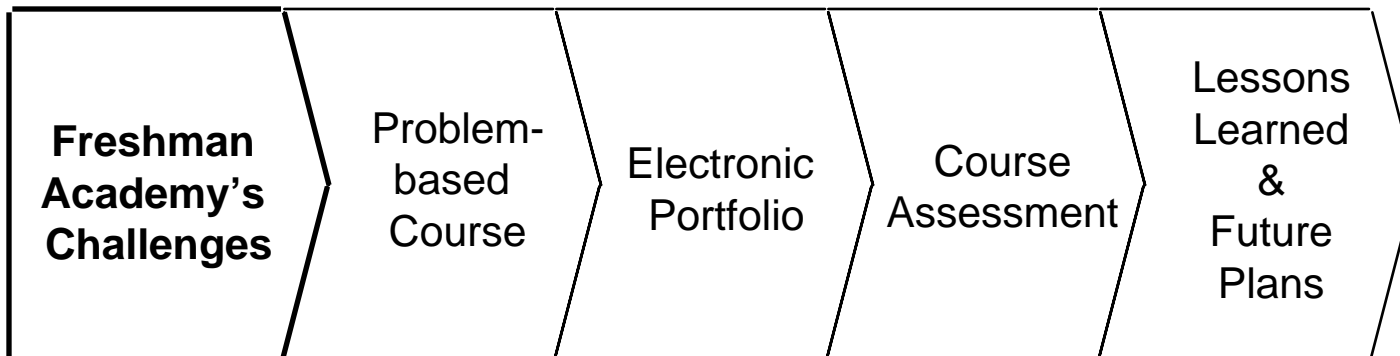


Using Problem-based Learning to Integrate Learning Communities

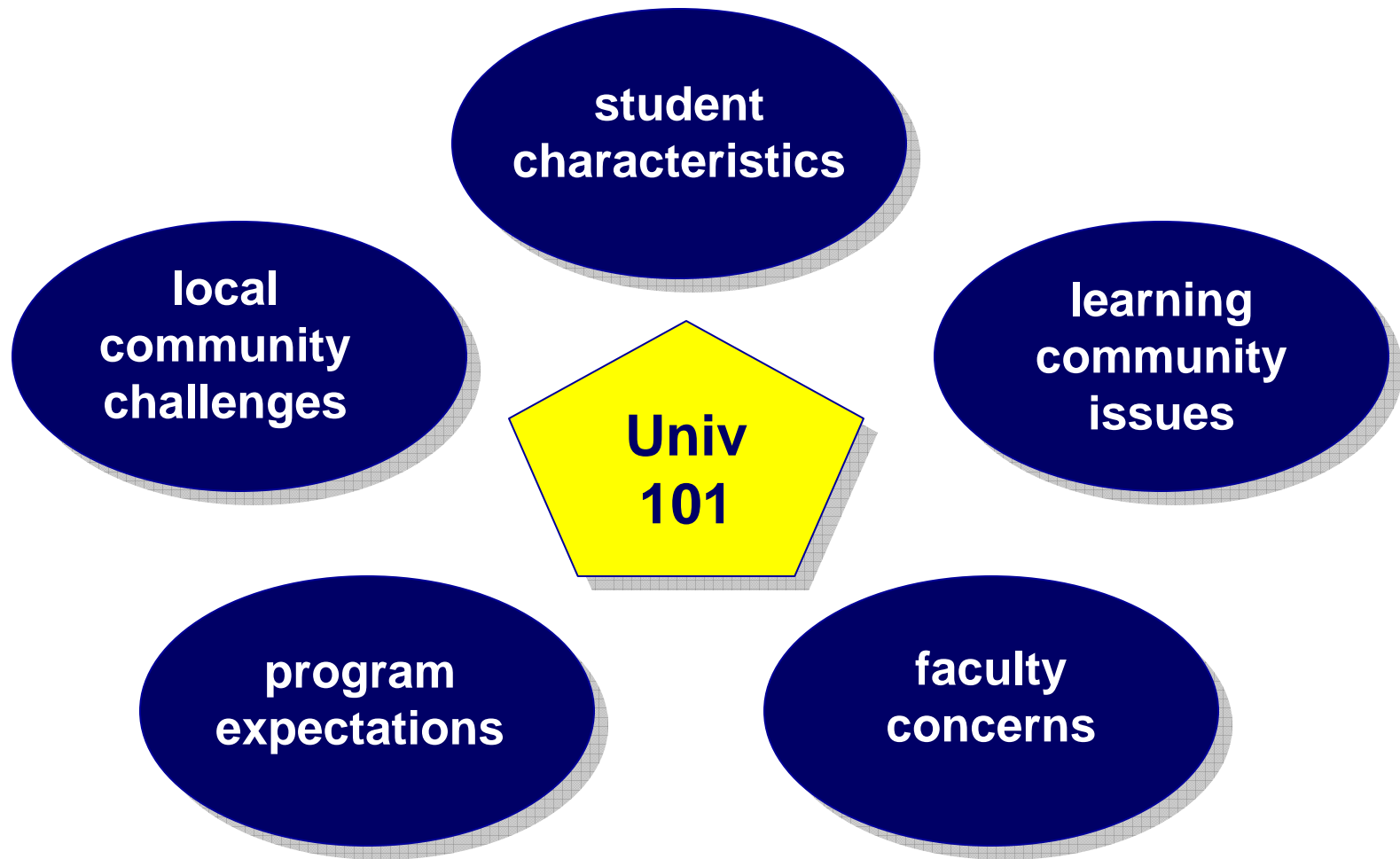
By
Patricia B. Esplin, Ph.D.
J. Gary Daynes, Ph.D.
Stefinee Pinnegar, Ph.D.
Kristoffer Kristensen, Ph.D.

Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

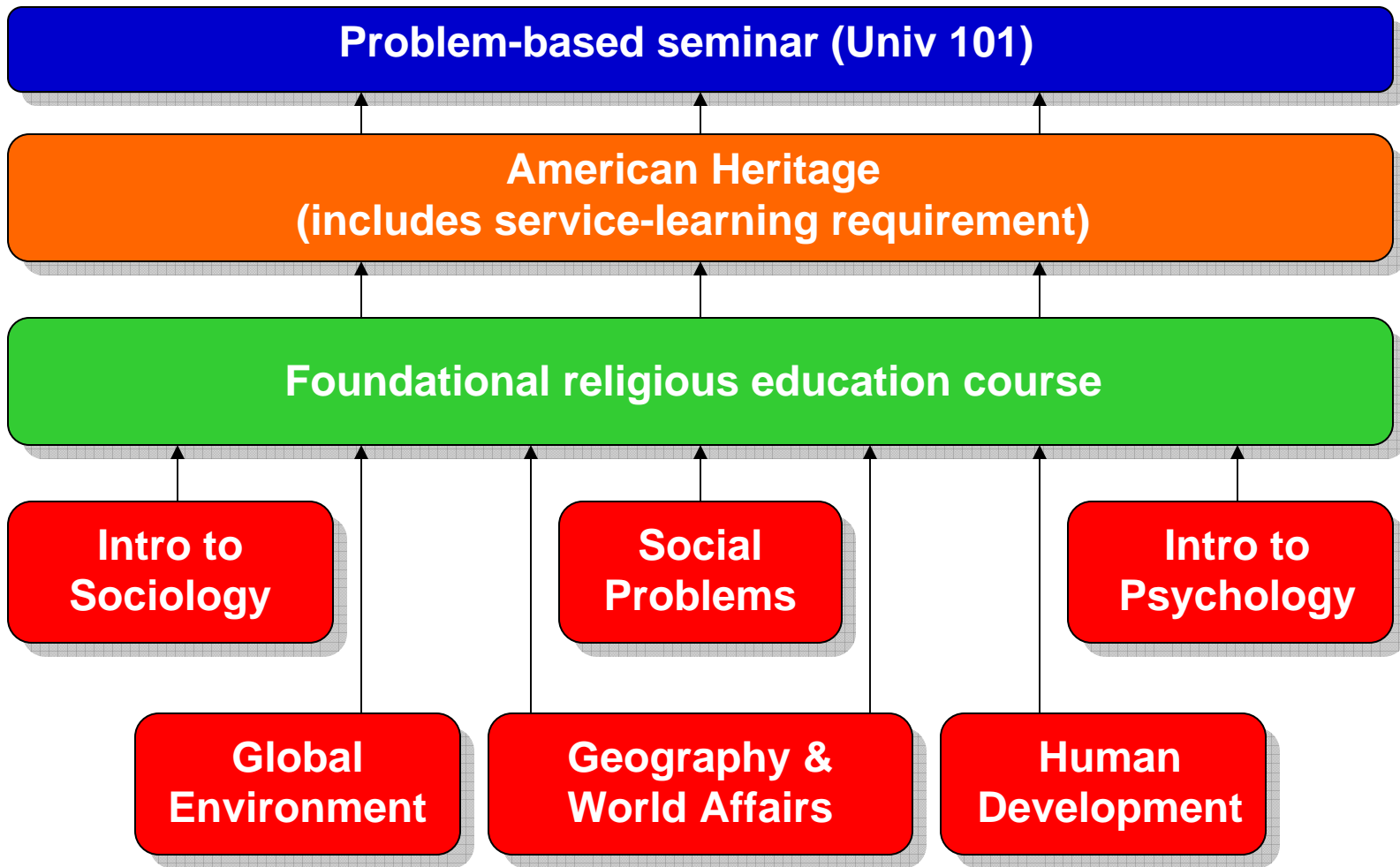
My agenda today...



Freshman Academy's Challenges



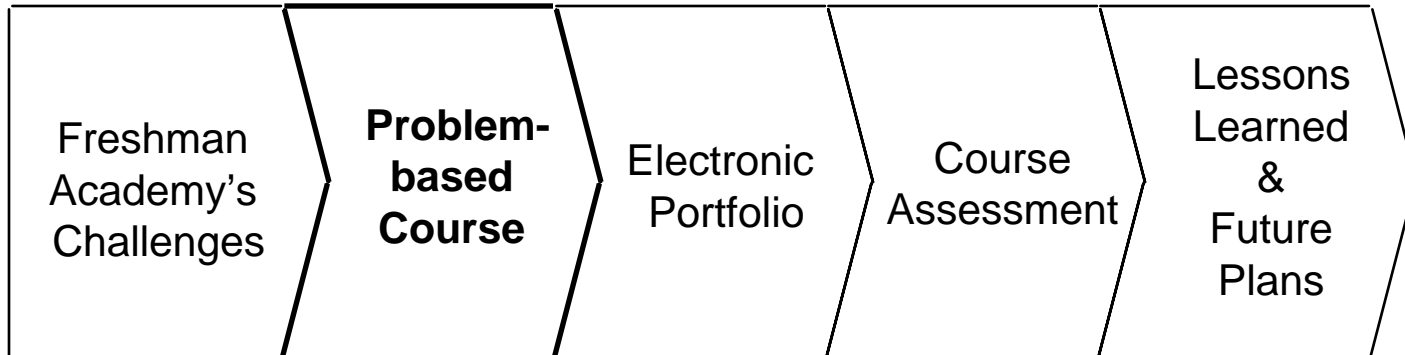
Freshman Academy's Challenges: Learning Community Issues & Faculty Concerns



Freshman Academy's Challenges: Program Expectations

- Effective communication
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Civic engagement
- Personal development

My agenda today...



