



# The Measure of Service Learning

Research Scales  
to Assess Student Experiences

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## PREFACE

This volume is foremost a resource for researchers and program evaluators who are interested in developing a broader and deeper understanding of the value of service learning. Hopefully, this compilation of scales that measure key constructs associated with the experiences of students in service learning classes will stimulate innovative research and the development of additional scales that are consistent with the rationale that is provided for the advantages of multi-item measures. Those with an interest in conducting research on service learning have a tremendous opportunity to develop significant programs of research that can improve the practice of service learning, test theories about learning and student development, improve the quality of all instruction in higher education, and contribute to the evolution of the public purposes of higher education.

This volume grew out of programs that were developed in Indiana during the 1990s. Indiana Campus Compact is a consortium of college and university presidents who endorse the public and civic missions of higher education. Through its programs, Indiana Campus Compact has helped member institutions engage students in community service, helped faculty in the development of service learning courses that integrate community service into the curriculum, and helped presidents and administrative staff members in institutional reform support the civic components of their mission. As part of its work, Indiana Campus Compact initiated the Universities as Citizens project in Fall 1996 to explore Ernest L. Boyer's (1996) ideas about connecting the rich resources of campuses "to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, to our cities" (pp. 19–20). President Clinton identified Ernest Boyer as one of the nation's most dedicated and influential educational

reformers. Boyer served as a college dean and chancellor, U.S. Commissioner of Education, and president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In reflecting on Boyer's contributions, Glassick (1999) noted that a common theme across Boyer's leadership positions was the call for educators to connect their work to the broader community. Boyer (1996) challenged higher education to find "a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission" (p. 20). At the heart of the Universities as Citizens project was the commitment to discuss, envision, and critically examine the implications for taking seriously Boyer's challenge for campuses to develop the scholarship of engagement.

The Universities as Citizens project was conceived by Richard Games, executive director of Indiana Campus Compact, and developed by a planning committee that included Kendall Lankford from Indiana Campus Compact, Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, JoAnn Campbell from Indiana University Bloomington, and Cathy Ludlum Foos from Indiana University East. The first year of the project, funded by Cinergy Foundation, engaged Indiana campuses in planning activities and colloquia. Through a multiyear grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Universities as Citizens project was extended in 1997 to include Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio Campus Compacts.

Activities of the Universities as Citizens project included a series of colloquia and institutes. Indiana Campus Compact also supported campuses to examine practical next steps to promote institutional change to increase involvement of faculty, students, and administrative staff in communities by convening institutional teams at summer institutes and by providing institutional grants to encourage campus exploration and implementation of institutional change directed at different facets of the scholarship of engagement.

Indiana Campus Compact also initiated the *Universities as Citizens Higher Education Series*, a series of publications coedited by Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher that provide resources to higher education to enhance the quality of programs associated with community engagement. *Establishing Universities as Citizens: Towards the Scholarship of Engagement* (Rothman, 1998) describes the thought-provoking combination of deliberation and action that resulted from the first year of colloquia, summer institutes, and institutional development grants. In *Colleges and Universities as Citizens* (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999), prominent scholars develop Boyer's ideas in key areas of the work of the academy and probe the possibilities and risks of community engagement by providing "guidance for paradigmatic change, [raising] aspirations for excellence in higher education, and [provoking] institutional change in how higher education conceptualizes its purpose and evaluates its accomplishments" (p. 17).

Three publications in the *Universities as Citizens Higher Education Series* focus on service learning. *Service Learning Tip Sheets: A Faculty Resource Guide* (Hatcher, 1998) and *Campus-Based Workshop Curriculum Guide* (Foos & Hatcher, 1999) provide important resources to practitioners for developing, implementing, and improving service learning courses. The present volume, *The Measure of Service Learning: Research Scales to Assess Student Experiences*, is intended for program evaluators and researchers who can inform the practice of service learning through their scholarly work.

The growth in service learning classes on campuses since the 1990s is both remarkable and paradoxical because it has been accompanied by a rather meager knowledge base (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler, 1998) that is only slowly growing. The acute need for research on service learning has not gone unnoticed. Wingspread conferences were conducted in 1991 and 1993 to develop research agendas for service learning. In addition, Giles and Eyler (1998), the Research Advisory Council convened by Campus Compact during 1997–1998, and the Campus Compact's *Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education* (Boyte & Hollander, 1999) each provided agendas to stimulate research about salient questions.

In a special issue of the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* devoted to assessment and research, Bringle and Hatcher (2000) advocated that service learning practitioners must devote more resources to conducting systematic, scientific assessment of service learning outcomes across students, faculty, institutions, and communities. They noted the following:

Although the experiences and anecdotes of service-learning practitioners, students, and community partners are meaningful and persuasive to some audiences, conducting systematic scientific research with meaningful indicators of educational outcomes represents a public, peer-reviewed, and replicable exercise that is important for increasing confidence among practitioners and for providing a justification to those who are in positions to support its expansion and recognition. (pp. 2–3)

The highly successful International Conferences on Service Learning Research held in fall 2001 and 2002 provided evidence that the interest in research on service learning is growing. The work presented at these conferences gives testimony to an expansion in both the quantity and the quality of research activities (see Billig & Furco, 2002). In addition, there was impressive participation by graduate students from a variety of disciplines, which indicates that future professionals are preparing to devote a significant portion of their training and careers to research on service learning.

This volume is foremost a compilation of scales that measure constructs associated with students in service learning classes. In addition, this volume

provides an explanation of the characteristics that multiple-item scales should possess in order for them to be used in research. We trust that the book fulfills its major intent—to be an educational and practical resource that fosters innovative and informative research that leads to a broader and deeper understanding of service learning in higher education.

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other campuses, and scholarship that is focused on service learning and civic engagement. She has read drafts of the manuscript, provided constructive feedback, and offered encouragement. We especially want to thank her for her invaluable support.

Barbara Cambridge wears many hats that include the following: professor of English and associate dean of faculties at IUPUI, vice president and former director of the Assessment Forum at the American Association for Higher Education, and director of the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program. Barbara's work has made many contributions to activities associated with service and service learning on the IUPUI campus, to the Universities as Citizens project, and nationally through her many activities. We also acknowledge the role she has played as an intellectual, professional, and personal mentor for work that has surrounded this book and for her inspiration to persevere.

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