COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING (CBL): INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR LEARNER-CENTERED TEACHING IN SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES

Rosfazila Binti Abd Rahman

Centre For Core Studies
International Islamic University College Selangor
rosfazila@kuis.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The Instructional Strategies For Learner-Centered Teaching resources offer learner-centered instructional strategies which can be used to bring out the best in students' performance. They provide tools and tips that can help strengthen class environment, facilitation methods and more. Have you wondered how to make your classroom lessons more authentic? One way is to incorporate instructional strategies that are based on real-life, everyday issues. Community based learning, often referred by the acronym CBL, is learning that incorporates the community and immediate environment into the teaching approach. It can be done in many different ways, but the overall goal is to integrate community into academic learning. The motivation for such an approach in educational comes from the belief that all communities have innate values that can and do enrich learning experiences. Within the immediate environment, there are resources and assets that can be used to provide real-life, hands-on experience for students that cement learning objectives as real and important skills. Hence Community-based learning brings together the community with academic learning through various types of instructional strategies. This study will describe types of community-based learning, provide examples, and discusses the benefits of its use.

Keywords: Community Based Learning (CBL), Instructional Strategies, Learner-Centered Teaching, Social Science, sociology

INTRODUCTION
Definition of Community-based learning
Community-based learning is the broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enable youth and adults to learn what they want to learn from any segment of the community. It may also be defined as experiential learning where students and lecturers collaborate with communities to address problems and issues. Simultaneously both are gaining knowledge and skills and advancing personal development. There is an equal emphasis on helping communities and providing valid learning experience to students (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, C.E).

Definition of Community
A community is a cluster of people who may live in the same area (a geographical community) or who interact around a common interest (a functional community) - for example, they work together, or they meet to talk about a shared interest or challenge, or they participate in a project.

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In South Africa, the term "community" has some particular meanings. How have you heard people talk about "communities" and what do you understand that term to mean? (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, C.E).

TYPES OF NEEDS
a) What I know I need...
b) What I think I need...
c) What I really need...
d) What I say I need...
e) What I need, but do not yet realize it. I need to be persuaded.
f) What I present as a need...

(People present a need that they think the expatriate thinks the people have so that he/she will work with them, but the presented need is not the real need the people have.) (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, C.E).

CORE FACTORS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING
a) Community as the location for development...
b) Community as the context for development...
c) Community as the potential for self-help...
d) Community as the vehicle for development...
e) Community as the motor for development...
f) Individual as the target for development...
g) To be successful, lecturers need to be actively engaged as mentors to students.
h) Students learn new knowledge and skills that contribute to their education.
i) Students have the opportunity to reflect critically upon their experiences.
j) The service provided meets a need identified by the community to be served.
k) Those receiving the service have significant involvement and control over the activities engaged in by students and lecturers.
l) Students learn what "real life" is like at grass roots level in poorer communities (Castle & Osman, 2003).

TYPES OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING
a) Direct service
    a. Placing students in direct contact with people
b) Indirect service
    a. Engaging students in performing service by providing goods or a product to a needy cause
c) Civic action or advocacy
d) Addressing the cause of a social issue (Castle & Osman, 2003).

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GOALS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

a) To enhance student learning by joining theory with experience and thought with action.
b) To fill unmet needs in the community through direct service which is meaningful and necessary.
c) To enable students to help others, give of themselves, and enter into caring relationships with others.
d) To assist students to see the relevance of the academic module to the real world.
e) To enhance the self-esteem and self-confidence of students.
f) To develop an environment of collegial participation among students, lecturers, and the community.
g) To give students the opportunity to do important and necessary work.
h) To increase the civic and citizenship skills of students.
i) To assist agencies to better serve their clients and benefit from the infusion of enthusiastic volunteers.
j) To expose students to societal inadequacies and injustices and empower students to remedy them.
k) To develop a richer context for student learning.
l) To provide cross-cultural diversity experiences for students.
m) To better prepare students for their careers / continuing education.
n) To foster a re-affirmation of students' careers choices.
o) To keep students in class and serve as a tool for retention.
p) To give students greater responsibility for their learning.
q) To help students know how to get things done!
r) To impact on local issues and local needs.
s) To do something. Anything.
t) To assist students to see how important it is to enhance the self-esteem of the unemployed and homeless (or shack dwellers) (Castle & Osman, 2003).

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

a) Emphasis on different ways of understanding
b) Value of human experience as a source of learning
c) Requirement for reflective thinking to transform experience into learning
d) Ethical foundation that stresses citizenship to community, profession and the large public interest.

Don't drag your feet. It's not the strength you're lacking, but the will. When the will is ready, the feet are light.	If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over? If it is worth doing, do it well!

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a) To realise that you are a part of the community - share your positive and negative experiences with the people around you and see how the community spirit builds (Castle & Osman, 2003).

