

Professional Development to Advance Service Learning: An Overview

Oh, let me count the ways! Professional development most definitely advances service learning and any other concept that a school truly values and wants to embed within the school culture. Be sure to read *Creating a Culture of Service*—Chapter 17 of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*. This was written specifically to assist schools move toward a sustainable ethos of service learning. As can be expected, the approach to professional development varies from place to place and may include one or a combination of any of the following:

Conferences Fortunately as the understanding of service learning expands so does its visibility at conferences for international school administrators and teachers. Service learning pre-conferences and workshops are on agendas for regional international school conferences, at specialized conferences such as one for international middle school educators, and at subject specific conferences. International Baccalaureate conferences are adding service learning presentations for some of their gatherings. In the United States, service learning conferences (yes, conferences devoted to introducing and advancing service learning practice) take place year round as additional opportunities to learn. Schedules for these conferences can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Web site— www.servicelearning.org and by registering for the e-newsletter from Youth Service America at www.YSA.org. See Part Four: Organizations and Resources of this DVD for more information about these and other organizations.

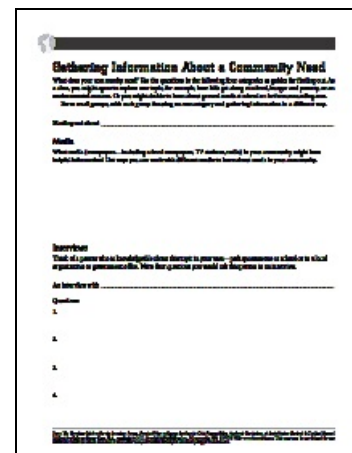
Conferences and Ongoing Communication regarding Service Learning. In the Resources section of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* (p257-259) and on this DVD in Part Four, several organizations list conferences (like the National Youth Leadership Council), and several have e-newsletters (like Youth Service America) and discussion groups (like the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse) to join and stay informed. www.servicelearning.org that will keep you informed of offerings.

Service Learning Institutes As the Central and Eastern European School Association (CEESA) adopted service learning as a priority, this organization hosted a series of service learning institutes to seed and advance this concept within their member schools. This was most strategic and outcomes far exceeded initial expectations. Over three years, I led all of these institutes and saw notable outcomes.

1. *Common Language and Understanding* This assured that high quality service learning was being developed at all member schools.
2. *Collegiality* Attendees became acquainted with other teachers and learned from everyone in attendance about how service learning looks in each school. This assisted with the development of grade or course specific service learning plans and an ongoing exchange through a dedicated listserv hosted by CEESA.
3. *Additional Professional Development for the Host School* In most cases, the host school chose to have additional professional development for their faculty and/or their entire faculty attended the Institute.
4. *Leadership within CEESA for Service Learning* As teachers learn about the expertise of their colleagues they become able to have ongoing exchange, and the potential for visits and professional development from within the organization by teacher leaders can occur.
5. *Themes Appropriate to the Attendees* Always the content was designed to meet the needs as defined by the attendees. This meant teachers were assured the topics and processes reviewed met what they came for. When scheduling such an institute, drawing ideas and needs from the populace being served makes a huge difference.

CEESA Board of Directors Meet about Service Learning Following one of the successful Institutes held in Prague, David Cobb, CEESA's Executive Director, thought it would be advantageous to present about service learning to the CEESA Board of Directors. Not being free myself, one of my consultants gladly went to the meeting and presented on the topic. By establishing understanding by the leadership of these organizations, the value of this pedagogy becomes more established.

