

As an established teacher, this new venture of Virtual Teaching felt as though I was entering my first year of teaching all over again. The amount of work and the task of developing appropriate resources, for our new virtual setting, was quite daunting, however I was blessed to be a part of the CSULB ACDA Choral Service Initiative. Being paired with one of their fantastic singers allowed for me to have another set of hands to help develop the many resources needed to be successful! Furthermore, the materials that have been created will be used for years to come and have truly added to my repertoire of resources to train up the next generation of singers. Thank you to all of the Staff, Faculty, and students who poured their hearts and time into this initiative and supported myself and my colleagues in our virtual classrooms!

One cooperating teacher's perspective

I overall had a fantastic experience! I get into my only negative in the pairing section, but I had a great time in working with the students! I even got to teach a song to the students which is FANTASTIC experience, even if it was over Zoom. I also got to put the techniques that I am learning in my education courses into "real life" practice, rather than theoretical situations with students who sight read and sing flawlessly within the college, which, while helpful, is not exactly indicative of what you will actually encounter as a teacher.

One preservice teacher's perspective



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Virtual service learning for preservice choral educators: Lessons from the “field”

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Service Learning

In teacher education,

service learning programs can be utilized to accelerate the process of learning how to perform a variety of roles needed to meet students' needs such as counselor, community liaison, advocate, and moral leader (Anderson, 1998)—roles necessary in the job of an educator.





Literature Snapshot: General education

→ **Service learning can benefit preservice teachers**

(e.g., Allen, 2003; Anderson, 1998; Barnes, 2002; Kiely, 2005; Marttinen et al., 2020; Sanders et al., 2016; Sedlak et al., 2003)

→ **Service learning can benefit the teachers mentoring preservice teachers**

(Reynolds et al., 2005; Zaffini, 2015)

→ **Service learning can benefit community partners**

(Baker & Murray, 2011; Donahue et al., 2003; Karyan & Gathercoal, 2005)

→ **Critical service learning projects** (Tinkler et al., 2019) **“encourage students to see themselves as agents of social change and use the experience of service to address and respond to injustice in communities”**

(Mitchell, 2008, p. 51).



Literature Snapshot: Music education

→ Cultural immersion

(Emmanuel, 2003; Van Deusen, 2019)

→ Preservice music teachers providing instruction for schools without a certified music teacher

(Bartolome, 2013; Reynolds, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2005)

→ “Arranger in Residence” project

(Forrester, 2019)

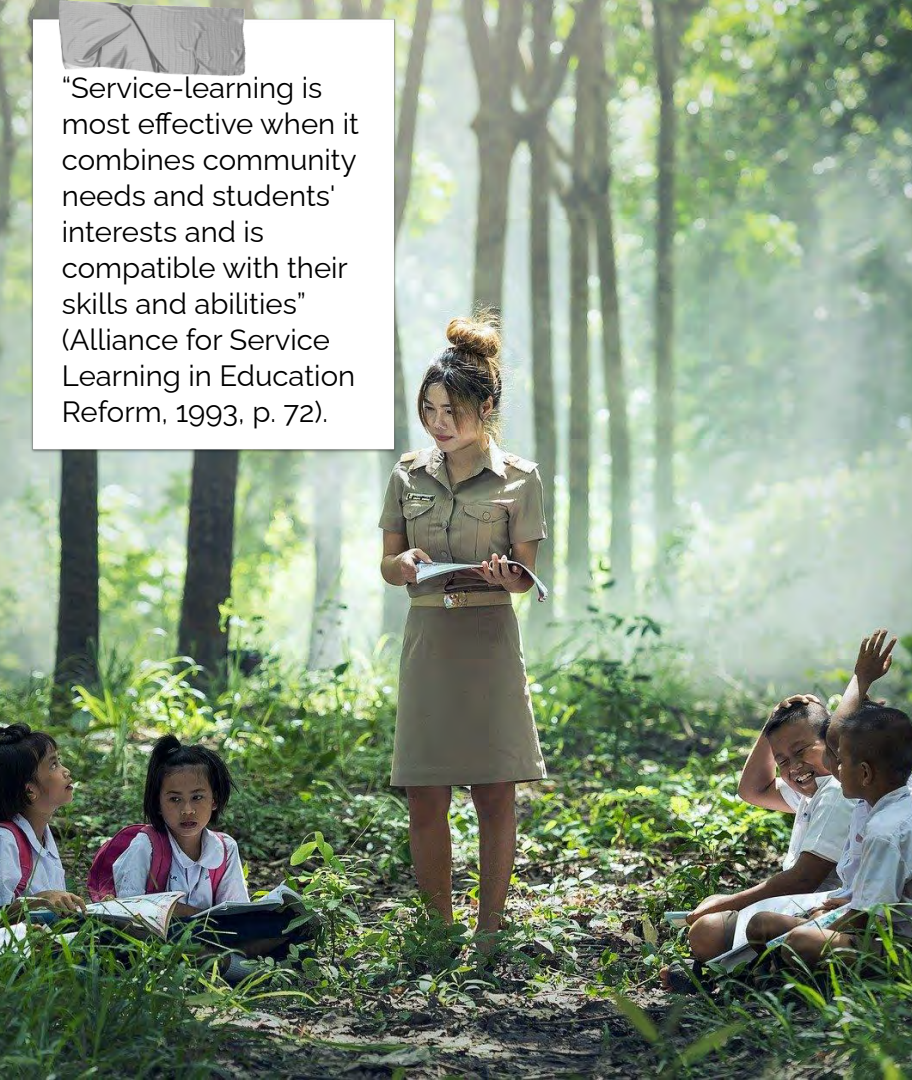
→ “The Band Project”

(Singberg, 2020)

→ Virtual service learning

(Reese, 2017)

"Service-learning is most effective when it combines community needs and students' interests and is compatible with their skills and abilities" (Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform, 1993, p. 72).



