

# Service-Learning to Enhance Academic Achievement



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## Calls for Change in Health Professions Education, 1990-99

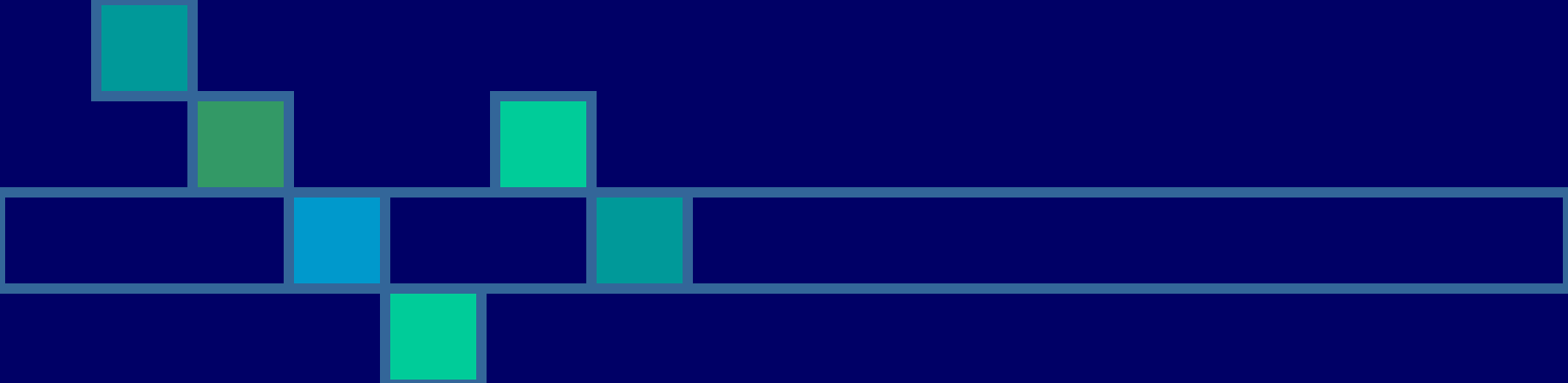
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- Pew Health Professions Commission
  - Council on Graduate Medical Education
  - IOM Report: Future of Public Health
  - Association of Academic Health Centers
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All advocate a greater emphasis on community-based learning




## Pew Practitioner Competencies for 21st Century

- Embrace personal ethic of social responsibility and service
  - Rigorously practice preventive care
  - Integrate population-based care and service into practice
  - Improve access to care
  - Provide culturally sensitive care
  - Advocate for policy that promote health
  - Work in interdisciplinary teams
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# What is Service-Learning?



“...a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

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



# Why Service-Learning?

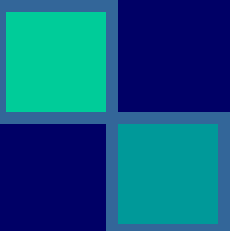



Service learning allows the student to reinforce newly acquired knowledge and skills application in real-life situations that mutually benefits the community and the student.

Kinsley C. What is community service learning? Vital Speeches LXI; 1994



## Service-learning is not:

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- An episodic volunteer program
  - An add-on to an existing program or medical curriculum
  - Service assigned as a form of remediation
  - One-sided: benefiting only students or only the community
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Service Learning is not:


Community service

If students remove trash from a stream bed:  
they are providing a service to the  
community as volunteers





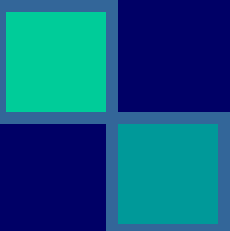

## Service-learning is:

- When students remove trash from a streambed,
  - analyze what they found,
  - share the results and offer suggestions for the neighborhood to reduce pollution,
  - and then reflect on their experience.
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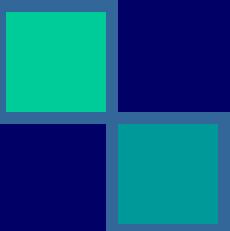
# Service-Learning Program Characteristics

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- Balances service and learning
  - Emphasizes real-life community-identified concerns and broad determinants of health
  - Integral involvement of community partners
  - Emphasizes reciprocal learning and reflective practice
  - Develops citizenship skills and achieves social change
  - Supports social, emotional and cognitive learning
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*Eyler, Janet and Giles, "Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?" San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.*



# Physical Therapy Program



Goal - To enhance our Pediatric curriculum by affording our students a real world experience that would:

- Reinforce knowledge and practice skills in the assessment and management of a child living with a neuromuscular disease,
- Allow students the opportunity to educate lay individuals in the management of the child with neuromuscular disease,
- Reflect on the psychological issues confronting the family of the child with a disability , and
- Provide consulting services for the community-based program.

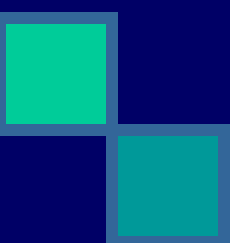



# Community Partnership UT Southwestern and MDA

- **Hosting Agency:** Muscular Dystrophy Association
- **Community Activity:** Camp John Marc weeklong Summer Camp
- **Agency Need:** Recruitment and retainment of competent community volunteers for the 1:1 counselor to camper ratio 24h/d



# Program Overview

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- Second year DPT program, 4th semester
  - Preparatory activities in prior semester
  - Academic structure is relaxed in the camp environment
  - Two faculty supervise the students at camp
  - Follow-up learning activities in subsequent semesters
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Objective: Manage in a safe and efficient manner, the physical and emotional needs of a child with a neuromuscular disease in a camping environment



Learning Activity: Students are responsible for safe transfers (i.e. pool, horses and into boats). They manage self-care and feeding for their camper.



