2018/2019
COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING
ABRIDGED EVALUATION REPORT

The following pages summarize the main findings from our CSL Evaluation Surveys of students, faculty/instructors and community partners. I would like to thank Tasmia Hai, our Evaluation Coordinator, and PhD student in Human Ecology, for producing the data and conducting the surveys. It is a large commitment that CSL makes to properly assess the learning outcomes and satisfaction with CSL and its processes, to both deepen student learning and build community partner capacity

This year was the final one in which we surveyed both kinds of students in a courses with a CSL option in in it: those who took the community placement/CSL mode of the course, and those who chose not to and complete the courses in the traditional way. In the future, in an effort to more directly probe the CSL student experience in particular, we will just survey students who do choose to do CSL projects and placements in community. Nonetheless, what is interesting to me here is the way our program seems to be attracting a higher proportion of first-generation university students. We are defining a first generation university student as measured by the highest level of education attained by the student's parent(s)/caregivers. A first-gen student is one whose parents did not have an undergraduate degree.   Tasmia has found that overall, there are 49% of students in courses in which CSL is offered who identify as 'first-generation'. This is considerably higher than the wider university benchmark figure, closer to 35%. Further, 42% of first-gen students in a CSL course choose *not* to take the community option when it is offered (clearly a smaller percentage than those who do). This suggests that CSL remains an inclusive form of experiential learning, attracting less privileged students and offering them low-cost experiential learning built into their courses. That for me is an especially pleasing result.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss any of these results further.

David Peacock, PhD

Director, CSL

Methodology

The University of Alberta CSL program distributed surveys at the end of the Fall, and Winter academic terms to CSL placement-based students, classroom-based students, instructors, and community partners. Students and instructors filled out their evaluations during class time at the end of term. Community partners were emailed a link to an online survey using the Course Evals tool. The CSL Evaluation Coordinator used SPSS to calculate frequencies of the quantitative data.

Statistics at a Glance 2018-2019

Placement-based students	Classroom-based students**	Instructors	Community Partners
1690 enrollments in CSL placements 1110 students responded to the evaluation survey 15% working towards a CSL certificate 75% in a CSL course for the first time 49% were first generation University students	117 responded to evaluation survey 76% in a CSL course for the first time 73% volunteer outside CSL 42 % were first generation University students	58 unique instructors 29 responded to the evaluation survey 21% taught a CSL course for the first time	190 community partners 85 community partners responded 21% involved in CSL for the first time
Gender: 75% female, 24% male, 1% other Age: 70 % are under 23 years Mean years of post-secondary education: 3.5 years	Gender: 78% female, 20% male Age: 70% are under 23 years Mean years of post-secondary: 3.4 years	Mean years of teaching: 11 years Position: 38% Contract Academic Staff, 7% Graduate Student, 10% Assistant Professor, 24% Associate Professor, 21% Full Professor	Mean of years worked in the non-profit sector: 9 years Mean number of students mentored per term: 6 students

**Students who enrolled in a CSL course but did not participate in a CSL placement
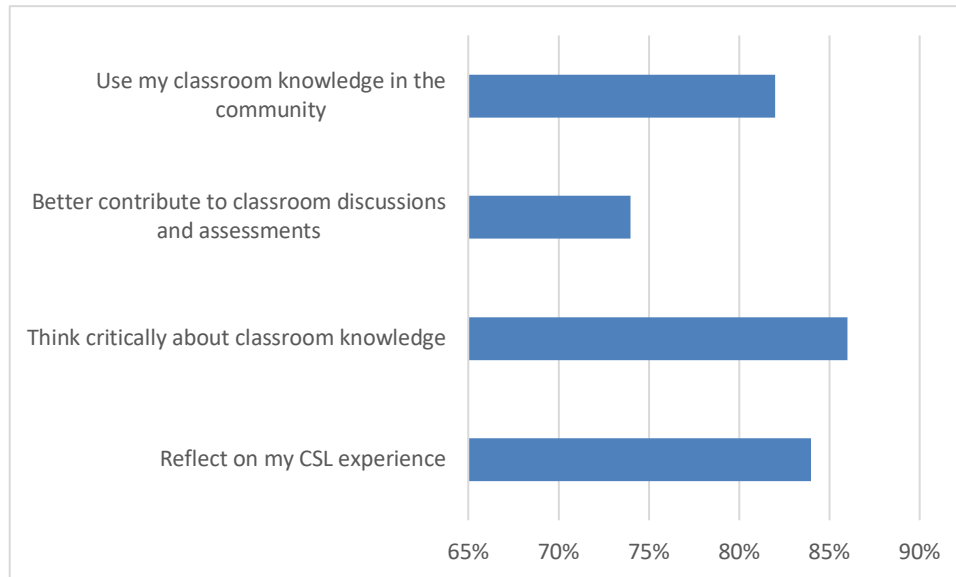
CSL Placement Student Experiences

Satisfaction rate as a pedagogical process
82% --- CSL is an effective teaching/learning strategy
85% --- I would recommend CSL to my peers

My involvement with CSL provided the opportunity to…

Use my classroom knowledge in the community
Better contribute to classroom discussions and assessments
Think critically about classroom knowledge
Reflect on my CSL experience

65% 70% 75% 80% 85% 90%

Understanding of Social Change and Social Issues

" I learned so much about cerebral palsy and the societal issues that arise from having it."

