

Using Service-Learning in an Undergraduate, Online Classroom

**Presented at
2004 National Service-Learning Conference**

**Carter Hendricks
Faculty, Concordia University-Saint Paul
hendricks@csp.edu**

Personal Introduction

I am pleased that you've chosen our session on using service-learning in online classrooms. As a faculty member at Concordia University-Saint Paul, I've been teaching online, full time and adjunct, for over 4 years. From 1999-2001, I was the service-learning specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education. From 1998-1999, I taught at an alternative high school in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota.

During this time, I've grown to understand the intricacies and special considerations an instructor must consider when teaching an online classroom. Inevitably, I've come to understand that the online classroom is every bit as valuable and worthy as the traditional face to face classroom.

Learning happens in online classrooms. Relationships are developed in online classrooms. Conversations are engaging in online classrooms. Teaching matters in online classrooms.

It is that last statement that has led me, and my colleagues, to implement service-learning in online classrooms. We understand that teaching matters. We realize that we have to be just as creative and concerned with holistic student development in an online classroom as we are in a face to face classroom.

That's why I began using service-learning in my course, Problems in Adolescent Development. I wanted to challenge my students to make theoretical connections to actual adolescents. I didn't want my class to be based solely on theory. I also wanted my students to have the context of their experiences, to observe and volunteer with kids facing tough circumstances, and to learn in a more fulfilling way.

As a result, I developed the service-learning experience so that students would spend 6 hours over a 6 week period volunteering at a youth organization of their choice. My only stipulation was that students volunteer directly with young people while having some time to simply observe and make notes on student behavior.

From these experiences, I instructed students to respond to questions on the "bulletin board" in our classroom. These questions were designed to encourage reflection, application, and synthesis of knowledge from the experience. More importantly, the student responses were shared in a public manner which allowed for greater engagement in conversation.

In this service-learning experience, there were four basic components:

- Require the experience as part of the syllabus (see syllabus)
- Set expectations and parameters for the experience (see agreement form)
- Engage in reflection and conversation (bulletin board and chat conversations)
- Assess the student's learning (see rubric for bulletin board and chat)

YD 440
Problems in Adolescent Development
B036

Carter Hendricks
Professor
W: 651-603-6284
hendricks@csp.edu

Course Books:

1. Adolescent: Development, Relationships, and Culture
Phillip F. Rice and Kim G. Dolgin
2. Rise and Fall of the American Teenager
Thomas Hine

Communication Plan:

Concordia believes in prompt feedback and communication. Email is the best delivery method in reaching me. I will respond to all emails and voice mails within 24 hours of receipt.

Assignments submitted on time will be reviewed and feedback provided within 3 days of receipt. Late assignments will be graded within one week. Bulletin board discussion will be monitored frequently and I will be equally engaged in the discussion.

Course Description:

A variety of problems of adolescence are discussed, including violence, aggression, education, and abnormal psychology. The issues etiology, intervention, and treatment are discussed. (4 credits)

Objectives:

- An ability to identify risk behaviors and risk indicators in adolescence.
- A discussion on strategies to discover root causes of abnormal development.
- Relate concepts discussed in class to real-world situations involving adolescents.

Student goals and objective:

This course is grounded in the principles of adult learning. Concordia recognizes that each student brings experience and knowledge to each course. Each student also brings expectations and goals for each course.

Course Outline

Week 1: October 29- November 4th

Chat: November 4th , 7:00 p.m. CST

Theme: Risk-Taking: Healthy or Un-healthy?

Reading: What makes a Risk a Risk?
“Troubled Teen Article”

Week 1: October 29- November 4th (continued)

Bulletin Board:

1. What do you believe are factors that lead to problems in adolescent development?
2. If the ability to deduct, evaluate, comprehend and express empathy escapes an adolescent youth, what opportunities exist for positive youth development to occur?
3. What can we do to help troubled teens?
4. As a youth, what were some healthy risks that you took?
5. How can YD professionals support youth who find themselves in the circumstances outlined in the article?

Assignment:

1. Weekly Reflection How was your learning challenged or enlightened this week?
What did you enjoy most about this week's assignments?
What can we do to help troubled teens? **Due November 4th**
**Begin Considering Site to Observe*

Week 2: November 5 – November 11

Chat: November 11th; 7:00 p.m. CST

Theme: What's the deal with kids today?

Reading: The Adolescent, chapters 1-3
 The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager

Bulletin Board:

1. Why have you chosen this particular site to observe?
2. Briefly, describe a 'teenager'.
3. What are some of the societal influences that impact an adolescent's development.
4. What factors contribute to lower academic achievement by some teens than others?