Problem-based Course: Rationale for Problem-based Learning

- Provides structure that supports integration of learning community course content
- Teaches practical use of social science methods
- Challenges student perceptions of faculty-student roles
- Encourages student responsibility for own learning
- Supports development of group skills, analytical reasoning, communication, and problem-solving
- Connects students and faculty without substantial faculty resources
- Uses ambiguous and complex issues to promote student growth

Problem-based Course: Problem Selection

Problem: *Educational progress in Provo*

Rationale:

- Relevance—most students recently attended public schools
- Most students were new to the Provo community
- Service-learning opportunities were available in the Provo School District
- Many students enrolled in the learning community were pre-education majors
- “No Child Left Behind” was a hot topic in national and local news

Problem-based Course: Activities and Student Assessment

- **Activities**

- Readings
- Problem definition
- Guest lectures
- Data gathering
- Group work
- Faculty consultation
- Problem redefinition
- Knowledge fair

- **Assessment**

- Weekly reflections
- Data summary
- Concept map
- Learning paper
- Self-evaluation
- Participation

Problem-based Course: Basic Course Design—Semester View

Weeks

1-2 Setting the stage, readings, initial problem definition

3-4 Guest lectures
Data gathering—related issues

5-6 (money, civic & social life, family, cultural/language, schooling, history/context)

7-8 Stakeholder group work
(students, parents, school personnel, government agencies, non-
governmental agencies, university)

9-10 Problem redefinition
Faculty consultation

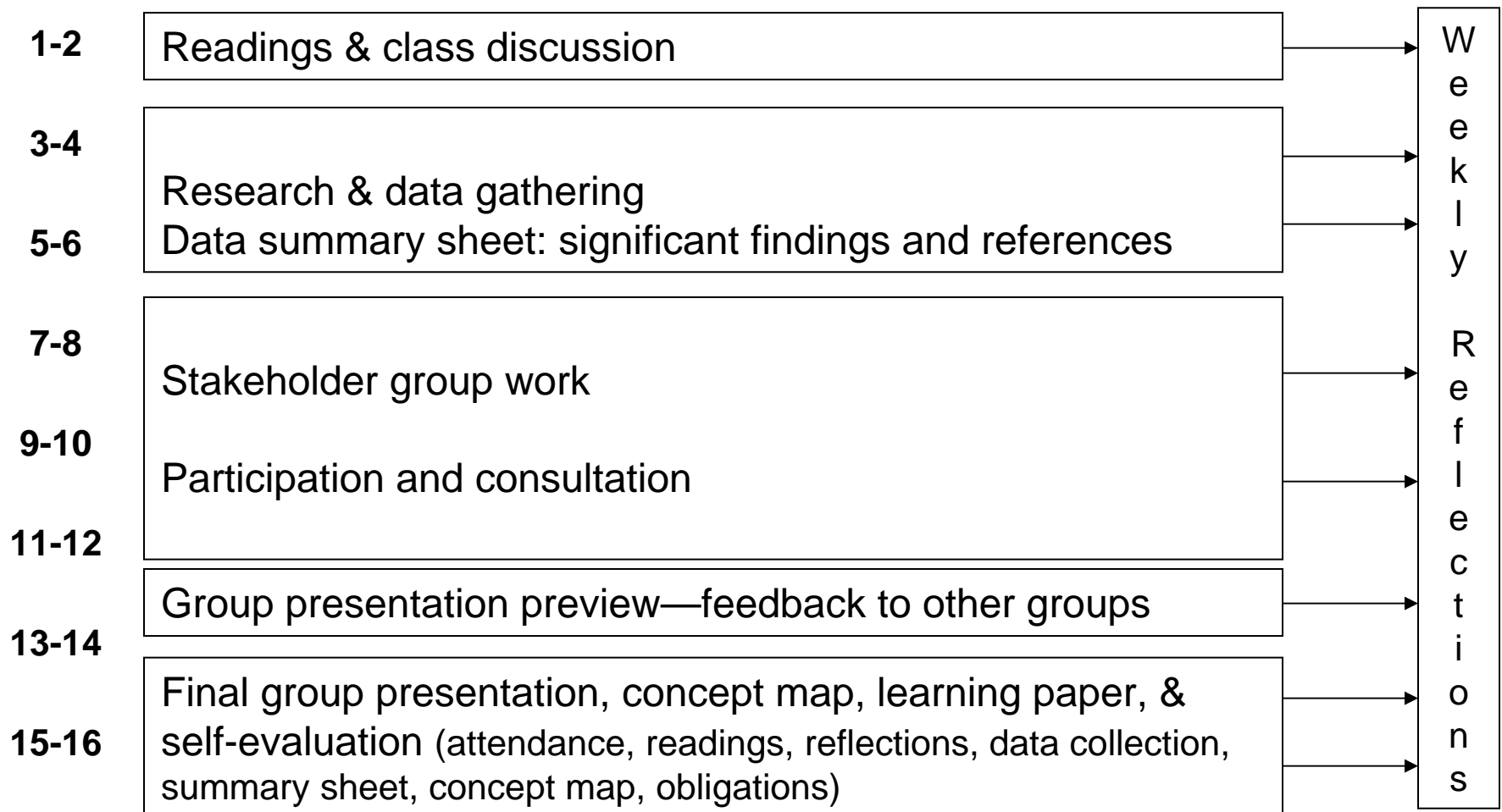
11-12

13-14 Group presentation—feedback session
Refine concept map

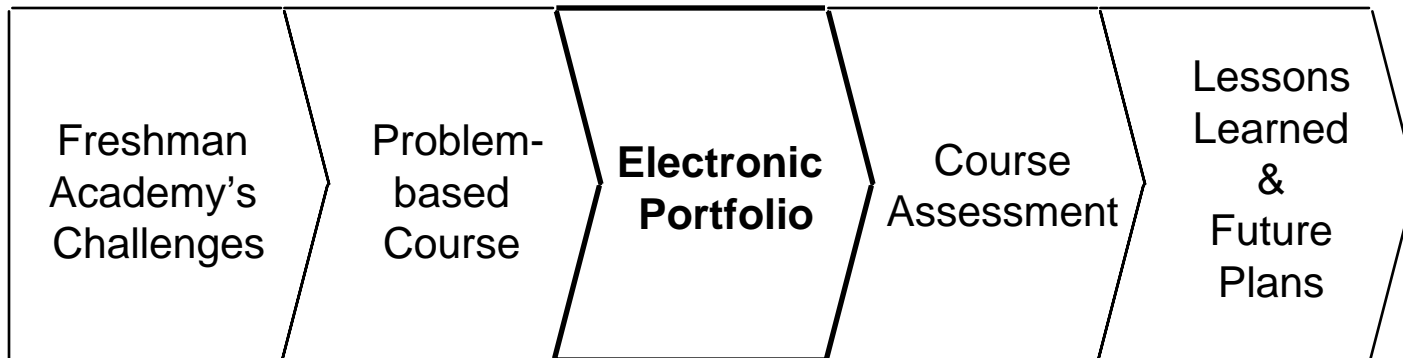
15-16 Knowledge fair, learning paper, self-evaluation

Problem-based Course: Student Assessment—Semester View

Weeks



My agenda today...



- 1) Weekly reflections
- 2) Research information & reference database
- 3) Data summary sheets
- 4) Learning papers
- 5) Self-evaluation ratings
- 6) Administrative tools

Electronic Portfolio: Weekly Reflection Prompts

Weekly Reflection Prompt	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Describe how your service in the community this week has helped you better understand a specific topic in one of your Freshman Academy courses.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What have you done this week to make connections between your course work and your service in the community?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Which of your activities this week have helped you become a better learner?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Which of the social types in The Tipping Point (connector, maven, salesman) are you most like? Why?	X										
What have you learned this week about the habits you need to develop to become a successful student?		X				X					X
Are you becoming a critical thinker? How do you know?		X					X				
Does BYU really need Provo?		X									
Are your communication skills improving? How do you know?			X					X			
Write a story from your own life that illustrates how shared stories help build community.			X								
Are you getting better at solving problems? How do you know?				X					X		
Describe a problem, with which you have first-hand experience, from two perspectives. How do differing perspectives influence the definition of problems?				X							
What are you learning about collaboration from working in your University 101 group? From your work in the community?					X	X		X	X		X
Are you becoming more engaged with the community? How do you know?					X					X	
Think about the things in your life that matter greatly to you (sports, family, art, religion, whatever). Draw a concept map of that thing, making sure that your map defines the thing, represents why it is the way it is, and describes the resources that that thing requires in order to be successful.							X				
Describe a time in your own life when someone's small action made a huge difference for you for good or ill. Based on that experience, come up with your own set of guidelines for discovering and taking advantage of leverage points.										X	

Electronic Portfolio: Research Database Design

Stakeholder Groups							
A r e a o f F o c u s		Students	Parents	School Personnel	Gov't Agencies	NGOs	University
	Money						
	Civic & Social Life						
	Family Life						
	Schooling						
	Culture/ Language						
	History/ Context						

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet

- Describe stakeholder group in terms of area of focus (3-5 sentences)
- Summarize most significant findings (3-5 sentences)
- Identify 8-10 most important facts and sources

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Summary Statements

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

- I. **In terms of your issue area, describe your stakeholder group. (3-5 sentences)** It is the job of school personnel to ensure that the cultures and languages of the students are not impeding on educational progress. If there seems to be problems in this area, school personnel must identify the problem and then create a plan of action to eliminate those problems. In Provo, the problem has been identified that many of the minority students, particularly the Hispanics, are lagging behind in test scores and reading abilities. The next step is for those in leadership positions and those working with the students to attempt to eliminate the gap in progression so that minority students are achieving at the same level as their peers
- II. **Summary of most significant findings. (3-5 sentences)** Although the percentage of Hispanics enrolled in Provo schools has increased dramatically over the past few years, it is obvious that their specific educational and learning needs are not yet being addressed as their test scores continue to lag behind their Caucasian peers. Test scores are not generally decreasing across the group at large or among different cultural groups, but the gap is not narrowing; each group is essentially stuck in a rut with little to no improvement over the past several years. Narrowing the gap and bettering educational progress for all, but even more specifically for minority groups such as Hispanics, is not hopeless. Salt Lake City Public Schools have made much progress in that very area over the past few years and can serve as an example to other districts, such as Provo.

