

# Strategically Integrating Service-Learning into Academic Units:

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## The Engaged Department Initiative

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*The*  
**UNIVERSITY**  
*of* **VERMONT**



**Campus Compact**

*Connecticut*  
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# Presenter Introductions

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**UVM Office of Community-University Partnerships  
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# The UVM Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning

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*To connect the university and community as partners in addressing real-world challenges through engaged scholarship and transformative learning experiences.*

- Provides university-wide support
- Programs (for S-L) include:
  - Faculty professional development;
  - Implementation grants;
  - Service-Learning TA program;
  - Community Partnership facilitation;
  - Consultation, support, etc.



# Workshop Overview

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1. S-L as a High Impact Educational Practice
2. S-L and the Engaged Department Initiative
3. Case Studies
4. Tools
5. Action Planning
6. Wrap-Up

*Participants will leave this session with strategies for incorporating the high impact educational practice of service-learning at the level of the academic unit.*



# Service-Learning as High Impact Educational Practice

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# What is Service-Learning?

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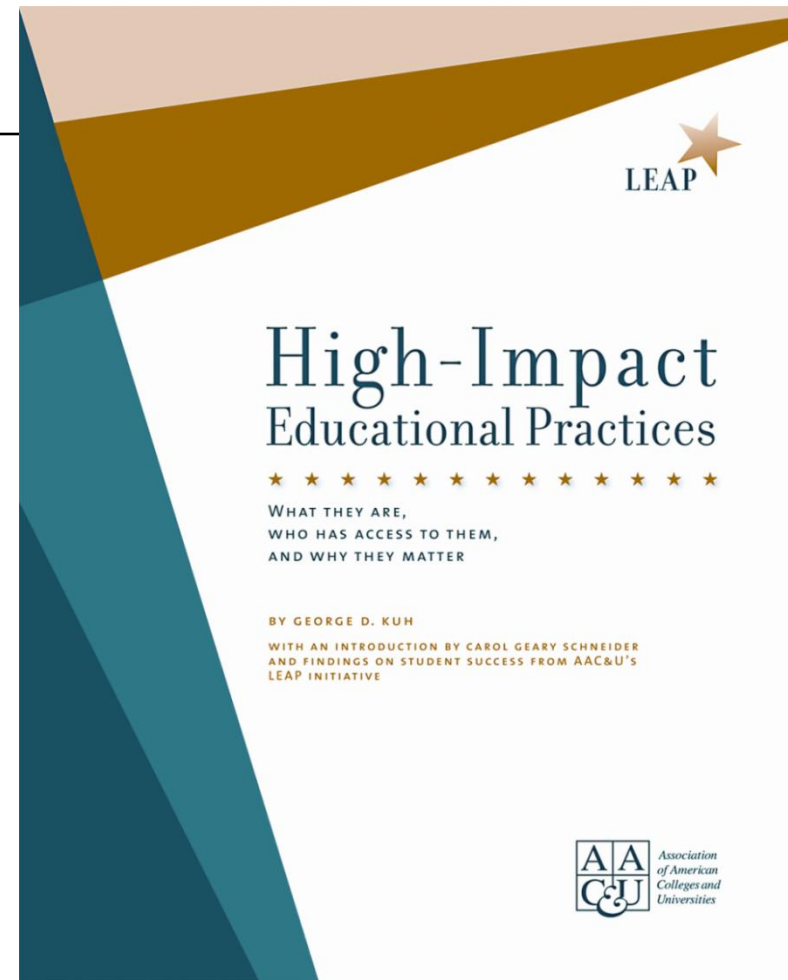
A form of **experiential education** in which students engage in activities that **address human and community needs** together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote **student learning and development.**

- Jacoby, 1996

## Service-Learning provides:

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- Meaningful engagement with peers, faculty, and community;
- Direct experience and application of knowledge;
- Analysis and solutions for community problems;
- Critical reflection on knowledge and values;
- Citizenship and Career Development;
- Deep, integrative learning.



