The Communication Consultant Corps

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Rationale

One reason service-learning offers an attractive educational opportunity is that it enables students to encounter problem-solving opportunities where the options and outcomes are underdetermined. Unlike classroom assignments with legislatively clear guidelines and step-by-step instructions, service-learning typically involves far greater ad hoc adaptations to the community partner's changing needs and the sometimes unpredictable vicissitudes of a public service agency's clientele. The service-learning practices described herein respond to that fuzzily defined problem-solving environment by offering students an element of high structure, furnishing a set of clearly defined job descriptions that enable groups of students to collaborate more smoothly and more rapidly. The simulation of specific jobs in a group setting provides students a degree of security to compensate for the typical lack of confidence when they confront a community environment beyond their comfort zone. Furnishing a ready-made support network of a task-oriented group with clearly defined roles boosts student confidence levels, but it also benefits community partners. Students who arrive with clearly defined learning objectives also can enhance benefits to community partners and their clientele. The students can embark on their projects more rapidly because they enter with educational goals in place. In addition, they can reduce the burden on already under-resourced community partners who often lack the infrastructure or expertise to integrate service duties with content-based educational agendas (Vernon & Foster, 2002).

The need for this project arose from an often unacknowledged challenge that confronts community organizations in rural areas (Téllez, 2000). In a town of about 10,000 residents, local agencies barely maintained the minimum personnel needed to continue operations, much less to train and supervise a total of 50 student volunteers. The nature of this assignment adapted to the reality that interaction with the community agency and their clientele had to be limited due to the lack of feasible oversight. The project therefore acquired the nature of an ongoing consultation project whereby students analyzed and developed promotional materials for the community agencies, providing desperately needed strategies and resources without overtaxing any of the agencies' personnel. With a class of communication studies majors, about two-thirds of whom were concentrating in public relations, the Communication Consultant Corps (3C) project simulated professional consultant work while improving the outreach of community partners to their clientele.

This exercise also addresses the need to build reflection into the conduct of service activities, integrating the cognitive and the service components of service-learning. Carefully designed reflection enables service to become an educational experience tied to the learning objectives of a course (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, 1995). By connecting each student's service to ongoing reflective activities, 3C treats reflection as integral to the project rather than as an afterthought or as an additional hurdle students feel they must complete.

Objectives

This activity was developed in partial fulfillment of a Missouri Campus Compact grant whose provisions stipulated that funded projects demonstrably benefit the community through student involvement. Since service-learning triangulates three stakeholders (students, community partners and their clientele, and the academic institution), the objectives of 3C address each category of participants.

Students should learn:

- how to work collaboratively in diverse organizational and interpersonal environments.
- how the principles of persuasion affect the operations of community service organizations.
- ways to harness theories of persuasion to develop promotional materials for community service projects.

This activity involves students in distinctly defined individual roles; therefore each of these roles also fulfills objectives related to the service projects, as described in the next section.

Description of the Activity

The 3C project was designed and implemented in a large (50 students) upper-division undergraduate Persuasion course at a small (enrollment 6,000), rural, midwestern university. Students were predominantly juniors or seniors. Although there were no formal prerequisites for enrollment, most students had taken at least one other course in communication—usually in the public relations area. The students were majors or minors in communication studies, focusing on public relations, speech communication, or organizational communication as their area of concentration.

The class was divided into teams of 5-6 students. Teams were determined based on student preferences to work with various campus and community partners. The partners, pre-screened before the project began, all expressed a need to develop public outreach programs to recruit additional volunteers to serve clientele, improve fundraising, or maximize the number of clientele served. Self-selection of community partners and jobs within each team was stressed, since partners more readily embrace working with students who choose to work with the organization or cause rather than merely being assigned to it (Vernon & Foster, 2002). Enabling students to choose the specific team role they wanted to assume also invested students with primary responsibility for a definite component of the project, increasing the sense of ownership for the project as a whole (Crutsinger, Pookulangara, & Tran, 2004). One member from each team assumed each of the following individual roles. Depending on the number of students in a course, each role could be occupied by more than one student.

- Campaign Analyst: understand the organization's current persuasive strategies.
- Campaign Assessor: evaluate the organization's current persuasive strategies.
- Literature Reviewer: research what the communication literature says about tactics the organization could or should use in the future.

