

Service Learning in the Sciences: Student Perception Before and After Working with a Community Partner

Michael S. Berger

Washington State University Vancouver, School of the Environment / School of Biological Sciences, 14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave, Vancouver WA 98686 USA
(msberger@wsu.edu)

Many courses in the natural sciences are focused on the generation of quantifiable data and empirical results in student assignments. Because service learning projects do not necessarily provide a quantifiable end product, they are not commonly integrated into science courses. As a result, students are not exposed to the transformative nature of service learning and do not develop partnerships with the community that could carry well beyond a single course. An understanding of a student's perception of a service learning project can help faculty, service-learning administration staff, community partners, and graduate student teaching assistants develop effective service-learning assignments that result in a transformative learning experience. I discussed the integration of a service learning assignment in a non-majors general biology course. Pre- and post-assessment Likert-scale survey data was presented to address student learning goals: (1) whether working with a community partner would be rewarding; (2) perceived benefit of service learning as a transformative experience; (3) contribution to the community. I addressed potential limitations and solutions to service learning projects involving non-traditional student populations on a commuter campus. The alignment of work between community partners and course concepts, and student's perception of future civic engagement, was discussed.

Keywords: service learning, projects, community partnership, non-majors biology

Link to Original Poster File: <https://doi.org/10.37590/able.v41.poster59>

Mission, Review Process & Disclaimer

The Association for Biology Laboratory Education (ABLE) was founded in 1979 to promote information exchange among university and college educators actively concerned with teaching biology in a laboratory setting. The focus of ABLE is to improve the undergraduate biology laboratory experience by promoting the development and dissemination of interesting, innovative, and reliable laboratory exercises. For more information about ABLE, please visit <http://www.ableweb.org/>.

Advances in Biology Laboratory Education is the peer-reviewed publication of the conference of the Association for Biology Laboratory Education. Published articles and extended abstracts are evaluated and selected by a committee prior to presentation at the conference, peer-reviewed by participants at the conference, and edited by members of the ABLE Editorial Board. Published abstracts are evaluated and selected by a committee prior to presentation at the conference.

Citing This Article

Berger M. 2020. Service Learning in the Sciences: Student perception before and after working with a community partner. Article 59 In: McMahon K, editor. *Advances in biology laboratory education*. Volume 41. Publication of the 41st Conference of the Association for Biology Laboratory Education (ABLE). <https://doi.org/10.37590/able.v41.abs59>

Compilation © 2020 by the Association for Biology Laboratory Education, ISBN 1-890444-17-0. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

ABLE strongly encourages individuals to use the exercises in this volume in their teaching program. If this exercise is used solely at one's own institution with no intent for profit, it is excluded from the preceding copyright restriction, unless otherwise noted on the copyright notice of the individual chapter in this volume. Proper credit to this publication must be included in your laboratory outline for each use; a sample citation is given above.