[www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org)



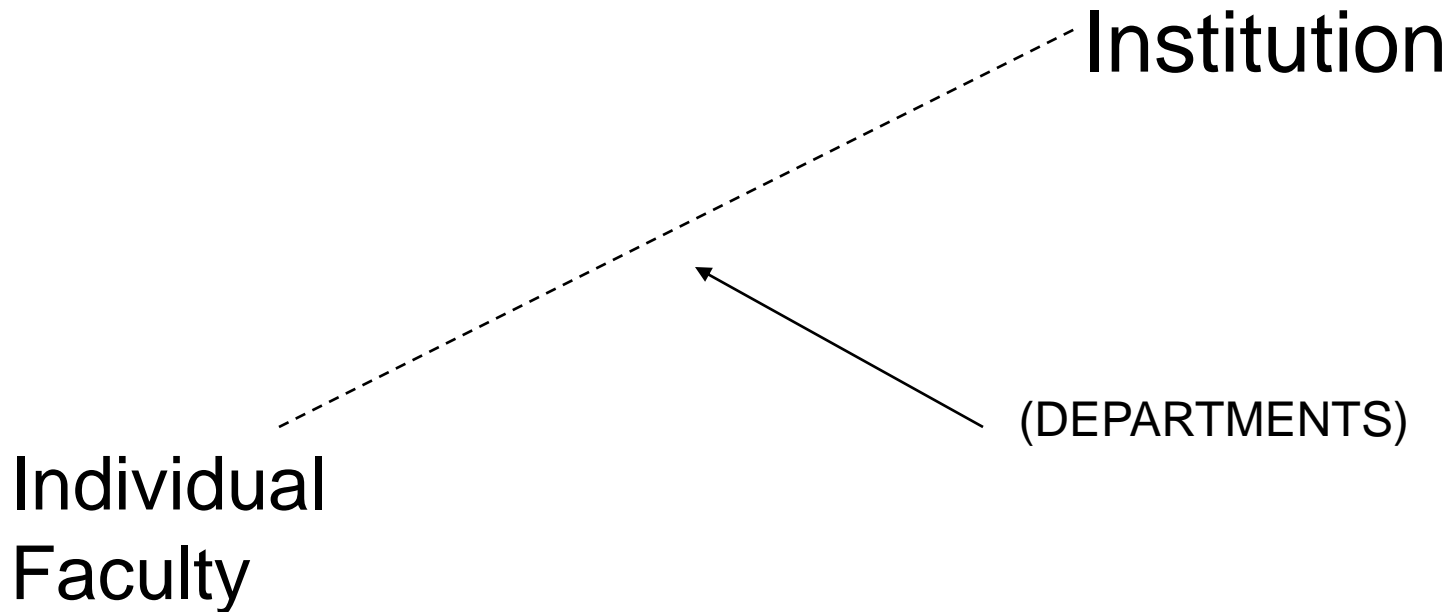
# Service-Learning and the Engaged Department Initiative

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# The Engaged Department Initiative

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- A need to examine engagement at the department level



