Assessment

Using assessments as a tool for improvement allows for a mechanism to tell one’s story, how the information acquired if useful for work and to be shared with others as well as includes a documentation on impact, outcomes, barriers and facilitators. It is important to consider all perspective while conducting assessment exercises because service-learning is collaborative.

Effective Assessment Plans:
- Focus on core issues
- Reinforce common definitions/terms
- Are grounded in data
- Reflect all participant perspectives
- Document strengths and areas for improvement
- Anticipates the audiences for and applications of results

Assessment outcomes include descriptive information, analytic information and comparisons, case studies, evidence of impacts, principles of good practice and ideas for program development.

Good assessments will:
- define strengths
- validate knowledge
- provide evidence for resource decisions
- identify opportunities for improvement

Bad assessments will:
- consume energy and resources
- Undermine program activities

Learning objectives:
Service learning is about…
- A particular community or population
- A particular issue, challenge, opportunity
- The provision of services to community
- A particular organization or grass-root effort
- Relevant public policies; historic perspectives
- The role of stakeholders
Based on these objectives, students will gain a variety of key concepts as a result of their experience and reflection. These concepts include an awareness of community, a commitment to service, career exploration, self-awareness, understanding course content, communication skill development and cross-cultural skills.

Effective Assessment Methods:

- Focus Groups are efficient and interactive.
- Interviews can be time intensive but allows for deeper views of individual experiences.
- Observation
- Surveys are time efficient, objective and anonymous but may be superficial.
- Journals, syllabi, site-reports are all useful for validation and cross-checking.