6. *Service Learning to Advance Education and Engagement* Always this is an overarching intention—to look at service learning in a construct that maximizes highly engaging teaching methods that advance the larger mission of well-educated students who are able to transfer their skills and knowledge toward real world applications. This meant in addition to what would be expected to be conveyed about service learning, I consistently introduced classroom engagement strategies that improve learning in general and develop the requisite skills for students to increase their efficacy within the service learning process. As noted on page 241 in *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*, when students gain transferable skills through this type of high engagement, the benefits can appear in other classes. For example, research methods taught in the Institutes (see page 36 in *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* and the forms Gathering Information About a Community Need, page one of two pages shown here; both pages available to download on this DVD under Introducing *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*) are easily applied in any class. As part of the pedagogy taught, teachers return to their schools with a method to replace single source research typically done by students through an Internet search engine such as Google with four types of action research: media, interview, survey, and observation/experience. This proves transformative for any classroom and aligns well with methods taught in IB. Indeed, as many schools I have visited adopt this approach to research, even skeptics about service learning have seen the value of this process of *Gathering Information About a Community Need* and begin to see application within their classes.



7. *Non-CEESA Attendees* At the Service Learning Institute hosted by the American International School of Zagreb, September 2010, local non-CEESA schools were invited to send teachers to participate. This was part of a strategy discussed the prior spring when I had visited the school for two-days for onsite development. How exciting that English speaking teachers from public schools were able to take advantage of this opportunity that is now leading to ongoing collaborations. For more information see **CASE STUDY—America International School of Zagreb.**

Webinars and On-line Learning Select colleges have service learning courses that participants can enroll in from anywhere in the world. Also, service learning experts can offer site specific webinars for your school. For several months in the fall of 2009, I led a six-part webinar series for the America International School of Bombay. This became a key aspect of how this school established a foundation of service learning protocols, created a service learning professional learning community, and concretized their understanding of the concept and practice. Of note was how every teacher who attended the webinars came to all the sessions and more came each time attests to the value (and the sessions were held at 6:30 am Bombay time!). See **Professional Development for Service Learning at American School of Bombay.**

Onsite Professional Development Having a service learning professional visit your school can be most advantageous for providing a custom fit program that responds to your specific setting, culture, needs, curriculum, and so on. Since having had the privilege to work onsite at many schools and each was different, a profile of different settings and approaches is included. Additional information will be found in the Case Studies as noted. These summaries provide brief overviews, noting highlights that may assist you in considering how to plan for professional development.

The **American International School of Johannesburg** contracted for a series of visits to build service learning within the school community. The initial visit was for one day—a presentation as part of an opening all-school faculty gathering where I would introduce the concept of service learning. From this teachers would elect to participate in follow-up professional development gatherings on service learning.

The second visit two months later brought these 20 teachers plus a few parents together for three days

of an intensive service learning program, a highly experiential process that provided time to workshop the material presented and have in-depth conversations and exploration in the pedagogy and how it fit within the school.

During the third visit, again two months later, we continued with the process with this initial cadre of teachers plus a few more joining the group, to consider how service learning ideas and application was progressing. Additional aspects of pedagogy and practice were introduced during this two-day follow-up. As always, when adopting a new methodology questions arise. Having this immediate ability to respond again developed the confidence for teachers to move forward. Two outstanding examples from this group are included on this DVD. Please see **Organizations and Resources: In Our Global Village** to see the American International School of Johannesburg book written by 6th graders who wrote about *The Cradle of Human Kind*, an exceptional one-of-a-kind resource to students around the world on this unique locale where they participate in onsite digs at Cooper's Cave. The second product is in Part Four, an **ABC Book** section, that shows a trilingual book (Spanish, English, Swahili) made in a Spanish class with young children. A third day on this visit was spent with student groups.

The following year I returned for another three days: one day with the initial teacher group and two days to lead another group of teachers through the service learning process.

American School of Warsaw: With two visits, each had different priorities as the school made advancements. The first visit for two days was more geared toward meeting with small groups of teachers who had ideas about service and were wondering how to make a transition from community service to service learning. For example, in one group we clarified the difference between community service and service learning by examining how students can participate in fundraising without understanding about the underlying issues. Through service learning, students could meet curricular objectives by completing research on the needs, assessing the work of the organization, and developing informational presentations for others. By the end of the 40-minute session, the teachers had a real "ah-ha!" moment; they could see that the learning had been missing. and could see the value of establishing a correlation between student curriculum and what they would learn by conducting research from varied sources, and creating interactive mini-lessons for younger classes about the topic and the elevating the understanding for the broader student population. As students become the active producers, roles shift and learning becomes more viable. It was reported that, "After that session, our teachers started looking at their curriculum for connections that could be made with service rather than just thinking in terms of community service as they had before. This was a gateway to real service learning in the elementary school." Similar conversations were held with middle school science teachers, and others at all various grade levels, always making the learning the centerpiece of cross-curricular possibilities that lead to action. Time was also spent with school leadership including coordinators of service learning activities.