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Facts & Sources (part 1)

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

III. Most important facts (and sources)

Fact: In the past three years, about 90% of Caucasian students in Provo have scored “near master” or “mastery” on standardized tests in Language Arts and Math. The percentage of Latino students scoring in the same categories has consistently been 20 points lower. Caucasians scoring at that level in Science has increased from 75% in 2000 to 85% in 2002, but has remained about 50% for Latino students.

Source: Provo City School District: A Changing Community (PowerPoint slides)

Fact: Latino enrollment in Provo schools has grown dramatically in the past few years. In the 1987-1988 school year, Latinos comprised only 3.3% of the school district. Last school year (2002-2003) they accounted for 18.69%.

Source: Provo City School District: A Changing Community (PowerPoint slides)

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Facts & Sources (part 2)

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

III. Most important facts (and sources)

Fact: Student-to-teacher ratios in Provo seem too high for any one-on-one attention for students. The lowest ratio is in first grade where it is 21:1. The highest is in fourth through sixth grade where it is 30:1--entirely too high.

Source: Provo School District website
(<http://www.provo.k12.ut.us/psdwebsite/newsandinformation/boardofeducation/pdfs/targets2002.pdf>)

Fact: The national student-to-teacher ratio is much lower than in Provo. In 2000 it was only 16:1. This suggests that perhaps one approach to decreasing some of Provo's problems is to find more budget money to hire new teachers.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics
(<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28>)

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Facts & Sources (part 3)

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

III. Most important facts (and sources)

Fact: It is not impossible to decrease the gap between the achievement of minority groups without decreasing the achievement of other students. Salt Lake is doing just that.

Source: Salt Lake Tribune "Minority Students Narrow Gap" by Ronnie Lynn
(<http://www.sltrib.com/2003/Oct/10082003/utah/99859.asp>)

Fact: Money is a necessary part of implementing successful programs. Money is needed for training, salaries, and materials. Salt Lake City Public Schools obtained much of their money for implementing such programs through the Annenberg Foundation as a part of the Eccles/Annenberg challenge to improve public education.

Source: Salt Lake Tribune "Salt Lake Test Scores Rising" by Stephen Speckman
(<http://www.sltrib.com/2003/Oct/10082003/utah/99859.asp>)

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Facts & Sources (part 4)

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

III. Most important facts (and sources)

Fact: Better teacher training is imperative for programs to be successful. Teachers need to be trained on how to meet the learning needs of all students in a classroom in order to improve all student achievement. Special training is needed on how to work with students who speak limited English or some from homes where English is not the primary language.

Source: Salt Lake Public Schools website (www.slc.k12.ut.us) and Salt Lake Tribune "Salt Lake Test Scores Rising" by Stephen Speckman (<http://www.sltrib.com/2003/Oct/10082003/utah/99859.asp>)

Fact: Problems vary from school to school. Salt Lake found it useful for each school to identify its major problem areas and create a plan to address their problems. There is no blanket solution applicable everywhere. The first step is using data to identify the problem and who needs to be targeted and then creating a plan to solve it, or at least alleviate its effects.

Source: Salt Lake Public Schools Newsletter Spring 2002 Vol. 1 No. 3 (http://www.slc.k12.ut.us/eccles/archive/present/news/documents/Spring02_low.pdf)

Electronic Portfolio: Data Summary Sheet—Sample Facts & Sources (part 5)

Area of focus: Cultural/language

Stakeholder group: School personnel

III. Most important facts (and sources)

Fact: Schools and teachers cannot do it alone. There needs to be collaboration between teachers and with various parts of the community. In order to be successful the schools need community support in the form of money, volunteers, and even advice and input.

Source: Salt Lake Public Schools Newsletter Fall 2001 Vol. 1 No. 2
(http://www.slc.k12.ut.us/eccles/archive/present/news/documents/fall01_low.pdf)

Fact: All of the programs Salt Lake has implemented need a lot of support from within the schools--especially from teachers. Most of the programs have been basic literacy improvement programs. In some schools, people have been assigned to be one-on-one advocates for students who are struggling with reading and writing. Most programs require teachers to receive some training on how to better involve and help those struggling students--especially those with language and cultural barriers.

Source: Salt Lake Public Schools Newsletter Spring 2002 Vol. 1 No. 3
(http://www.slc.k12.ut.us/eccles/archive/present/news/documents/Spring02_low.pdf)

Electronic Portfolio: Learning Paper

The purpose of this paper is to give you the chance to reflect on your learning this semester and to draw connections between what you have learned in University 101 and the things you have learned elsewhere in Freshman Academy.

Before you write it you should read your reflections for University 101, consider your experience serving in the community, and list the most important things you have learned in all of your Freshman Academy classes. Then answer the questions below.

We strongly recommend that you write out your answer in a word processing program, check it for spelling and grammatical mistakes, and then copy your essay into the space below. Your paper should be between 500 and 1000 words in length--roughly 1 to 2 double-spaced pages.

Clicking "Save" at the bottom of this page will save your work. You will still be able to modify your work at a later time. Clicking "Submit" will permanently save your work. You will not be able to make further modifications.

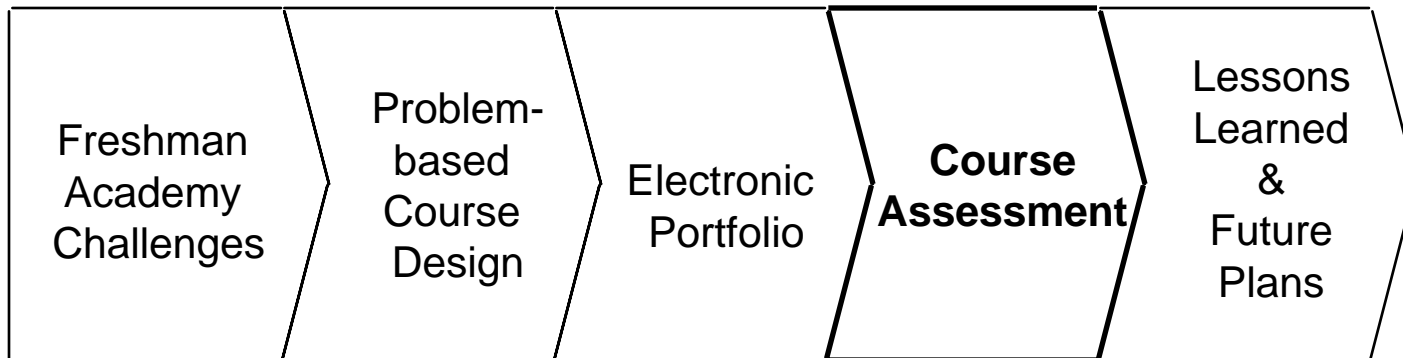
How have you developed as a learner this semester? What roles have your community service, Freshman Academy coursework, and participation in University 101 played in your development?

Electronic Portfolio: Self-evaluation

At the beginning of the semester, we suggested that University 101 would provide you an opportunity to develop skills that will serve you well throughout your time at BYU. As your teachers, we took the responsibility to create assignments to help you think critically, solve problems, communicate clearly, develop as a learner, and become more engaged with the communities that you live in while at BYU. As you know, though, the development of these skills depends not just on our abilities as teachers but also on the level and quality of your involvement in the class. This self-evaluation form asks you to report on your work in the class. We will use it, together with your final learning paper, reflections, and our own observations, to assign you a grade for the semester.

1. I attended class
2. I completed the assigned readings
3. I completed the weekly reflections on time
4. I completed my data collection on time
5. I completed my summary sheet on time
6. I participated fully in my group's work on our concept map
7. I fulfilled my obligations to the rest of the group

My agenda today...



- 1) Student engagement—self-evaluation ratings
- 2) Learning papers—qualitative analysis
- 3) Weekly reflections—qualitative analysis
- 4) End-of-semester data comparisons

Course Assessment: Student Engagement—Self-evaluation Ratings

	Usually & Always
I attended class	82%
I completed the assigned readings	78%
I completed the weekly reflections on time	15%
I completed my data collection on time	80%
I completed my summary sheet on time	78%
I participated fully in my group's work on our concept map	85%
I fulfilled my obligations to the rest of the group	83%

Course Assessment: Learning Paper Qualitative Analysis—Criteria

• Community & Course Design

- content – specific course
- Freshman Academy
- group work
- reflections
- service-learning
- suggestions for course improvement

