Fall Capstone Workshop
September 20th, 2012
Breakout Session (Option #2)

-Tone In Unique Service Learning Course Syllabi-

Capstones are very complex due to their interdisciplinary, collaborative nature and the bridging of classroom and field work. It would suffice to say that because of this our syllabi are unique in nature as well. So then, how do we best orient students to the unique characteristics of service-learning courses through our syllabi content? How do we set the tone for these unique learning experiences? Let's take some time to brainstorm what makes these service-learning opportunities different than most main stream classes and then discuss how we can most clearly articulate that meaning for our students.

-What do you want students to know about the work they will be doing? What do they need to know that would help them be more successful?

-Which of these are inherent or clearly defined in the assignment descriptions? And which ones underly the experience?

-List of adjectives that help set the tone for effective service-learning opportunities and invite students to become active, engaged participants:

-Notes:

-Excerpts from Capstone Syllabi-

<u>Course Desire and Description</u>: "The Spirituality of Being Awake"

"This community-based learning class is designed to ignite question, wonder and reflection particularly related to spirituality and direct service, but not limited to that. Through lived experiences, classroom exercises, guest presenters, relevant readings and out-of-class assignments, students will gain a wider and deeper collection of awareness. These learnings will be integrated into the final projects of this class. Students will explore which final-project option(s) will best serve the community partners. The final projects will be determined in collaboration with the community partners, the students and the facilitator."

<u>Course Opportunities and Outcomes</u> "Living Beyond War: Challenge to Change our Thinking about War"

In this course, you will have the opportunity to: Examine your own and our society's assumptions about war and conflict; Explore alternative solutions to conflict at the personal, community and international levels; and, Learn about the Beyond War guiding principles and core practices.

If you participate actively and genuinely in this course, you will gain: A new awareness about conflict and war, and about the consequences of our choices in response to conflict; A broader knowledge about alternatives to war and ways to avoid war; Confidence in your ability to educate others about the above; and, a sense of empowerment in your ability to make positive change.

<u>Instructor's Expectations:</u> "Grant Writing for Nonprofits"

In am interested in a class in which everyone is welcome and included and in which everyone takes responsibility for welcoming and including everyone else. My expectation is that we will all bring ourselves - our best selves - to this work every day with the intention to be fully present to this experience and to companion each other as we make our way together through it. And that *is* a practice. Some days our best selves may look and sound and *be* a whole lot "better" than on other days. But I ask that each of you, if you choose to remain in this class, agree to take this same sort of commitment on for the duration of our time together and to investigate what that means to you."

<u>Instructor and Student Expectations:</u> "Educational Equity Capstone: Bridging the Gap"

I believe that it is my responsibility to offer you as many resources, experiences and opportunities as I can for you to come into a deep understanding of educational equity issues. I also believe that it is your responsibility to fully engage in and contribute to your own learning and to the quality of your experience in this course. We all share responsibility for co-creating this learning environment, so you are encouraged to contribute your ideas, concerns and/or suggestions.

<u>Instructor's Facilitation Role</u>: "Enhancing Youth Literacy (Partnership with Upward Bound)

My job, as your Capstone instructor, is to serve as a facilitator and advisor for your experience. Our work in the classroom should build a context for thinking more deeply as you provide service to the community. This is a community-based class not only in your service work but also in the classroom. The classroom community is built by all of us in an open, honest, and critical space.

<u>Instructor's Expectations:</u> "Change for the Common Good: Madison High School"

"I assume that each of you enters this class with profound gifts and skills to offer your fellow students, instructor, and the community, and that you will put these capacities to use as we create a rich, vibrant and meaningful community-service experience in an environment of mutual respect and commitment.

In service-learning classes like this Capstone, students work in a partnership with a community organization towards mutually beneficial goals. In this course, you will learn experientially; that is, by doing and by reflecting on the meaning this "doing" has for you and for the communities of which you are and will be a part. This process is a collaborative one, in which students, faculty, and community partner work together to identify each collaborator's needs and to develop the means to address those needs while capitalizing on and expanding each collaborator's strengths.

As such, this Capstone experience may be quite different from any other course experience you have had to date. By its design - bringing together mutli-disciplinary teams of students to work towards a shared goal - this class may at times feel challenging in ways unique to a Capstone. Any feelings and thoughts we may have about this experience are not in and of themselves positive or negative; it is our attitudes and behaviors related to the challenges and contingencies with are an inevitable part of interpersonal relating that determine how functional our relating is. I expect that each of you, as an upper-class student, will be responsible for your own learning, attitudes, and behaviors. You are encouraged to process your thoughts and feelings about this class in as many ways as you can. Please feel free to speak with me if you would like additional resources for doing so."

<u>Class Participation:</u> "Grant Writing Bike Transportation"

Respectful and robust dialogue and collaboration are essential to a lively and engaging class environment. Active participation in this class requires that you not only express your own views, but also that you listen carefully to the views of your classmates.. The following guidelines will help facilitate our conversation:

Be willing to share your ideas, experiences, and questions with the class. Others may probably share your questions or ideas.

Come prepared for class. If you have not carefully completed the reading and taken the time to think through the implications of class materials, your participation won't be as meaningful and (even worse!) you'll probably find yourself bored during the discussing.

If you are a reserved person who finds conversing in a group difficult, challenge yourself to join the dialogue.

Vice versa, if you are a talkative or outgoing person who finds conversing in a group relatively easy, challenge yourself to hold back a little and allow others a chance to speak.

Be respectful of the ideas and experiences of others, even though you may feel that they are different from your own.

Listen respectfully, do not interrupt, and reserve judgment until you have attempted to hear what another has to say.

Don't assume that because people are quiet they have nothing to say and that you have to "fill the gap" by speaking. The best way is to fill an uncomfortable gap is to ask others what they think.

-Facilitators Notes-

I would like to start by asking you to think back at a time when you were a student on the first day of a class and looking over the course syllabus. What did the syllabus mean to you? What did it provide?

And now on the flip side, being the instructor, what does it mean to you? What does your syllabus say about your course? You?

Aside from being the author and developer of this syllabus, has anything shifted due to the fact that you are teaching a service-learning course?

What do you think your students want from this class, you? What do they or would they appreciate knowing as they venture into this experience?

Distribute breakout session #2 handout:

Examples for *what do we want students to know*:

-What takes place outside of the classroom?
-Focus on student led learning
-Community Partner as co-educator
-Drawing on own discipline/expertise
-Working in groups
-Taking responsibility for your own role and possible evaluation
-Presentation (teaching to peers and instructor)
-Reflective nature of work
-Writing and speaking opportunities that speak from personal experience
-What does it mean to be a community
-Best practices for strong participation and engaged learning
-Suggestions/ways to participate (asking questions, speaking up, etc)
-Communication practices (shows you are flexible and care about your students)
-Communication practices in the classroom (respectful, engaged learning)

Adjectives:

<u>Helpful</u>
-Invite you to
-Encouraged to
-Opportunity to
-Explore
-Support and challenge
-Enhance
-Collaborate
-Promote
-Desired learning outcomes
-Empowered to share
-We welcome
-You will be inspired to