By the second visit, the school had made substantial advancements and had a new configuration of service learning coordinators, as described in the **CASE STUDY—American School of Warsaw** on this DVD.. These coordinators had traveled to Krakow to attend my PD sessions there, and we had a four hour train ride back to Warsaw together with a nonstop conversation and mini-workshop! At the school I led workshops and meetings with different teacher groups and sessions with students. This always is a highlight! One group of sixth graders described their work in support of KIVA and micro-finance (www.KIVA.org) and explained the inner workings of this organization and how their efforts connected across many academic areas and increased their skills. Conversation moved to what is greater motivation: internal or external rewards. A 90-minute session with the entire 10th grade class, about 70 students, was planned to assist students think about how they could approach CAS (the International Baccalaureate "Creativity, Action, Service") with a service learning model. Crammed into one classroom, I led a sequence of experiences that had students interview each other in pairs to complete the *Personal Inventory* (CGSL p. 35 and form on p51), identify community needs of personal interest, work in small groups to develop ideas for action research using the *Gathering Information About a Community Need* process (CGSL p36 and form on p51, and available on this DVD), and had them brainstorm ideas for four kinds of action related to that theme of

service: direct, indirect, advocacy, and research. (CGSL p11). Finally we reviewed two additional organizers that would assist them in planning their CAS service experience—*Taking Action* (CGSL p37 and form on p52—and also on this DVD) and *Project Proposal* (CGSL p37 and form on p52). Student response throughout the sessions was high, and several teacher observers remarked on the high level of sustained student participation. Of note was a moment that occurred near the conclusion. After students had an understanding of what they could experience with CAS through service learning—meaning they would identify and apply their personal interests, skills, and talents to meet an authenticated need and document their purpose and process – I asked them this question: *What do you need to know?* Honestly, I had not posed this question to students before in this way. With students who had already exhibited high level of academic ability and critical thinking skills I wondered if they would have a sense that they already knew all their was to know, and then they surprised me. They began to list quickly and nonstop areas where they needed knowledge. Practical knowledge. *How do you: make a phone call, arrange an interview, set up a visit, write a memo, design a press release, organize a group.* This opens up the idea that the process of CAS can also be an opportunity to provide much needed skills students and teachers identify all during the year.

All of the sessions I led with 3rd, 6th, and 10th graders were reported as having been intentionally scheduled “for the added benefit that service learning coordinators and teachers were there witnessing, watching, taking notes, and helping to facilitate the sessions with all the different age groups. Having them observe your process with kids had possibly even more lasting value than the kids’ learning—not to minimize what occurred with the students! However, this was a valued part of the professional development process for our faculty.”

Meeting with school leadership on developing strategies for embedding service learning across the curriculum completed the day. The discussion centered on creating sustainable relationships within the community with the mutual benefit of learning and service. These are presented in the Case Study.

Also of note, the current head of school Tony Gerlicz has been promoting service learning by co-presenting with me on this topic at numerous conferences. Leadership in Action!