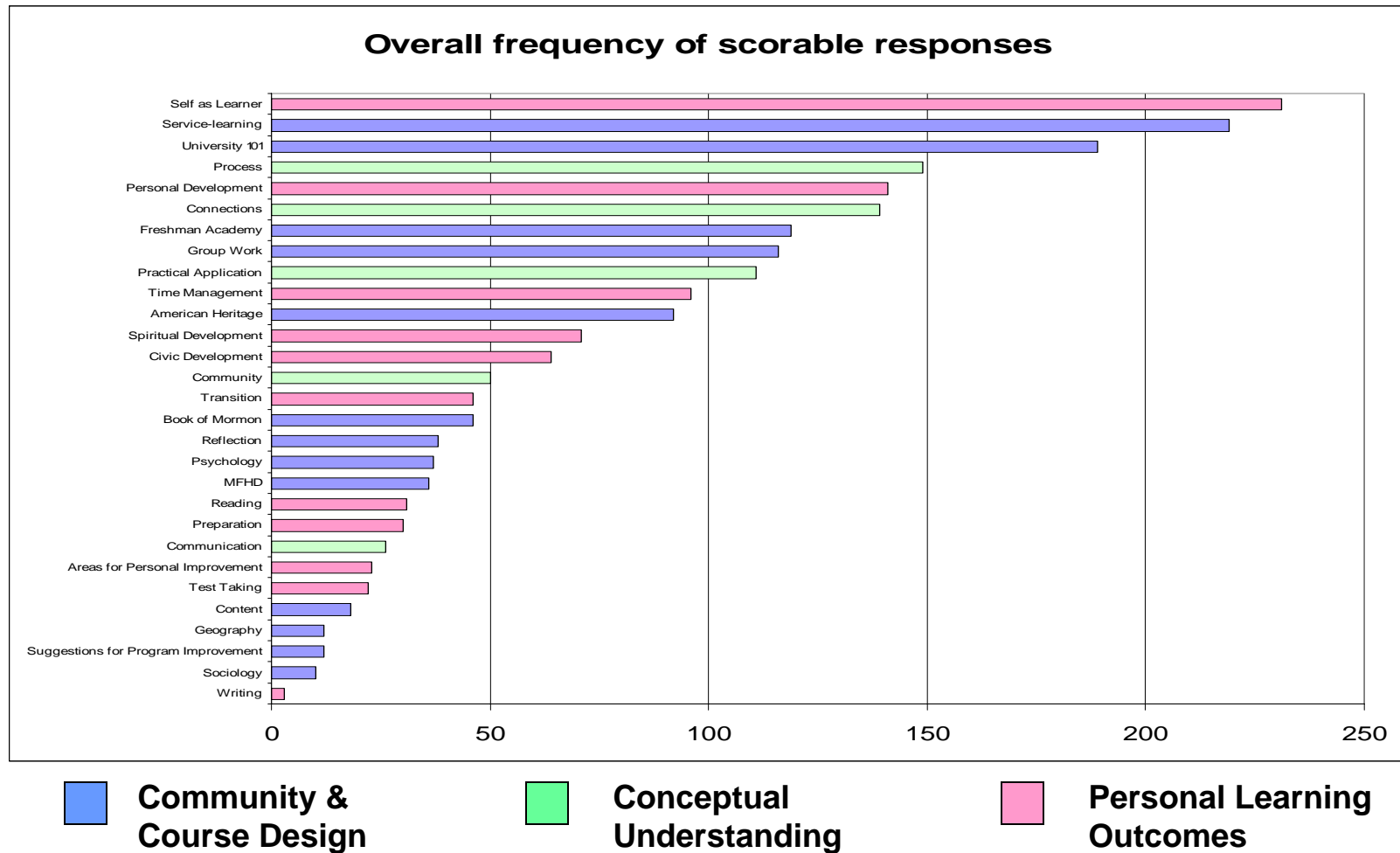
• Conceptual Understanding

- communication
- community
- connections
- practical application
- process

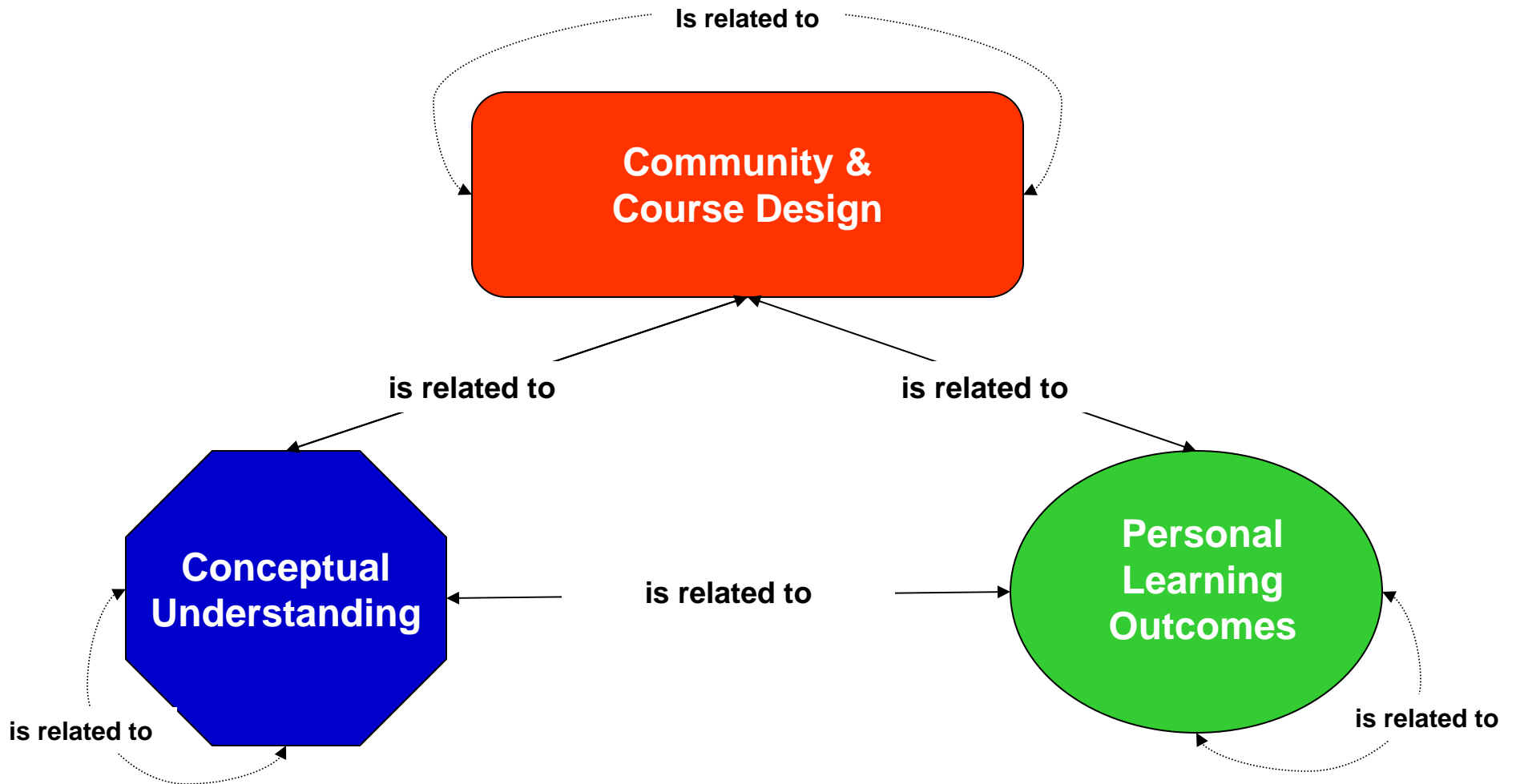
•Personal Learning Outcomes

- areas for improvement
- civic engagement
- personal development
 - preparation
 - reading
 - test taking
 - time management
 - writing
- self as learner
- spiritual development
- transition

Course Assessment: Learning Paper Qualitative Analysis—Summary of Responses



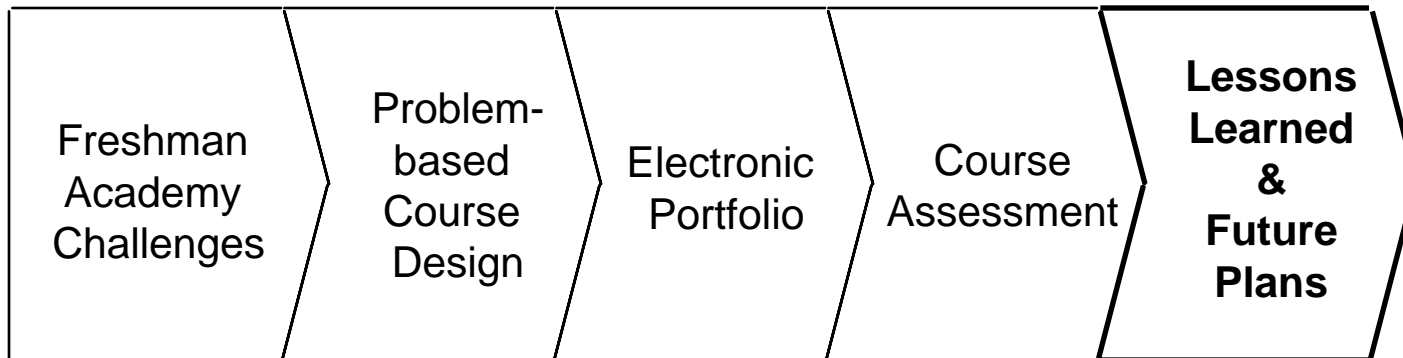
Course Assessment: Learning Paper Qualitative Analysis—Relationships



Course Assessment: Additional Criteria--Currently Under Investigation

- Weekly reflections—qualitative analysis
 - *Student development & growth*
 - *Significant connections*
- End-of-semester data comparisons
 - *Approaches to study and learning*
 - *Engagement in learning & university activities*

My agenda today...



- 1) **Course & community design contributes to desired program expectations**
- 2) Course significantly impacts the value of service-learning
- 3) Course design achieves intended objectives
- 4) Additional observations suggest areas for improvement

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—effective communication

“My **communication skills** improved as I worked in my University groups. I was able to express my concerns and give my input to my group I was also able to listen to others inputs and concerns. Communication within our group is what made our group successful.”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—critical thinking

“This class has been vital in helping me to become a better **critical thinker**. Throughout the semester I have looked at various problems that exist around me and have made an effort to find the root of these problems and then, more importantly, a solution. I have asked questions of myself and others, and then have made an effort to piece together these different facts and views into a coherent whole. I have not stood idly by and simply watched things happen, but rather I have become genuinely interested and involved. **Through this I have noticed myself thinking more critically in my other classes. I ask important questions about the material that I am learning and have tried to make conclusions on my own.**”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—problem solving

“University 101 helped me to **look at complex issues and break them down into manageable pieces to come closer to a solution.** I also had to perfect my art of rhetoric for this class as well. In doing that educational progress project I saw how tons of different areas can affect a single outcome as well as how all these different areas interrelated. This will be important in future problem solving.”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—civic engagement

“I’ve learned that it’s important to be involved in and knowledgeable about what’s going on around you, because if you don’t care about what’s going on—nothing will ever improve, and no changes will come about for the better, no matter how badly they are needed! I liked how it added a more real-life learning dimension to my education—I finally felt like I got OUT of the textbook and into what’s really going on currently out there. That was really cool!”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—personal development

“University 101 played a great role in my development as a learner. I had to **take responsibility for my learning** outside of class. No one checked to see if I did the reflections, but I learned that it was my responsibility to do them every week, or else I would end up having a ton to do at once. And although I did not attend all of the optional presentations outside of class, I attended a few. That is something that I most likely would not have done a couple of months ago. **But I developed a sense of responsibility for my own learning and education. I also began to connect what I learned in my classes to the world through our group projects. I realized that what we learn in class is about more than just tests and grades, it is about life.**”

