



WATERLOO **PHARMACY**

Achieving a win-win balance with community
service-learning: Are we there yet?

Nancy Waite PharmD (nmwaite@uwaterloo.ca)

Katie Cook, MA (katiemcook@gmail.com)

April 25, 2013



Acknowledgements

Program Initiatives Fund (2007) *“Pharmacy students and community engagement: Integrating service learning in a new curriculum”*

Thank you to Laura Gorman, Anita Abraham, and Cheryl Rose for their contribution to our CSL design, implementation, and research at the School of Pharmacy

WATERLOO
PHARMACY



What is CSL?

Community service-learning (CSL)

“an educational approach integrating community service with intentional learning activities, working together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial”

(Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning)



Our approach to CSL

- “PHarmacy innovation Garden: planting ideas, growing change (PHiG) was introduced to students in their first year
- Teams of 5 – 6 students complete community-identified capacity building projects in 6 mos
- Types of placements:
 - Not necessarily pharmacy-related
 - Event planning
 - Awareness-raising
 - Developing community presentations
 - Fundraising



The CSL Balance

“If service learning is to meet its goals of improving student learning, preparing students for civic involvement, and addressing community needs, then it is critical for service-learning practitioners and administrators **to pay closer attention to the role of community** in this endeavor”

(Ward & Wolf-Wendell, 2000, p. 2)

University

Community

Students

Community Organizations

Clients

The CSL Balance: Evidence

Student outcomes:

- Increased cultural competence
- Enhanced understanding of course concepts
- Improved communication skills
- Increased professionalism
- Satisfaction with CSL

Community Outcomes:

- Increased capacity
- New ideas and fresh perspectives
- Advancing the organization's mission
-?.....





PHiG Research: Understanding the Balance

- Student data
 - Reflection papers written at the beginning and end of first year
 - Qualitative data, phenomenological analysis
- **Community Agency Interviews**
 - 30 – 60 minute interviews completed over a 12 month period
 - 12 organizations interviewed
 - Involvement with CSL at various times, for 1 – 4 years
 - Questions about the work students completed, the interaction with agency staff and clients, the partnership with students, perceived student outcomes



Findings: Student Outcomes

1. Understanding Diversity
2. Recognizing the Strengths and Needs of the Community
3. Professionalism
4. Teamwork (leadership, flexibility, communication, managing diversity of team members)
5. Time Management
6. Social Responsibility
7. Project Management Skills



1. Understanding Diversity

Average rating (scale of 1 – 5) from
community partners: 3.5

“I would say that that is definitely an outcome of our project experience, first and foremost because we talk a lot about the journey for families and particularly a journey with autism” (Org. 7)

“Working with this project may have helped them understand diversity because the diverse clients that they have been working with” (Org. 4)



2. Recognizing Strengths and Needs of the Community

Average rating (scale of 1 – 5) from community partners: 4

“I think for quite a few, they really stretched their horizons quite a bit. We hopefully made them think about being a donor to some of these, you know when they see advertisements for need in the community, they would be more prepared to contribute” (Org. 5)

“I think with all groups, during our reflection, heard things like ‘I never knew it was so tough, I don’t know how families do it’, right? Because in these forums, we also have families” (Org. 7)



3. Professionalism

Average rating (scale of 1 – 5) from community partners: 4

“We certainly try and model that, but we also try to make sure that they are prepared as professionals the day of the event, they’re just not there to help me set up tables, but they’re part of the professional team for the day” (Org. 7)

“I think some already had good professional skills, follow up, that sort of thing” (Org. 2)



4. Teamwork

Average rating (1 – 5) from community partners: 4.5

“The real big learning for them also, and I guess for me in one way too, just working together as a team, seeing the times to stretch them a little bit” (Org. 5)

“I think they were quite a different crew, like there were three individuals who, when I met them, they were varying personalities, and obviously different skills and they did have to sort of communicate with one another and work together” (Org. 2)



5. Time Management

Average rating (1 – 5) from
community partners: 4

“I think they could have managed their time a little better for at least the accessibility project, because I have a feeling they left it a bit to the last minute” (Org. 2)

“Do they even need to come here to learn that? I don’t think so, but definitely even over the few years there were a couple here and there that struggled a little bit with that and just through sitting down with them made a big difference just opening their eyes to maybe some other ways to get around this” (Org. 1)



6. Social Responsibility

Average rating (1 – 5) from community partners: 4

“They felt socially responsible for doing a good job and for making sure that they didn’t look bad in the community” (Org. 6)

“The social responsibility is really around the inclusion and the difficulty, you know, we talk about families, because autism typically presents in behavioural ways as opposed to taking a child that has cerebral palsy that has a physical challenge, the behavioural piece typically excludes kids in so many ways” (Org. 7)



7. Project Management Skills

Average rating (1 – 5) from community partners: 4

They were still wrapping their heads around that, I don't think that was their forte, they were probably more book ready (Org. 6)

"There's no big management required. It's a straightforward thing" (Org. 4)

"I like to yak about project management 101 and when you're planning a big event it's all about tasks and time, and timelines, so we go through...what I would say the rudimentary steps of putting a big event together" (Org. 7)

WATERLOO
PHARMACY



Findings: The Partnership

How did community agencies describe the partnership?

“This is a two-fold thing. It does great things for our clients and it does great things for the students I think because they get to go out and talk and meet and know a little bit about being a pharmacist in Waterloo Region and what that looks like, so it was a no-brainer” (Org. 1)

“I think it is, I hope that it’s a win win, you know, we get to engage a team, I hope in a meaningful way, and I think that’s a win win” (Org. 7)

“You want it meaningful, but you also want benefit too. So you don’t want to make more projects just because they have to do it, but if we can both get something out of this, that’s really good” (Org. 8)

WATERLOO
PHARMACY



Findings: The Partnership

Inputs: What tangibles does the organization put into CSL student learning?

- Staff time
- Student orientation
- Organizing a team of students
- Managing the time burden/workload for students
- Constructing a meaningful learning experience for students



Findings: The Partnership

“I just support them. Sometimes they might need supplies or materials or various things, contacting through the other staff or whatever, like I will take care of that, but it’s just open for them” (Org. 1)

“Well for sure, my time with the students, orientation and training, I try to come to the school so it makes it easier for the students, so they don’t have to figure out transportation to get here” (Org. 11)

“I don’t think I really had expectations other than the opportunity to work with the young people, and hoping that I was able to give them something constructive and meaningful that they could take from that” (Org. 6)



Findings: The Partnership

Outputs: What tangibles did students provide to the organizations?

- New partnerships
- Awareness-raising
- Fundraising
- Support in event planning
- Community/staff education materials
- Client education



Findings: The Partnership

“So it is that volunteer force, which is very meaningful, the day of the event in particular, but also with the marketing and the outreach piece, so I would say that those are probably the key outputs, the hard outputs, the tangibles” (Org. 7)

“The health fair is just something that we’ve always wanted to do and it meets certain criteria and standards that is needed for, we’re going through accreditation process, it’s helped out with that, plus it’s just a lot of fun, and it’s a lot of work, so the students have been helpful” (Org. 12)



Discussion

Was a win-win achieved?

Evidence for yes:

Evidence for no:

Moving forward from here

- curricular reform
- further research