International School of Estonia, in Tallinn, was a two day visit that began with an all-faculty workshop. For a school new to the service learning concept, this is highly recommended. Additional time was spent meeting with small groups of faculty and service learning leaders at the school. Also, as in Warsaw, I met with a much smaller group of students who were in CAS and struggling with finding meaningful, purposeful experiences. Again, taking these students through the aforementioned sequence of *Personal Inventory* and *Gathering Information About a Community Need*, ideas were forthcoming that connected students together and with community concerns. At the time, the foremost idea was regarding Estonia having the highest population of people living with HIV and AIDS of all the Baltic states. They developed ideas that also drew upon the ability of one of their peers who was from Tallinn and had the language fluency they lacked. While that student was absent that particular day, this group expressed great excitement and confidence in how they could move forward with her help. The most important “takeaway” from this session was how the students each recognized that individually they had abilities and collectively they could plan and carry out their ideas. Please read the **CASE STUDY—International School of Estonia** for information about the range of service learning experiences at this school. This school has done exemplary work by creating cross-curricular service learning opportunities at the high school level with students producing outstanding work and winning awards for their dedicated efforts.

At the **United Nations International School of Hanoi** (UNIS), a different approach was taken to advancing service learning. Having seen my work at the American International School of Warsaw during my initial visit, then school head Chip Barder, now at UNIS, asked me to come for two days. The first day I spent in non-stop interviews with individuals, pairs, and small groups of stakeholders discussing the existing community service program and the idea of transitioning to service learning. I was on a fact-finding mission to collect ideas and make recommendations about how to move forward. This process offered unique insight to a myriad of perspectives, from administrators to CAS coordinators, to students, to teacher leaders.

Part of what was revealed is the school has a tremendous commitment to service however this is done mainly outside of any class content. With CAS, again, students had many exceptional activities to participate in, however they primarily signed up for opportunities and what was missing was the *investigation* and *preparation*, which result in students buy in and commitment to address real social issues rather than complete an hours requirement. From the CAS coordinators to the teacher sponsors to the students to school leadership—all agreed that revisions could be made to engage students in a service learning Five Stage approach to CAS. By engaging all students in knowing the underlying social issues and problems before visiting a site to be helpful, students would gain understanding and be able to make connections to what they are learning in class. They could also help with the logistics. Even with the inability to speak Vietnamese, it was stated that many of the community partners are fluent in English so this enables most students to have, with adult support, a more significant role in the planning aspects of the visit.

On day two I met with a designated leadership team invested in service learning success. We worked towards considering the points of view presented and, with recommendations drawn from day one, consolidating a proposed plan for moving the school forward with service learning. One key area of concern was the overabundance of fundraisers held at the school. A new plan has been adopted that grew from these two days and showed tremendous initiative by school leadership in aligning school practice with school mission. The imperative was simple: what we do at school, including fundraisers, must advance and align with the purpose and mission of the school. Please read the resulting plan, as noted in **Case Studies—United Nations International School of Hanoi**.

Two visits to the **American International School of Zagreb** held six months apart were well timed for a school eager to advance service learning. Several of the faculty had already attended the CEESA Institutes and were finding success with their curriculum integration. With support of the school administration, the entire faculty was ready to examine how service learning worked and consider steps to move forward.

The initial two-day visit held in the spring allowed for approximately 20 teachers to participate in an intensive service learning institute customized for this school. Of course a brief overview of service learning can be presented to a faculty in 90 minutes, however having a two-day immersion in the process always allows for more in-depth experiences, analysis, and consideration of how to apply these ideas within a classroom. Time was always allocated to look at the specific engaging teaching methods modeled and how these would also improve student engagement in everyday lessons.

Numerous documents can be found throughout this DVD from AISZ.

Five days spent at **Hong Kong Academy** had a clear and distinct purpose: align the school's academic IB (International Baccalaureate) program with service learning, K-11 (at the time of the visit the school did not yet have a senior class). The sequence of activities included a 90-minute all faculty workshop on service learning followed by approximately 50 minute meetings with each grade level over the following days. At each of these smaller meetings, I reviewed additional components of service learning adapted to each grade level, and together we identified a unit of inquiry most suitable to integrate a service learning experience. Many classes already had in place aspects of service learning and recognized the benefits of integrating the Five Stages of Service Learning to strengthen academic connections. In some cases the teachers wanted to challenge themselves to look at additional units where connections to service were less apparent. In all groups there was a sense of readiness to move forward with this teaching approach. Additional meetings were held with individual teachers who wanted to explore particular ways service learning could advance their classes, for example, in science and art.