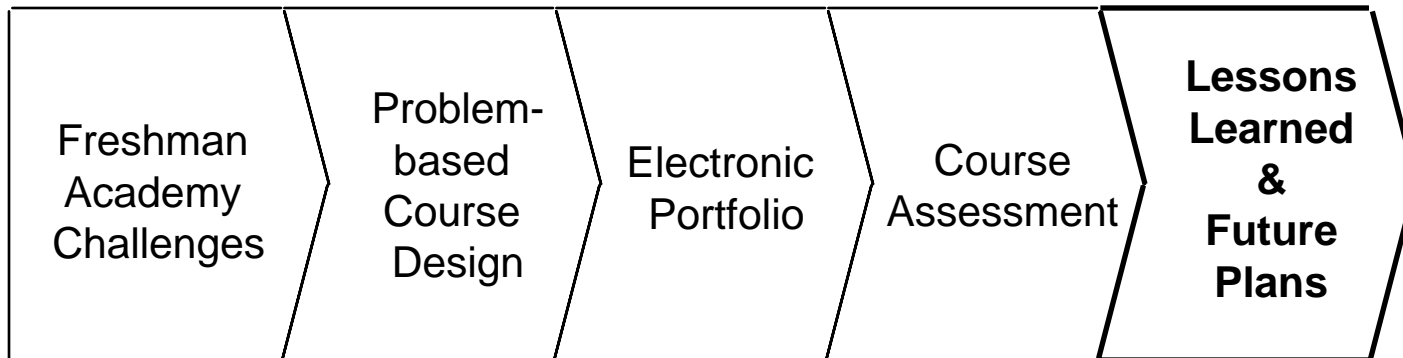
Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—personal development

“I really disliked University 101 when it first began because I did not see the objective that it was trying to accomplish. However, now that the class is over, I can see how thinking like my specific shareholder or the city of Provo changed the way I approached the problem of improving education in the Provo School District. I was really unhappy with this project and the fact that I had to take this class at all, so **I had a bad attitude**. When I decided that there was nothing I could do about being in the class I decided to just make the best of it. **I opened my mind to a new type of project and new situation where I had to think creatively and analyze things from another’s viewpoint. This was problem solving as I had never done before, and I learned a lot from it about thinking critically, analysis, and seeing things from another’s perspective. Another important concept that this class helped me develop is that of communication.** In order for our group to put on a successful presentation, we had to meet together and discuss our ideas. Once the project itself was complete, we each came up with our own way of presenting that would effectively communicate our goals and objectives to the audience at the final display.”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Program expectations—personal development

“I have never been involved in so many study groups in my life. **In order to learn well in a study group each member has to do their part. I found that research has to be done so that you can contribute to the group.** I learned how to do research on my own and how to prepare what I have learned. Then, when I entered the study group, things went smoothly. Each member could teach certain points that others did not understand and then take turns with others. These study groups worked best in American Heritage and Psychology. We also worked on group projects in Psychology and I found individual work to be very important. I noticed when others in the group were not working as hard, and it slowed the whole group down. If not all members showed up, or one member did not have their information prepared, we would have to reschedule our study group. **It is important to work hard as an individual, even if you are in a group, in order for learning to take place.**”

My agenda today...



1) Course & community design contributes to desired program outcomes



2) Course significantly impacts the value of service-learning

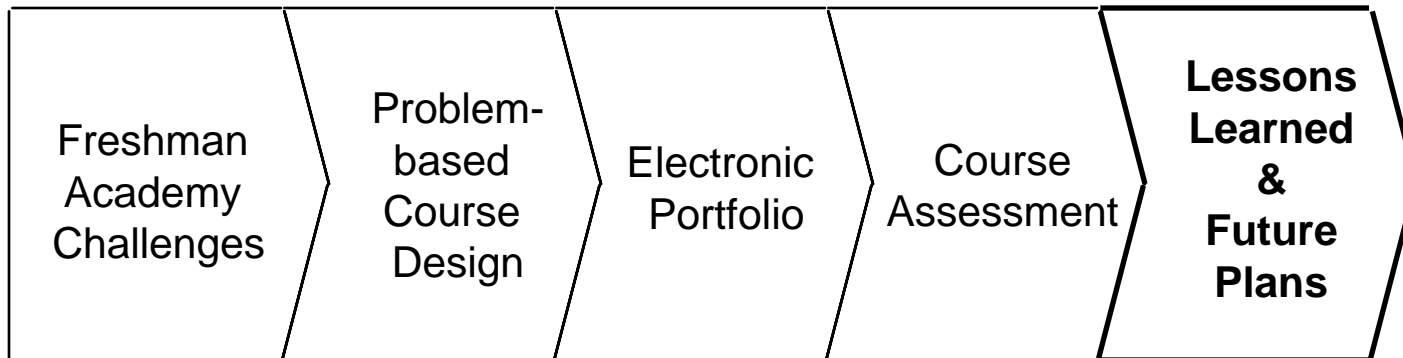
3) Course design achieves intended objectives

4) Additional observations suggest areas for improvement

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Course design significantly impacts value of service-learning

“University 101 has required me to make connections between my service learning activities and the things I am learning in the classroom. I believe that because of the experience I have had this semester, I won’t be able to help making connections between all of my coursework and activities in the future.”

My agenda today...



- 1) Course & community design contributes to desired program outcomes
- 2) Course significantly impacts the value of service-learning
- ➡ 3) Course design achieves intended objectives**
- 4) Additional observations suggest areas for improvement

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Course design achieves intended objectives

- Making connections across learning community courses
- Promoting a sense of community
- Student development as a learner
- Minimizing faculty costs
 - 191 students enrolled
 - 3 faculty members
 - 5 peer mentors

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Course design achieves intended objectives

“University 101 probably played the biggest role in my development as a learner. **This class brought everything I learned everywhere else together.** I could use that information and critically analyze it. I could determine what I learned, what to do with that information, and how to use it. All my classes weren’t just individual classes but they had a purpose in creating the big picture. This class also helped in pulling me back to reality. By going to the many different presentations throughout the semester in and out of class I was pulled into a real community perspective and out of my sheltered BYU perspective on life.”

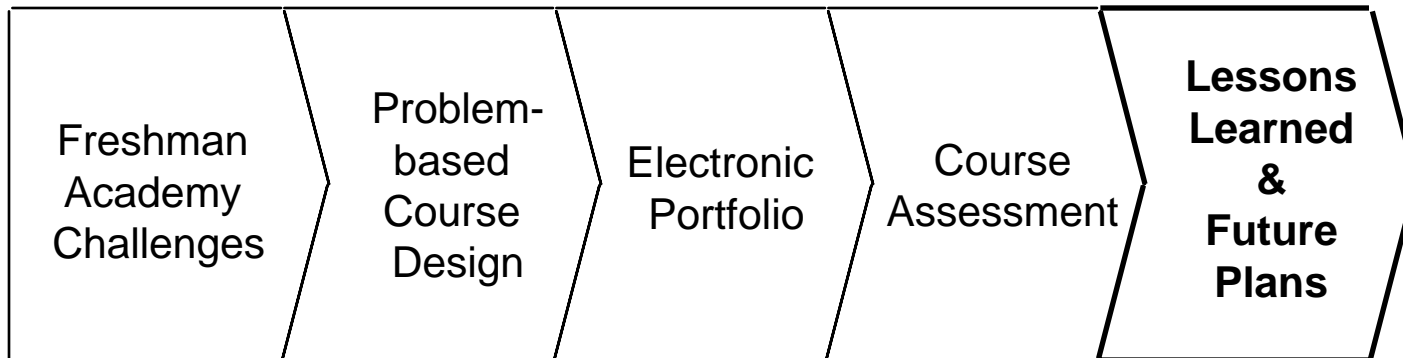
Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Course design achieves intended objectives

“University 101 has definitely been the most unique of all my classes. It has taught me that not all classes have to be about a particular subject. Not all classes involve reading out of textbooks and regurgitating information on exams. This class has been a very interesting experience for me. It forces me to do something I usually do not do. **I had to look at the world around me and really focus on problems and how they can be solved.** It helped me realize that even though I am not a permanent resident of Utah, or Provo in particular, **I am still a part of the community, and I can still try to make a difference in the world.** Now that I look back on the semester, I think this has been one of the best classes for me, because it is not a traditional one. I had to really think in this class. I had to in my other classes too, but not in the same way. **It has taught me to think critically about the things I see around me.**”

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Course design achieves intended objectives

“University 101 has also taught me many valuable lessons. I have learned how to cooperate with people better, and that communication is important. I also learned that attitude is everything. Those in class who had a good attitude learned much more from their research and work than those students who had poor attitudes. I learned that a class is what you make it and what you put into it. **However, the most important thing that I have learned from taking University 101 is that a few people can make a difference for many if they try hard enough.** I really think that the tipping points and programs that people have thought of can make a difference in the Provo community if they are established. It’s neat to see that a handful of college freshman can make an impact if they try. Nearly all that we learned in University 101 came from experience because we didn’t have a text book to read from. I have learned a lot from this class, and I have honestly loved it.”

My agenda today...



- 1) Course & community design contributes to desired program outcomes
- 2) Course significantly impacts the value of service-learning
- 3) Course design achieves intended objectives



- 4) Additional observations suggest areas for improvement**

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: Additional observations suggest areas for improvement

- Early and consistent consultation with faculty improves student learning
- Diverse faculty team provides opportunity to model group work
- Involvement of peer mentors provides additional coaches for student work
- Course scheduling should be modified to take advantage of community resources & support diversity in group work
- Data collection should be simplified to allow more time for analysis
- Course name plays a significant role in setting expectations

Lessons Learned & Future Plans: What's next?

- Establish community partnerships & increase participation
- Develop prototype of data center
- Improve alignment of course with other courses in the learning community & invite faculty participation
- Restructure student work groups to include representation from across the various courses
- Modify class schedule to include a common hour and breakout sessions
- Involve peer mentors in course design & evaluation
- Increase enrollment & add one new faculty member
- Refine electronic portfolio
- Change course name

University 101
Fall 2003

Instructors

Tuesday Sections—112 TMCB
Dr. Patricia Esplin
177 TMCB
422-6284
pat_esplin@byu.edu
Office Hours: Wed 4-5 pm
and by appointment

Wednesday Sections-135 TMCB
Dr. gary daynes
175 TMCB
422-9392
gary_daynes@byu.edu
Office Hours: Th 4-5 pm
and by appointment

Thursday Sections
116 TMCB—4 pm
112 TMCB—5 pm
Dr. Stefinee Pinnegar
422-6031
225-5401 (home)
201W MCKB
stefinee@byu.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Introduction—This class is about connections. It aims to help you connect the content of your Freshman Academy courses, it encourages you to connect that content with the community in which you currently live, and it expects that by connecting your courses with your community, you will become a more complete person, one who thinks critically, solves problems, communicates well, and is civically engaged. As you do these things you will achieve the Aims of a BYU Education. You will also support an important part of BYU's mission—to improve the world in which we live.

This is a tall order for a 1-credit course. Fortunately, you are developing most of the ideas and skills you need to be successful in your other courses. You will be making connections with your community in American Heritage, learning about society in your social sciences classes, learning about human obligation in Religion. In this class, we will help you draw those skills together and put them into a package that helps you to become a more successful student, citizen, and disciple.