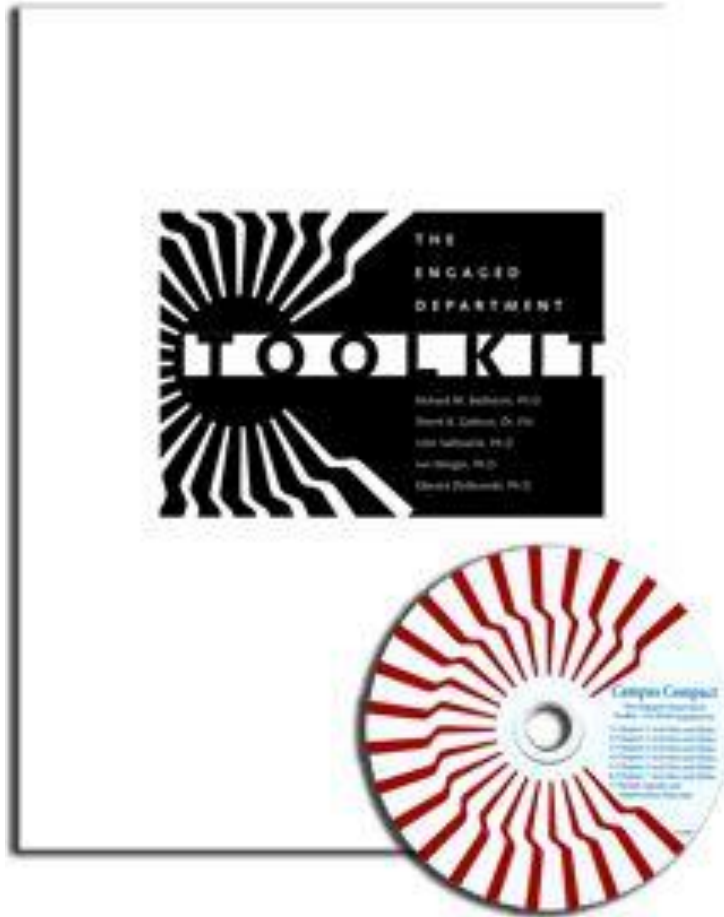
# The Engaged Department Initiative

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- The Context:
  - Began in the late 1990's;
  - Spearheaded by National Campus Compact;
  - Concurrent with initiatives to develop discipline-specific resources for S-L;
  - Echoes of Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* and examinations of the faculty role.

# Engaged Department Toolkit / ED Institutes

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Engaged Department Toolkit (2003);  
National Campus Compact.  
By Richard Battistoni, Sherril Gelmon,  
John Saltmarsh, Jon Wergin, and  
Edward Zlotkowski

# What is an “Engaged Department?”

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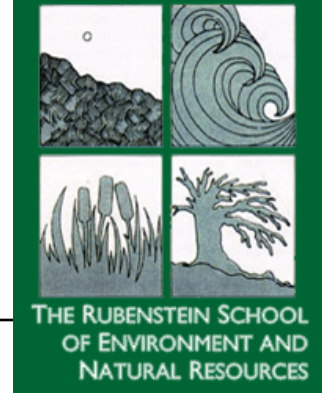
- A department that:
  - has shifted faculty culture toward a focus on the public work of department members;
  - **is defined by curricular coherence around civic engagement;**
  - has a deepened commitment to community partnerships.



# Engaged Department Initiative at UVM

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# Case Study #1: Rubenstein School



"Cultivate an appreciation and enhance understanding of ecological and social processes and values aimed at maintaining the integrity of natural systems and achieving a sustainable human community in harmony with the natural environment."

## **Mission Statement**

- 590 undergraduates in six majors
- 120 graduate students
- 34 full-time faculty members
- 24 designated S-L courses 2009-10

# Case Study #2: Community Development & Applied Economics

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“CDAE supports sustainable local, regional, and international communities through interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach that serve the public interest.”

## **Mission Statement**

- 300+ undergraduates in three majors
- 55 graduate students
- 23 faculty members
- 20 designated S-L 2009-10
- Strong international S-L offerings





# Tool #1: Engaged Dept Research

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# Engaged Department Research

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Purpose: baseline data for discussion

## Faculty Community Engagement Tool:

1. Inventory current levels of community engagement (both teaching and research-based) within units.
2. Identify challenges and opportunities for incorporating community engagement into the work of the unit.
3. Provide the Department and CUPS staff with recommendations for further supporting community engagement in unit.

(Westdijk, Koliba, & Hamshaw; 2010)

# Selected Results: Encountered Challenges

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Challenges	Percent of Total Respondents
Communication issues between student and partner	52%
Lack of time for planning interactions with partner	44%
Conflict between students working in groups	39%
Students unable to complete tasks	39%
Logistical challenges	35%
Communication issues between faculty and partner	26%
Students unwilling to complete tasks	26%
Difficulty integrating academics and community	22%


**Table 1. Challenges related to community-based teaching in CDAE. Responses were not mutually exclusive; n=23.**

# Selected Results: Support & Resources

Type of Program or Resource	Percent of Total Respondents
Trained service-learning teaching assistant to work with your course*	61%
Mini-grants to support work with the community through a course*	61%
Community projects/contacts that you might use in your courses/teaching*	52%
Listing of grant opportunities for community-based research	52%
Skill development workshops for students	48%
Listing of publishing opportunities for community-based opportunities*	39%
Information on service-learning pedagogy*	39%
Information on community-based research*	30%
Community contacts that are related to your research interests*	26%

*\* Denotes existing CUPS program or resource*

**Table 3. CUPS Resources or Programs. (Responses not mutually exclusive; n=23).**



# Tool #2: Learning Outcomes & Curriculum Mapping

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# Defining Learning Outcomes

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Purpose: Identify common vision

UVM Rubenstein School (2009):

1. Reciprocity
2. Applied Analysis and Synthesis
3. Problem Solving
4. Communication
5. Group Work
6. Individual Development
7. Healthy Relationships