- Survey Developer: devise and interpret actual surveys for the team to distribute that will generate tangible data about how people would react to persuasive techniques.
- Team Artifact Strategist: judge and explain the efficacy of the new persuasive materials the team designs.

Each team was required to produce, through collaborative effort, a coherent persuasive campaign to accomplish the organization's objectives. Executive staff from each community service organization negotiated the specific goals for the campaign. The service objective was defined by the community partners to assure that students were not simply using the community partners as instruments for completing a class project (Stukas & Dunlap, 2002). Specific objectives included:

- Increase membership to Friends of the Library (local public library)
- Prepare literature to urge approval of a upcoming referendum to provide funds for library renovations and expansion (local public library)
- Redesign the web site and promotional materials for animal adoptions (local humane society)
- Enlist drivers and other support staff to deliver meals to shut-ins (county senior citizens center)
- Recruit students to attend the Missouri Academy, a residential college program for gifted high school students
- Expand public awareness of, and generate more donations and volunteers to the local shelter for abused women and children
- Develop a publicity campaign for the preventive health measures targeted by the Healthy Campus 2010 initiative (university student health services).

As for what the students should accomplish educationally, the 3C project closely simulates the collaborative partnerships that professionals in the fields of promotion, public relations, and consulting need to build. Instead of working with corporate clients, the students were charged with participating in improving life in their own community. As a whole, the group members not only produce their own individual written component (the research project), but the group collectively also produces the promotional material requested by the organization. Each team's materials (individual written reports plus the redesigned persuasive campaign) were presented directly to the community partner on the final day of class.

Implementation of the Activity

Needs Assessment

The project begins by identifying organizations that express a need for assistance in community outreach. Since the activity comprises part of a course in persuasion, organizations should have a need for developing materials that can be used as part of a strategic campaign. If the college or university has a centralized service-learning office, it can act as a clearinghouse for prospective community partners. To prepare for the activity, the instructor should meet with administrators of service organizations to make the expectations of the project more explicit. We developed the following script for these interactions, which clarifies the obligations for the community partners and for the students.

What We Need From Your Organization:

1. What is a specific objective your organization has? Tell us a key issue you face. Please share with us a problem, challenge, or need you have that involves communication. For example, do you need to recruit more volunteers? Do you need to get more financial or in-kind donations? Do you need to publicize an event? Etc.
2. Lend us samples of the materials you currently use or have used regarding that issue. (Example: brochures, logos, press releases, fundraising letters, etc.). The more you offer us, the more we can help.
3. Suggest to us what concrete products you need to address the issue. Students are expected to produce tangible products related to accomplishing the goals you set.

What You Get From Us:

1. A comprehensive examination of the communication techniques you currently use, with an analysis of how to maximize their effectiveness.
2. Actual survey data of your target audience (clientele you serve, prospective volunteers, etc.).
3. A literature review explaining what communication research tells us about the persuasive techniques you are using.
4. Tangible promotional materials you can use to help you address the issue, challenge, or opportunity you face.
5. An evaluation of the new materials you get, explaining how and why they could help you achieve your objective.

Each of the items the community partner will receive corresponds to the final products the students will create.

To provide reasonably parallel workloads for all the student groups, it is best to obtain roughly the same amount of material from each organization. Since the first task will be to discuss the existing state of the organization's promotional efforts, each group should have a critical mass of items. For example, the local animal shelter provided a collection of print ads they had run in local newspapers. The public library shared the brochures it had developed to encourage financial and book donations. Sometimes the organization had none of its own promotional materials. In those cases, students used promotional materials from similar organizations or from national affiliates. For example, a preventive health campaign for college students needed to develop its strategy, but had no prior materials. To address this situation, students were provided the web address of the American College Health Association, which sponsored the national campaign. They then examined web materials that had been developed on other campuses to provide a benchmark for their own campus's promotional campaign. The local Senior Center also had never created promotional materials to recruit volunteers. In this case, the graduate assistant for the course collected addresses of web sites for senior centers in towns roughly the same size. To assure fairness to all student groups, the sample promotional materials (or their URLs is the material were electronic) were prepared for simultaneous distribution to all student groups in the class.

