

Service Learning and Community Based Research

**Implementation, Benefits,
Challenges, and Future Directions**

Gulf South Summit 2016

Savannah, GA

April 13-15, 2016

Panelists

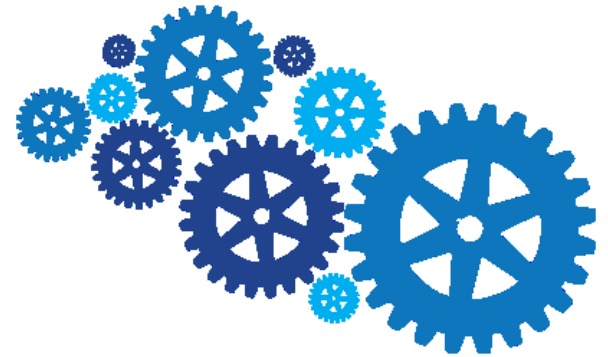
- 1. Ariana Postlethwait, PhD - Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Social Work**
 - 2. April Rand, PhD - University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, School of Social work**
 - 3. Carmelita Dotson, MSSW - Middle Tennessee State University, Department of Social Work**
-

Panel Goals

1. How to implement student-led community based research projects.
2. How to build partnerships with diverse stakeholders/agency settings.
3. Benefits and challenges of student-led research within a community-based agency.
4. How to use projects to support agency change.
5. Future directions in service learning.

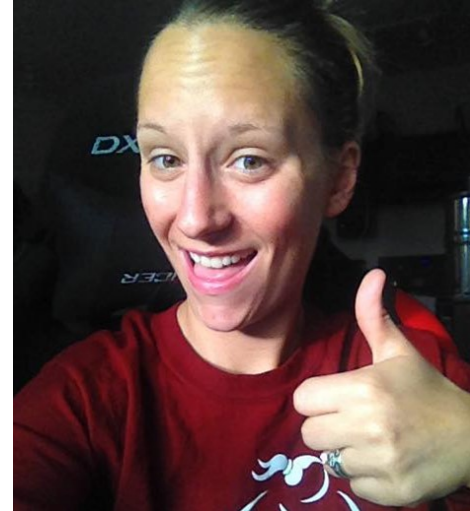
1.

Implementation



Pick a Feasible Project

- Group project purpose appears to influence student learning.
- Students who present their work to external audiences, such as a community agency, work harder than students presenting only to classmates.
- Example Project:
 - Data Analysis Project



Group Dynamics

- Peer evaluations
- Group Contracts
- Nonviolent Communication (NVC) strategies

When I die, I want the people I did group projects with to lower me into my grave so they can let me down one last time.



someecards
user card



Assessing Learning

- How to incorporate measures of student learning and engagement into a service learning course.



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwOZEgD5m7fyX2JmMUwtLVQ5c2s/view>

2.

**Building
Partnerships**



Diverse Stakeholders



- Center for Service Learning
 - Matchmaking events
- Pre-Class Work
 - Individual meetings to identify need
 - Valuing agency input & communicating benefit
 - Preliminary project development
- Nurturing Relationship
 - Ongoing contact throughout semester
 - Students present work at mid and end of semester
 - Maintaining relationship post-project

