Service Learning in Nursing Education:
Bridging the Gap Between Classroom and Community

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Disclosures

This extracurricular research was conducted by Barbara Christianson and Natalie Titcomb under faculty mentorship by Dr. LaSonya Davis. Dr. Davis is faculty at California State University Channel Islands, Ms. Christianson and Ms. Titcomb were student nurses while research was conducted.

All researchers and subjects involved in this project participated on a volunteer basis only. Participants were not paid and did not receive course credit for their efforts.

All images were taken by participants and released to researchers. Researchers and participants both participated in community engagement events during the course of research.
Author Information & Conflict of Interest Statement

Dr. LaSonya Davis is currently employed by California State University Channel Islands and also works at a private practice as a Family and Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner. Barbara Christianson is a Labor and Delivery RN at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital and a private practice Doula and Certified Lactation Counselor. Natalie Titcomb is employed as a pediatric RN at Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles in the Cardiovascular Unit. Researchers received no sponsorship or commercial support for this project. There are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Learner Objectives

By the end of this presentation, the learner will be able to discuss possible benefits of including service learning into nursing education and consider application to other disciplines. The learner will also become familiar with possible applications and benefits of photo elicitation interviewing.
Service Learning in Nursing Education: Photovoice

The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of service learning on the undergraduate student’s understanding of the university mission, institutional mission-based learning outcomes (MLBO), course content, and community engagement.
Photovoice: Photo elicitation interviewing

- Qualitative research method
- Mitigates barriers
- Empowers participants
- Unique insight

(Polit & Beck, 2012)
Setting and Participants

CSUCI collaboratively opened a community health clinic in Spring 2015, Frances Huggins Community Health Clinic (FHCHC) in an underserved area of Oxnard, CA. The population consists mainly of families of migrant field workers, Hispanic, Chicano, Mixteco, and African American families, and the homeless. Services included non-invasive health screening, patient education, donation management, community gardening for school age children, adult Zumba, community referrals, and health fairs.

All services are provided by CSUCI students on a volunteer basis, and include but aren’t limited to majors such as nursing, health sciences, chicana/o studies, sociology, psychology, chemistry, mathematics, and environmental services and resource management. Students are supervised by licensed RNs during health services and CSUCI faculty at all times.

Participants were required to volunteer for any FHCHC activity or event a minimum of three times in order to be included in research.
California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI)

Mission: Placing students at the center of the educational experience, CSUCI provides undergraduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.

Mission Based Learning Outcomes (MBLO):
CSU Channel Islands’ graduates will possess an education of sufficient breadth and depth to appreciate and interpret the natural, social and aesthetic worlds and to address the highly complex issues facing societies.
Graduates will be able to:
Identify and describe the modern world and issues facing societies from multiple perspectives including those within and across disciplines, cultures and nations (when appropriate); and Analyze issues, and develop and convey to others solutions to problems using the methodologies, tools and techniques of an academic discipline.

(California State University Channel Islands, 2014)
Participant Prompt

Participants were asked to discuss the following for each of the pictures submitted.

- What do you see?
- What is really happening here?
- How does this photo reflect your perception of
  - Course content
  - CSUCI mission pillar of service learning
  - Community engagement
- Has service learning experience impacted your overall educational outcomes?

Service learning was defined as: community service activities that students participate in and are related to academic objectives, course content, or field of study.

CSUCI’s mission statement and MBLOs were displayed for participant reference.
Results

Themes were identified by participants during facilitated discussion of images.
1. Confidence in clinical skills, communication, leadership, connection of resources, and critical thinking

“I have been able to reflect on the actual knowledge, skills, values, and motivation that I have acquired during my undergraduate education career at CI.”
2. Greater awareness of community needs and vulnerable populations

3. Exposure to new cultural experiences
4. Exchange of information between individual and community

5. Meaningful relationships among students and community members

“This education activity, along with many others provided at the Frances Huggins clinic aim to engage this community and gain mutual, positive benefits from these interactions.”
“...motivated me to continue expanding on my education and [share] this knowledge with community members everywhere.”

