



IMPLEMENTING A SERVICE-LEARNING MODULE INTO AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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OVERVIEW OF CAPSTONE SITE

Itawamba Community College OTA Program located in Tupelo, Mississippi.
OTA students, Program Director, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator and Potential Community Partners
Mission: “To prepare qualified occupational therapy assistants for entry into the health care environment with the requisite skills needed to provide effective therapy under the supervision of a certified occupational therapist”.

LITERATURE SUMMARY

Service-learning allows the student to engage in deeper, experiential learning that helps strengthen their classroom education (Kielsmeier et al., 2004; Gallagher & McGorry, 2015). Hansen (2007) explains service-learning as the “link between community-based learning and academic enhancement.” Furthermore, there is a correlation between higher academic performance and participation in service-learning. Through service-learning a student can better understand the objectives of his or her current courses. Finally, students can further develop critical thinking skills, which will be applicable throughout their education, in their careers, and within their community (Davis & Dempsey, 2018).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Initial Meeting:- June 17th, 2020: SWOT analysis and semi-structured interview questions regarding service-learning were conducted. The decision was to create a one-hour service-learning course would be most beneficial to their curriculum design.

Follow-up Meeting- April 8th 2021:

Capstone mentor and student decided to create a module to introduce the freshman students to service-learning, develop expected outcomes, determine student roles while at service-learning sites, design reflection assignments, and methods for tracking of service-learning hours.

PROJECT GOALS / OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Develop a module to communicate to the ICC OTA program service-learning objectives and structure to the students by completion of the capstone experience.

Objective 1: Create service-learning objectives for the ICC OTA program by week 2.

Objective 2: Design a literature review PowerPoint presentation on service-learning for the professors by week 3.

Objective 3: Compose a PowerPoint lecture to introduce the importance of service-learning, learning objectives and program structure to the students by week 3.

Objective 4: Create a list of approved sites and activities by week 13.

Objective 5: Create a rubric used to grade assignments (journaling, reflection paper, and PowerPoint presentation) that will assess the student’s completion of service-learning objectives by week 13.

Goal 2: Meet with community partners to make sure they understand the service-learning objectives and the activities are meeting the need of the organization by completion of the capstone experience.

Objective 1: Design a flyer handout to explain the importance of service-learning and learning objectives by week 2.

Objective 2: Generate a meeting with key stakeholders on service-learning by week 10.

Objective 3: Create a document that has approved service-learning activities by week 13.

Goal 3: Determine where the one-hour service-learning course would fit best in the curriculum by completion of the capstone experience.

Objective 1: Collaborate with the capstone mentors to discuss curriculum design by week 12.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