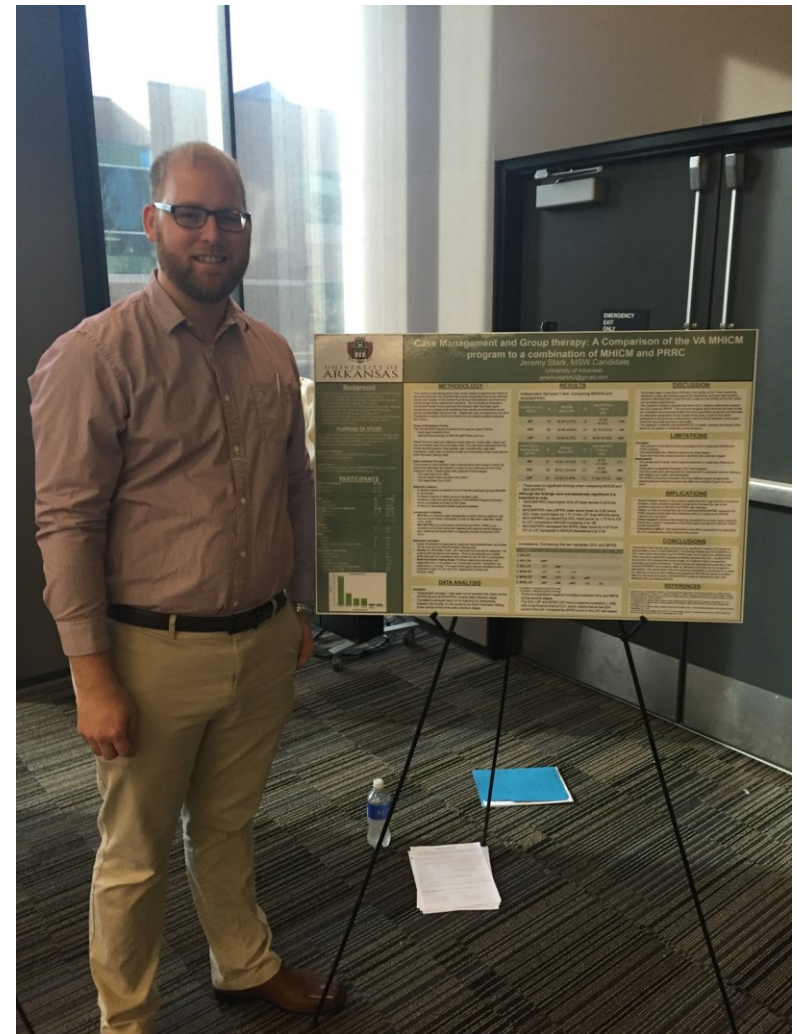
3.

**Benefits &
Challenges**



Benefits of Service Learning

- ▣ Applied learning
- ▣ Skill development
- ▣ Confidence building
- ▣ Increased commitment
- ▣ Real world experience
- ▣ Professionalism
- ▣ Networking



Challenges



- ▣ Agency Politics & Commitment
 - Research design
 - Dissemination of results
- ▣ Rural Setting
 - Limited service opportunities
 - Overworked, unable to participate fully
- ▣ University Support of Service Learning
 - Satellite campus
 - Feasibility

4.

Agency Change

let's talk.

change

What is Change?



- ▣ The professor as a facilitator
- ▣ The *Change* Project
 - Service learning course activity.
 - Addressing and supporting change with real life situations.

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for.

We are the change that we seek - Barack Obama

Benefits

- ▣ Assessment skills
- ▣ Citizenship
- ▣ Communication skills
- ▣ Collaboration skills
- ▣ Communication skills
- ▣ Negotiation skills
- ▣ Research skills



PLAN B
~~PLAN A~~



The *Change* Project

<p>Engagement</p> <p>Groupings</p> <p>Select an Agency</p> <p>Make a Plan of Action</p>	<p>Assess</p> <p>Written Paper Assignment</p> <p>External and Internal Factors</p>
<p>Plan</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>Coordination</p> <p>Commitment</p>	<p>Implement and Terminate</p> <p>Present the <i>Change</i></p>



The *Change* Project

- ▣ Evaluation
 - Feedback
- ▣ Project Examples:
 - Recruitment tool for foster/adoptive care
 - Adding new service
 - Filing system

Example Community Projects

Community Assessment (Google Sites)

- Pick a Target Population
- Determine Community Characteristics & Structure
- Recommendations
- Example Site

Grant Project (Presentation)

“The Stomping Ground”

- Pay as you can cafe
- Social enterprise
- Entrepreneurship training
- Community garden
- Food insecurity outreach

5.

**Future
Directions**



Future Directions

1. Formal agency partnerships for CA and grant project.
2. Connect CA project to change project.
3. Enhance relationship with agencies for capstone projects.
4. Incorporate SL into more courses.



Future Directions

1. More rigorous approaches to measuring learning outcomes.
2. Expand cross-discipline collaborations to address community needs.
3. More strategic focus on building communication skills.



Thanks!

Any questions?

- April Rand: amrand@uark.edu
- Ariana Postlethwait: ariana.postlethwait@mtsu.edu
- Carmelita Doston: carmelita.dotson@mtsu.edu