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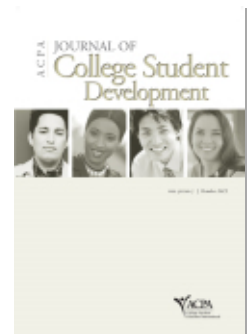
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*Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons  
Learned* by Barbara Jacoby (review)

Robert G. Bringle

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## *Service-Learning Essentials: Questions, Answers, and Lessons Learned*

Barbara Jacoby

San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2014,  
352 pages, \$38.00 (softcover)

*Reviewed by* Robert G. Bringle,  
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What a delight it is to read Barbara Jacoby's compilation of her wisdom on service-learning. The breadth of the book is ensured by Jacoby's allegiance to a definition of service-learning that encompasses both curricular and cocurricular initiatives. As such, the book is relevant to professionals in academic affairs and student affairs who practice service-learning, are interested in promoting its role in higher education, and want to have a resource that they can hand to others to answer questions about its nature.

Holliday and Chandler (1986) identified two attributes of wisdom: (a) exceptional understanding of experience, and (b) judgment and communication skills. Jacoby has had extensive experience helping others understand the basic and the complicated aspects of implementing service-learning in higher education. She has done this through books that have led the way in the field's development (e.g., Jacoby, 1996; Jacoby, 2003; Jacoby, 2009; Jacoby & Mutascio, 2010) as well as through her many workshops and lectures. She has consistently helped others learn from her experiences and the experiences of others. This book captures her exceptional understanding of service-learning.

The book also demonstrates Jacoby's excellent judgment in presenting best practices, choices to be made, and navigating the nuances of service learning. This is done across an extraordinary breadth and with appropriate depth to be useful to most practitioners and supporters of service-learning. This includes faculty who want to integrate service learning

into a course or those who would like to improve the quality of their service learning courses or programs. The information will be of interest to professional staff and administrators associated with campus-level initiatives to promote and enhance service-learning (e.g., community service directors, deans of student affairs, student affairs staff, chief academic officers). The book will also provide useful information to other constituencies (e.g., students, community partners, funders).

Jacoby does all of this with exceptionally clear communication. The presentation artfully goes from the basic concepts, best practices, and rudiments of service-learning to the complexities and contentious issues. She provides a depth of exploration that will help even seasoned practitioners and instructors appreciate what they are doing, learn more about their craft, and improve their work. The book will also serve as a resource for those interested in greater depth because of the citations to primary sources and the identification of key resources at the end of each section.

The book appropriately begins with definitions of service-learning and civic engagement, its philosophical roots and history, its rationale, and how it varies depending on institutional type. The next two chapters focus on the cornerstones of service-learning: reflection and partnerships. Each of these chapters explores different approaches, best practices, and specific examples to help practitioners. Chapter 4 provides a nut-and-bolts examination of integrating service-learning into academic courses. It covers such topics as different ways to structure service-learning in a course, the syllabus, assessment and grading, logistics, special types of courses (e.g., in a discipline, on-line course, general education), and related topics (e.g., designating service-learning courses, promotion and tenure, departmental engagement).

To complement the chapter on integrating service-learning into courses, Chapter 5 is devoted to co-curricular service-learning. It covers different types of co-curricular service-learning, connecting co-curricular service-learning to other initiatives in student affairs, student development and leadership, and assessing co-curricular service. Assessment is then broadened into a full chapter. Chapter 6 briefly considers different types of assessment: counting, evaluation, benchmarking, outcomes assessment, and how assessment can provide a basis for research. It also discusses the purposes of assessment and different methods for gathering information (e.g., surveys, academic achievement, content analysis of student products, interviews, focus groups, observation, case studies). In addition to student assessment, the chapter contains brief overviews of course assessment, assessment from the point-of-view of community partners, and assessment at the institutional level.

The focus of the chapters then shifts from largely service-learning courses and co-curricular programs to administrating service-learning on a campus. Central to her coverage in Chapter 7 are the nature and location of campus-level infrastructure to support service-learning, professional staff to support its development, funding, marketing to support the understanding of service-learning on campus and beyond, risk management and liability issues, and a short section on international service-learning.

