



TEACH, SERVE, AND LEARN

the newsletter for Service Learning
at Nassau Community College

FALL 2014

GETTING ENGAGED NY ENGAGEMENT ACADEMY

*By Professors Judy Suh, Valerie Lagakis
and Dean Evangeline Manjares*

Dean Manjares and Professors Suh and Lagakis attended a three and a half day executive program designed to develop institutional capacity for community engagement. The program was held at Stella Maris in Skaneateles, NY on June 23-26, 2014. New York Campus Compact, an organization of which Nassau Community College is a member, brought their renowned national faculty on Civic Engagement, Dr. Barbara Holland, President Emeritus Dr. Judith Ramaley, and Dr. Lorilee Sandmann.

The academy provided a professional development forum for those leading the strategic direction of higher education engagement with a focus on institutional strategies. Discussions included concepts, tools, and best practices for leading engagement, and included space and time for reflection, coaching, and scholarship. Participants developed action plans that can be tested and shared and established a network of leaders to continue discussion about and advance the institutionalization of engagement.

The representatives from Nassau Community College were so fired up on the idea of Civic Engagement that they are expanding as a committee to figure out how to position engagement as a significant strategy for supporting a larger campus vision and achieving institutional goals while connecting campus and community at NCC. The goals are (1) to implement ideas aimed at fostering more buy-in to the concept of engagement and encouraging experience with engaged strategies for research, learning and teaching, especially among faculty and among students; (2) to understand how change works and how to initiate and lead intentional change; (3) to create a portfolio of ways to support a more intentional agenda of engagement activity; (4) to collect evidence and assess the value and impact of engagement from the perspectives of everyone involved in the effort; and (5) to align institutional assets effectively with community assets and focus on key items of interest to both campus and community.

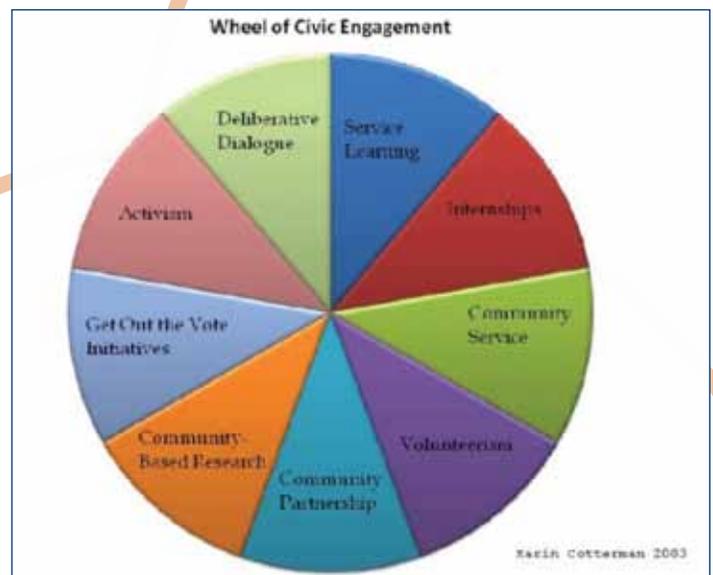
WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

Civic engagement is an umbrella term used to describe the activities which promote the bridging of communities with socially

conscious thought and action. “Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.” Thomas Ehrlich, goes on to say that “a morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to and to take action when appropriate.”

The underlying aim of civic engagement is to produce meaningful service and experience to all involved participants. The relationship between all involved parties is ideally reciprocal; the community partners explain their needs, the students and faculty work with the community partners to find a sustainable way to address their need and the experience serves as a common ground for students to enhance their scholarship, raise questions and explore alternative solutions with new social consciousness, not only in the classroom but as they move into the world as professionals. This experience also allows faculty to reignite student’s passion and tie current or future research endeavors to their courses.

Excerpts from “Civic Responsibility and Higher Education,” edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000.



Community Based Research	<i>Faculty/Student/Community Research inquiry into societal dis-services for example nutrition and food desert in urban settings</i>	Internships	<i>Similar to a practicum; practical application of theory learned in the classroom in a controlled setting</i>
Service Learning or Experiential Learning	<i>Enhances what a student learns; it connects academic discussion to real-world experiences the service given to a community results in the development of soft transferable skills and increase networking and marketability for future employers for students and reinforces learned academic material</i>	Activism	<i>Through advocacy, for example, increasing others awareness through Get out the Vote drives, Reducing Gang Violence walks, or various disaster relief fund: earthquake relief, tsunami relief</i>
Deliberate Dialogue	<i>Workshops, seminars, town hall meetings</i>	Community Service or Volunteerism	<i>May be one-time or on-going service to a community in need</i>

“WHO DOESN’T LOVE TO TALK?”

