Capacity Building for Research/Evaluation: Using Service-Learning to Expand Research on Service Learning Programs

Rob Shumer, U of Minnesota
A definition: ECB is the intentional work to continuously create and sustain overall organizational processes that makes quality evaluation (and research) and its uses routine (Compton, D., Baizerman, M., Stockdill, S. (Spring 2002). The Art, Craft, and Science of Evaluation Capacity Building; New Directions for Evaluation. Number 93. San Francisco: Jossey Bass).
Higher Education Examples

- UCLA: Sociology Immersion Program
  - Academic sociology course – e.g. Sociology of Education
  - Introduction to Social Science Research (Ethnography)
  - Intensive Writing Course
    - Spend 10–15 hours/week at community agency…doing research, learning about topic, writing notes, reports
    - Produce 30–50 page ethnographic reports…submitted to agency and 3 faculty
    - Faculty members write book on Ethnographic Research
Developmental Disability Immersion Program (DDIP)

Full semester course conducting research on developmental disabilities --- course on developmental disabilities, research methods

Students produce actual research report with faculty guidance

Support professional journal: Pacific States Archives...international journal on developmental disabilities
University of New Mexico: Creative Writing Program in Research in Service-Learning Program (RSLP)

- Students meet goals of creative writing course by conducting interviews/research with AmeriCorps (national service) members.
- Write creative story about their “subject”…discuss goals, roles, outcomes, etc
- Enjoyed course because it produced meaningful product
- Reports included in state evaluation of AmeriCorps program
Higher Education Examples

- University of Minnesota: Research/Evaluation Course: Evaluating Community Programs – 5 year study of AmeriCorps in Minnesota
- Actual evaluation course on “evaluating community-based programs”
- Students work with community programs, conduct interviews, surveys, focus group
- Produced one doctoral study, 3 Master’s studies, and 5 major reports on program.
- Included cost–benefit study...economic impact/return
- Included 42 page report on one Corps member....qualitative study
- 200+ page reports (several years) on all aspects of programs
Higher Education Examples

- Minnesota Campus Compact/Minnesota Evaluation Association Regional meetings on evaluating civic engagement
- Minnesota American Evaluation Association chapter conducts workshops for universities and community organizations on evaluating civic engagement
- Produce information packets, resources on evaluation (included as resource for this presentation)
Course construction materials: 6 models of courses

“Pure”

Discipline-Based

Problem Based

Capstone Course

Service Internship

Action Research

14 page resource guide on evaluating civic engagement
Higher Education Example

- Lingnan University: Service–Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS)
- Research skills: 1) know methodology, 2) know how to collect data, 3) know how to write up proposal, 4) know process of doing quantitative and qualitative research
- Conduct formative and summative research/evaluation – includes research training
- Added dimension to S/L courses
Youth Evaluation Examples

- Raffles Institution --- Singapore
- Year long course on Research Education Service-Learning projects
- Students design a study and collect data/information on their program throughout the year
- Produce a written report describing what they did, how they used their research to modify program elements, and how they measured impact
- Produce a document each year summarizing research (e.g., *Service with a Heart: The Rafflesian Spirit*, 2007).
Reaching Out to Extension Scouts

Ling Chun Ang Norris, Neo Yue Zheng, Ng Jun Jie & Udomkichdecha Sarun

We developed a service-learning project to reach out to APSN (special needs) youth and maintain a strong scouting presence. The resulting project benefited both the Extension Scouts and our selves. We describe and document how the help occurred and what was gained by all who participated.
We learned a lot about how to deal with Extension Scouts in educational settings. The process was complicated, yet very doable. We learned four key principles of communication and interaction that would hopefully lead us to be successful in our interactions.