There are two main ways that we will help you make connections. The first is by discussing with you the benefits that come to you by making connections. You will read a few articles for class, and together we will work to understand what they say about the educational power of connections. The second is by asking you to investigate a local educational issue—the educational progress of students--, define a specific problem related to that issue, and suggest how the public schools and the broader community could begin to respond to it. This effort will require you, together with a group of your fellow students, to draw on what you are learning in your other classes, and to develop the ability to think critically, communicate well, and engage with your community.

Class Periods

Week 1—2, 3 or 4 September

Introduction

Today we will go through the syllabus, and then introduce you to one of the major ideas in this course—that listening to and telling stories is an excellent way to understand other people and

the challenges they face. Be prepared to tell a few stories about your own experience in school and to listen closely to those told by your fellow-students.

We will also divide you into data gathering groups. Over the first 6 weeks of the course you will work with other students in a group to gather information about the issue of educational progress. Rather than have all students study “educational progress” in general we will assign each group to study educational progress from a particular perspective. In gathering this information we will be doing two things. We will create a database of evidence about educational progress in Provo. And that database will serve as the source of raw information out of which you will define a particular problem related to educational progress. These two acts will benefit you as students. They will help you think more critically and solve problems more skillfully. But the acts will also benefit the community by gathering a body of information necessary for any community group to respond to local challenges.

Week 2—9, 10, or 11 September

What is a problem and how do you respond to it?

Nearly every class you have ever taken has required you to solve problems. Most of them, to this point, have been simple problems. You will find that at the university much of your time will be spent solving problems. You will also find that different disciplines require different problem solving skills and processes. Scientists approach a problem one way, humanists another.

This semester, most of the classes you are taking in Freshman Academy are social science classes. Social scientists see the world as a series of problems. But the problems we work on differ greatly from those that engage our colleagues in chemistry or physics. Scientists work in laboratories where they carry out carefully controlled experiments. They expect that same experiment, done the same way, will provide the same results every time. Social scientist work in the real world. While we think that communities have certain general tendencies, we do not expect every community to be the same, or think that the thing that improves one place will do the same in another.

There are a couple of reasons why this is the case. First, the problems that social scientists work on are complex. Take, for example, drug abuse. Drug abuse has many causes—poverty, the availability of cheap narcotics, the decline of manufacturing jobs, genetic predispositions, pop culture, and family problems among them. But it has as equally large number of effects—violence, robbery, poverty, and family problems for example. In this, social science problems are not like algebraic equations, where finding the right value “solves” the problem. They are instead more like a kaleidoscope. Put all of the influences on a social problem into a tube, spin them around, and they look different (though clear) every time.

Second, social science problems always involve people, and people always have their agency. People are not like chemicals; they do not react the same way every time. People inject unpredictability, beauty, grace, anger, self-interest, pride, and humility into the process of responding to social problems.

In spite of these challenges, universities and communities are becoming better at responding to their own problems. This improvement is largely due to two insights. The first is that all members of the community, even those that appear to be most needy, have assets that can make the community better. The second is that, under the right circumstances, a small change can make a huge difference.

To take advantage of these insights, our work on responding to social problems this semester will follow a particular process. The process begins this week with a brief class activity to expose you to the complexities of social problems.

Readings, Week 2: Introduction to "Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets," by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/introd-building.html>

Malcolm Gladwell, "Introduction" and "The Three Rules of Epidemics," in *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston, Little, Brown, 2000), 3-29.

Week 3—16, 17, or 18 September

Social Problems in Provo

Provo is made up of dozens of small, over-lapping communities. Some are geographic, others ethnic, others economic or religious or ideological. It would be an impossible task to understand every community in all of its complexity during a 16-week course. One way around this problem is to get to know a group of people that Malcolm Gladwell calls "connectors." These are people who know an extraordinarily large number of other people in the community. Their knowledge has two sources: they naturally like to get to know other people, and their pleasure in knowing others leads them to careers in which they are responsible for getting to know lots of people. We have invited a number of "connectors" to join us as members of a community advisory board. Today a few members of the board will join us to talk about the social problems that they come across in their work in the community.

Your task is to listen to the stories the connectors tell. Try to understand why they think a particular issue is a problem for a particular community. Ask how the problem effects the lives of the members of the community and what they think are the obstacles that get in the way of responding to the problems well. Ask also how the stories they tell connect to your own story as a student, citizen, family member, and disciple. Consider the obligation you might have to other members of the community, as well as the ways in which community members can help you become a better learner.

Readings—Week 3: Daynes, "Why BYU Needs Provo as Much as Provo Needs BYU"

Week 4—23, 24, or 25 September

Public Education as a Response to Provo's Challenges

Provo faces many of the challenges that other American cities do. It has a declining downtown, a shrinking tax base, ethnic divisions, religious animosity, and a separation between the rich and the poor. Like most cities, too, Provo relies on its public schools to respond to most of these problems, whether by training students to become better workers, or to be more tolerant, or to

understand how to connect across barriers of language, religion, and race. Schools have the added benefit of being a place where people learn to turn their challenges into strengths, and to use those strengths to the benefit of the community. This means that the Provo schools are at once the home of many of Provo's challenges and the location where they might be most successfully solved.

Of course, Provo's schools are as complicated as its communities. We have formed a School Advisory Board made up of teachers, administrators, and staff in the public schools. Some of the members of that board will join us today to tell stories about the ways that Provo's problems manifest themselves in the public schools. They will work with us to define the problems that you will be working on in the coming weeks. Those definitions will be based in the stories of the communities in Provo, the assets and challenges of the public schools, and the disciplines you are studying in your Freshman Academy learning community.

Readings—Week 4: Excerpts from Stanley Hauerwas, “A Story-formed Community: Reflections on *Watership Down*,” in John Berkman and Michael Cartwright, eds., *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 171-199.

Week 5—30 September, 1 or 2 October
Defining Problems

This week we come to the heart of your work this term. Your overall task is to define a local problem, map out the influences on that problem, and suggest leverage points where, if the right pressure is applied, the schools can help respond to the problem. The first part of that process, defining the problem, is very hard work. If it is done well it will lead to success in the rest of the project. If it is done poorly, then the rest of the project will flounder. Today we start defining the problem. Up to this point you have been working in a data gathering group. You will have done research, gathered evidence, and compiled it into a useful format. Today we will re-shuffle you into problem solving groups. These groups will be composed of a member from each of the data gathering groups, so that you can draw on the expertise of students who have investigated educational progress from a wide variety of perspectives.

Your definition should be based on the stories of the participants, and it should draw on the insights that you are gaining from the social science and religion courses you are taking this semester. To help you begin to formulate your definition, we have invited some of your faculty members to join us. They will work with you to define the problem in a way that is rigorous, clear, and connected to their discipline and the stories from the community and the schools. In defining the problem, be specific. Explain what the problem is, how it got to be that way, and what the consequences are. Make your definition particular—if the problem is homelessness, be sure that you have defined it in a way that makes sense in Provo.

Week 5—Readings **TBA**

Week 6—7, 8, or 9 October
Work on definitions

Week 7—14, 15, or 16 October

Work on definitions

This week you should work to prepare a description of your problem for presentation to members of the community, the schools, and the university.

Week 8—21, 22, or 23 October

Present definitions

Good learning comes from good feedback. This is especially the case in the social sciences, where what you propose can have an immediate and serious impact on real people. This week you will have the opportunity to present your definition of the problem to our course advisors. Even more importantly, you will have the chance to listen to their feedback in order to refine your definition and set you up for the next step of the process.

Week 9—28, 29, or 30 October

Concept Maps

A definition is a valuable thing, but it is not always useful. By this we mean that a definition alone does not necessarily lead towards a course of action. (For example, the definition of homeless—“having no home or haven,” suggests nothing about the causes of or responses to homelessness.) One way to get from a definition of a problem to its analysis is by using a concept map. A concept map is a visual representation of a problem. It includes the definition of the problem, its causes and consequences, and the assets in the community that can be used to respond to that problem. This week we will introduce you to concept maps and get you started on mapping the problem you are working on.

Week 9—Readings **TBA**

Week 10—4, 5, or 6 November

Work on Concept Maps

This week you will work in your groups to develop a concept map of your problem. We will be available to consult with you.

Week 11—11, 12, or 13 November

Leverage Points

A lever is a simple tool that allows your work to have a greater impact than the amount of effort you invest. Social problems have leverage points, places where a small investment of effort can have a large impact. Your concept map will allow you to begin to identify leverage points for your particular problem. This week we will work with you on identifying leverage points. Be sure to do the readings in advance.

Week 11—Readings

Malcolm Gladwell, “Case Study: Suicide, Smoking, and the Search for the Unsticky Cigarette” In *The Tipping Point*, 216-253.

Week 12—18, 19, or 20 November

Leverage Points continued

You will work with your group this week as you continue to identify leverage points for your social problem

Week 13—2, 3, or 4 December (please note that there will be no class during the final week of November)

Prepare Final Project presentations

All of the work you have done defining, mapping, and analyzing local problems will have little impact if your work is poorly rendered, unintelligible, or offensive. Therefore your final presentations need to be excellent, both in thought and in portrayal. This week we will give you some examples of final presentations and help you to critique them. Your critiques will allow you to see what you need to do in your own presentation.

*Week 13—Assignment—**Learning Essay Due*** (see “Assignments” below for a description of the Learning Essay)

Week 14—9, 10, or 11 December

Draft Final Project Presentations

Today you will present your final project to your University 101 faculty member. The purpose of this presentation is to acknowledge the strengths of your work, correct errors, and point out gaps in your logic. You should expect that your presentation will receive close scrutiny and that your faculty members will ask searching, difficult questions.

Week 15

Knowledge Fair—presentation of final projects

All of the groups from all of the University 101 sections will display their final projects during a knowledge fair, to be held in the evening. We will invite members of the advisory groups, administrators from the university and the schools, community leaders, and anyone else you would like to have there, to view the exhibits and talk with you about your work. This event is to be a celebration of excellent work.

Assignments

This semester you will complete four assignments. All of them will contribute to the overall purpose of the class—to help you meet the Aims of a BYU Education by strengthening the community. Some of the assignments are described a great length in the syllabus. Others receive only brief mention above but are more fully described here.

- **Weekly Journal Reflections**—your service in the public schools can be a valuable learning experience for you and for the kids you work with. For you to gain all of the value that you can from that service you need to reflect on the connections between your service and the issues raised in your classes. Each week you should write in a journal about the connections between your service and learning. We will help you by giving you prompts—questions that will help you focus on the issues underlying the immediate needs that you are responding to in the schools. We will spot check your journals to make sure that your reflections are complete and helpful.
- **Data Gathering**—For the first half of the semester you will work with some of your fellow students to gather information from a particular perspective about the issue of

educational progress in the Provo schools. That data will come from many sources—interviews with community members, library research, and your journal reflections among them. By Week 6 of the semester you should have completed your data gathering and, with our help, compiled your data into information sheets that can be used by your fellow students as they work to define and map local problems.

