



Justice: Beyond Charity



Compassion: Beyond Blame



Diversity: Beyond Tolerance



Responsibility: Beyond Self

## COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING(CSL): A SNAPSHOT- May 2008

On March 18th the Volunteer Action Centre, in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Waterloo and Conestoga College, hosted a unique community-wide conversation focused on **Community Service-Learning (CSL)**. The conversation began a process that we hope will help CSL develop in a way that will provide benefits to all the stakeholders, the students, the community organizations, the faculty and the Universities. This communiqué is intended as a status report for those involved and those interested.

### INSIGHTS FROM MARCH 18

Paul Davock

- In order to work together in a way that will create maximum partner benefits and enable a positive experience for all involved we need to create a centralized and integrated planning system to address the coordination of CSL.
- The structure of post-secondary learning institutions can create a paradox in that part of the intent of CSL is to build relationships/community yet many placements have a short-term nature. There were several ideas for alternative models of CSL that reduce this barrier and we need to creatively build more of these.
- There are benefits for community organizations, students and post-secondary institutions in the CSL process. This includes both service opportunities for community organizations and student learning on multiple levels.
- Almost every participant in the forum expressed some form of commitment to making CSL work for all parts of the community.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING ON THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING SPECTRUM Anita Abraham

Community Service-Learning is an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities. Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial. (Canadian Association for CSL)

Within the region of Waterloo we are fortunate to have 3 post secondary institutions that offer different types of experiential educational opportunities. The expansion of CSL is not intended to replace any of these models, but the hope is to offer another vehicle through which students can continue to become engaged and educated citizens of this community.

There are things that differentiate CSL from any other experiential model. First it is important to look at 3 of the elements of CSL:

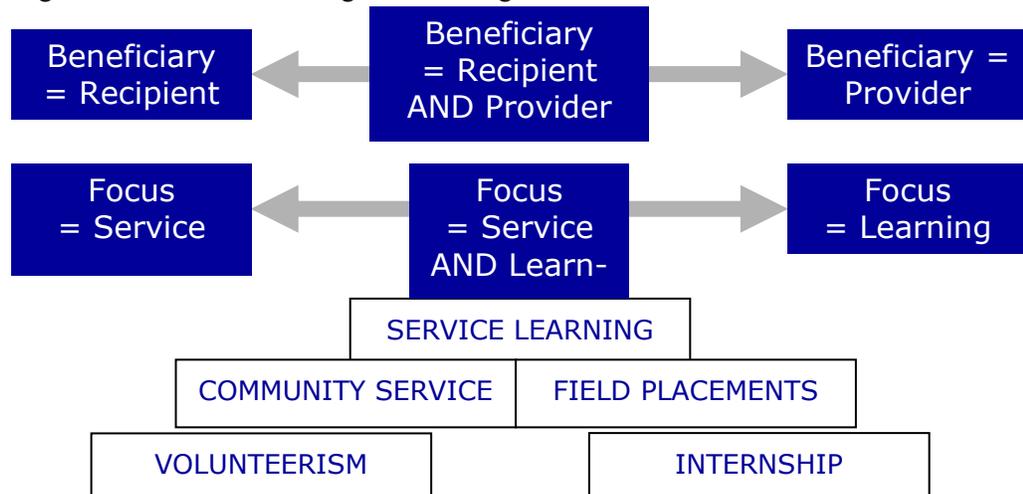
- **Carefully designed** community service activity meeting both community and educational needs
- **Reciprocal** learning between university and partner organizations

- Structured and intentional **reflection** that encourages civic development

Andrew Furco developed an experiential education typology or spectrum that classifies service learning, community service, volunteerism, field education, and internships according to two main criteria: intended beneficiaries of the activity, and emphasis on service and/or learning. While internships, for instance, tend to benefit primarily the provider (i.e., the student) and focus on learning, volunteerism, at the other end of the spectrum, tends to focus on service and benefit the recipient (i.e., the community organization). According to Furco's typology, by integrating service and learning and benefiting both providers and recipients equally, service learning achieves a "happy median" in the scale he devised (see Figure 1).

By integrating the three elements of service learning and recognizing the beneficiary and focus of the work, we can differentiate CSL from the many other experiential models that exist.

Figure 1: Distinctions among Service Programs



Furco, A. *Service-learning: a balanced approach to experiential education. Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning*. Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service, 2-6, 1996.



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## COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING IN POST-SECONDARY WATERLOO REGION

### University of Waterloo

Diana Denton

Community Service Learning initiatives are happening across the University of Waterloo campus. The Speech Communication program has piloted a CSL course in Organizational Communication that is part of a larger UW-wide initiative to integrate a service-learning course into the broader UW curriculum. At UW's St. Jerome's University, there are two areas where CSL is happening: the Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies practicum course, and the Beyond Borders program. The Peace and Conflict Studies program at UW's Conrad Grebel College has experimented with a couple of different service-learning models: 1) Volunteering 30 or so hours per term with a local civil society organization (CSO) and incorporating the experience into the class; 2) Students as part of a major assignment, draft a proposal for a CSO that can actually be used by the CSO. The Social Development Studies program at UW's Renison College encourages students to volunteer locally so as to increase the experience they bring to their studies and to test their understanding of theory in practical settings. SDS's research apprenticeship course (ISS 495R) also offers an opportunity for students to work with faculty members on community-based research.

The Pharmacy "Innovation Garden" matches teams of students with capacity-building projects identified by community agencies. The students work with the agencies over 6 months. During this time, they participate in classroom activities and personal reflections that draw out their learning. Lecture topics such as civic professionalism, diversity, community and health, leadership and advocacy are tied to their CSL experience and help students explore competencies required by the program and for professional certification.

### Wilfrid Laurier University—LCCSL

Anita Abraham

The Laurier Centre for Community Service-Learning (LCCSL) was started in August of 2006 with the support of the university and the McConnell Foundation. Our structure allows us to have staff and management positions that focus on research, faculty partnerships, student partnerships and coordination of CSL placements and projects at both the Waterloo and Brantford campuses. In the past one year :

- We have placed around 1300 students from 29 courses in 4 faculties into 158 partner organizations in both placements and projects
- Hosted the first annual celebration of the LCCSL that both mayors, our president, faculty and over 40 community partners attended
- In collaboration with the Office of Student Diversity and Student Leadership Centre a group of 25 students and staff went to Oaxaca, Mexico for the first CSL alternative reading week project where they worked at a school for kids with exceptionalities
- Presented at various national and international conferences including co-planning the Kitty Lundy Pan-Canadian CSL Research Conference with York University

**THIS IS THE FIRST UPDATE FROM THE PARTNERSHIP WORKING GROUP—CSL IN WATERLOO REGION.**

### Conestoga College

Carol Gregory

Conestoga College has, for years, been actively involved in experiential education.

- Many programs have a Practicum Learning component as part of their program design. Practicums take the form of supervised student experiences with a focus on competency attainment.
- Conestoga also has a significant number of Co-operative Learning program designs. These program designs integrate paid employment for students to gain course-related work experience.
- With respect to volunteerism, some of our programs require a number of community volunteer hours in addition to their academic admission requirements.
- Community Service Learning elements exist primarily within the School of Health Sciences, Community Services and Biotechnology, More recently, however, there has been an interest from this School and the School of Business to incorporate community service learning (as defined by the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning) into more program designs.

The timing for a coordinated, collaborative, Community Service Learning approach in this Region is excellent.