STANDARDS OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

a) Effective community-based learning efforts strengthen service and academic learning.
b) It provides a concrete opportunity for students to learn new skills, to think critically and to test new roles in an environment which encourages risk-taking and rewards competence.
c) Preparation and reflection are essential elements in community-based learning.
d) Students' efforts are recognized by their peers and the community they serve.
e) Students are involved in the planning.
f) The service students perform makes a meaningful contribution to the community.
g) Effective community-based learning integrates systematic, formative and summative evaluation.
h) Community-based learning connects school and its community in new and positive ways.
i) Community-based learning is understood and supported as an integral element in the life of a school and its community.
j) Skilled adult guidance and supervision is essential to ensure the success of community-based learning.
k) Pre-service and staff development, which includes the philosophy and methodology of community-based learning, best ensure that program quality and continuity are maintained (Eyler, J. 2002).

LEARNING OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

a) Empathy
b) Personal values
c) Beliefs
d) Awareness
e) Self-esteem
f) Self-confidence
g) Social responsibility
h) Sense of caring for others
i) Change of attitudes towards community engagement
j) Deeper understanding of social issues
k) Develop lifelong learning and problem solving skills
l) Develop skills for community action and involvement (Eyler, J. 2002).

> We cannot change the direction of the wind ... but we can adjust our sails.

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SPECIFIC OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC LEARNING	SOCIAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
Self-esteem	Higher-level thinking skills	Political efficacy
Personal efficacy (sense of worth and competence)	Content and skills related to service experience	Knowledge and exploration of service-related careers
Ego and moral development	Skills and learning from experience	Understanding and appreciation of, and ability to relate to, people from a wide range of backgrounds and life situations
Exploration of new roles, identities and interests	Motivation to learn and retention of knowledge	
Willingness to take risks, accept new challenges	Judgment and understanding	
Taking responsibility for, accepting consequences of own actions		
Leadership skills		
Communication skills		
Team working skills		

Life is 10% of what happens to you and 90% of how you respond to it.

PRINCIPLES FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS
   a) Start where the people are.
   b) Build relationships; then introduce new ideas, showing how they meet identified needs.
   c) Keep projects simple.
   d) Involve as many community members as possible in all activities from the start.
   e) Train people close to their home communities.
   f) Train in locally acceptable ways (e.g. methods, facilities).
   g) Train trainers who can train others.
   h) Involve local leadership.
   i) Cooperate with governments (Kamai, E. Nakabo, M . 2002.)

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REMEMBER
a) The student provides meaningful service
    a. Must be prepared to work in community different from theirs
b) The service the students provide meets a need or a goal of some kind.
    a. Must be related to a real need
        i. Members of the community have to define the need
        ii. The service rendered flows from the course objectives
        iii. Assignments need reflection
        iv. Assignments must be assessed and evaluated
        v. Communities take on a life of their own under certain conditions:
            a. When they have forward-looking leadership;
            b. When there is a strong entrepreneurial culture;
            c. When they provide cultural and social amenities; and
            d. When they enjoy population growth and solid job creation (Kamai, E. Nakabo, M . 2002.)

BE AWARE OF ASSUMPTIONS
a) Communities consist of harmonious interest groups.
b) All community members desire change.
c) All community members have the self-confidence and knowledge to participate.
d) All community members may take free, democratic decisions.
e) Community leaders service community interests.
f) All community developers are objective.
g) All external guidance is given unconditionally.
h) Developmental needs are always satisfied.
i) Community development projects necessarily snowball (Kamai, E. Nakabo, M . 2002.)

MODELS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING
Community-based courses can basically be described in four categories:

a) *"Pure" Community-Based Learning:* This is the course that sends students out into the community to serve. These courses have as their intellectual core the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens. They are not typically lodged in any one discipline.
b) *Discipline-Based Community-Based Learning:* In this model, students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding.
c) *Problem-Based Community-Based Learning:* According to this model, students (or teams of students) relate to the community much as "consultants "working for a "client."

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Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. This model presumes that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community or develop a solution to the problem: architecture students might design a park; business students might develop a website; or botany students might identify non-native plants and suggest eradication methods.

d) *Capstone Courses:* These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Capstone courses ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their coursework and combine it with relevant service work in the community. The goal of capstone courses is usually either to explore a new topic or to synthesize students' understanding of their discipline. These courses offer an excellent way to help students make the transition from the world of theory to the world of practice by helping them establish professional contacts and gather personal experience (Waghid, Y. 1999).

STEPS TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

1) Preparation
   a) Identify a need
   b) Draw upon students' skills and knowledge
   c) Acquire new information
   d) Collaborate with community partners
   e) Develop a plan that encourages student responsibility
   f) Incorporate service and learning as natural extensions of the curriculum (Waghid, Y. 1999).