- **Project Presentation**—During the second half of the semester you will work with a project group. In this group you will (1) draw on the data you have gathered to define a local problem related to educational progress, (2) map its causes, consequences, and the resources available to respond to it, (3) identify leverage points that the community might use to begin to respond to the problem, and (4) present your projects to the community.
- **Learning Essay**—This course is both about responding to local problems and developing your learning skills. At the end of the semester you will reflect on your learning and, in a 1-page essay, describe how this project has helped you become a better problem solver, critical thinker, communicator, and citizen. The learning essay will be due in class during Week 13.

Grading

All students in this class will begin with an A. We expect all of you to maintain that A throughout the semester by doing the following: coming to class, completing the readings, participating fully in your groups, and offering and receiving feedback with wisdom and grace.

There are several reasons why we have defined our grading this way. We want all of you to invest in the project without pre-occupation about your grade. We fully believe that all students are capable of doing A-quality work, especially in a course based on collaboration. Any work done for the public cannot be shoddy. It is one thing to turn in a sloppily written essay when your work hurts only you. But your work in this class has an impact on your fellow students, members of the community, the public schools, and children. You therefore have an ethical, civic, and personal obligation to do your best work here.

Why BYU Needs Provo as Much as Provo Needs BYU

gary daynes

If people ever think about BYU's relationship with Provo, it is to assume that Provo desperately needs BYU.¹ But the opposite is equally true. BYU's future success depends largely on the quality of its relationship with the communities that surround it.² This assertion may, on its face, seem false. After all, BYU trains students from around the world and competes with the nation's elite universities for students, faculty, resources, and prestige. This broad reach, though, is an artifact of a particular moment, one in which BYU was the dominant educational institution in a predominantly American church, and American universities could conceive of themselves primarily as career training grounds for the best and the brightest, be they students or faculty members. This moment has passed. We stand instead at a time in which BYU is but one of many major educational efforts of a global LDS Church, and universities across the land have come to recall their historic commitment to the civic well-being of their students and their communities. This new time, our time, is rich with opportunity. It offers BYU the chance to make good on its Aims—to help its students and faculty become wise, spiritual leaders whose character and beliefs impel them to service. BYU's own history, the history of Provo, and the history of higher education in the US suggest that this will happen best when BYU fully commits to a healthy relationship with its community.

In order to accept my contention about BYU's future, you need to consider BYU in a historical context. There was a time when BYU's role in the LDS Church was much closer to

¹ See, for example, the recent press release touting BYU's huge economic contribution to Utah County. "BYU's Economic Impact on Provo/Orem Nearly \$380 Million," released 1 November 2002, available on-line at <http://www.byu.edu/news/releases/archive02/Nov/Impact.htm>

² Though this essay talks primarily about Provo, its argument applies to BYU's relationship with all of the communities that lie within a 50 mile radius of campus. Within this circle lies an enormous variety of towns, from the suburban sprawl of Eagle Mountain to the new wealth of Highland to the rural poverty of Genoa.

the meaning of its moniker, “the Lord’s university.” But that was a relatively brief time, stretching from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s. Before that time BYU was small, and but one of numerous educational efforts across the church. Since the 1990s BYU has again become part of a huge range of educational opportunities, stretching from those offered by the Perpetual Education Fund, to the personalized curriculum of BYU-Idaho, the international context of BYU-Hawaii, or the religious education at institutes across the US. In its current context, BYU’s reason for being is less clear than it was when it dominated LDS education. When it was dominant, BYU was able to suggest two things with absolute confidence: BYU was representative of the church as a whole, and BYU had a special mission to produce the leaders of the Church. Neither statement is now true. BYU is overwhelmingly white and American; the church is increasingly brown and non-American, and so BYU is not demographically representative. One might respond that demographic representation is unimportant, but that what really matters is that BYU be representative of the Church’s worldview. In a narrow, institutional sense this is certainly true—BYU follows the doctrines of the Church in much the same way that other Church-run institutions do. But in a broader sense it is false, for BYU’s student body, faculty, and staff are culturally and ideologically unlike the rest of the Church, or even that part of the Church that resides in the US. BYU is more highly educated and more intellectually cosmopolitan than the rest of the Church, while at the same time practicing a version of the gospel that is more exclusive than that of the rest of the Church. (Here I am thinking about the requirement that BYU faculty be temple recommend holders, or that BYU students and faculty nor wear beards or long hair or shorts that rise above the knee—requirements that do not obtain for members of the church elsewhere.)

Now, perhaps representativeness is exactly not what BYU is aiming for. Perhaps instead its purpose is to prepare the sorts of leaders that the Church needs. (My students, when I ask about the reason for the existence of BYU, often offer this suggestion.) That could be true if BYU provided training to bishops or relief society presidents, for example, or if the Church were to institute a requirement that all leaders above a certain level in the hierarchy had to have a college degree and religious training from an approved institution. But those options, if they were ever possibilities, are increasingly distant in an age where the growth of the Church is taking place primarily in the southern hemisphere. The fact that the church is burgeoning elsewhere also makes the other “leadership” justification—that even if its mission is not to train leaders, it does so in practice—unconvincing. The percentage of church leaders who are BYU graduates is surely shrinking. Here the appointment of Elder Cecil Samuelson, a University of Utah alum and administrator, as the new President of BYU is emblematic. And, if the matter is looked at from the other direction—if we ask what percentage of BYU graduates are church leaders in any formal sense—then the “leadership” argument is even less persuasive. While BYU graduates undoubtedly develop some leadership skills during their time in Provo, they are more likely to demonstrate them in teaching a primary class than in leading a stake. And while there are highly placed Mormons in business and government around the globe, attendance at BYU is hardly a prerequisite to become such a thing.

Please note that I am not offering criticism of BYU in writing what I have written above. While I happen to believe that BYU should be more demographically representative than it is now, and while I hope that BYU does a good job of training leaders, neither of those things matters in making the point that I am making. BYU’s future significance is unlikely to rely on either its representativeness or its production of leaders. It will rely, though, on BYU’s ability to

be an example of a particular form of higher education, one that weds intellectual rigor with practical utility in order to develop wise, righteous citizens.

To accept this assertion, you cannot believe what most people do about the purpose of higher education in the United States. Though they disagree about many things, students, parents, legislators, business leaders, and educators alike regularly think of higher education as a system for the development of individuals. The belief in personal development shows itself in a number of guises. For the student, the university is a place to find herself, to explore all sorts of interesting things, to become fulfilled. For the parent, the student's fulfillment is at once more narrowly and more broadly defined. Parents, by and large, want their students to focus on a major at the university so that they can quickly graduate and become economically self-sufficient. Business leaders and legislators are much like parents, except that their view of post-graduation life is more circumscribed than that of parents. For them, people leaving college are not graduates but employees who will make the business, state, or nation more competitive. In this sense, educators are simply students who graduate as employees of the educational system. If you listen to the way we talk about education in the US you will hear the personal development theme even from faculty. Universities urge their faculty members to do more research and publish more by appealing to them as individuals. Publication makes you famous and earns you more money. Public schools motivate in the same way—by seeking more money for teachers' wages or by seeking people who find fulfillment in the classroom.

There is much to be said in behalf of personal development. I would be hard pressed to argue that university graduates should be personally *underdeveloped*, and I am not so naïve as to believe that students should ignore matters of future employment, or that employers should really want something besides good employees. But the focus on personal development is both a

symptom of the troubles of our time and evidence that our vision of higher education is shrinking. I need not belabor the first point here, except to say that the civic vision of Americans is in decline, and at least some of the responsibility for that fact lies with the schools that teach students that success is measured one person at a time.

The second point, that personal development is a sign of a shrinking educational vision, deserves a bit more attention, for it weighs on why BYU needs Provo so badly. Let me put it baldly. Every major system of higher education—private liberal arts colleges, state universities, community colleges, religious schools—was born with a civic vision, one that invested a community’s assets in schools so that schools could train people who made the community better. Put another way, higher education’s historic mission was to use the means of educating individuals as a way to the end of creating healthy, civically engaged communities. If colleges and universities fail to attend to the communities around them they have renounced their educational traditions.

A few examples here might make this point more clear. The charters of the first college in North America, Harvard, began by emphasizing the link between the community and the college. The 1643 act establishing a Board of Overseers for Harvard opens, “Whereas, through the good hand of God upon us, there is a College founded in Cambridge, in the county of Middlesex, called HARVARD COLLEGE, for the encouragement whereof this court has given the sum of four hundred pounds, and also the revenue of the ferry betwixt Charlestown and Boston, and that the well ordering and managing of the said College is of great concernment” the General Court established the Overseers. The 1650 Charter made it clear that it wasn’t simply government that had invested in the college. It justified granting the charter because of community support for the school, since “through the good hand of God, many well devoted

persons have been, and daily are moved, and stirred up, to give and bestow, sundry gifts, legacies, lands and revenues for the advancement of all good literature, arts, and sciences in Harvard College.”³

That same connection between community, student, and education appears in the Morrill Act of 1862, which established the land-grant college system. That Act granted public land to the states, the proceeds from the sale of which were to fund colleges. Those colleges had a community-minded mission, to “teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”⁴

Or, consider the purposes of normal schools, those teacher-training colleges that have become the backbone of the state systems of higher education. In the 19th and 20th centuries public schools across the nation needed trained teachers. State legislatures created normal schools to supply those teachers. Normal schools led the way in opening higher education to women (who became the bulk of the teachers in the public schools) and in making the promise of public education good for nearly all American children. Consider this example, from the charter of the State Normal and Industrial School for Women at Radford, Virginia. The enabling legislation makes clear the close connection between higher education and the community when it distributes spots in the student body by community: “each county and city in the State shall be

³ *Constitutional articles and Legislative Enactments Relative to the Board of Overseers and the Corporation of Harvard University, Also Rules and Regulations of the Overseers* (Cambridge, MA; Charles Folsom, 1835), 3, 4.

