

Designing Service Learning Projects for an Online Course in Health Care Delivery

Linda E. Welsch Jensen, Ph.D., M.N., R.N.

Clarkson College Omaha, Nebraska, U.S.A.



Faculty Disclosure

Linda E. Welsch Jensen, Ph.D., M.N., R.N.

Conflict of Interest

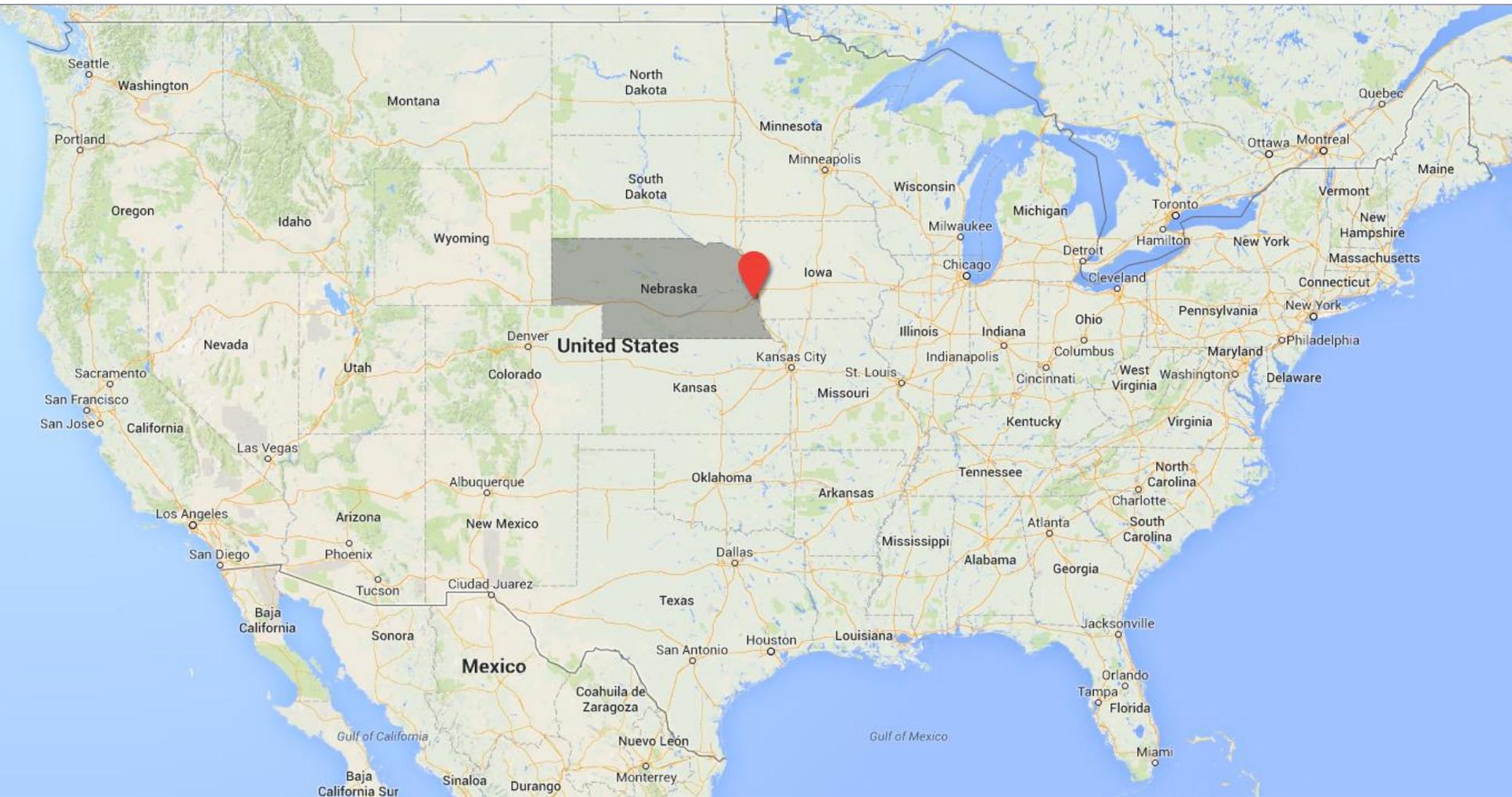
None

Sponsorship/Commercial Support

Clarkson College

Employer

Clarkson College



Definitions

- A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities (Learn and Serve America National Service Learning Clearinghouse).
- Experiential learning approach to education that involves students in a wide range of activities that are of benefit to others and uses the experiences generated to advance the curricular goals (Waterman, 2007).

