference in terms of motivation, satisfaction, and outcomes?)

- 2) This one is a variation/elaboration on "How could the course/projects be restructured in order to be more effective...?" which picks up on the question of how complex the translation process between cultures and settings is : What aspects of the project guidance process, including the communication with instructor and students, seemed too onerous, confusing, and/or complicated and what ideas do you have for simplifying, streamlining and/or systematizing with little or no loss of quality?
- 3)

Sources / Documentation

Student online feedback to the department (8)

Individual student reflections at the end of the course (5)

Anonymous student feedback to Elan (6)

Project Guide face to face interviews (7)

Faculty conversations about community-based learning (1)