⁴ *The Morrill Act of 1862*, 12 Statues at Large 503.

entitled to one pupil in the said school...and each county and city in the State shall be entitled to one additional pupil for each additional representative in the house of delegates above one.”⁵

I could continue to multiply examples--from community colleges, born to educate local people without access to more prestigious institutions of higher education, to religious schools dedicated to educating communities of believers—but the point is, I trust, clear. Higher education in the US was born in a compact between communities and local schools. All of the seeking for prestige and money, aspirations to national importance, research dollars and publications, secularization, on-line classes, and career-minded students cannot change that fact. They can only serve to point out that those newer things owe their existence, in part, to a civic vision for education broad enough to make space for them.⁶

All of these examples would mean nothing if BYU’s history and purpose placed it somehow outside of the civic traditions of American higher education. They do not. BYU was born as Brigham Young Academy, one of many local schools in Utah dedicated to instructing local children in the rudiments of earthly and spiritual knowledge. When it first began to offer “college courses” as we would recognize them, they were to potential teachers who were desperately needed in Mormon settlements across the West. Even BYU’s first brush with national fame, John Dewey’s lectureship at the Brigham Young Academy Normal School in the summer of 1901, served to reinforce the connection between education and the community. There, Dewey said, “We should not, for instance, give much for the education which did not impart to the individual a sense of loyalty and devotion, an enthusiasm for the country and state to which he belonged. We should regard such education as very defective morally. We should

⁵ *Charter, State Normal and Industrial School for Women at Radford*, Chapter 120, Virginia Acts of Assembly, pp176-77, accessed at <http://lib.runet.edu/archives/collections/bov/charters/1910.htm>, 5 September 2003.

⁶ There are many histories of higher education’s falling away from its civic origins. Two of the best are George Marsden, *The Soul of the American University* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), and Derek Bok, *Universities in the Marketplace: the Commercialization of American Higher Education* (NY: Princeton University Press, 2003).

regard it as practically inculcating selfishness, if this complete development we talk about of all the powers did not lead to a better ability to serve the community and a greater interest in serving it.”⁷

Certainly things have changed since 1901. Brigham Young Academy became Brigham Young University, and grew from a smattering of Utah County students to 30,000 students, the majority of whom hail from outside Utah. But given that two of BYU’s four institutional aims are to build character and develop in students a devotion to lifelong learning and service, I can see no reason why Dewey’s point should not apply today. An education that fails to build a real devotion to the community should still be regarded as “very defective morally,” for it is an education that flies in the face of national tradition, one that exalts personal advancement, and one that is foreign to the theology and practice of Mormonism.

Alone among prominent religions (and those aspiring to prominence), Mormonism has no contemplative tradition. There are no Mormon monks or nuns, no Mormon meditation (at least as the rest of the religious world understands meditation), no paid clergy, and, at least since Brigham Young, no charismatic leadership. Though the church is led by a prophet, his influence is grounded in support from his counselors and other general authorities who make decisions by consensus. Each congregation is led by a council, missionaries travel two by two, people are not saved alone but with their families. These practices based in fellowship are undergirded by a strong community ethic. Mormons do not shop around for congregations, they attend the congregation nearest their homes. Mormons give a monthly offering to the poor, volunteer weekly at church, care for the hungry, sick, and lonely, and visit each other regularly. These acts have high theological significance, for Mormons believe that they are acting as Christ would were He on the earth. And, Mormon scripture holds that serving a human is literally the same as

⁷ John Dewey, *Dr. Dewey’s Lectures*, typescript in Herald B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, p.33.

servicing God, “And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”⁸ If this is the case, if the way to learn wisdom is to understand that your service to a fellow being is service to God, and if the Mormon tradition is to carry out that service in a community context, then BYU is both well-placed and obligated to locate the well-being of members of a real community at the fore of its work.

To this point I have argued that BYU’s future well-being depends on its relationship with the local community. I believe this to be true because other justifications for its existence (representativeness and leadership training) are not convincing, because it is in the American tradition of higher education, because it is part of BYU’s history, and because it is congruent with Mormon doctrine and practice. If you have agreed with me to this point, or if you have disagreed tolerantly enough to have continued this far, I must make two further points to round out my argument. The first is that Provo is an appropriate community for BYU to care about, and the second is that caring about Provo will do good for Provo and for BYU.

When I suggest that BYU must focus on Provo, I am actually asserting two things. The first is that there is no other community, however defined, that is better for BYU to engage with. The second is that Provo has a set of characteristics that make rich connections possible, desirable, and necessary. Both of these assertions may be controversial, the first because we often think of BYU’s community as the worldwide church, the second because Provo, in the eyes of many, has little to commend it.

While it may be desirable for BYU to serve the worldwide church, there is no practical way for such a thing to happen. Remember, BYU’s student body and faculty are not representative of the church, and BYU has no mandate to train the church’s leaders, so there is

⁸ Mosiah 2:17, *The Book of Mormon*.

no automatic connection to the rest of the globe. Nor is there any way that BYU's work can be leashed to the world. Its student body, while enormous by the standards of American higher education, is far too small to reach around the globe in an organized way. It is, for example, dwarfed by the Church's missionary force, which is itself too small for the task it faces. And even if BYU were able to somehow organize itself to reach the globe, there is no reason to believe that it would do more than rudimentary good. If we have learned anything from the humanitarian challenges of our era, it is that the problems facing the globe are intractable and diverse, and that centrally directed efforts to "end starvation" or whatever else the goal may be always founder on the shoals of hubris and ignorance. While problems may have global causes, they almost always have local solutions.⁹

In writing this I do not presume to suggest that BYU should ignore the rest of the world, or that BYU students and faculty should stop traveling the globe. Learning about the world is desirable, and the work of BYU has done good elsewhere. I do mean to suggest, though, that as an organization, BYU cannot hope to make a dent in the globe's problems or manage such a huge undertaking. I also mean to suggest that engagement with a community requires close work over an extended period of time, and that such work is almost impossible to do anywhere besides the place where a person lives. This is why the American political system and Mormon congregations are both organized geographically. It is also why, if BYU is going to train students who are engaged, it needs to focus on Provo.

It must be said that at first blush Provo seems hardly to be the sort of place that an institution as large and renowned as BYU would want to make common cause with. But that first impression is a false one. Provo is much closer demographically to the rest of the US (and

⁹ See, for example, Scott Anderson, *The Man Who Tried to Save the World* (NY: Anchor Books, 1999), a biography of Fred Cuny, one of the world's most successful humanitarian leaders, who made his way by attuning service to local needs before being murdered in Chechnya's civil war.

the rest of the Church) than is BYU. Its immigrant population has doubled in the last 10 years, and the number of people for whom English is a second language has grown apace. It is a community full of wisdom and full of difficulties. Those difficulties are a microcosm of the difficulties of the rest of the world. And the particular characteristics of many of those difficulties, from housing to education to intercultural misunderstandings to politics, are due to BYU's presence. BYU's engagement with Provo, then, is a way for students and faculty to engage with a real community, one that affects their lives and prepares them to do similar work elsewhere. It is also a way for BYU the institution to measure and take responsibility for its impact. And it aligns with BYU's religious commitments and educational mission.

Whatever the civic and human value of the university engaging with the community, such an effort would be unacceptable at a university, even one of BYU's ilk, if the engagement failed to improve the university and community. Most readers will be able to see ways that a closer partnership between BYU and Provo would benefit the community. It would receive more volunteer hours, more resources, more access to influence, just to name a few. But at the end of this essay I want to posit again what I proposed at the beginning—that real engagement with Provo will make BYU better. It will improve teaching and learning, focus research and assessment, and enrich the formal organization of BYU.

For the past 30 years educators and community leaders have labored to connect student learning with the betterment of the community. This movement, service-learning, has amassed an enormous body of research on the learning benefits of community service.¹⁰ The major findings of this research are extremely encouraging for universities. Students who serve as part

¹⁰ Service-learning has been as rigorously assessed as any other learning innovation of the recent past, and far more rigorously assessed than the lecture or discussion models of teaching that hold sway everywhere. The most accessible one-volume compendium of research on service-learning is Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, Jr, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning* (SF: Jossey-Bass, 1999). For a current bibliography of research on service-learning, go to the website of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, <http://www.servicelearning.org/>

of a course that makes explicit connections between service and the curriculum build stronger connections to their classmates, faculty, and university. They develop a richer appreciation for diversity. And they learn better because they are able to apply their coursework to the real world and use real world experience to examine the theoretical positions offered in the classroom. All of this happens in a “rigorous” learning environment, one in which students are responsible to themselves, their classmates, and members of the community, to turn out top-rate work. I have no reason to believe that BYU wants to weaken the quality of the courses it offers. If this is the case, then the university ought to adopt service-learning much more broadly, for it marries the rigor traditionally prized in the university with the learning that is so often absent from lecture courses intent on “covering” an enormous curriculum.

Even in the face of the potential for student learning, faculty often reject work that engages with the local community. When pressed as to why this is the case, faculty often fall back on the “research” excuse, by which I mean that faculty claim that their research obligations are so onerous that it makes changes in their teaching difficult. This position is increasingly common at BYU, where department after department has, in the last decade, reduced the teaching load of faculty, increased course size, and retained and promoted faculty largely on the basis of their research output, and this in spite of the growing critique from inside and out of the university that research is inaccessible, targeted to miniscule audiences, and irrelevant to the issues of the day.¹¹ I have no desire to suggest that faculty cease to do research. But if faculty at BYU are responsible to support all of the Aims of a BYU Education, then one must ask how a

¹¹ In the past 15 years all of the major higher education associations have embraced this critique as they have worked to justify the costs of higher education to taxpayers, legislators, students, and donors. Much of their work emerges from the positions laid out in Ernest Boyer’s work, particularly *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). See also the work of the American Association of Higher Education on faculty roles and rewards at <http://www.aahe.org/initiatives/facultyroles.htm>, and the work of Campus Compact at www.compact.org

retreat into research does that. The short answer is that it does not. The slightly longer answer is that a research-oriented faculty might indeed make BYU into a place where learning is intellectually enlarging, spiritually strengthening, character building, and conducive to life-long learning and service if more faculty research had a clear connection to the real world. By this I do not mean that everyone should do “applied” research, or turn their entire intelligence toward Utah County. I do mean, though, that faculty ought to be expected to produce some work that is either accessible to the community, focused on community issues, or useful to their students as they work in the community. When the university seeks external reviewers of faculty work, it should find at least one reviewer from outside the university system, and the closer to Provo the better. More broadly, BYU ought to make good on the language of its rank and promotion documents and value teaching and service along with research.

None of the effort to connect BYU with the community will make a difference if the voice of the community is not represented in the university’s curriculum or decision-making process. If I am right that BYU can do its best work only if it is truly engaged with real communities, then community ought to be central to the university’s general education curriculum and community members ought to sit on the major governing councils of the university. BYU depends on the goodness of church members for its budget and the forbearance of community members for its comfort. Community is central to its theology and essential for its students’ learning. To believe such things and yet not listen to the community is to break faith with the place and people that nourish us.