By *Cara Tuzzolino Werben, Lecturer, LINCC*

Angeline Agnant, an advanced level ELL (English Language Learner) in the LINCC program who is originally from Haiti, posed this rhetorical question recently. LINCC stands for Language Immersion @ NCC, and the program consists of 250-280 students (depending on the semester) who are placed there to improve their writing, reading, listening and speaking skills. It is a desire to practice this last skill that leads students like Angeline to commit to participating in LINCC’s Conversation Partners program.

This semester the Conversation Partners (CP) program matched over 100 LINCC students with NCC faculty, staff and students. Under the auspices of

Rosemary Ortlieb-Padgett, Associate Dean, International Student Affairs, Assistant Professor of Communications, Victoria Chai, I work closely with LINCC Lecturers as well as LINCC department secretary, Jill Feldman to match our students with NCC volunteers. CP focuses on helping LINCC students improve their conversational English-speaking skills. LINCC students and their partners commit to meeting once a week, for at least 30 minutes, to practice English conversational skills throughout the semester. Many volunteers choose to participate in CP as part of their service learning experience at NCC.

For Angeline’s Conversation Partner, Keysi Jimenez, a former LINCC student, it was a desire to give back that led her to become a volunteer. “When I first came here from the Dominican Republic, it was so hard because I didn’t speak any English and

I didn’t have any friends,” she says. “Now, we’re friends. We talk about boys, high school, life, vacation and experience.” In addition to the geographic proximity their native countries share, the two women are close in age, and have developed a respect for one another. “I learned I’m not as liberal as I thought I was,” said Angeline. “I’m learning to be more open minded.”

Being in CP has taught the women the American idiom “win-win.” For LINCC students, they can make friends and learn more English. Additionally, they can learn about life on the campus, the faculty, and coursework. “NCC is so multi-cultural,” says Angeline. “This is an easy way to meet someone with a different perspective.” “This is a very easy volunteer activity,” says Keysi. “We just talk and listen to one another.” After all, who doesn’t like to talk?

Talking about life at NCC has become one of the main benefits three LINCC students have experienced during their semester in CP. For Neeru Devi, from India, her partner Nathalia Montenegro has taught her vocabulary words. “If you feel something is very, very bad, you can use despicable,” she explains. “My partner has taught me so much, such as where classes are located, and websites where I can improve my listening. She even reviews my homework and gives me sample sentences to help me.”

NCC staff member Bellinda Wise guides Jessica Ordoñez with her English language skills. “Bellinda is so great. She taught me words and correct pronunciation. For example, I say estudent and she corrects me to say student. I knew about the library, but now I’m learning more. Next, she’s going to show me where the Nursing department is. I feel so lucky to be matched with her.”

Tomoko Togashi from Japan learned the idiom “small world” when she discovered that she had met her partner Alyssa Zambrano in



the fall semester. Alyssa, secretary of the NCC Outing Club, chatted with Tomoko at a meeting last fall. To their surprise, they were matched as partners for the spring. “I have learned about hiking from her,” says Tomoko. “We have different cultures—she is Spanish—but we can talk about a lot in common like college, our jobs and studies. She makes practicing English conversation so easy.”

LINCC students and NCC volunteers learn about each other’s cultures. For Sarah Nolan, and Ella Ahn, originally from South Korea, the learning has been symbiotic. “As an international student from Ireland, I have also been able to expose Ella to European culture as well as the little bit of American culture I am familiar with,” says Sarah. “In return, Ella has taught me about Korean culture. We speak about her home life in Korea, and Korean food.” When Ella asks, Sarah corrects her pronunciation, as well as explains English expressions and vocabulary words.

If you’re interested in volunteering, and curious what to talk about, all the volunteers interviewed said the conversational topics flowed very easily. Several said they discuss past and future weekend plans, NCC courses, and even the weather. (Surely every ESL student learned a lot of snow-related vocabulary this past winter.)

