MAKING SPACE FOR
MAKING MEANING

Developmental Reflection Curriculum in the
Community Engagement Scholars Program
Session Overview

- Brief Description of Community Engagement Scholars Program
- Group Introductions
- Presentation: Research Project Process and Results
- Group Reflection
Community Engagement Scholars
Program: Background

- For students committed to community work as part of undergraduate experience
- Spans the undergraduate experience
- Students in the program (over 625) come from all over campus
Community Engagement Scholars
Program: Background

- Program Requirements: distinct entry points for reflective conversation
  - Workshop for New Scholars
  - 400 hours of community work/engagement
  - 8 credits of service-learning coursework
  - 6 reflections
  - Capstone project and seminar
  - One-on-one advising
Introductions

- Your name
- Your work at the University
- In what ways do you use reflection with students?
- What does reflection mean to you?
Research Project

- Interdisciplinary Studies in Writing (ISW) Grant through the Center for Writing
- Addressing missed opportunity for meaningful writing and reflection
- Effort to create developmentally appropriate assignments for students from different backgrounds, level in school and experiences
Research Project Process

- Summer 2009
- Evaluation of past reflections
- Focus groups: first/second year students, third/fourth year students, alumni, community partners, and faculty
Focus Group Questions

- How would you explain what reflection is and its purpose to someone unfamiliar with it?

- When do you find doing reflection (in any form) helpful? Why?

- How does reflection writing for CESP compare to writing you have been asked to do in your other college courses?

- When you write, what audience/reader do you have in mind? Who would like to read your writing?

- What kind of feedback on written reflection is helpful to you? Why? Who would you like to read your reflection pieces and offer feedback?
Research Findings

- Students understanding of what reflection means is varied and vague
- Students have interest in interacting more with others in the program
- Community partners expressed interest in being more involved in reflection
- Students very concerned with deadlines
- Written reflections lack contextualization (especially in terms of identity)
- Most written reflections in first person narrative
Reflection Themes

- Ethic of Service
- Sense of Self
- Diversity, Power, and Privilege
- Agency
- Collaboration and Community Building
- Integration and Contextualization
Outcomes

- Developmentally Accessible Assignments (self authorship)
- Focus on Writing Process (research project)
- Provide more structure and deadlines and integrate reflections into program advising structure
- Audience: feedback and participation
Assignment Examples

- Sense of Self
  - Create a Self Portrait
  - Write a “This I Believe” Essay
  - Write a Letter to a Friend or Family Member
  - Interview with a Community Partner
Whitney’s Examples: Self-Portrait

- Community work as global or population-level
- Health is central (personal value/frame)
- “Self” is contextually small, working in a world where service can be positive or negative (ethical decision making)
- Connections between community and classroom
Whitney’s Examples: This I Believe

Essay

- Demonstrated understanding of who I have become based on:
  - Family
  - Past experiences
  - Community work
  - Course work
  - Vocation

- Value of health equality is highlighted and serves as a uniting theme in past, current, and future community work
Whitney’s Examples: RAP sessions

- Created two sessions:
  - Health Inequality
  - What is Well-being?

- Integrated personal experiences, course work, and community work
- Reflection was in-depth as I had to think not only about what I believe and know but how this may be similar to/different from what others believe
- Listening to other student’s feedback and perspectives deepened understanding
- Gained confidence in ability to talk about issues in the community and lead discussions
- Attended other students RAP sessions
Whitney’s Examples: Integrative Community Engagement Project (ICEP)

- Created a pre-service training for students going abroad through a campus life program
- Highlighted the reasons to volunteer, ethics in volunteering, necessary knowledge and etiquette for volunteering abroad, unintended consequences of volunteering abroad
- Provided space for students to reflect before, during, and after service connecting their global experiences to local
- Wrote case studies to show how the topics in the training are applicable
- Presented training formally at the end of ICEP
- Facilitated training
Reflection Activity

- We don’t want any student to leave this program without having thought about.....
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Foundational /Tier 1</th>
<th>Milestone/Tier 2</th>
<th>Capstone /Tier 3</th>
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<td>What does service mean and why do I do it?</td>
<td>Motivation for volunteering is externally driven (ie- to build resume) and simplistic (notion of “help”)</td>
<td>Students may feel that “there are a lot of ways to do service, and they are all good,” or “there are a lot of ways to do service, but none of them is particularly effective or unproblematic.”</td>
<td>Motivation for service is seen as part of who the student is. They have moved past both simplistic definitions of “help” as well as disillusionment about service, and understand why they are committed to service.</td>
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<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Students can identify their own motivations for doing service as well as distinct motivations that others may have.</td>
<td>Students can articulate pros and cons of different models of service, motivations for service, and understandings of service. Students know which they prefer and can begin to explain why.</td>
<td>Students can articulate an integrated ethic of service and when making a decision to take on something new, they have a framework for deciding whether or not it fits in to this ethical framework.</td>
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<td>Ways to Get There</td>
<td>Students do interviews with people in their life (family, mentor, community partner) about their understandings and beliefs about service.</td>
<td>Have students look back at their community work history and think about the types of service they’ve done, what they learned from those experiences, and identify “ah-hah” moments.</td>
<td>Have students look at Social Change Wheel and identify where they are on the wheel and see if they can identify where they are on the wheel as well as acknowledging the depth of their work.</td>
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Questions?

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