Assignment:

1. Site Observation Selection **Due November 11th**
2. Weekly Reflection: How was your learning challenged or enlightened this week?
What did you enjoy most about this week's assignments?
Due November 11th

Week 3: November 12 – November 18

Chat: November 18th ; 7:00 p.m. CST

Theme: Taking a Closer Look (3-hour field practicum)

Reading: The Adolescent, chapters 5 and 8
 The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager

Bulletin Board:

- 1) What's one thing that really stuck with you from this week's observation?
- 2) How would you describe the young people that you are observing?
- 3) What concepts from the readings apply to your observation?

- 4) Describe yourself when you were an adolescent.

Assignment: **Both Due November 18th**

1. Weekly Reflection: How was your learning challenged or enlightened this week?
What did you enjoy most about this week's assignments?
2. Site Observation: Three hours of youth program field observation/ volunteering

Week 4: November 19 – November 25th

Chat: **NO CHAT—November 25 (Thanksgiving Break)**

Theme: A Closer Look, part 2 (3 hour field practicum)

Reading: The Adolescent, chapters 17 and 18

The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager, _____

- Bulletin Board:
- 1) What's one specific problem in adolescent development that you are observing at your site? Why do you think it's a problem?
 - 2) Have you observed any signs of adolescent alienation? If so, what?

Assignment: **Assignments Due November 28th**

1. Weekly Reflection: How was your learning challenged or enlightened this week?
What did you enjoy most about this week's assignments?
2. Youth Profile: Profile of Young Person
3. Site Observation: 3 hours of youth program field observation/ volunteering

Week 5: November 26 – December 2

Chat: December 2nd, 7:00 p.m. CST

Theme: Exploring a Cause

Reading: The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager

Bulletin Board:

1. What are some possible root-causes of problems in adolescent development?
2. How do professionals address these root causes?
3. How do these root-causes impact the development of youth?

Assignment: Begin writing research paper, **Due December 9th**

Week 6: December 3 – December 9

Chat: December 9th, 7:00 p.m. CST

Theme: Understanding the underlying factors of child/youth delinquency

Reading: visit- <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/delinq.html#201800>

“Child Delinquency; Early Intervention and Prevention

- Bulletin Board:
- 1) Based on the reading, what might be some youth development goals for prevention of youth delinquency (target population- at-risk-youth)?
 - 2) If prevention is not effective, what are some of the consequences facing youth-at-risk?
 - 3) Identify possible risk factors facing youth in community, family, school, and among their peers?
 - 4) What are some possible adolescent health and problems derived from those risk factors?
 - 5) What strategies have been implemented in your organization or community to address delinquent behaviors?

Assignment: Research Paper on Root Cause, **Due December 9th**

Grading System:

To earn an A:

- Complete and meet the requirements for each of the 5 assignments.
- “Actively” engage in the BB discussion by demonstrating depth of thought in responses. Must response to 2-3 peers per question.
- Attend and participate in each chat (excused absences will NOT count against you)

To earn a B:

- Complete and meet the requirements for 4 of the 5 assignments (*the research paper must be one of the four*).
- “Actively” engage in the BB discussion (multiple postings each week) by demonstrating depth of thought in responses.
- Attend and participate in each chat (excused absences will NOT count against you)

To earn a C:

- Complete and meet the requirements for 3 of the 5 assignments (the research paper must be one of the three).
- “Actively” engage in the BB discussion (multiple postings each week) by demonstrating depth of thought in responses.
- Attend and participate in 5 of the 6 chats (excused absences will NOT count against you)

Assignment Descriptions:

Weekly Reflections

Due date: Before the start of chat sessions.

1. *What inspired you from this week’s learning or reading?*
2. *What challenged you from this week’s reading?*

Reflections should be approximately 1/2 page in length and discuss the student’s response to observations, readings, bulletin board postings, or other information that has impacted the student’s learning.

Profile of a Young Person

Due date: November 28th

Choose one young person from your site observation to profile. Identify the young person's age, interests, strengths, deficiencies, and support available to the young person. With this knowledge, you are to write a 2 page profile of the young person discussing their strengths and limitations while considering "possible" problems in his/her adolescent development (if any).

Research Paper

Due date: December 9th

Choose a "problem" in adolescent development. Write a 3-4 page research paper that analyzes the problem behavior and the impact on said behavior. It is important that you address possible root causes of the problem behavior and how youth development professionals might address the issue within the constraints of their work.