Sarah and Ella were originally matched as Conversation Partners in Fall 2013, and have been meeting since then. “It’s almost like meeting a friend now as opposed to meeting a student to help her with her English,” says Sarah. Preparing for meetings is also easy. “If Ella has questions about a certain expression/subject matter, I try to find materials for her on the Internet that will aid me in explaining these things better. For example, I taught her the expression “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.” Initially, she found this expression difficult to remember. I directed her to YouTube and showed her the Kelly Clarkson song with the same title.”

Ireland and South Korea may be miles apart, but the two women have discovered a common ground, according to Sarah. “As an NCC student (and particularly an international student), we both understand how difficult it is to be away from our families for long periods of time, and how different American culture is to adjust to. I have been able to pass on the knowledge I have gained about being an international student in the US, and I think that has been somewhat comforting to Ella to know that she has someone to speak to who understand how daunting this can be at times.”

Similarly, Stefanie Lewis, Assistant Professor in the Communications Department, and Jonathan Santos, TK, were matched in Fall 2013, and have been meeting regularly since that time. “To prepare for our meetings, I usually try to remember what I did over the weekend. This is because Jonathan starts the conversations by asking how I am and how my weekend was,” says Stefanie. Additional topics include school, family and social relationships, future plans, places to travel, time zones, current events and anything else that comes to mind during the conversation. There is never a set agenda or topic, according to Stefanie.

Each volunteer brings a unique perspective to the conversation, as does Stefanie. “As a faculty member - and an older adult - I am able to provide information that Jonathan may not get in social conversations. We’ve talked about courses to take and when to take them, future employment, the online Occupational Outlook Handbook, writing essays and other topics that would be important to a motivated college student. Word choices and correct pronunciation are, of course, part of every conversation.”

LINCC is located in the North Annex, and many of the Conversation Partner meetings occur in its student lounge. Notes Stefanie, “NCC has a large, varied student population, as evidenced by the students relaxing in the LINCC lounge! As a conversation partner, I benefit by learning about the personal experiences of one student, which I can extrapolate to my other students. By speaking with Jonathan, I am constantly reminded that all my students have personal experiences that shape their, values, perspectives and educational experiences.”



What are some successful components of a rewarding Conversation Partner pairing? Honesty and open-mindedness. “In my opinion, it is essential to be honest, flexible (be willing to talk about anything) and non-judgmental,” says Stefanie. Adds Sarah, “I’ve learned so much about Korean culture from Ella, and it has really opened up my eyes to a culture that I previously knew nothing about. I’ve made a really great friend through this program, and I always leave the meetings feeling good about myself. My student is so grateful and it’s such a good feeling to see her progress from initially having broken English when she first entered the LINCC program, to being almost fluent in English at this point. It’s a very feel-good experience.”

To learn more about this service learning opportunity, contact Cara Tuzzolino Werben at cara.tuzzolino-werben@ncc.edu.

INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN CANSTRUCTION LI

By Prof. Susan Beganskas

Last fall, a group of NCC interior design students participated in the Canstruction competition/exhibit. Canstruction is a global charity of the design and construction industry created to help fight hunger. Each year, Canstruction teams design and build giant self-supporting structures made entirely out of canned food. The structures are exhibited for 10 days at the RXR Plaza in Uniondale. At the close of the exhibit, the cans are donated to Long Island Cares, The Harry Chapin Food Bank.

For last year's event, NCC interior design students assisted a team that needed help building their structure. This task turned out to be more complex than anticipated. The students expected to follow plans provided by the structure's designer. Upon reviewing these plans at the buildout, the team discovered flaws in the design and realized that they could not build the structure as planned. The students worked closely with the other team members to engineer a new design, and then successfully built the new structure for the exhibit. At the close of the exhibit, the students worked to take down the structure and pack up the cans for donation to Long Island Cares.



Participation in this event gave the students real-life experience working with design drawings and facing the challenge of having to solve design issues onsite, as is often the case with project installations. The students gained experience working with other design professionals and earned their respect for displaying perseverance and ingenuity in engineering a new structure. Their contribution brought positive exposure to the NCC Interior Design program, both within the Long Island design community and to the public visiting the exhibit. Most importantly, their participation helped bring attention to the fight against hunger on Long Island.