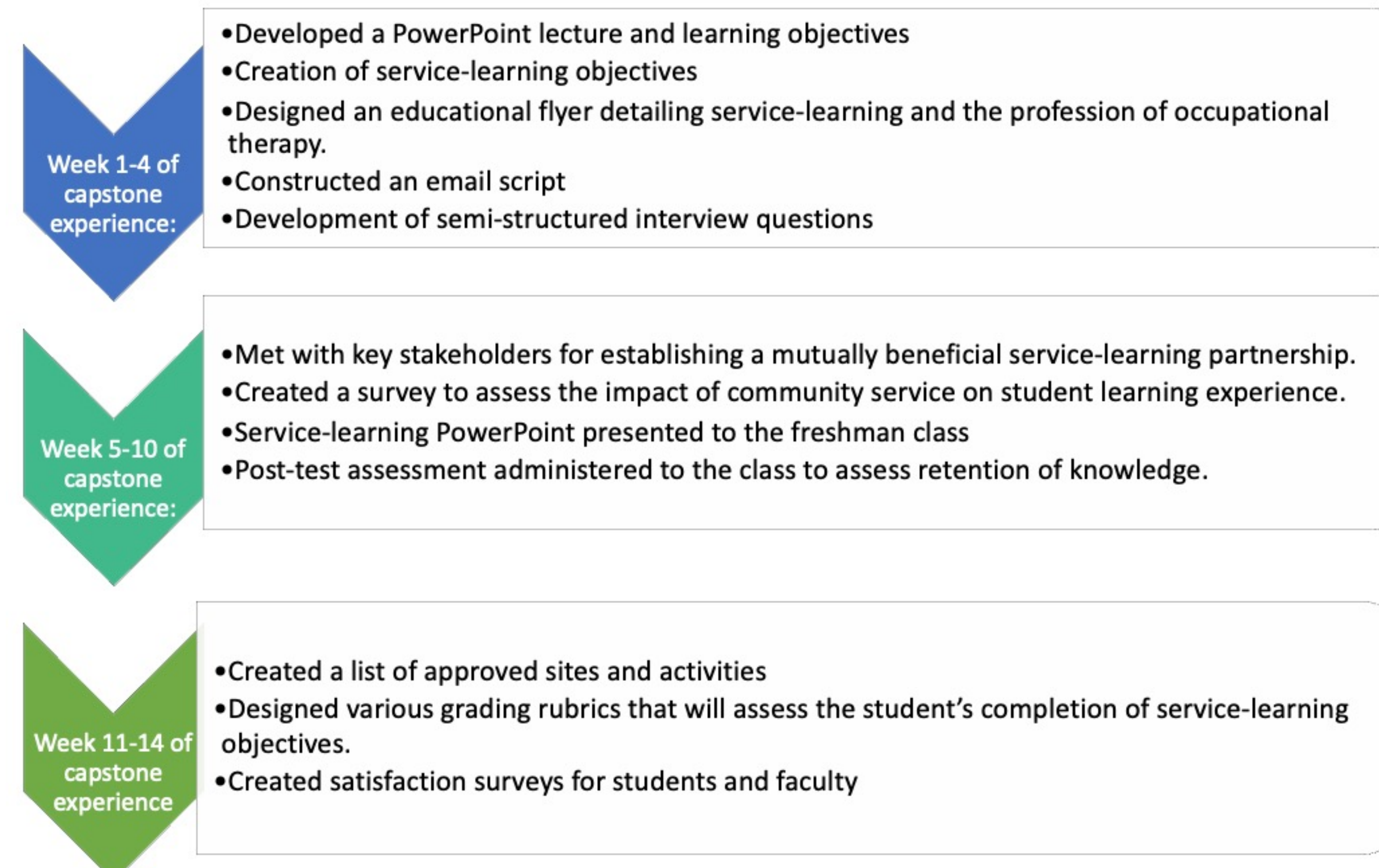


Figure 1:Timeline of Goals Accomplished

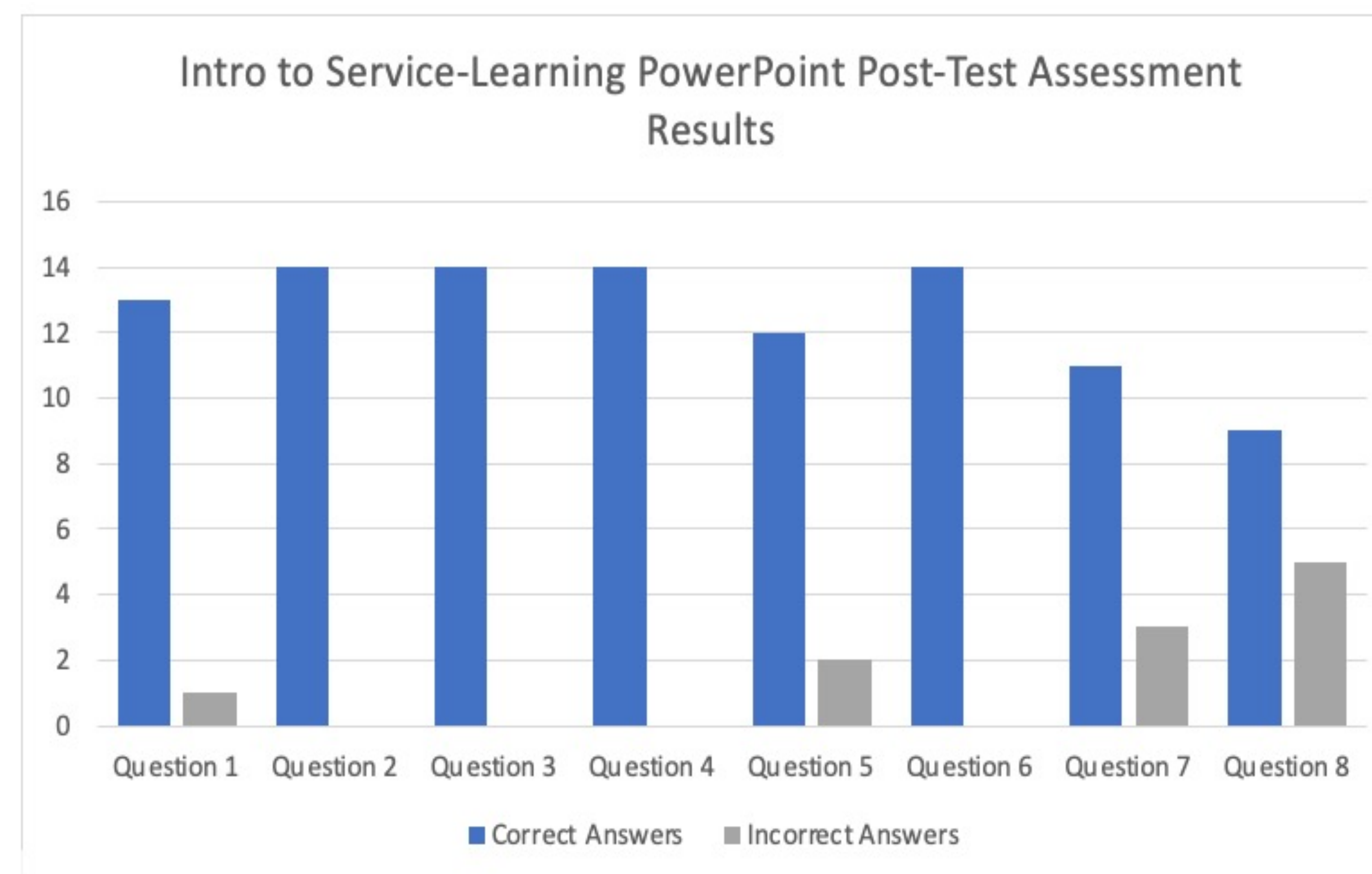


Figure 2: Service-Learning Module Post-Test

Community Partner Development: The program director and capstone student met with thirteen community sites face-to-face to discuss a mutually beneficial partnership. From the collaborative meetings, I created a detailed spread sheet for the program director containing all established sites with their missions, services offered, number of clients served, needs, hours of operation, number of students allowed and how the site will utilize the students, how students are utilized, preferred means of communication and if the site requires additional drug screening, background check or training. Also, I created a smaller spread sheet for the students with the most pertinent information.



Figure 3: Description of Community Partners Established by the Capstone Project

PLAN FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

I developed two satisfaction surveys for faculty and students. The survey for the students evaluated just the service-learning module. The faculty survey assessed the capstone project altogether. The students and faculty both had high satisfaction ratings.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The capstone project made a valuable contribution to the OTA educational program at ICC. The developed service-learning module greatly expands the experiential learning opportunities for students. My project will assist in preparing students with essential professional ethics, attitudes and skills needed in OT practice while positively impacting the community.

Future Recommendations- The students and faculty at ICC will utilize my service-learning module and spread sheet to progress to implementing a service-learning program in the near future.