Field Study/Service Learning

Due date:

Choose a youth development oriented site (*the organization's mission and/or services should be directed to youth*) to volunteer and observe for six hours over a two-week period. During this observation, students are asked to engage young people in conversation. Pay special attention to signs of problems in adolescent development. Assignments during weeks 2-4 are designed to build off of this field experience. I trust and expect each student to be involved in a field experience. If this is problematic for you, please consult me immediately for advice on how to progress.

Weekly Bulletin Board Questions

Due date: Before the start of chat sessions.

You are expected to respond to 2-3 peers each week. All questions are designed to compliment your reading and expand on discussions. The responses need to reflect well thought-out critical reviews of the issues being discussed.

Instructor expectations for writing:

At the undergraduate level, students should demonstrate strong writing. I expect students to write professionally, to have minimal grammatical mistakes, and to challenge yourselves to expand your vocabulary. Material will not be graded for grammar, but may be returned if I cannot understand your intent due to poor writing.

If you have writing issues, please feel free to contact Louise Ehrhart or myself and we will assist in connecting you with a writing tutor and/or other resources.

Instructor philosophy on teaching and learning process:

This is your learning. I am not responsible or accountable for your learning or growth in this course. You must be engaged, committed, and active in this process. It is your learning.

My responsibility is to communicate expectations and comments effectively. I strive to provide an inclusive environment and build a teaching-relationship that is conducive to maximizing your prior knowledge and experiences. I am also charged with challenging you to expand and grow in both your thinking and the way you work with young people. To accomplish this task, I will challenge you to reflect and analyze all information that is presented in this course. We are equals in this process of learning and I hope to learn as much from you as you do from each other or from me.

Attachment A

Student Assessment Rubric

Threaded Discussion and Chat

Threaded Discussion/Bulletin Board

Knowledge	Understanding	Writing skills	Application/Analysis Of specific component or idea	Peer responsiveness
5. Comprehensive, in-depth and wide ranging	Outstanding ability to grasp concepts and Relate theory to practice	Excellent mechanics, sentence structure, and organization	Grasps inner relationship of concepts, Excellent use of a wide range of supporting material	Demonstrates an exceptional ability to analyze and synthesize student work, asks meaningful extending questions, exceptional ability to critically analyze other's comments
4. up to date and relevant	High level of ability to conceptualize essential ideas and relate theory to practice	Significant mechanics, structure and organization	Demonstrates the ability to analyze and synthesize, genuine independent analysis Good use of a range of supportive material	Demonstrates good ability to analyze other student work, and ask meaningful extending questions.
3. Relevant but not comprehensive	Some ability to conceptualize essential ideas and relate theory to practice	Some grammatical lapses, uses emotional response in lieu of relevant points	Informed commentary with some evidence of genuine analysis; some supportive materials used	Some ability to meaningfully comment on other student work and ask bridging questions
2. Limited superficial knowledge/response	Limited ability to draw out concepts and relate theory to practice	Poor grammar, weak communication	Some observations, some supportive evidence used	Lack of ability to comment on other students work and ask meaningful questions
1. Little relevance/some accuracy	Minimal awareness that external concepts exist	Lack of clarity, poor presentation of thinking	Lacks evidence of critical analysis, poor use of supportive evidence	Demonstrates poor ability to comment on other student work, asks no meaningful questions

Student Rating:

Chat discussion student evaluation rubric:

Knowledge	Focus	Applied Contribution	Demonstration of synthesis of materials
5 Demonstrates exceptional ability to conceptualize knowledge and demonstrates inventive thinking	Maintains sharp focus on subject matter, makes astute contributions	Demonstrates exceptional ability to apply comments to integrated course components	Exemplary evidence of synthesizing course materials. Frequent & relevant expanding comments
4 Depth of knowledge up to date and relevant, reflect some in-depth and personal ideas	Well focused on subject, with frequent relevant comments of discussion subject	Competent in using and adapting understanding to varied applications	Comprehensive synthesis of materials, good ability to make relevant comments integrating other's point of view
3 Depth of knowledge competent, some ability to relate theory to practice	Reasonable focus on subject, occasional astute comments on subject	Frequent use of assertion rather than relevant argument	Some ability to synthesize course materials, well developed point of view
2 Superficial understanding of concepts, beginning to read between the lines	Superficial focus on subject.	Sees things through his/her own ideas and feelings/ ignores or is threatened by different attitudes and views	Little ability to synthesize course materials, few relevant comments
1 Minimal awareness of concepts Restates what was taught or read	Frequent lack of focus, several off task comments divergent from subject matter	Cites facts and opinions with out being able to support or explain them	Poor ability to synthesize course materials and infrequent relevant comments

