Transcript Notation for Service-Learning: Instructor Guide

What is the Transcript Notation for Service-Learning (TNSL)?

Through the creation of this notation, Bellevue College has acknowledged the utility of service-learning (S-L) as a teaching methodology, particularly in helping students better understand and/or apply course content, build transferrable skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, and bolster their résumés and transfer applications. When students do list their service-learning experiences in their résumés and transfer applications, as they should be encouraged to do, the TNSL provides official support that they did actually have these experiences. Additionally, it may help some students transfer service hours from Bellevue College to new academic institutions.

Qualifying students will receive an additional course in their transcript for that quarter. The course will come with zero credits and no grade, and will read: SRVLN 001-SERVICE-LEARN: [COURSE WITH S-L].

Does a service-learning course need to qualify for or offer the TNSL?

No, it does not. Instructors are strongly encouraged to offer courses with service-learning or community engagement components, even if they do not meet the rigorous criteria (explained below) to qualify for the transcript notation. Almost any form of community engagement will benefit students, and research has shown that robust service-learning offers a variety of benefits that go beyond many other forms of community engagement.

Instructors should talk with the RISE office if they would like support in converting a community engaged or service-learning course into one that may qualify for the transcript notation.

How does a student qualify for the Transcript Notation for Service-Learning?

There are two steps involved in students earning the TNSL:

1) The course must be approved by a committee that it meets specific criteria. The committee consists of one administrator, one instructor, and one student. Just because a course uses service-learning does not mean it automatically qualifies for the transcript notation; it must be approved by the committee. By the end of the previous quarter, interested instructors will need to submit their syllabi and supporting documents to the committee for review. These materials need to show the following:
   a. Service-learning is built into the course, either as direct service (individual volunteering with an external agency for a certain number of hours) or as a project (team of students working on a project for an external agency). The agency must be non-profit or governmental to qualify as service-learning (Bellevue College departments work, as well). The service-learning needs to focus on a mutually-beneficial partnership (not just volunteering to help the agency, and not just mentoring to help the student). RISE has a list of approved, vetted agencies that can be utilized for service-learning. Talk with RISE for suggestions on how to make the partnership more mutually-beneficial.
   b. Students must complete a minimum of 16 hours of direct service, or must give a project deliverable to the agency. Students should be encouraged to spread the 16 hours evenly throughout the quarter.
   c. The syllabus must talk about service-learning and explain why it’s an integral part of the course. Service-learning should also be seen as contributing to the overall course grade.
   d. The course must have at least three dedicated reflection assignments (graded or not graded) built into the course. Each assignment must exist for the purpose of reflection, and not simply be integrated into others, such as final papers. The reflections should encourage students to critically examine their service-learning experiences and connect them to the coursework. Details on these reflection assignments must be provided to the committee.

2) Additionally, instructors utilizing direct service will need to meet with RISE to discuss policies and procedures. Doing so will minimize risk to the college and ensure standardization of processes.

3) Once the committee has approved a course, and the instructor has met with RISE, the students are then eligible. By the end of the course, the instructor will need to provide RISE with a list of students who qualify for the TNSL. These students will have completed their hours, or have given the project deliverable to the agency. Additionally, the students will have submitted all their reflection assignments.
a. Instructors are encouraged to reach out to the external agencies throughout the quarter as check-ins. However, the results of the final evaluations RISE will send to agencies will not be counted towards TNSL eligibility.

b. If a student completes the hours/deliverable and submits the reflections, but the instructor feels that the student did not give significant or meaningful effort to either/both, the instructor is encouraged to talk with RISE before deciding whether that student earns the TNSL.

What is the timeline for all this?

1) **Middle to end of previous quarter** – Meet with RISE to discuss options and ensure an understanding of policies and procedures, if not done before

2) **First month of quarter** – Submit syllabus and supporting documents (e.g. reflective assignments) to RISE for review by committee; a previously-approved course will still need to be re-submitted

3) **Last week of class or finals week** – Submit to RISE a list of the SIDs for students who meet the requirements and qualify for the TNSL

What are some tips for making more meaningful or critical reflections?

1) The assignment should be focused on or dedicated to reflection.

2) There must be at least three, one before service, during service, and after service. However, RISE recommends five for best effect.

3) In order to provide the greatest accessibility to reflections, a variety of methods is best. These include written and spoken, in-class and online/Canvas, individual and group-based.

4) Some possible reflection topics are:

   a. **Beginning Reflection**
      i. Why are they being asked to do Service-Learning?
      ii. Take a temperature check (e.g. What are they excited about? Nervous about?)
      iii. How do they plan to manage their time/project over the course of the quarter?

   b. **Mid-term Reflection**
      i. How can the material being learned in class benefit the world around them, and in particular, the issue being addressed through their service-learning partnership?
      ii. How does the coursework relate to what they’re doing for S-L?
      iii. What is something they’ve observed or experienced as part of S-L, what was their reaction to it, and how does it relate to their coursework?
      iv. What are some challenges and/or discomfort they’ve been feeling as part of S-L, and how have they been dealing with them?

   c. **End Reflection**
      i. How was the S-L useful in helping them better understand or make sense of the course material?
      ii. How have they personally changed because of the S-L?
      iii. What will they do in the future? What changes will they make in how they do or see things? How can they use their own knowledge or skills to become more civically engaged or help address the issues they experienced?

Send all materials, arrange meetings, and ask questions to:

**Sapan Parekh**
Associate Director, Service-Learning & Community Engagement
RISE Learning Institute
Email: sapan.parekh@bellevuecollege.edu
Phone: 425-564-4031
Mail Stop/Office: B-241