Best practices for service learning in teacher education

- Goal/mission (“north star”)
- Organizational structure
 - Clear expectations, guidelines, & support for participants
- Synchronicity
- Ongoing reflection
- Progress monitoring and Feedback
- Collaboration and communication
- Reciprocity
- Intentional use of technology

CSULB Choral Service Initiative

What: The **CSULB ACDA Choral Service Initiative (CSI)** is a *completely virtual* service program where vocal music students from CSU Long Beach's Bob Cole Conservatory of Music were paired with California K-12 Choir teachers for a semester of service in their classroom(s).

Why: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic - induced shift to distance learning, and its impact on K-12 music educators and their students, as well as collegiate music students.

- This program, being both completely virtual and free, allows our CSULB students to serve teachers and classrooms across California regardless of location, school funding, or method of instruction.



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Parties Involved:

- Program Director : Emily LaSalle (founder)
- CSULB ACDA Chapter: Sponsor
- CSULB vocal students of multiple majors
- K-12 Teachers across California
- Faculty Support: Dr. Joshua Palkki and Dr. Jonathan Talberg

Program Timeline

- Development: August 2020
- Terms
 - Fall 2020 Semester (14 weeks)
 - Spring 2021 Semester (14 weeks)
 - Currently ongoing



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Program Setup and Structure:

- Interested individuals filled out an extensive application form
 - Students: skills, interests, availability
 - Mentor Teachers: needs, interests
- Contracts with terms and expectations
- Partnerships were made by the Program Director to address
 - The needs of teachers
 - The interests/skills of volunteers
- Progress was tracked via:
 - Weekly forms for volunteers
 - Bi-monthly forms for Mentor Teachers



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Example Tasks (including, but not limited to):

- Administrative support (grading)
- Created Part tracks
- Private and small group voice lessons
- Virtual choir video and audio editing
- Ran full ensemble rehearsals
- Led group composition projects



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Preservice Teacher Testimonials:

- “My experience has been amazing! This opportunity has helped give me a sense of purpose for getting through this challenging time and focusing on my future professional goals, because it's really reaffirmed my passion for teaching music and providing a safe place for young people to learn and communicate.”
- “This program has made me excited to teach. It is hard to gain experience by doing peer teaching, so it was very helpful to work with actual students.”
- “Before this program, I had been very dead set on teaching high school in the future. But now I am much more open to working with middle schoolers upon my realization that a teacher's influence is strong for younger students.”
- “This program inspires me to keep going at the end of the week.”



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Mentor Teacher Testimonials:

- “I would not have been able to be as successful [in] maneuvering through this first year of teaching if it weren't for [my volunteer].”
- “Overall - this program was very helpful for an opportunity for both the student to learn some of the ropes maneuvering through what is going to be an unforgettable year as well as an opportunity for me as a teacher to learn the ropes of mentorship on how I can be a more effective mentor for future student teachers.”
- “This program, and [my volunteer], were God-sends this year. Her insight, feedback and overall willingness to help made the unit, and subsequently our year, a success. I am so glad that this connection was able to be made, and I know my students and I will never forget it.”



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Outcomes:

- Total Participants
 - Fall 2020: 27 Mentor Teachers, 27 Volunteers
 - Spring 2020: 23 Mentor Teachers, 23 Volunteers
- Total Hours:
 - Fall: ~ 700
 - Spring: ~ 500

Publication:

LaSalle, E. R. (2021). The CSULB ACDA Choral Service Initiative: College Students serving California's Teachers. *California Choral Directors Association Cantate*, Vol. 33(3), 8-10.



CSULB Choral Service Initiative, cont.

Areas for Improvement:

- Reimagine structure to get consistent volunteer responses
- Increased reflection opportunities in weekly volunteer forms
- Reevaluate structure to give students more agency in pairing
- Increased guidance for mentor teachers
- Address student burnout



– CSI as a blueprint for virtual service learning programs

Some
Recommendations...

- Examine ways to maximize reciprocity and to add more of critical lens
- Provide students with context about the school/communities in which they will be working
- Strong reporting protocol (enforcement?)
- Structured feedback system between mentor teachers and preservice teachers
- Compensation
 - Preservice teachers
 - Mentor teachers
- The nature of a volunteer experience vs. a service learning course



CIRCLING BACK...

What we learned and how these small pitfalls could be avoided...

- **Synchronicity: Closer connection to coursework**
 - *Barrier at CSULB: State CTC requirements*
 - *Barrier during COVID: specific fieldwork experiences had already been designed*
- **Ongoing reflection + Progress monitoring and Feedback= Mid-course correction**
- **Intentional use of technology during non-COVID times**



Questions/Comments?

Thank you for joining today!

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