Job Descriptions

Each student team consisted of five members, each of whom fulfilled a specific duty. Students collaboration was encouraged, although each student was expected to complete an individual component in addition to the collectively produced campaign materials. In our implementation of the project, one student in each team selected one job: Campaign Analyst, Campaign Assessor, Literature Reviewer, Survey Developer, or Team Artifact Strategist. Each job carries a job description that connects to the assessment criteria.

Campaign Analyst: Job duties focus on explaining the persuasive tactics and strategies used in a service organization's communication. A written report explains the major persuasive strategies and tactics that an organization is using or has used in a persuasive campaign. Responsibilities include explaining the persuasive goals and methods at work, providing specific examples that identify what kinds of persuasive strategies and tactics are occurring.

Students who become Campaign Analysts assume the following duties to their team:

1. Carefully examine the material from current or previous campaigns involving the community partner. The team may focus on all or some of the materials it obtains.
2. The entire team should share and have access to the material being analyzed. The materials being examined also may be the springboard for other components of the team's project, perhaps as a basis for survey questions or new campaign ideas.

The material the team decides to examine should be designed to influence a specific audience's behavior, promote awareness of a specific product or service, or to gain compliance with a specific objective (e.g., to raise funds). The Campaign Analyst's mission is to identify the persuasive techniques employed in the persuasive campaign materials, apply the persuasion theories from the texts and from class to the specific materials. The objective is to reveal the persuasive strategies and tactics at work in the messages. The Campaign Analysis is designed to show how a persuasive campaign functions. The Analyst's role is purely descriptive, examining the material carefully, but not evaluating its effectiveness, moral quality, or otherwise passing personal judgments. (Other phases of the project offer opportunities for making evaluations.) The Campaign Analysis is supposed to show the student's understanding of how persuasion actually operates. The report the Campaign Analyst produces, therefore, is purely descriptive, detailing the persuasive techniques at work in the current or previous persuasive campaigns.

Campaign Assessor: The goal of this position is to render judgments about the efficacy and desirability of actual persuasive tactics. Using materials the team has obtained from the community partner, the Assessor's task is to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of that material in light of the organization's objectives. Specifically, the Assessor's report will answer the questions:

1. Which persuasive appeals in the community partner's material should have worked well and why?
2. Which persuasive appeals in the community partner's material should prove less effective and why?
3. What were the actual results of the materials that were developed? How did these results confirm or contradict the predictions that theories of persuasion would make about their efficacy? How can the results be explained by persuasion theories?

The Campaign Assessor's report should cover the following topics, which can provide a template for an outline.

1. Considering the target audience and the setting (where, when, and how the messages are presented), how effective should these messages be? Explain how you reach your conclusions by justifying them in light of what you have learned about persuasion in this course.
    A. Which components of the message stand the greatest chance of success and why?
        1. According to persuasion research, which target audiences would most likely react in the desired manner? (Consider which audiences are most responsive to the persuasive appeals being used.)
        2. According to persuasion research, what kinds of persuasive appeals *should* prove most effective for the organization's target audience and cause?
    B. Which portions of the message stand the least chance of success and why?
        1. Which relevant audiences are not addressed adequately or appropriately?
        2. What obstacles does this organization face in constructing effective persuasive appeals?
        3. In light of what you know about persuasion (from the text, class material, and research), which persuasive appeals could be altered and why?
2. What ethical issues does this persuasive campaign confront?
    A. What ethical guidelines should this persuasive campaign follow and why?
    B. What sorts of persuasive appeals might prove morally problematic for this organization and why?

Literature Reviewer: This role requires examining and assessing the current state of knowledge about specific communication strategies employed in a service organization's communication. The report (the literature review) demonstrates the student's ability to read carefully, comprehend, and assimilate communication research published in reputable academic journals.

A useful literature review synthesizes research into an essay that compares the findings of the different sources, identifies the directions research has taken, suggests areas for further research, and evaluates the quality of the work that has been done in that area. Students who serve as Literature Reviewers identify one or two prevailing persuasive strategies in the persuasive material already developed or utilized by the community partner. The strategy should constitute the predominant means of persuasion in the material. For example, the structure of the material may indicate that the organization is relying on rewards as a compliance-gaining strategy. If several students are conducting a literature review, each student can report on a different persuasive technique.)