Interaction

- Patience
- Simple Language
- Praise
- Reading
Process of Project

Our process for this service-learning project can be summarized in three main phases:

- the researching stage
- the connecting stage
- the planning stage
Through this activity, we have also changed our mindsets about Extension Scouts. At first, we were concerned that the Extension Scouts would not be receptive to us. However, we soon realised otherwise. We found that they were relatively proficient in areas such as language ability, attention span, level of response, openness, and intellect. We had underestimated them.
Impact

- Maintained Extension Scouting Program in Singapore
- Plans for expansion of program sites in the future
- Created real connection with national scouting staff and now have full support for future endeavors
- Read full article at: IFA Journal (publications): service-learningpartnership.org
New Mexico Civic Engagement Program

Statewide initiative to involve youth in addressing civic issues....both school–based and after–school club based

Identified issues, developed programs, and produced digital stories to explain/assess their work

Also trained small number of youth to conduct interviews to assess the impact of the program on their knowledge and understanding of civic engagement (conducted at yearly conference held in June)
Elementary School Example

- Elementary School project – changing school behavior at lunch
- 4th grade takes on project as leaders and design study
- List 28 problems in lunch room, develop 6 rules
- Implement program for semester….ensure design can be followed by K–6 youth
Students Brainstorm Idea

- Quiet
- Good manners
- Check the floor
- No jumping out of seat
- A clean desk
- No running
- No fighting
- No loud talk
- Respect
- Do not play with food
- Do not fight
- No talking
- Do not hit others
More Ideas Explored

- Good manners
- Check the clock
- No running out of seat
- A clean table
- No running
- Don’t push other seat
- No loud noises
- Listen to teacher
- Respect
- Don’t play with food
- No toys
- Throwing
- Discrimination
- Don’t touch others food
Students Create Evaluation System

1. Quiet Environment
2. Respect personal space
3. Good food manners
4. Enjoy your lunch
5. Remain in your seats
6. Stay safe
Youth Create the Rules

- Quieter environment
- Respect Personal Space
- Good Food Manners
- Enjoy Your Lunch
- Remain in Your Seat
- Stay Safe
Instant Feedback System
Student Data Looks Like This
Working together, students, teachers, and administrators can develop reasonable rules.

Of three reasons program is working, 1) student developed rules, 2) stoplight and feedback system, and 3) ice cream/recess incentive, more than 80% of students said it was the daily feedback/pride of doing well that made program successful.
Beyond Resistance
Ginwright, Noguera, and Commorata

- 18 chapters on examples of youth engaged in participatory roles, including evaluation, to bring about change in their communities
- Oppositional resistance (deviant behavior) vs. strategic resistance (conscious action to achieve a common good)
- Youth participatory evaluation is one strategy to help arm youth with data and a plan to change conditions in a respectful, adult manner
Develop Evaluation Skills of Community Members

- Use more easily learned evaluation skills to help community members and students tell their story

- Focus Groups
- Language Experience Stories
- Participatory Journaling
- Digital Storytelling
A Digital Story
Reactions

- What do all these examples have to do with capacity building?

- What are some of the primary issues that must be addressed in developing capacity for research and evaluation in any setting?
Developing An Evaluation/Research Capacity Building Plan

- Reviewing the ECB worksheet
  - What are your information needs?
  - What is the context of your setting?
  - Who can collect the information on a regular basis?
  - Who can do it as a regular part of what they do...or be trained to do it?
  - Who can support this effort and provide whatever assistance is necessary?
  - What would your evaluation capacity system look like?
  - What are the drawbacks/barriers for implementing this system
In groups of 3–4 do the following:

- Discuss your program/potential program and describe the context of your work – goals and purposes of your program
- Describe the potential sources of evaluation capacity building – who/what organizations could be of assistance?
- How could they help?
- Discuss your plan for engaging them in the research/evaluation process?
Reporting Out

- Each group will discuss the major issues --- the basis for their plan

- What are some common themes/issues that arise from this discussion?
Where Do We Go From Here?

- From our discussion, what are important considerations for doing ECB?
- What is your role in the process?
- The role of others?
- How realistic are your plans?
Evaluating the Session

- What new/constructive ideas are you leaving with?
- What was best part of workshop?
- What didn’t work as well?
- What will you do next when you return home?
  - (Name three things you will do to develop ECB)
  - And……..