



# **SERVICE LEARNING IN THE ONLINE LANDSCAPE**

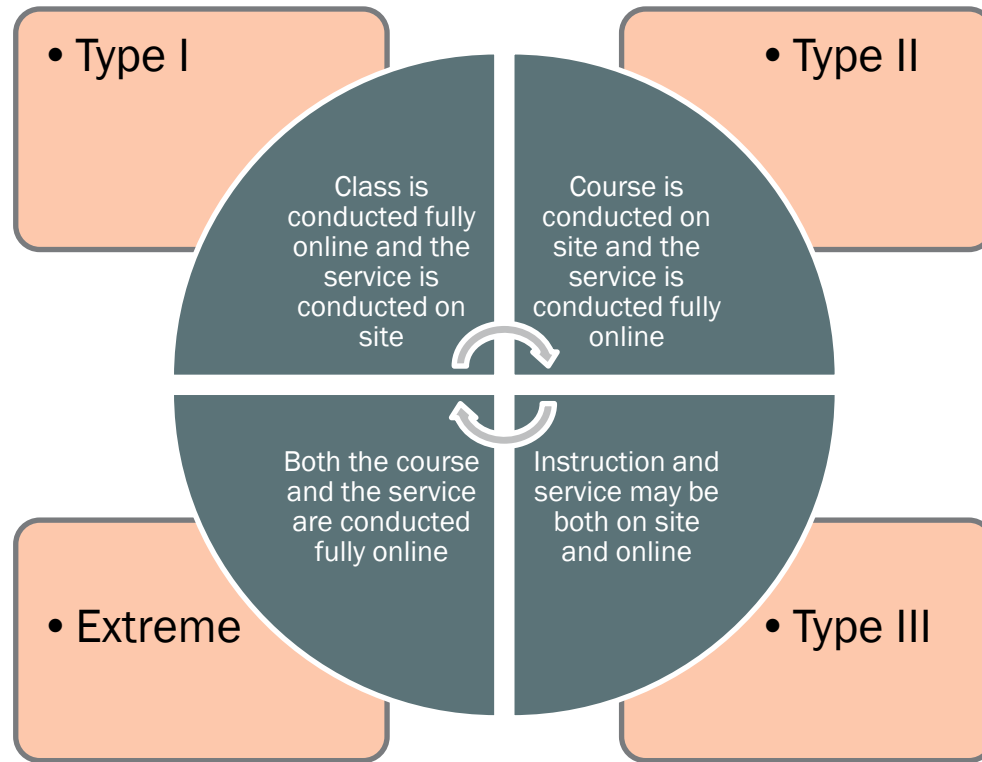
EXPLORATION OF MODELS

# WHAT IS E-SERVICE LEARNING?

- **An instructional approach by which students participate in community-based placements and complete associated coursework online. Collaborative virtual partnerships are created between the coordinating institution, students, and their service learning placement (Strait & Sauer, 2004).**
  - Some E-Service Learning models are completed in an entirely virtual environment, e.g. students work in teams writing fundraising case statements for community-based organizations.
  - Other E-Service Learning models are more traditionally aligned with in-classroom service learning environments in which students are doing hands-on service at a local organization in the community and are enrolled in an online course.

# E-SERVICE LEARNING TYPOLOGIES

(Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012).




# IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

- The introduction of technologies in experientially based curricula allows for the effect of service to extend well beyond the classroom (Guthrie & McCracken, 2010)
- Online education brings students together from diverse geographic, cultural, social, and economic areas of the country and world.
- Collectively, this adds great variety and diversity of service learning experiences that inform social action, ethics, and leadership within the framework of civic engagement.


# IMPACTS OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT

- **Effective service learning instructional approaches across media include:**
  - Promoting authenticity in teaching – real world application and reflection
  - Fostering collaborative inquiry in community through dialogue
  - Integrating and facilitating participative action through the use of technology
  - Capitalizing on the features of the learning management system, e.g. asynchronous email and/or threaded discussion forums, real-time conferencing platforms, uploading video content, etc.
- **Secondary skills students develop include interacting in meaningful ways in a virtual learning environment, collaborating with others to achieve shared goals, and communicating using various media.**

# BARRIERS TO E-SERVICE LEARNING

- **As online course opportunities increase, Waldner, McGorry, and Widener (2012, p. 123) cautioned that service learning “risks being left behind as instructors increasingly transition to online learning platforms”.**
  - **Service learning in a traditional on-campus classroom already requires extra work on the part of faculty members to create community partnerships, support students in connecting with service opportunities, maintain communication with community partner organizations, incorporate reflection and assessment, etc.**
  - **Even those professors highly committed to service learning, abandon their service learning efforts when migrating to teaching online because they view the online medium as a barrier to service learning.**
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# EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