The Literature Reviewer attempts to answer the question: on the basis of scholarly research, what do we now know about this persuasive technique? To answer this question, students should carefully examine refereed articles in scholarly journals dealing with the persuasive strategy. Students will find the Communication and Mass Media Complete, PsycInfo, and SocIndex electronic databases especially helpful when researching persuasion. In additions, students could start by tracing some of the citations in their textbook to find primary sources for research dealing with relevant theories.

The following questions can guide construction of the literature review:

1. What does the early research tell us about this persuasive strategy?
   A. When does this persuasive technique work best? When does it tend to fail?
   B. What were the methodological limits of these early studies?
2. How have the early findings about this persuasive strategy been confirmed, revised, or rejected by later research?
3. What are the methodological limits of recent research? Have all the potential limitations of early studies been acknowledged and corrected?
4. What directions should future research in this area take?
   A. What important issues remain controversial or unanswered? (Pay special attention to conflicting findings.)
   B. How could future studies correct the shortcomings of current and past research?

Survey Developer: The goal of this job is to apply the principles of effective communication research to the construction, administration, and interpretation of a survey regarding persuasion. This job requires considerable advance planning to determine whom to survey, administer the survey, then work with the instructor to tabulate and summarize the results. Despite—or perhaps because of—its challenges, this job proved the most popular, with more students wanting to select it than any of the other roles.

The Survey Developer creates an actual survey relevant to persuasion whose results can be applied to develop and improve persuasive materials of the community partner. The subject pool must be a population relevant to the people the organization wants to reach. For example, a team working with the local humane society surveyed people who claimed they were considering adopting a pet. Another team obtained reactions to a new logo for the family shelter, testing several designs with local citizens. A team working with an organization that provided free rides to local bar patrons (to prevent drunk driving) asked patrons of these bars about the best ways to remember the organization's phone number.

The Survey Developer's guidelines can be customized for the nature of the project, but here are the instructions they received in 3C.

1. Decide exactly what the team wants to find out by administering a survey. What kinds of attitudes or behaviors do you want to measure? Who do you plan to survey? The subjects you select must mirror or represent the populations the organization is trying to reach. For example, if the university is trying to recruit more African-American students, you should target African-Americans who are college-bound.
2. Once you decide on the aspects of persuasion you will examine, search for relevant studies in refereed journals. Many studies use surveys to obtain data, and some of these questions might be adaptable to your study. This outside research provides some models of how data can be gathered.
3. Develop a survey instrument to measure the reactions of your subjects. Pattern the survey after ones you have seen or read about in your research for this project. The survey should have the following characteristics:
   A. Ask 10-15 questions.
   B. Use a properly constructed Likert scale in at least three (3) of the questions.
   C. Design the questionnaire so it can be completed within 15-20 minutes.
   D. Administer your survey to at least 20 different people.

To assure properly constructed questions, the instructor should review and approve all survey questions and the selection of subjects. This approval process also prevents potentially offensive or invasive questions, and the stipulation of a voluntary subject pool avoids issues of consent. Instructors should consult their college or university's institutional review board to assure compliance with procedures of informed consent. A properly constructed questionnaire with an introductory disclaimer that assures confidentiality and voluntary consent usually will qualify as exempt from review. Instructors should consult the specific policies on their campuses.

The following structure should guide the construction of the survey and could serve as an outline for the Survey Developer's final report.