"CSL broadened my perspective on disability and problems in the society that individuals with disabilities face"

"I hope I had an impact on providing people with more knowledge and experience surrounding food sovereignty. Because I did a documentary on it, I think it will teach and inform people."

Program Structure & Communication

There was a good fit between the placement and the course   83%
I knew enough about the aims/requirements of CSL   79%
There was adequate communication between my instructor and me   86%
There was adequate communication between my community partner and me   79%

Connections between course learning and placement learning

This experience provided me with the opportunity to use classroom knowledge in the community   82%

This experience provided me with the opportunity to think critically about classroom knowledge   86%

> "It fit well with the course material in that we had to teach in a classroom environment."
>
> "By having it mandatory it gives future teacher the opportunity to find out if they even like kids or if they don't"

Instructor Experiences with CSL

Satisfaction rate as a pedagogical process
72% --- CSL contributed to students' learning
76% ---I would recommend CSL to my peers

Benefits of Participating in CSL

CSL helped me deepen relationships with my students   62%
CSL helped me develop relationships with the community 62%
Including a CSL component helped me to improve my teaching skills   48%

Connections between course learning and community placement

Students' course work and class instruction enhanced their ability to understand community experience 90%
CSL enhanced the classroom learning environment 72%

Strategies I find most effective in integrating CSL into my course…

Checking in with students   79%
In class presentations/workshops by community partners   31%
Student assessment   69%

Program Structure & Communication

Overall, there was a good fit between the goals of this course and the community placements
          84%

There was adequate communication between instructors and the community partners   59%
Instructors received the type of support and assistance requested from the CSL staff   93%

Quotes from Instructors:

"I think this is an essential part of EDU 100. I hope it remains mandatory."

"This CSL experience is the best I've had so far. My comments are more for future improvements. This requires the efforts of both instructors and the CSL office.   1. Placements that provide more meaningful experience for students 2. Opportunities to build on instructors' already established community networks 3. Ways to bring CSL into the classroom beside presentations"

"Overall, my experience with CSL has been extremely positive. The staff at the office are always friendly and supportive and have lots of great ideas. I do think that picking the right community partners is essential, and I've been lucky to snag an enthusiastic and creative group. Our biggest hurdle is probably just fitting everything into one semester. It always takes time to get things started, but I'm reluctant to ask students to sign up early (i.e. in the previous semester) and give them priority over the projects."

Community Partner Experiences with CSL

Satisfaction rate as a pedagogical process
93% --- the placements significantly contributed to CSL students' learning.
95% ---I would recommend CSL to my peers

Benefits of Participating in CSL

CSL helped me develop relationships with students, instructors and the university   77%
CSL helped me network with other community organizations   35%
CSL helped our organization accomplish some of our project needs   85%
CSL helped me develop mentoring skills   67%

Understanding of Social Change and Social Issues

CSL helped students understand some of the complexities of social issues   93%

Program Structure & Communication

CSL staff provided me assistance and support in integrating CSL into my work   58%
I knew enough about the aims/requirements of CSL   75%
There was adequate communication with students   85%
There was adequate communication with instructors   68%

Quotes from Community Partners

"They brought new experiences and fresh perspectives to our regular employees."

"I am very proud of the expertise our staff bring to their work on a day-to-day basis, but the CSL Students are extremely helpful in communicating that expertise to the students we support. We rely on these students to help tutor and support our students and they are also a great support to our teachers as well."

"The CSL students, especially the students in our dance program for children, built genuine helping relationships with our clients and encourage individuals with disabilities to engage in all kinds of activities."

"I know that our CSL students get a greater understanding of the challenges of being a newcomer in Canada and the barriers that exist between our students and academic and social success. They are exposed to very nuanced social challenges and are they themselves challenged to work through that."

"I think the students gained alot more knowledge about the court system. Alot of people think they know how things work by what they see in media, however it is often very different. It is very nice to see their enthusiasm for learning, and their passion to want to help and make change. I think they may have a better idea if Law is a career path they want to take, or at least explore further."

"The CSL students have a huge impact on our school. They work with small groups of students to provide support in the area of numeracy. It is one of our targeted interventions. It allows our students to get extra support. This is especially important for struggling students and those who do not get extra support at home. CSL students also grow and learn as teachers (our students come from Education classes)."

"Functionally increased our capacity to run programs. An example is offering more open slots for a student-lead personal training program."

"Helped plan and execute a workshop we wanted to facilitate but didn't have the capacity for on our own and conducted community-based research that we hope will be valuable in future funding applications."

Conclusions

Key findings of the 2018-2019 CSL Evaluation at the University of Alberta include the following:

- Community service-learning continues to be seen by most students, instructors, and community partners as an effective pedagogical tool that they would recommend to others.
- Instructors feel supported in integrating CSL into their work.
- The fit between the placement and the course, along with differing expectations among students, and instructors, has improved over the years.
- For CSL placement students, the most commonly stated benefits are the opportunity to enhance their skills as well as the opportunity to meet and work with different people.
- For community partners, the most commonly stated benefits are developing relationships with students, instructors and the university, along with helping their organizations accomplish project needs.

To view the comprehensive 2018-2019 CSL Evaluation Report, please contact our Evaluation Coordinator. To learn more about the CSL program at the University of Alberta, please visit our website at [uab.ca/CSL](uab.ca/CSL)