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## Review

### The Measure of Service Learning Research Scales to Assess Student Experience Edited by Robert G. Bringle, Mindy A. Phillips and Michael Hudson

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The Measure of Service Learning offers a compilation of psychometric scales that, while not all designed specifically for service-learning, should provide useful ways to measure different aspects of students' experience with and attitudes toward community-engaged learning. The authors group these scales under six headings: motives and values, moral development, self and self-concept, student development, attitudes, and critical thinking. Each section offers a number of tools and angles from which to evaluate what is really going on in a course, something program directors and teachers find themselves asked to do with increasing frequency.

Lead author Robert G. Bringle, a social psychologist who directs the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), has been actively involved in service-learning initiatives since the 1980s. As a strong advocate for program evaluation, Bringle understands that different types of service-learning courses require different pedagogical approaches and different types of assessment. The



Measure of Service Learning helps the service-learning practitioner to remember this principle and, hopefully, to develop those strategies and assessments.

For example, the first assessment scale offered is the popular Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). This scale might help service-learning professionals understand what motives students have for service-learning involvement, a factor that can inform pedagogy and course outcomes. The VFI is divided into six subscales that can measure the following functions: values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. These subscales ask questions that assess an individual's degree of interest in the program and reasons for volunteering. In addition to listing sample questions from the scale, The Measure of Service Learning provides reference information about how the scale has been used, others who have used it, its reliability, and the impact of gender on scores. It should be stressed, however, that the authors do not provide the information one would need to interpret student responses to the scales.

This book, like others of its genre, will be more familiar in its scope to psychometricians than to most service-learning scholar-teachers. It provides a succinct overview of service-learning and a brief primer on scientific research and measurement, neither enough for a psychologist wanting an introduction to service-learning nor for a service-learning professional to feel confident performing psychological research. As it turns out, however, this book only intends to provide an indication of available, relevant scales and to alert readers to the validity, reliability, and known biases of each scale. These are important points of consideration in choosing one scale over another, but not everything one needs to conduct data collection and analysis. Upon finding a scale of interest, a would-be researcher would write away for the full test and accompanying



materials that aid in evaluation.

Thus, although the book fulfills its purpose to alert researchers to available tools we were disappointed that the book does not offer better guidance for relative novices interested in service-learning assessment and research.

<p>I was disappointed that my students represented community partners as subject matter rather than as collaborative thinkers working in the writing with model. Patrick and Steven contributed their othered experience to the project, and Lynn and Marc contributed all of the writing.</p>	<p>We expected a richer definition and discussion of service-learning from this book, especially given the extensive experience in service-learning of its lead author. The book defines service learning as a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience . . . [that helps students] gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (5). This description certainly provides some of the characteristics and intended outcomes of service learning. Given the promising title, however, the authors might also have considered Weigert's well-established (and more specific) six-element framework that differentiates and characterizes service learning: three criteria for the community (provides service that is meaningful to the community, provides service that meets a need or goal, and allows the community to define that need or goal) and three for the student/institution (service flows from and into course objectives, assignments requiring reflection integrate the service with course objectives, and the assignment is assessed and evaluated). Weigert's six elements highlight aspects of service learning much in need of measurement and assessment and could provide a focus for another book on research scales and service learning. A resource pro-</p>
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