1. Introduction
   A. Research questions: What are you trying to find out that will be relevant and useful to your community partner?
   B. Hypotheses: What do you think the answers to your research questions will be?
   Hint: The best focus would be to test reactions to the organization's current materials *and* to test reactions to the materials your team is designing.
2. Method
   A. Subjects: How many people responded? Who are the subjects (maintain their anonymity, but specify their environment). Example: Respondents were 50 undergraduate students in an upper-division Persuasion course at a mid-size (enrollment 16,000), urban, southeastern university.
   B. Construction of survey: Why did you choose to ask the questions you did? Which communication studies formed the models for your study?
   C. Include a complete copy of the survey itself.
3. Results should include (minimally) the following statistical data in table format:
   A. Number of responses for each question.
   B. Mean (average) of responses to each question (where applicable).
   C. Range of responses: breakdown of how many respondents chose each answer.
   D. Standard deviation of responses to each question (where applicable). This data shows you the tendency of responses to cluster near the average. It is a measure of variance.
   E. Patterns/themes that emerge in responses (especially to open-ended questions).
4. Discussion
   A. Were your hypotheses confirmed or disconfirmed?
   B. How should we interpret the statistical results? What do they mean for the community partner?
   C. What factors might have influenced the respondents to answer as they did?
   D. What limitations does this study have? (Consider subject selection issues especially.)
   E. To what extent are the results generalizable to the community partner's target audience and objectives?
5. Conclusion
   A. How could the community partner use the results?
   B. How might this sort of study improve if it were redone?

Team Artifact Strategist: The goal of the Team Artifact Strategist is to assess the materials that the team has created for its community partner. The end product of 3C, of course, is to produce tangible products that the community partner can use to accomplish its objective. The Artifact Strategist explains why, according to the principles of persuasion, the material the team designed and developed should help accomplish the community partner's goals. Throughout the 3C project, the development of the persuasive campaign materials has been grounded in persuasion theories.

The Team Artifact Strategist's report basically consists of a "before and after" approach, specifying exactly what the team has targeted for change and explaining why the team designed the new materials the way it did. The report offers a summative explanation of the persuasive communication principles that guided the team's choices in designing the campaign materials. The Team Artifact Strategist's report should cover the following topics, which provide a template for outlining the report.

1. Explain how your team's artifact helps the community partner.
    A. Which areas of persuasion does your new artifact improve? Consider how the material your team created meets a challenge, solves a problem, or improves a situation in a way that would help your community partner achieve its goals.
    B. How do the strategies and tactics of your material fit with the community partner's objectives and/or target audience?
    C. What data indicates that your choice of persuasive tactics will prove more effective than those the organization already uses? What persuasion research suggests that your tactics should work for the designated purposes?
2. Considering the target audience and the setting (where, when, and how the messages are presented), how effective should the new messages be? Explain how you reach your conclusions by justifying them in light of what you have learned about persuasion.
    A. Which portions of message stand the greatest chance of success and why?
        i. According to persuasion research, which target audiences would most likely react in the desired manner? (Consider which audiences are most responsive to the persuasive appeals being used.)
        ii. According to persuasion research, what kinds of persuasive appeals *should* prove most effective for the organization's target audience and cause?
    B. Which portions of the message stand the least chance of success and why?
        i. Which relevant audiences are not addressed?
        ii. What obstacles does this organization face in constructing other effective persuasive appeals?
        iii. In light of what we know about persuasion (from the text, class material, and research), exactly how should your community partner use this material to maximize its desired effect?
3. What ethical issues does this persuasive campaign confront?
        i. What ethical guidelines should this persuasive campaign follow and why?
        ii. What sorts of persuasive appeals might prove morally problematic for this organization using your material and why? (Consider: Should they avoid distributing it to certain audiences, etc.?)

Evaluation of the Activity

Assessment regularly receives attention as a high priority in service-learning (Oster-Aaland, Sellnow, Nelson, & Pearson, 2004). Its importance stems not only from its centrality in evaluating educational achievement, but also in documenting the effects of service-learning to various constituencies, including potential providers of funds or resources. Assessment also serves vital internal functions, since feedback from and about community partners can help determine the nature of future projects and partnerships (Schwartzman, Meister, Davis, Paus, & Rummer, 2007).

As the preceding section noted, students were expected to submit a report related to the tasks they performed in their designated jobs. Each team member's report consisted of a 5-8 page paper requiring use of at least two peer-reviewed sources (at least five were required for the literature review). One copy of each report was submitted to the community partner. Another copy was submitted to the instructor for grading. Students need to recognize and adapt to two audiences in their writing. The instructor will look for mastery of the concepts of persuasion and how they are applied to the campaign for the community partner. The community partner will value clear language that offers direct explanations of how the students' work can improve its operations. The community partner focuses on pragmatic, results-oriented reports, while the instructor prioritizes demonstrating cognitive mastery of the course material. By appealing to both audiences, students should demonstrate they thoroughly understand persuasion theories by recognizing and applying them in concrete situations.