Meeting with administrators of the different schools and curriculum coordinators continued to identify ways to look at transforming the more traditional community service experiences and also student council activities. With curriculum coordinators, we considered the “big picture” implications of service learning and how this would be grow to be an explicit part of the articulated and documented design. They saw implementation of service learning as part of the role of the curriculum coordinators rather than a separate coordinator.

To bring in and inform the extended community, an evening parent presentation was scheduled as part of a celebration for the completion of a school cookbook, created by parents to recognize the school's diversity and also raise funds for charitable causes. This 50-minute talk covered what service learning looks like within international school settings, including examples culled from Hong Kong Academy. Guests, including visitors from other schools and a local university participated in small group activities as part of the presentation and had a chance to ask questions. Including parents is key within the service learning process, to garner support and understanding for the integration of this pedagogy.

Several meetings were held specific to examining CAS—the International Baccalaureate Diploma graduation requirement of Creativity, Action, Service—and how to move this toward a genuine service learning model. This led to a culminating conversation that included administrators and CAS coordinators from the Hong Kong Academy and a CAS coordinator from the Canadian International School. During this hour, I presented a proposed design that moves students through the Five Stages of Service Learning—investigation, preparation, planning, (ongoing) reflection, and demonstration—with support organizers for each stage taken from *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*. More on this topic can be found in **Part Four: Supplements and Articles, Moving Forward: Transforming DP & CAS through Service Learning**.

Central to the success of this five day consultancy was the end-of-day daily meeting held with Stephen Dare, head of school, and several times joined by the heads of the lower and upper schools. These conversations reviewed the progress of the day, questions that were raised, suggestions for further implementation, and, most significantly, time spent to wrestle with how to maximize the value of service learning within the IB programme. For example, we discussed each of the transitions from PYP (Primary Years Programme) and MYP (Middle Years Programme) and looked at how the culminating activities could easily integrate a service learning core or context. This process would give a way for the Learner Profile Attributes to be experienced and made explicit as students demonstrate their competencies. We looked at how service learning enables students to succeed by building on their strengths while also adding more skills and abilities. At the conclusion we all agreed significant progress had been made and always more time could be of value to growing service learning. What will sustain Hong Kong Academy as they move forward is ultimately administrative understanding and support at the highest levels and the recognition of how the integration of service learning strengthens the desired outcomes of the IB approach. Please review the **CASE STUDY—Hong Kong Academy** for additional information.

Visits to **Krakow, Bucharest, and Vienna** all had components reviewed by the different case studies. Additional information on Bucharest and Vienna can be reviewed in the Case Study section of this DVD.

Advisory Groups for Service Learning If you are setting up an Advisory Groups, often consisting of teachers, parents, community members, and students who want to be certain service learning opportunities occur and community partnership expand, understanding of service learning, and can agree on the principles and foundations, then what occurs will be more reliable. Members can attend a conference or workshops offered in the region, set up distance learning, or bring a resource person to the school. Either way, being clear on the concepts and having solid examples will advance the work of this group and lead toward more substantial results.

The Complete Guide to Service Learning as a Resource for Professional Development This book, now in its second edition, was revised specifically to be a tool for professional development. While Chapters 1-3 have many ideas for professional development, Chapter 17 has this at its core. When I present I am continually making what I do transparent, **to encourage those in attendance to use the ideas and methods as they lead service learning workshops with others**. When writing Chapter 17, I intentionally put in many of the ideas, “secrets,” tips, and step-by-step processes to

A School-Wide Read! Looking for a summer read to get everyone on board with service learning? *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* has been used in many schools for this purpose. Share the wealth of information and the excitement!

encourage even the novice to get out and *do it!* Many of the ideas in the chapter can be accomplished within 15 minutes of a staff meeting and that is often the best way to start, to lead a series of short mini-sessions that grow the ideas and processes and leave the teachers eager for the next time. Most important to note is the book is a resource, a resource for individual teachers, for administrators, and for students who are seeking ideas. Have many copies available!