

Community Service Learning Project

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Abstract

This is a project based on students planning and implementing afterschool activities related to the prom season. All of these students were high school juniors. Ten of the leadership members were representatives of the entire school. This study shows how when a group of students is coached based on a community service learning model, they are able to represent a larger population and make decisions on their behalf in a shared experience.

The Project

Students self-selected their own individual leadership roles and responsibilities.

Students delegated responsibilities among themselves based on general expectations and a tentative deadlines provided by advisors.

For example:

- Students are tasked with selecting the playlist, the menu, and the decor of the venue for the event
- The leadership committee created two Instagram polls to survey their peers to learn their preferences for menu and music choices.
- The leadership committee also met with a design consultant that has experience with prom decor in order to brainstorm ideas for the centerpieces.

Research

In the article “What is Service Learning or Community Engagement?” Joe Bandy, the assistant director at the Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching, writes that there are learning, personal, social, and career developments that emerge when students are engaged in community service learning. Learning outcomes for students who engage in CSL are the “ability to apply what they have learned in “the real world” and better “understand complexity and ambiguity.” Personal outcomes are “greater interpersonal development, particularly the ability to work well with others, and build leadership and communication skills.” Social outcomes are “reduced stereotypes and greater inter-cultural understanding, improved social responsibility and citizenship skills, and greater involvement in community service after graduation.” Career development for students who engage in CSL are “connections with professionals and community members for learning and career opportunities.” These elements of service learning have been implemented into the work that I have done with the student leaders in this rural community school.

Findings

Students needed additional check ins, as well as a clear deadlines to achieve the goals below.

- Students relied on the results of the menu Instagram poll to make the final menu choices when we visited the venue.
- Students will be curating a playlist of songs to be played while everyone is arriving, as well as during dinner.
- Students will be researching constellations for the names of tables and incorporating the constellations in the creation of the centerpieces, which will be created by students during April vacation.

Conclusions

I will continue to check in more regularly with the leadership committee in order to meet the approaching deadlines. It was very easy to get them to make decisions once they were all together, but without regular meeting, students were not as productive. I am eager to observe these ten leadership committee members achieve the learning, personal, and social outcomes, as well as the career developments throughout the remainder of the school year and their high school experience.

Contact

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Research Reference

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What is Service Learning or Community Engagement?

By Joe Bandy, Assistant Director, CFT