

**GLSI Incentive Grant – Student 2 Steward (S2S)
PROJECT PROFILE**

Project Title: **Student 2 Steward (S2S)**

Grantee Organization: **Grand Valley State University (College of Education – GVSU COE)**

Project Team:

Forrest Clift, Principal Investigator (PI); GVSU COE Associate Director

Clayton Pelon, Co-PI; GVSU COE Associate Director

Susan Loughrin, Adjunct Administrative Personnel; GVSU COE Project Coordinator

Mintium, Web Developer; Contracted Personnel for web site development and design

***Michael Posthumus**, Key Personnel; (former GVSU COE Assistant Director, left 5/2015)

Contact Person:

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Grant Amount: **\$76,240.00**

Grant Time Frame: **7/15/2014 – 6/30/2016**

Focus Areas: **Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI)**

Brief Project Summary:

Groundswell developed, and implemented a web-based application to guide/assist educators through the process of high-quality place-based education knowledge acquisition. The application, Student2Steward (S2S) is located at Student2Steward.com. Current Groundswell educators were tapped to add lessons, resources, documents, etc. to assist in developing a high-quality professional development (PD) module.

A broader regional or statewide presence provided by S2S may enable the GLSI to reach more schools with less financial support.

Making the S2S resource available to other hubs in the future will provide quality professional development (PD) and assist with implementation of high-quality service learning and place-based education (PBE) projects.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

IMPLEMENTATION

1. ***Please provide a thorough but succinct (two to four paragraphs) summary of the work that you did through your incentive grant.***

The Student2Steward (S2S) project included two primary objectives: 1) developing a web-based application of learning modules to assist educators in learning about and actually implementing a high-quality service learning program; and 2) documenting experienced teachers' instructional activities to help novice place-based educators develop content-rich environments and improve service learning implementation in their school and/or community. This was done via an "alpha/beta" model, where experienced Groundswell teachers (alpha team) worked with novice teachers (beta team) to complete the online modules and develop a final proposal for project funding.

Groundswell used the expertise and experiences of current Groundswell-trained educators (the "alpha team") to make S2S a robust and relevant teaching and learning tool with tips, tricks, practical examples of lessons, and other information in the form of videos, photographs, or downloadable content. These teachers: documented successful lessons and/or strategies from their own previous project experiences; recorded short videos demonstrating high-quality instruction in service learning; and developed supplementary content.

The alpha team piloted S2S and aided the development team by providing direct feedback during the software development phase (alpha testing).

Each alpha team member recruited one new educator to work as a 4-member secondary pilot team (beta testing). This "beta team," whose members have never been exposed to service learning or place-based stewardship education, were to complete the S2S learning modules and then utilize S2S to plan/implement a service learning project in their classroom. Of the four teams, only one (1) team completed the project through final project submission.

2. ***Referring to your application, please note any significant differences between your proposed and executed scope/tasks/timelines.***

Given the timing of the academic school year and the delay in receiving funding, our project timeline had to be altered to allow for the beta teachers to participate in training and exposure to the site, complete the modules, and then work with alpha teachers to develop projects and complete the proposal for funding. Thus, a no-cost time extension was requested and approved to extend to June 30, 2016.

The other factor in the scope of our tasks was the lack of ongoing participation by members of the beta team (novice teachers). Only one of the four groups (25%) completed the process through to completion – finishing the six (6) learning modules and completing an application for project funding. While the three of the four beta teachers attended an August 2015 project rollout meeting where they were provided with copies of printed resources found on the site, two of them did not complete the work. Attempts to understand the lack of follow through were met with concerns about time needed to complete the work and teachers who felt overworked.

3. ***Please describe any unanticipated factors that positively or negatively influenced your work, and explain how you either capitalized on or coped with these factors.***

A member of the team who was key personnel accepted a job at another organization and was in the process of leaving as the development of the site was well underway. His expertise was needed to complete portions of the learning modules. Trying to secure his information and input was difficult. His departure left some grant funds on the table in the "Salaries" section.

RESULTS

1. Report on results associated with the measurable goals/intended outcomes of your project.

Proudly, we can proclaim that the four (4) goals related to Student 2 Steward project were met. We developed the pilot test, developed the website, demonstrated the functionality of the site, and invited participants at the 2015 PBE Conference to complete profiles and consider using the site to do self-paced professional development.

The associated outcomes have also been met, although the outcome related to beta team educators completing a draft of a service learning proposal to Groundswell for funding (through this grant) found only one in four of those teachers actually participating to completion and being funded. Also, the work to expand the message and marketing of S2S continues as members of Groundswell share the website information at various events, including a national NAAEE conference (October 2016). We are committed to growing interest and utilization of the website for PBE professional development.

2. List up to three important outcomes or results of this project that you believe have value to your hub. For each outcome, briefly explain why you think it is valuable.

- a. With the growth of Groundswell and participating schools, the development of the S2S website provides an alternative route to learning about place-based education and service learning with students.
- b. Members of the community who might be interested in how an educator or class utilizes service learning in quality educational instruction, can also utilize S2S to learn about why PBE is so critical in classrooms.
- c. Teachers could utilize the online project development portion for submitting their proposals for review while also developing an outside funding avenue via the “crowdsourcing” component developed by the web team.

3. List up to three important outcomes or results of this project that you believe have value to the GLSI as a whole. For each outcome, briefly explain why you think it is valuable.

- a. The alpha/beta model can allow teachers to work together in a mentor/mentee, respectively situation for understanding the key tenets of PBE. This model can easily be utilized in expanding teacher participation in other hubs.
- b. The online learning modules can be marketed and shared with areas where PBE professional development may not be currently happening. Because the modules were created with successful teacher participants, it is ‘vetted’ by professionals who have tried and tested methods for ensuring their students’ project success.
- c. Additionally, the ‘crowdsourcing’ connection means a school can work on getting the word out to local communities, organizations, businesses for providing financial support

OUTREACH

1. What are your ideas/plans for sharing the most important results of your work on this grant with other hubs, either on your own or in collaboration with the GLSI?

It is the recommendation of our development team that we share the information about S2S at a future “all-hub” meeting, so other hubs have knowledge of what was designed. Additionally, members of Groundswell will be presenting information on online education models (including S2S) at the NAAEE conference in October 2016. This will provide a large, relevant audience to hear information about this new method of learning about place-based education.