# Curriculum Map

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- Purpose: To understand if and when S-L is integrated into the curriculum
- Inventory of Course Information
  - Requirement vs. Elective
  - Semester taught
  - Key Concepts/Skills
  - Products/Outcomes
  - Type of Experience



Tool #3:

# Curriculum Development Tool

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# S-L Curriculum Development Tool

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- Purpose:
  - link student development theory to elements/characteristics of s-l course design
- Goals:
  - Align with and build student capacity over time;
  - and Maximize impact for all partners.
- Objectives:
  - Align expectations with student ability;
  - Offer appropriate balance of challenge and support;
  - Build student skills to progressively prepare them for the next level;
  - and Maintain more positive and reciprocal relationships with community partners.

## Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Three-Phase Developmental Model

Service-learning courses and partnerships can be more successful for all stakeholders if they are designed to align with and build student capacity over time.

By understanding student development and considering the skills and knowledge levels of the students with whom you will be working, you can design a project that:

- Aligns expectations with competencies;
- Offers the appropriate balance of challenge and support;
- Builds student skills to progressively prepare them for the next level;
- and Results in more positive and reciprocal relationships with partners.

Consider designing your service-learning course or program to align with the following three phases.



While this model is helpful in designing service-learning courses that stand alone, it is also meant to spur conversation within a given academic unit or progressive curriculum. The more we build our students' capacity, the higher they can achieve in the long run. If we do not pay attention to building that capacity, we risk potential disappointment for everyone involved.

*This model is based on student development research and its links to course design - See related CUPS handout "Service-Learning and Student Development."*

## From Theory to Practice: What do Courses Look Like?

### PHASE I: EXPOSURE

Courses typically offered to first or second year students, or any student who has never been introduced to service-learning pedagogy. Often take place early within an academic career and/or major and serve as a foundation for future, more complex experiences.

**Goals:** introduction/exposure to service-learning and course content; initial skill development (teamwork, project management, interacting with community); introduction to reflection as academic practice; building cultural and interpersonal competencies.

**Instructor Role:** Primary Manager - defines project (in collaboration with community partner), carefully controls student interaction with partner, provides close guidance throughout the process, outlines clear processes and expectations.

**Project Description:** clearly defined, concrete, small in scale, time limited, often happen within the classroom, rather than in the field. Can also be "hypothetical" (not considered service-learning, but preparation for service-learning).

**Connection to Academic Content:** content is primary focus, project explicitly connected.

#### EXAMPLES:

Entry level service-learning: event support; one-day service projects; survey or information gathering (with intentional reflection and connection to course content);

Exposure to community: interviews; basic "mapping" exercises; event attendance; organizational profiles

### PHASE II: CAPACITY BUILDING

Courses typically in the sophomore or junior year students are moving more deeply into their discipline and are beginning to master concepts and skills that can be effectively applied in community-based settings. Ideally, students would have experienced a Phase 1 course.

**Goals:** building student capacity, raising expectations, increasing student responsibility for outcomes; practicing personal/professional skills introduced in earlier courses; progressing to higher-levels of critical thinking through reflection.

**Instructor Role:** Facilitator - continue to provide structure (tools, timelines, and reporting) but raise expectations for students to self-manage within this structure; select partners and establish agreed-upon outcomes, but welcome student participation and input in the process.

**Project Description:** major component of the course (a unit or major project); may focus on an extended relationship with an organization (an enhanced internship or field-based experience); expectations are defined, but students take leadership in deciding how to meet them.

**Connection to Academic Content:** explicit, but challenges students to find additional connections, synergies, and critiques. Balance between focus on content and application.

#### EXAMPLES:

"Deliverables" such as public relations materials, web content, exhibits, etc.

Educational Outreach/Programming – students teach what they are learning to others;

Second-level survey work – students play a role in designing and analyzing surveys;

Consultation – students work with an agency to provide advice on planning, proposals, etc.;

Agency "placements" – students work regularly in internship-like placements.

### PHASE III: RESPONSIBILITY

Courses often designed as capstone or culminating experiences that take place during the final semesters of the college experience, and could also be connected to student theses. Students at this level should have already been exposed to Phase 1 and 2 service-learning.

**Goals:** skill mastery, professional development, student accountability/responsibility for outcomes, independent decision-making, effective group work, problem-solving; mastering higher levels of critical thinking through reflection.