Student performance within each of the job descriptions gets assessed according to criteria specifically designed for that task. The criteria were furnished to all students with the description of each job at the beginning of the term. To the extent that a report deviates from these criteria, it will earn a lower grade.

Campaign Analyst and Campaign Assessor

The Campaign Analyst and Campaign Assessor jobs require a research-based report that examines the persuasive techniques the community partner used in at least one of its publicity campaigns. The Analyst's report describes the persuasive tactics; the Assessor evaluates these tactics in light of research-based theories of persuasion. The report can be graded using several criteria.

Artifact:
- Examines a substantive body of material examined.
  - Material is significant enough to withstand examination.
  - Sufficient selection of material to represent persuasive strategies and tactics employed.
  - Authoritative versions (primary sources).
- Clear examples of persuasive tactics.

Analysis:
- Correctly identifies persuasive strategies and tactics.
- Clearly identifies likely target audiences.
- Findings go far beyond simple commonsense assumptions about persuasion.
- Analyst remains descriptive, refrains from evaluation. Assessor bases evaluations on theories of persuasion, not personal opinions.
- Directly engages ideas covered in class discussion and in the texts.
- All claims supported with primary source examples and relevant research.

Research:
- Employs relevant theories of persuasion.

- Shows evidence that communication research, psychological research, and other research from relevant fields was used.
- Uses credible (peer-reviewed) sources instead of popular (not peer-reviewed) material.

Literature Reviewer

Evaluative criteria for the literature review specify the following requirements:

- Correctly identifies a major persuasive strategy in the body of material examined.
- Directly engages ideas covered in class discussion and in the texts.
- Supports all claims with examples and relevant research.
- All research examined is published in reputable, refereed scholarly journals.
- Review examines both the early and more recent research on the persuasive strategy.
- When possible, includes research published within the past five (5) years.
- Specifically describes methodological techniques and limitations of studies.
- Does not rely exclusively on studies cited in the text. (Paper reflects independent research.)
- Reviews at least five published studies (assignment requirement).

Survey Developer

The evaluative criteria for the Survey Developer's report include assessment of the quality questions as well as the interpretations of the survey results. High quality reports will have the following characteristics:

- Survey questions include demographic data about subjects plus inquiries relevant to the study's objectives.
- Survey questions phrased clearly, not leading, loaded, or ambiguous.
- Administers survey to a sufficient number of subjects.
- Selects subject pool that is representative of the organization's target population.
- Directly engages ideas covered in class discussion and in the text (especially in the area of properly conducting persuasion studies).
- Supports all claims with data from the surveys and relevant research.
- Applies the survey results to guide construction of persuasive materials for the community partner.
- Bases questionnaire on previously published research without duplicating (or unduly overlapping with) that research.
- Presents statistical data in systematically constructed, easily understood tables.
- Specifically describes limitations of the survey.

Team Artifact Strategist

The Team Artifact Strategist's report should justify the choices the group made in constructing the campaign materials for the community partner. The evaluative criteria for these reports include the following components.

Redesign and Discussion:

- Offers specific ways the new artifacts enhance the community partner's persuasive appeal.
- Correctly identifies persuasive strategies and tactics being used in the new materials.

- Findings go far beyond simple commonsense assumptions about persuasion.
- Substantiates evaluations with relevant research about persuasion.
- Directly engages ideas covered in class discussion and in the texts.
- Gives the community partner a specific rationale, supported with evidence, as to why the artifact should be effective under specific circumstances.
- Explains clearly how to use the artifact for maximum effectiveness.

Research:
- Employs relevant theories of persuasion.
- Shows evidence that communication research, psychological research, and other research from relevant fields was used.
- Uses credible (peer-reviewed) sources instead of popular (not peer-reviewed) material.

External Evaluation

Assessment by community partners, while important, must proceed with caution. Many community partners, grateful for additional volunteers and reluctant to risk a continuing influx of labor, may evaluate student workers uncritically except for instances of gross malfeasance (Schwartzman, 2002). To avoid this positive bias, assessment instruments should incorporate operational questions that ask evaluators to specify achievements and areas for improvement.