Assignment: Student meets with faculty supervisor every other day to discuss skills and receive checks on the camp skills assessment sheet.

Objective: Confront the psychological issues of dealing with a child with a degenerative disease



Learning Activity: Student provides 24 hr/day care for a child with a neuromuscular disease at camp for 5 days.

Assignment: Students attend a lecture on supporting the terminally ill child and do reflective journaling.

Objective: Utilize his/her professional expertise in the role as consultant to the Camp John Marc and MDA staff.



Learning Activity: The student participates in or observes daily operations at camp from the perspective of a counselor.

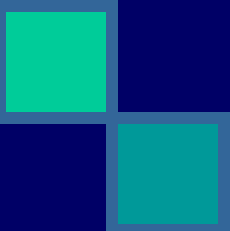

Assignment: Each student is responsible for 2 “suggestions for change”. The idea must be justified as being safer and or more efficient for the daily management of camp.

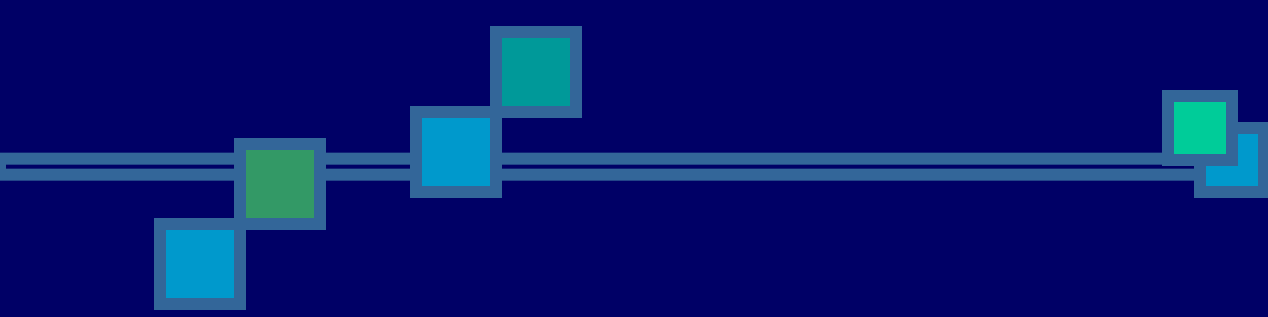
## Multi-domain Evaluation Tool

<u>Domain</u>	<u># of items</u>	<u>n=90</u>
Interpersonal Experience		
Student Interaction	6	4.3 ± 0.08
Student Roles	4	3.8 ± 0.16
Academic Relevancy		
Knowledge	4	4.3 ± 0.11
Skill	4	4.3 ± 0.06
Professional Growth		
Personal Growth	4	4.6 ± 0.06
Pro Bono	1	4.6 ± 0.06
Overall Camp Experience	1	4.7 ± 0.03
Total	30	

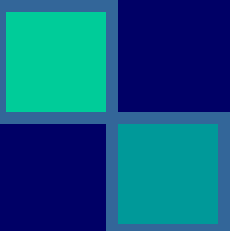



# Community Benefits

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- Elevate the level of care for the camper,
  - Decrease the anxiety of the parent associated with sending the child away to camp,
  - Promote a higher level of competence and confidence among the community volunteers for handling techniques with this special population of children.
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# Lessons Learned: Service learning is a powerful teaching strategy

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- SL can contribute to competencies needed for health professions practice
  - SL can benefit students, faculty, the community and community-university relationships
  - Community can be effective educators and are often overlooked
  - SL requires schools to give up “control”
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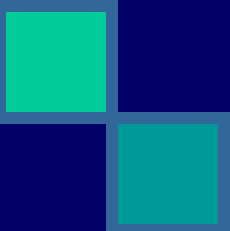



# Key Factors for Developing a Successful Service Learning Experience

- Determine the needs and goals of the academic program
  - Investigate and establish community partnerships
  - Develop the SL curriculum, including evidence/outcomes to demonstrate success.
  - Allocate necessary resources and develop the infrastructure.
  - Decide how to obtain visibility for your efforts.
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# Challenges

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- Rigid and over-loaded curriculum
  - Resistance to change
  - Resources
  - Lack of roles and rewards for innovation
  - Accepting the implications of true partnerships
  - History of town/gown relationships
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# Questions or comments?

## Tools and Resources



- National Resources for Service-Learning
  - Faculty Toolkit for Service-Learning in Higher Education
  - National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
  - An Inventory of Your Service-Learning Partnership
  - Tool for Service-Learning Sustainability
  - Tool for Building Partnerships into All Aspects of Service-Learning
  - Methods and Strategies for Student Assessment
  - Methods and Strategies for Community Partner Assessment
  - Methods and Strategies for Faculty Assessment and Reflection
  - Methods and Strategies for Institutional Assessment
  - Fact Sheets on Service-Learning (SL) in Higher Education
  - Quick Guides on SL in Higher Education
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