- **E-service learning enhances engagement online – online education can sometimes be viewed as disconnected and unengaging, E-SL can remedy that.**
  - **Online learning facilitates, not blocks, service learning – use of discussion forums can stimulate students to think deeper about their experience and engage with one another in more authentic ways.**
  - **E-service learning can free service learning from geographical constraints, it broadens the visibility of a campus and its students.**
  - **E-service learning can engage populations that otherwise may be unable to participate, e.g. students with disabilities, time-constrained, rural areas (Extreme E-SL).**
  - **E-service learning is an important part of the future of service learning and online learning – to remain relevant, service learning must be part of the online landscape (Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012).**
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# BEST PRACTICES FOR E-SL COURSES

(Waldner, McGorry, & Widener, 2012).

## Technology

- Training for students, community partner, instructor
- Bridge synchronous and asynchronous methods
- Trial runs prior to live sessions
- Assess community partner and student technical capacity

## Communication

- Clear expectations in memorandums of understanding
- Community partner access to course shell
- Use of groups; group space on course management system
- Community partner “reveal”

## Course Design

- Service related to learning objectives
- Appropriate typology
- Reflection
- Community partner and student feedback



# PSCI 595: INTRO TO NONPROFIT ADMIN

## Learning Objectives

- Understand the distinguishing features of the nonprofit sector relative to the public and private sectors.
- Understand the complexity and diversity of the nonprofit sector.
- Understand the unique legal structure of nonprofits and the role of boards in governing them.
- Develop skill in writing a business plan for a new nonprofit organization.

## SL Assignments

- 20 hours of service
- Service learning agreement
- Discussion Forum weekly participation
- Service learning video
- Service learning reflection paper
- Documentation of service hour completion

## Logistics

- Service site selection
- Confidentiality
- Communication with community partners
- Flexibility

# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

*The Service Learning aspect of this course not only allowed me to explore my own sense of humility, identity, and community, it furthermore reignited my interest in volunteer work that I regretfully admit stagnated after I was admitted to law school. I certainly plan on injecting the principles I've developed in this course, whether in lectures, on the discussion board, or during my service learning, into my personal and professional aspirations.*



# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

*To put it bluntly, this class stands as a great counterpoint to so many of my criticisms of college. Often times I feel what I am learning has no applicability in the real world and there is no great drive for my studies other than degree fulfillment. This class stands apart in that regard, as I have learned many practical life skills. The context in which I take this class is important, because I've never gone to school while also working full time at a new job. The demands of this semester have been trying on me, and this class provided a great challenge in this regard. Finding time to volunteer was difficult when I couldn't predict my schedule week to week, but this was a problem I was able to overcome... Even though I am no longer required to do volunteer work, I look forward to going next week to help out. It fills me with great joy to do volunteer work in the nonprofit industry, and I look forward to maybe one day finding a paid position within it.*


# COMMUNITY PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

*I am writing to confirm that Jane Doe completed her volunteer hours with Quality Life Concepts. Her services were utilized in a variety of ways. She assisted with our Positive Parenting Practices for Young Children with Autism group by helping provide supervision and activities for the children of parents attending the group. She also assisted a teenage girl with a developmental disability develop social communication skills utilizing a curriculum. The goal of this being to increase this young ladies vocational opportunities. Finally, she was instrumental in helping us create a business plan for an after school program that would be available to the young people and families in our services. This has been a dream of our office for several years now and Jane's knowledge and expertise was very valuable to moving us toward achieving this dream. I am pleased with the commitment of her time. It was a pleasure to work with her.*

*I am grateful for the opportunity to have students of Jane's caliber sharing their knowledge and expertise with Quality Life Concepts. I am hopeful that our agency can continue to collaborate with students in your program. It was a very positive and enriching experience for our program.*



# IDEAS ABOUT THE FUTURE

- **Things I will do differently in my class:**
    - More communication with community partners – more thorough evaluation.
    - Create discussion groups based on service areas, e.g. animals, environment, youth, etc.
  - **Faculty Development Opportunities:**
    - Online Learning Consortium (formerly the Sloan Consortium): Individuals, institutions and organizations committed to quality online education. Faculty can earn Online Teaching Certificates.
    - Institution-level training and/or certificates for online teaching.
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# NEXT STEPS...

What ideas do you have about E-service learning?

What information and/or skills do you need to do E-service learning?

What seems really challenging about doing E-service learning?

What resources would be helpful?

How will you get started?

Others?



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