

## Assessment of Service-Learning Activities

This year, the SCCESL expanded its assessment of the Service-Learning modality. The perception of attainment of Essential Learning Outcomes was again calculated and the responses are in Table Three below.

**Table 3. Paired pre-and post-test scores on Essential Learning Outcomes for students enrolled in a Service-Learning course in the 2023 - 2024 school year**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Two-Sided p</b>
<b>Pair 1</b>	Post- I can generate ideas	991	4.57	0.594	0.294	<0.001
	Pre - I can generate ideas	991	4.28	0.623		
<b>Pair 2</b>	Post - I can recognize opportunities in problem-solving, relationships, or self-expression	991	4.58	0.557	0.29	<0.001
	Pre - I can recognize opportunities in problem-solving, relationships, or self-expression	991	4.29	0.606		
<b>Pair 3</b>	Post - I can adapt to change	999	4.48	0.644	0.317	<0.001
	Pre - I can adapt to change	999	4.17	0.711		
<b>Pair 4</b>	Post - I can share ideas with diverse audiences effectively	996	4.47	0.65	0.372	<0.001
	Pre - I can share ideas with diverse audiences effectively	996	4.09	0.733		
<b>Pair 5</b>	Post - I can use various formats to share knowledge with diverse audiences effectively	992	4.41	0.692	0.333	<0.001
	Pre - I can use various formats to share knowledge with diverse audiences effectively	992	4.08	0.715		

For the first time, AI was used to conduct a qualitative analysis of the students' reflection responses (n=991). The methodology that was created for this new analysis was twofold. Results for each of the six questions that students responded to in the post-test were entered into ChatGPT in batches of 100 responses; ten sets of analyses were run for each question. The ChatGPT prompt was, "Please analyze these statements and create three themes. Cite one quote from the statements to support each theme." Once all the responses were analyzed for one question, the AI results from the ten batches were entered back into ChatGPT and it was given the same prompt. In this way, the qualitative data was analyzed 11 times into three meta-themes for each question. The results are outlined below.

**“How was your experience different than your expectations at the start of the semester about your Service-Learning experience?”**

Many students entered their Service-Learning experiences with specific expectations that often differed from the reality they encountered. This theme highlights the initial apprehension or misconceptions students had about the nature of their service tasks or the challenges they might face. Students consistently reported significant learning experiences and personal growth through their Service-Learning activities. This theme emphasizes the educational value of hands-on experiences in community settings. A central aspect of students' experiences was the enjoyment and value derived from interacting directly with community members. This theme emphasizes the importance of interpersonal connections and the positive impact of engaging with different segments of the community.

**“What was the significance of your service? What did you accomplish?”**

Students consistently highlight the development of empathy and the formation of meaningful personal connections through their service experiences. This includes understanding diverse perspectives and challenges faced by communities they engage with. Students focus on the tangible impact of their service on communities, whether through direct assistance (e.g., food distribution, educational support) or creating positive environments (e.g., cultural events, therapeutic activities). Service-Learning opportunities are seen as valuable educational experiences, providing students with practical skills, knowledge about social issues, and leadership experience. This theme underscores the educational value of service beyond traditional academic settings.

**“What did you learn from your experience? How was your work meaningful? Do you think you made a difference?”**

Students frequently mentioned acquiring practical skills such as editing, interviewing, teamwork, and time management. This skill development was pivotal in their personal and professional

growth. Challenges like managing diverse teams, navigating systemic issues, and adapting to unexpected situations were prevalent. Overcoming these challenges led to significant personal growth and resilience. Many highlighted gaining empathy and understanding through interactions with diverse individuals and communities. This included overcoming biases and developing a deeper appreciation for societal issues.

Experiences informed students' career aspirations, such as roles in non-profit management, media production, or education. They gained insights into professional teamwork, project management, and the realities of various professions. Applying classroom knowledge in real-world settings was highly valued, contributing significantly to their professional development and future career prospects.

Reflection on challenges encountered led to personal growth, adaptation, and a reevaluation of approaches. Students learned valuable lessons in resilience and problem-solving. There was reflection on the perceived impact of their efforts, with students considering the tangible difference made despite challenges in measurement or immediate feedback.

**“What did your service experience mean to you personally? What did you learn about yourself as a result of the Service-Learning experience?”**

Service-Learning was a catalyst for personal development, discovering strengths, and overcoming challenges. Many students found a motivation to contribute positively to communities and address societal issues. Service-Learning emerged as an influence on students' career choices and confirming professional aspirations. Students' experiences increased awareness of social issues and a commitment to community service. Another theme that emerged was developing empathy and meaningful connections through service experiences. Finally, many students reflected on how their service experiences helped them understand their strengths, weaknesses, and personal inclinations towards empathy, communication, and adaptability. These reflections often led to a deeper understanding of oneself and personal growth.

**“How will you use what you have learned in this experience in your future?”**

Many students emphasized how their Service-Learning experience would aid in their future careers, utilizing specific skills they learned as well as a commitment to continue engaging with the community and giving back. As stated above, many reflections highlighted personal growth, particularly in empathy and understanding diverse perspectives. Finally, some students focused on how the experience would contribute to their academic and professional portfolios.