2) Action
   a) Provides meaningful service
   b) Uses previous and acquired academic skills and knowledge
   c) Offers unique learning experiences
   d) Has real consequences
   e) Is in a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes and to have successes (Waghid, Y. 1999).

3) Reflection
   a) Describe what happened
   b) Record the difference made
   c) Discuss thoughts and feelings
   d) Place experience in larger context (Waghid, Y. 1999).

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4) Demonstration and celebration
   a) Reporting to peers, lecturers and/or community members
   b) Writing articles or letters to local newspaper regarding issues of public concern.
   c) Extending experience to develop future projects benefiting the community (Waghid, Y. 1999).

SOFT AND HARD SKILLS

What are Soft Skills?

Soft skills tend to be... Skills by which an individual interacts with, interprets, structures, coordinates or otherwise informs the social and physical environments within which physical, societal and or personal products may be generated.

Examples... Planning, preparing, organizing, communicating, observing, describing, identifying, empathizing, learning, intuition, sense of timing, attitude, tool development, skill transfer, process development, creativity, ingenuity, design, sense of aesthetic, endurance... (Jacoby, B. 1996).

What are Hard Skills?

Hard skills tend to be... Skills by which an individual interacts physically with technology during the generation of physical product. Examples... Tool use, formula use, text use, measuring, marking, strength, fitness, endurance... (Jacoby, B. 1996).

Generic competencies

Generic Competencies	Skill Types
Collecting, analysing and organising information	Soft and hard skills
Communicating ideas and information	Soft and hard skills
Planning and organising activities	Soft and hard skills
Working with others and in teams	Soft skills
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	Soft and hard skills
Solving problems	Soft skills
Using technology	Hard and soft skills
Using cultural understanding	Soft skills

The goal of Community-Based Learning	Experience is not what happens to a man;

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is to empower students and those being served.	it is what a man does with what happened to him. Aldous Huxley

BASIC SKILLS	PEOPLE SKILLS
• Reading • Writing • Mathematics • Speaking • Listening	• Social • Negotiation • Leadership • Teamwork • Cultural diversity
PERSONAL QUALITIES	THINKING SKILLS
• Self-esteem • Self-management • Responsibility	• Creative thinking • Problem-solving • Decision making • Visualisation

EXPECTATION OF STUDENTS

a) To fulfil their hours and complete the projects (as per their proposals).
b) To complete a service-learning agreement that indicates goals and schedule of hours with reasonable assurance that this agreement will be honoured.
c) To respect the policies and expectations of the site (during field work), especially with regard to confidentiality and participation in required training sessions.
d) To behave professionally while carrying out assigned tasks, including observance of their established dress code.
e) To always treat the members of the community with respect.
f) To service in a manner which preserves the reputation and integrity of the University of Pretoria.
g) To provide a minimum of 24 hours advance notice of absence.
h) To provide a minimum of 48 hours advance notice if service must be ended.
i) To notify (immediately) the project coordinator if the student or site supervisor terminates the project (Jacoby, B. 1996).

WRONG ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

a) Development depends on external finance.
b) Development equals growth.
c) The grassroots people ("villager", the "uneducated", the "poor" and sometimes "women" and "youth") need to participate in their development, through self-help endeavors, hard work and compliance with development paradigm.
d) The grassroots people lack education, entrepreneurship skills and attitudes, and an independent attitude.
e) The grassroots people are too dependent on the state and outsiders.

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f) Stakeholders' workshops provide the need, participation and consultation (Jacoby, B. 1996).

CONCLUSION

Community based learning (CBL) as an instructional strategies for learner-centered teaching in social science courses focuses on 9 major aspects namely on what is community-based learning?, goals, characteristics, specific outcomes, models for community-based learning, steps to establish community-based learning, soft and hard skills, expectation of students and wrong assumptions about development. Community-based learning is the broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enable youth and adults to learn what they want to learn from any segment of the community. It may also be defined as experiential learning where students and lecturers collaborate with communities to address problems and issues. Simultaneously both are gaining knowledge and skills and advancing personal development. There is an equal emphasis on helping communities and providing valid learning experience to students. A community is a cluster of people who may live in the same area (a geographical community) or who interact around a common interest (a functional community) people present a need that they think the expatriate thinks the people have so that he/she will work with them, but the presented need is not the real need the people have. There are 13 core factors of community-based learning. Types of community-based learning are directive and indirect service also civic action or advocacy. Goals of community-based learning; to enhance, assist, expose, increase and so many positive verb in enriching students' potentials. Community-based learning is characterized by standards of community-based learning and learning outcomes of community-based learning. Specific outcomes of community-based learning relies on the principles for a healthy community-based process which is to remember and be aware of assumptions. There are four models for community-based learning namely pure community based learning, discipline-based, problem-based community based learning and capstone courses. There are four steps to establish community-based learning namely preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration and celebration. Soft and hard skills are meant for a generic competencies to cater with the expectation of students and to understand and overcome the wrong assumptions about development

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