

TEACHING INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY TO BUSINESS STUDENTS
Linda Nowak and Sherri Anderson, Sonoma State University, School of Business and Economics
1801 E. Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park, CA 94928, (707) 664-2377

ABSTRACT

There is always much excited debate about the role of higher education in our society. Most universities and colleges have asserted their responsibility is to provide service to society through utilizing their ability to create new knowledge and in training the future leaders of communities and nations. One aspect of training future business and community leaders is to teach civic and global responsibility.

Business schools are increasingly being asked to provide students with diverse experiences outside the classroom. Service learning programs emphasize the accomplishment of tasks that meet human needs in combination with conscious educational growth. They combine needed tasks in the community with intentional learning goals that reinforce skills learned in the classroom. By using service-learning projects, the professor imitates innovative business practices by promoting altruistic behaviors within the context of course activities. Service learning exposes students to a wide range of value-driven strategic alternatives so that they can make more informed choices of where and how to devote their energies and talents. Importantly, it gets the student off campus and into the realities of their community.

A preliminary analysis of business students' attitudes regarding service learning was conducted at a California State University. A total of 137 students were in the sample. The authors found that personal norms, consequence awareness, attitudes toward business' role in society, and gender (females students were more interested), were significant predictors of "I am interested in a service learning experience because it helps the local community".

**TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A SERVICE
LEARNING COURSE**

1. The instructor will have to find a community service project that is a good fit for the students and in which the students are welcome and can become active contributors.
2. Some community agencies, especially schools, may require finger printing and/or tuberculosis tests (e.g. tutoring programs).
3. Develop a pre-test and post test to measure attitudinal changes and/or learning objectives.
4. Plan to have class time each week for planning, organizing activities, and answering questions.
5. If necessary, obtain permission from the university for off-campus student activities.
6. Determine how much course credit will be given for the service learning experience. How will the students be graded?
7. Most proponents of service learning recommend a "reflection" component. Examples: Students could either meet in groups to share their experiences, challenges, and attitude changes or they could be required to write on these topics.
8. Consult a website for helpful information about curriculum development and grant availability. For example, the California State University System has an Office of Community Service Learning. The website is: <http://www.calstate.edu/tier3/csl>