6. Sense of contribution and appreciation

7. Fulfilment of CSUCI’s mission statement and MBLOs.
Limitations

- The small sample size may be a limitation in considering the validity and applicability of results
- Participant group meetings were inconsistent in trying to meet all scheduling needs, despite the use of electronic meeting access

Conclusion

- Service learning has a positive impact on student learning and engagement
- Success in meeting MBLOs can be reached through service learning
- The ability to integrate into multidisciplinary course content is beneficial for student learning and community needs
For the Future

- Larger sample size/multiple small groups
- Consistency with meetings
- Trial across all disciplines
- Nursing students could be encouraged to use photovoice for nursing research and/or community assessments
- Incorporate service learning opportunities into curriculum, consider service learning a requirement for graduation
References


Service Learning in Higher Education: Photovoice

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Introduction

California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) upholds service learning as one of the four university pillars and is an integral part of the mission statement. The purpose of this research is to understand the impact of service learning on the undergraduate student’s understanding of the university mission, institutional mission-based learning outcomes (MBLO), course content, and community engagement.

Objectives were explored using photo elicitation interviewing, or Photovoice. This type of participatory research mitigates inherent barriers between researchers and participants and empowers participants as they actively collaborate with each other and the researchers (Polka & Beck, 2012.)

CSUCI Mission Statement

Placing students at the center of the educational experience, CSUCI provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines, emphasizing experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.

Institutional Mission-Based Learning Outcomes

CI graduates will possess an education of sufficient breadth and depth to appreciate and interpret the natural, social and aesthetic worlds and to address the highly complex issues facing society. Graduates will be able to:

- Identify and describe the modern world and issues facing societies from multiple perspectives including those within and across disciplines, cultures and nations (when appropriate).
- Analyze issues, and develop and convey to others solutions to problems using the methodologies, tools and techniques of an academic discipline.
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Photovoice is a qualitative research method where participants use photography and discussion to explore a research question. For this study, participation was solicited via a printed flyer distributed to students who were currently or historically volunteering at the Frances Huggins Community Health Clinic (FHCHC) in Oxnard, CA. CI students were invited to volunteer at FHCHC to perform clinical services (under the supervision of a licensed register nurse), tutor school aged children, assist in community gardening, and engage in other health promoting events.

Potential research participants attended the advertised informational meeting and consent for participation was obtained from ten CSUCI undergraduate nursing students. Participants were required to engage in at least three service-learning/volunteer opportunities at the FHCHC. They were provided with basic photography instructions, guidelines for obtaining media release waivers from photography subjects, and the research prompt:

- What do you see in the photo?
- What is really happening here?
- What do you see in the photo?
- What is really happening here?

Methodology

Participants independently came to the consensus that they would not have met the MBLOs if they had not volunteered for service learning activities. Because of this, and the expressed positive impact on student learning, community engagement, and personal/professional development, we recommend service learning be integrated into multidisciplinary course content in addition to providing volunteer opportunities.

Limitations

The small study sample provides limitations for general application of results, however the intimate nature of Photovoice requires limiting participants. This study was designed for service learning in any discipline but only nursing majors consented to the research. Additionally, it was difficult to schedule meetings where all participants could attend, this was mostly overcome by using Zoom.

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- What do you see in the photo?
- What is really happening here?
- How does this photo reflect your perception of CSUCI’s Mission Statement and Mission-based Learning Outcomes?
- Community engagement
- Has service learning impacted your overall educational outcomes? If so, how?

Results

CSUCI’s mission statement and MBLOs include non-nursing majors in order to provide additional evidence for integrating service learning into course content.

Future Research

Participants independently came to the consensus that they would not have met the MBLOs if they had not volunteered for service learning activities. Because of this, and the expressed positive impact on student learning, community engagement, and personal/professional development, we recommend service learning be integrated into multidisciplinary course content in addition to providing volunteer opportunities.

Future Research

We extend our sincerest gratitude to our faculty mentor, Dr. LaSonya Davis for providing the opportunity, direction, and autonomy to perform this research. We appreciate all of our participants and their contributions to our project, their commitment to research, and their active engagement in our communities. We also thank the FHCHC and its community partners for providing service learning opportunities to CSUCI students.

References


Conclusion

Photovoice is a qualitative research method where participants use photography and discussion to explore a research question. For this study, participation was solicited via a printed flyer distributed to students who were currently or historically volunteering at the Frances Huggins Community Health Clinic (FHCHC) in Oxnard, CA. CI students were invited to volunteer at FHCHC to perform clinical services (under the supervision of a licensed register nurse), tutor school aged children, assist in community gardening, and engage in other health promoting events.

The FHCHC is an integral part of the mission statement. We extend our sincerest gratitude to our faculty mentor, Dr. LaSonya Davis for providing the opportunity, direction, and autonomy to perform this research. We appreciate all of our participants and their contributions to our project, their commitment to research, and their active engagement in our communities. We also thank the FHCHC and its community partners for providing service learning opportunities to CSUCI students.

Appendix A

Poster Presentation Displayed at Sage Student Research Conference May 2017.