As I mentioned, Jacoby confronts difficult, complex, and contentious issues related to service-learning. Chapter 8 discusses diversity issues, service-learning as a graduation requirement, social justice and politics as discretionary or essential components of service-learning, tailoring service-learning beyond the civically motivated students, the gap between the aspirations of service-learning and its implementation (e.g., democratic

partnerships, reciprocal relationships), and the dialectic between service focused locally versus globally. Her approach to discussing these issues is balanced and will help practitioners, professional staff, instructors, and community partners reflect on the nature of their activities.

The final chapter examines challenging issues associated with the future of service-learning in higher education. She acknowledges the advances and momentum that service-learning has accrued over the past several decades and she explores the ways in which its future can be secured. What is meaningful evidence that will be persuasive to different audiences? How can research better equip practitioners to present the case for service-learning? How can service-learning be further woven into the fabric of higher education? How can more faculty, and especially newer faculty, be encouraged and supported to implement service-learning? How can partnerships be improved to enhance outcomes for all constituencies, not just students? What is the future of on-line service-learning? What should be the relationship of service-learning to K–12 education, global and local humanitarian crises, and social entrepreneurship? Her commentary on these tough questions is constructive and optimistic.

It is possible to quibble with some of the coverage. The coverage of reflection fails to present Patti Clayton's excellent contributions to structuring reflection to generate learning, capture learning, and assess learning (e.g., Ash & Clayton, 2009a, 2009b). Student eportfolios are not considered as an emerging feature of the higher education landscape that can incorporate both curricular and cocurricular service-learning. More attention could have been given to the potential for conducting scholarship and research on service-learning to strengthen faculty credentials and advance the field. However, I do consider these minor in comparison to how the book fulfills its

intended purpose. Jacoby states that the “primary purpose of this book is to promote high-quality service-learning throughout the higher education landscape in order to realize its potential benefits and to secure its future” (p. 253). She has again provided the field with a significant contribution that has no peers and that will help many practitioners for years to come. I recommend that service-learning practitioners buy multiple copies of this book and distribute them widely.

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### *Student Veterans and Service Members in Higher Education*

Jan Arminio, Tomoko Kudo Grabosky, & Josh Lang

New York, NY: Routledge, 2015, 168 pages, \$34.77 (softcover)

*Reviewed by* Susan V. Iverson,  
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Arminio, Grabosky, and Lang provide compelling coverage of a segment of students on US institutions of higher education: student veterans and military service members (SVSM). The coverage in the volume is reflective of the multiple perspectives of the author team, as researcher, practitioner, and student veteran. Reflective of these three perspectives, the volume includes empirical

evidence, stemming from their multi-site case study of cultural conflict experienced by SVSM during their transition to the military and then to higher education; it illuminates best practices and calls for practitioner advocacy for SVSM students as they navigate campus barriers; and this volume draws heavily on SVSM voices (from their data) to narrate the cultural conflicts during transition experiences.

Following an introductory preface, the authors provide a rich and well-researched overview of “the long but inconsistent tradition of veterans’ benefits” (p. 1). This comprehensive historical context stirs the reader to consider “how and when those benefits included education” (p. 1), but the authors also use their overview of historical shifts and evolutions to foreshadow issues later discussed in the volume. For instance, the authors illuminate (historical) institutionalized inequities in allocation or distribution of benefits, and the reader can see these vestiges in a later chapter on (in)equity issues. It is not hard to connect the historical reality that “prior to World War II, women who serviced in the nurse corps were not providing any rank or benefits” (p. 7), with “strong stereotypes in society that women are not ‘real veterans’ or that they are not exposed to ‘real danger’ compared to male veterans” (p. 119). The authors’ description of Bonus Marchers—a group of veterans in the 1930s who marched from Oregon to Washington, DC in protest of poor economic conditions (i.e. few benefits and high unemployment)—foreshadows organizing by SVSM on campus, but also their discussion of the need for practitioners to possess advocacy competencies. I appreciated the authors’ strategic use of history to foreshadow what followed in the volume.

In chapter 2, the authors describe the methodology for their multi-site case study, and analyze and discuss their findings through a cultural lens. The authors contrast military