

The Experience of Implementing Service-Learning as Instructional tool in a course-based in the Master of Social Work at Bethlehem University: Implications and Perspectives for Community Social Work Practice.

Dr. Eman Abusaada, MSW, PhD

This paper presents the experience of implementing Service-learning in a course-based as an instructional tool in the Master of Social Work at Bethlehem university. The aim of Social-Service is to promote social and civil engagement of the students “where students invest in their service to solve real problems in the community or meet identified needs at the community level, at the same time reflect on the service in a way to gain further understanding of the course content and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002, p. 505).

Within this framework the course has been implemented and has been in continuous development since 2015 to give the students a broader appreciation of the social work discipline through understanding how to serve their community but reflect back in the classroom in order to use and implement theory in their service. The focus on the link between theory that is taught in the classroom and the praxis in the community through reflection has shown how students’ social, personal and methodological skills are improved.

The experience of this course, will be presented and discussed within the theories that support Service Learning, these include constructivism and experimental learning. Constructivist learning theory applies to service learning in that “learning is potentiated by active engagement in real or authentic activities” (Furco, 2001). Implications to community social work practice and social and civic engagement will be discussed and highlighted.