**Instructor Role:** "Coach" - empowerment with support; provide suggestions/tools for structure, ongoing consultation, but raise expectations for students to follow-through and seek resources on their own. Keep "in touch" with projects and partners to monitor progress.

**Project Description:** developed collaboratively between partners and students; with faculty input; require students to take high-level responsibility for defining, understanding, and working to address an issue; often span an entire semester or year; could focus on "deliverables," programs, initiatives, or ongoing professional roles within an organization.

**Connection to Academic Content:** students are demonstrating knowledge of content through projects. While content is still delivered, it may be driven by topics that support projects and related to transitions to professional roles.

#### EXAMPLES:

Capstone courses- students work in groups or individually to define and complete projects with community partners based on proposals/interests from the organizations;

Deliverables that move beyond a small-scale project to a larger implementation (media campaign, curriculum development, web site development, components of strategic plan, etc.);

Service-learning enhanced internships (meeting clear community need; focused reflection);

Undergraduate community-based research;

Student leadership in service-learning programs at the Phase 1 or Phase 2 level (such as teaching assistant programs, coordination of international service-learning projects, etc.)

# Phase I: Exposure



## ○ Goals:

- Introduction/exposure to SL, reflection as academic practice and course content;
- Initial skill development; building cultural and interpersonal competencies.



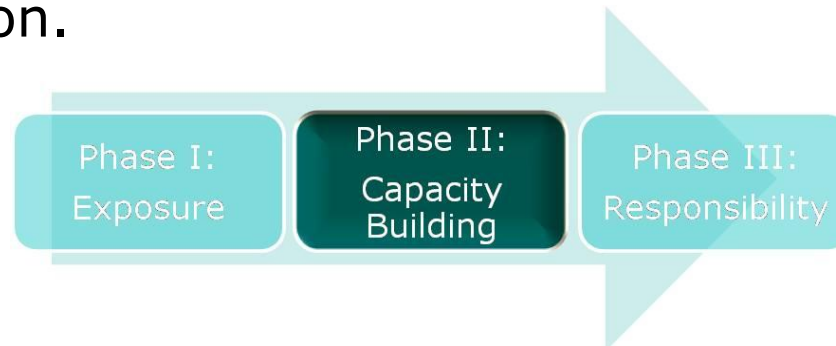
- Instructor Role: *Project Manager*
- Project Description: *Concrete/hypothetical*
- Connection to Academic Content: *Explicit*

# Phase II: Capacity-Building



## ○ Goals:

- Raise expectations and increase student responsibility for outcomes;
- Practice personal/professional skills introduced in earlier courses;
- Progress to higher levels of critical thinking through reflection.



- Instructor Role: *Facilitator*
- Project Description: *Substantial, clearly defined*
- Connection to Academic Content: *Balanced*

# Phase III: Responsibility



## ○ Goals:

- Professional skill development, effective group work, problem-solving;
- Independent decision-making and responsibility for outcomes,
- High levels of critical thinking through reflection.



- Instructor Role: *Consultant*
- Project Description: *Semester or year long*
- Connection to Academic Content: *Capstone*



# Tool #4: Institutional Support

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# Institutional Support: Staffing

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- Liaison to Academic Units
  - Graduate Assistant
  - Campus Compact Americorps  
VISTA Members
  - Service-Learning Teaching Assistants
  - Staff Liaisons (future)

# Faculty Development & Support

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- Professional Development
  - Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning
  - Workshops and Networking
- Consultation and Partnership-building
- Advocacy
  - Funding Endorsements (letters of support)
  - RPT Testimony
- Resources
  - Resource Library
  - Web resources and referrals
  - Free S-L Teaching Assistants

# Common Lessons Learned

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- Draw on current excitement & needs;
  - Gather evidence and input and use it to inform process
- Balance “ownership” of initiative
  - Leaders, faculty, staff, students, community...
- Seek genuine buy-in of top administrators
  - Staff support to facilitate process
- Keep vision when tempted to dwell in details;
- Use Campus Compact support (grant, models, examples) as catalyst and leverage.



# Clarifying Questions?

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# Action Planning Prompts

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- Pair and Share
  - What stands out to you?
  - Could you use these tools/this process on your home campus? How?



# Wrap-Up

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- What are you taking home?
- Other strategies?



# Acknowledgements

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- CUPS Team
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- Vermont Campus Compact



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