Purpose

Offering your time and talent to the community can make a difference in the lives of others. People who give back to their communities often receive more than they give.

The Clarkson College community engages in service in order to live by the institutional values of Learning, Caring, Commitment, Integrity and Excellence (Clarkson College Student Handbook, 2014).

Purpose

Through service, students will become familiar with service agencies, connect learning with action and engage in civic service activities with local and national agencies.

Students complete service experiences in specific Designated Service Courses, which are completed throughout a student's program of study and present students with the opportunity to build on previous service experience (Clarkson College Student Handbook, 2014).

Health Care Delivery Course

Course Description

This course is an overview of the United States health care system as compared to health systems in other countries. It includes study of the evolution and current state of health care services and insurance, health professionals, quality, health policy and health services financing. HMOs, PPOs, and POS plans will be reviewed. Additionally, managed care objectives, functions and contracting will be discussed.

Health Care Delivery Course

Objective

Gain a depth of understanding about one health care-related, non-profit community service agency/organization, the issues it addresses and the population it serves.

Learning Competencies

- Choose a health care-related community service organization/agency to explore in a SWOT analysis. This should not be a hospital or a health care facility. It should be a community resource that offers volunteer opportunities to serve health care clients.
- Develop a firm foundation of the history and need for service in the community.

Learning Competencies

- Demonstrate knowledge of agencies/organizations in the community and the various ways in which an individual can become involved with the agency.
- Participate in various activities with a community agency/organization in order to gain a better understanding of the work and services provided to the community.
- Analyze and evaluate the work and value of the service agency for health care clients.

Elements of a Service Learning Project

Date Due	Activity	Documentation	Points
End of week two	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begin to select organization and write rationale2. Receive approval from instructor	<p>Critical reflection</p> <p>Threaded discussion in week three</p>	25
Week three	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Contact information for agency	<p>Contact information</p> <p>Dropbox</p>	

Elements of a Service Learning Project

Date Due	Activity	Documentation	Points
Week six	4. Interview with agency representative	Critical reflection in Dropbox Threaded discussion and Dropbox	25

Elements of a Service Learning Project

Date Due	Activity	Documentation	Points
Week nine	5. Complete SWOT analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengths• Weaknesses• Opportunities• Threats	SWOT paper in Dropbox Threaded discussion	200

Elements of a Service Learning Project

Date Due	Activity	Documentation	Points
As available	6. Present SWOT to agency representative	Critical reflection in Dropbox Threaded discussion and Dropbox	25

Elements of a Service Learning Project

Date Due	Activity	Documentation	Points
Week 14	7. Evaluation of project and future recommendations/plans	Critical reflection in Dropbox Threaded discussion and Dropbox	25

Service Organizations

- Local office of National Health Related Service Organizations— i.e. American Red Cross, Salvation Army, American Heart Association, National Alliance on Mental Illness or AIDs programs
- Free clinics, homeless services or food pantries
- Coalitions of agencies for health promotion—i.e. smoking cessation, teenage drinking/drug abuse or obesity
- Facilities serving developmentally delayed persons with mental illness
- Organizations to help victims of domestic violence, foster care, soldiers and veterans

Service Activities

- Service as a nurse at free clinics, immunization clinics, children's camps, patient and community education
- Collecting items for homeless shelters, including toiletries and paper products
- Help serve meals for homeless people/people in poverty
- Help with plans for fundraising events
- Attend board of director meetings, annual meetings or other committee meetings

SWOT: Strengths

Internal:

- Diversity of funding
- Dedicated staff and/or volunteers
- Variety of programs
- Marketing and social media
- Location
- Networking with other locations

SWOT: Weaknesses

Internal:

- Lack of stable funding
- Lack of staff/training
- Lack of job descriptions for staff or other infrastructure
- Location
- Volunteer recruitment
- Office space

SWOT: Opportunities

External:

- Relocation
- New funding resources for programs
- High needs in area for services

SWOT: Threats

External:

- Current economic uncertainty
- Government regulations
- Competition from other similar organizations
- Weather

Student Evaluations

“My husband and I, along with our five children, rang the bell for the Salvation Army. We covered two entrances outside, so we bundled up and trekked to our assigned sites. The whole experience was enlightening and uplifting simply because we were volunteering for a great organization and educating our kids simultaneously.