BUILD A BETTER WORLD MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE COURSE

*By Dr. Nicole Simon
(Engineering/Physics/Technology)*

MDS 101 takes part in a semester final project for MDS 101 incorporates Service Learning in a final project entitled "Build-A-Better-World." At the beginning of the semester, the students identify a campus or community project that they would like to actively take part in throughout the class. Together, with various campus groups and community outreach, the students identify what they would like to change and how this would impact their local environment. They research each idea and vet how they would obtain permission from administration, identify with whom they needed to work, create an action plan, and develop

how they would implement their plan. As they complete each task, the students are required to record the data of their impact on the local environment and/or community structure, and how their project aided in reducing waste or engaging growth. At the end of the semester, the groups present their Service Learning Project to the class and detail how they executed their project idea and how their project impacted them as individuals. Projects students are currently working on include better recycling within local parks and community centers, improvements to on-campus harassment prevention services, adding more healthcare initiatives on-campus, and working with campus student clubs (such as the Sustainability Club's Organic Campus Garden) to provide fresh produce to local food banks. Within the first month of these projects, the students collected over \$150 worth of food to donate and cleaned up the equivalent of 100 pounds of plastic from local parks and surrounding areas, among other accomplishments. Every student was aware of the impact they were having by actively seeking out what they would like to change and how they are involved throughout the project.

GRANT ALLOWS NCC NURSING STUDENTS TO TEACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT ASTHMA

By Prof. Eileen Engelke (Nursing)

This semester, Eileen Engelke, an assistant professor of Nursing at Nassau Community College was awarded a grant by the Asthma Coalition of Long Island to initiate an asthma teaching program for the students of Westbury High School. Westbury School district is amongst the top ten districts in Nassau County with the highest burden of asthma. As a part of the grant, all

nursing students in Prof. Engelke's class were taught the American Lung Association's "Asthma 101 Basics" through combined on-line and classroom activity training. This knowledge assists the students to teach more people in the community about their asthma and methods of controlling their asthma. Several nursing students have been actively involved with asthma severity screening at Westbury High School and will be presenting their asthma learning modules based on the information learned in the "Asthma 101 Basics" course. This grant is the first on Long Island to utilize nursing students to teach asthma basics to high school students.



SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION GIVEN BY DR. EDWARD ZLOTKOWSKI ON 10/31/2014 AT THE SERVICE LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

*By Professors Helen Rice and
Susan Newlin-Wagner*

1 THE SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT

The college must serve as staging- grounds for community service and must commit to the scholarship of engagement. Colleges must connect the resources of the academy to social, civic, and ethical problems.

2 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Among the many aspects of civic engagement is service learning. Service learning must have an intellectual dimension and meet a genuine community need. Service learning must also meet assessable learning objectives and must involve structured reflection or analysis

3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

There are three aspects of public engagement. These include personal contact and direct service, problem-solving, and research as resource.

4 ASSORTED PEDAGOGICAL USES OF SERVICE LEARNING

The pedagogy of service learning involves opportunities for engaged research as well as the study of theories and concepts. It encourages investigation of morals and provides a reality factor to classroom learning.

5 SERVICE LEARNING SPECTRUM

There is a spectrum which begins with social responsibility and culminates with active learning. This active learning includes many forms of service learning projects.

6 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/ CIVIC COMPETENCIES

Students should become aware that they are part of a larger community and, therefore, responsible for trying to solve social problems. Their service learning experience should help them recognize these problems and develop the skills to solve them. While developing a public voice, students learn to be mindful of active listening, civil argumentation, and the suspension of judgment.

7 WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS/WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT LEARNING

True learning is more likely to occur by operating within the world, as opposed to operating within an isolated classroom. Additionally, learning occurs best when people are confronted with an identifiable problem.

8 FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Service learning may help close the gap between the identified disparity of the preferred learning styles of faculty and students.

9 THE FOUR QUADRANTS OF SERVICE LEARNING DESIGN

There are four dimensions of design. These include: student-centered structured learning, community-centered unstructured learning, the academic expertise focus, and the common good focus.

10 FACULTY CHALLENGES

Faculty interested in establishing a service learning program design must ensure that the project is appropriate, contains multi-level reflection strategies, and leads to personal commitments for the students and teacher.

11 SERVICE LEARNING AND RETENTION

There is a potential for service learning to be an important element of student retention.

12 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

The importance of the evaluation and assessment of service learning cannot be underestimated. There must be the traditional grading of student work, but this must be coupled with using assessment as a diagnostic tool and an institutional measurement.

13 NEXT-CENTURY LEARNING

Service learning will help students develop competencies for the future. They can acquire the higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills that grow out of direct experience.