The 3C project incorporated external evaluation in two ways. First, community partners were asked to review the initial needs assessments and service agreements. They then listed the ways that the campaign materials developed by the students failed to meet, met, or exceeded expectations. Rather than request an overall evaluation of quality, evaluations focused on each of the community partner's self-identified needs and how well the students' work fulfilled them.

A second, more long-term evaluation can occur longitudinally. Although this stage of evaluation happens long after the projects are graded, it can indicate the sustainability of the 3C approach. Periodically the instructor should follow up with the community partners to determine how the student-devised campaigns were implemented and what the results were. Three years after the pilot 3C project was implemented, results are still visible. The local humane society totally redesigned its pet adoption strategy according to the student campaign recommendations. The new web-based pet adoption campaign features names and photos of every pet eligible for adoption. The new campaign, for example, heeds student advice to use scarcity appeals. A limited supply tends to increase value, while a surplus of animals reduces each one's uniqueness and reduces urgency to adopt now (because more animals always seem available). Now the web site includes photos of animals that have been adopted recently, urging patrons to act before their chosen animal gets adopted. Instructors also can gather statistical data to document the results that student-designed persuasive campaigns have generated.

Reflections on the Activity

The 3C project has some limitations as a self-contained service-learning activity. Born amid constraints posed by understaffed community partners and high student enrollment, the project as implemented sacrificed a degree of direct student contact with community members. Some researchers suggest that the educational quality of a service-learning project correlates with the amount, duration, and depth of contact with people in the community who differ from the customary social contacts of students (Erickson & O'Connor, 2000). If the 3C project were to provide a template for other service-learning activities, opportunities for more direct, sustained interaction with the community partners and their clientele should be maximized. The survey component does involve students in field work, and other stages of the project could become more hands-on as well. For example, students could interview the designers of previous persuasive campaign materials to understand the rationale behind the tactics the organization employed. Student teams also could organize focus groups among each organization's target populations to test reactions to the new campaign materials the students develop. This input could provide concrete ways of testing the persuasive appeal of the new items. For example, students might present their work to a gathering of volunteers who serve meals for the senior center.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in using the 3C concept is managing its implementation. To consolidate the number of tasks to oversee, several students could fulfill the same job. This consolidation would enable larger groups or perhaps an entire class to work with one organization. Such an arrangement requires service organizations with sufficient infrastructure to provide enough previous campaign materials and ambitious enough plans for future campaigns to occupy the students.

Since students had accumulated a vast repertoire of persuasive techniques in the course, they had little difficulty identifying and devising persuasive tactics. The literature review proved somewhat challenging, largely due to students' unfamiliarity with reading a large number of scholarly articles and translating the findings into usable insights expressed in everyday language. By far the most challenging job was the survey construction. Students required extensive guidance in devising unambiguous, non-leading, non-loaded questions that would yield usable information. The survey component probably should receive top priority as a job that calls for multiple student collaborators, perhaps with each student responsible for developing a given number and type of questions. Table 1 can assist in students selecting or being assigned to the various jobs. The contents of the table reflect observations regarding the kinds of students who self-select and excel at each task.

The most important virtue of the 3C project lies in its versatility. By tying reflection to the job that each student performs, the exercise fully integrates the cognitive component into the service activity. Since the team member roles are not specific to a particular type of community organization, they can be implemented as part of the structure of any service project. Incorporating some of the elements of 3C into a service-learning project can provide a way to structure student expectations without overburdening community partners that may lack the resources and personnel to assign and monitor distinct activities for every student.

Table 1
Types of Students and 3C Jobs

Job Title	**Types of Students Best Suited to Job**
Campaign Analyst	Effective organizer and classifier; thoroughly understands key concepts and their definitions
Campaign Assessor	Critical thinker; good at rational and impartial judgments
Literature Reviewer	Good researcher; skilled at using electronic databases; good translator of complex ideas into plain language
Survey Developer	Enjoys qualitative or quantitative research methods; values tangible evidence to ground claims
Team Artifact Strategist	Highly original and creative; can provide clear examples of persuasive strategies

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