By doing this, I learned that the spirit of volunteering and giving really does need to begin with the family teaching young kids the need to give back to the community.”

Student Evaluations

“I was involved with Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s School & Youth Program and worked one-on-one with the campaign manager. I helped with future kick-off assemblies, phone meetings and meetings with area schools.

I have enjoyed working with the program and will continue to volunteer with them. I am interested to see this year’s contribution by the School & Youth Program and the results of all the hard work and dedication by the students.”

Student Evaluations

“I gained a depth of understanding about Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LSS) and the organization as a whole. Because of my job, I knew of LLS but was not aware of their services and contributions.

The SWOT analysis was an effective and strategic way to identify and balance the strengths and weaknesses. It also assisted in the examination of the opportunities and threats to this local LSS chapter.”

Student Evaluations

“I wouldn’t change a thing regarding this project. I had a great experience and learned a lot.

It is very easy to become wrapped up in your work and life that you miss exceptional opportunities to make a difference. I have found a way that I want to give back to my community.”

Student Evaluations

“Through my community agency project I developed an understanding of the American Heart Association’s (AHA) history and how the AHA contributed to the advancement of cardiovascular care. Furthermore, the community need for such an agency is clear. The AHA meets this community need by supporting cardiovascular research. I found that the AHA provides millions of dollars for research. Additionally, the AHA provides professional and community education. The first educational resource that most think of is CPR classes, but the AHA provides much more.”

Student Evaluations

“This non-profit organization operates solely on grants, individual donations, community health charity drives, United Way drives, health fairs and speaking engagements. They do this in order to offer any needs to the chronic kidney disease population. They work hard to assist all individuals asking for help, and if it is out of their control, they find the patients resources.

I definitely will be recommending this organization to patients looking for help with their chronic disease.”

Student Evaluations

“I enjoyed my time visiting the free clinic and am impressed by the staff’s passion and dedication for the community. The board discussed many topics—from daily issues to the clinic’s future. The need for providers seems to be the bottom line and have proposed hiring a “paid” nurse practitioner in the future to help bridge the gap. Currently, the wait time for an appointment is 10 to 12 weeks for a new client and three weeks for established clients; two years for dental visit and eight months for optometry. The free clinic is in financial trouble and may not survive.”

Problems

- Timing for students to interview organizational executives
- Some executives are chosen frequently for interviews, as they have the same assignment each semester, three times a year
- Students do not plan ahead
- No activities for student volunteers. Volunteer background checks are needed

Value

- Experience with people of health disparities whom they will be caring for in the future
- Step outside of their comfort zone
- Contacts that may help students find a preceptorship or a future job
- Involve their families, children and coworkers and teach them the value of giving to others
- Find resources for patients

References

Cohen, S., & Milone-Nuzzo, P. (2001). Advancing health policy in nursing education through service learning. *Advances in Nursing Science, 23*(3), 28-40.

Narsavage, G., Lindell, D., Yea-Jyh-Chen, Savrin, C., & Duffy, E. (2002). A community engagement initiative: Service-learning in graduate nursing education. *Journal of Nursing Education, 41*(10), 457-461.

Narsavage, G., Batchelor, H., Lindell, D., & Chen, Yea-Jyh. (2003). Developing personal and community learning in graduate nursing education through community engagement. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 24*(6), 301-305.

Most, L., (2011). Hands on from a distance: The community embedded learning model contextualizes online student coursework. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science, 52* (4), 295-304.

Stone, C. (2012). Engaging students across distance and place. *Journal of the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association, 39*, 49-54.