

Exploring Indigenous Elements of Service-Learning in a Hong Kong University

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Agenda

- Background of the Research
- Objectives of the Research
- Research Framework & Methodology
- Findings of the Research
- Recommendations

Background of the Research

- SL has been expanding since 2000 in Asia
- Asia Engage, Service-Learning Asia Network, Service-Learning Higher Education Network in Hong Kong, Service-Learning Network in Philippine, Service-Learning Network in Indonesia have been set up
- Hong Kong is a city with both Western and Eastern Culture, the concept of Service-Learning has been brought to the secondary school education (Other Learning Experience) and University level (Liberal Art Education)
- Given the expanding development of Service-Learning in Asia, especially, in Hong Kong, we hope to explore the indigenous elements of Service-Learning pedagogy in Hong Kong

Service-Learning Model at Lingnan University

□ Hong Kong: Lingnan's Experiences

Background of Lingnan University

- The only Liberal Arts University in Hong Kong
- Lingnan has been subscribing to students doing community services as part of their university life e.g., Integrated Learning Programmes (ILPs)
- Scholastic Excellence & Whole-person development
- S-L Pioneer in Hong Kong
- Distinctive Teaching and Learning Processes and Environment Through liberal arts Education & Service-Learning:
 - **6 pillars**, 4Is (Individualization of students; Interdisciplinary approach; Intra-curricular activities; International exchange) & **3 Es** (Experience, Exposure, Excitement)

Our Definition of Service-Learning

- 1. Co-curricular service (vs. general voluntary work/community service):** experiential learning/credit-bearing/part of course assessment/attached academic goals/structured time/reflection for further understanding of the course content
- 2. University-wide participation:** applicable to all majors/disciplines; not confined to social work nor service activities in social service organizations
- 3. Equal emphasis on processes and outcomes:** close supervision by home instructors and host supervisors
- 4. Emphasis on public interest:** with a purpose of charity and social responsibility. (vs. other forms of experiential education such as internship: professional training largely for private interest)

Objectives of the Research

- 1) To explore the meaning of Service-learning to different stakeholders at Lingnan University in Hong Kong
- 2) To discover is there any indigenous elements in adopting the Western Model How do Chinese Students, Coordinators and Faculty doing service learning view it?

Research Questions?

- What does Service-Learning mean to Chinese Students, coordinators and faculty members in Hong Kong? (Perception of Service-learning in Hong Kong-Their **Understanding**, their **application** and their **Change**)
- Are there any **Chinese values** embedded in the service-learning programs in Hong Kong?

Research Framework and Methodology (In-Depth Interview)

Questions/ stakeholders

(1. Understanding)

Q1: When you first heard about SL, what did you think? When did it hear about it? What do you think? Did it make sense to you? To what extent, did it sound like a HK or Chinese idea? To what extent, did it sound like a western concept? Why do you start to have SL?

(2. Application)

Q2: What kind of service-learning program did you do? Why and how?

(3. Change)

Q3: Any change related to the students/faculty members/coordinators?

4. Overall Questions-Indigenous elements

Q4: What is your idea of Service? What is your idea of learning? What part of SL experience makes sense to you? What didn't make sense? What should be changed about SL? What element do you think it should fit in the HK culture? Why? And how would you do?

Stakeholder Data Gathering at Lingnan University

- **15 Interviewee (5 students, 7 faculty, 3 OSL Staff Coordinators) from Faculty of Art, Business, Social Sciences and Office of Service-Learning. They have at least participated in one service-learning course.**

Data Analysis

- General Understanding of SL
- Application of SL
- New perspectives or actions after doing SL
- Comparison between Chinese Culture and Western culture on SL
- Others

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Understanding of SL: Students' perspective

Before doing S-L	After doing S-L
I just knew that it was <u>different</u> from <u>general field trip</u>	I thought that SL is service plus learning . Everyone must think what service and learning mean by.*
I thought it was <u>similar to service</u> at the beginning.	I don't think you join SL so it is SL. It should be your daily life . How to serve people and how to learn from the other?
I did <u>not</u> think it could <u>relate to knowledge in lecture</u> .	I think the ultimate level of SL is to show education...
I thought that SL was something <u>extracurricular programs</u> being held by school. It could be <u>voluntary works</u> or some related activities. It might widen students' horizons.	The most important thing is that it did not only focus on theory , but also practical and two-way , as you said, you gave out something, but also gained something
As told by other students, SL means you won't take courses in school, but serve people or hold events outside school. It is <u>more interesting than attend classes</u> in school	The understanding towards SL... not really understand* (*=Same Student)

Understanding of SL: Faculty's perspective

Before doing S-L	After doing S-L
<p>My interpretation of SL at that time is <u>putting knowledge into community</u>, make it more interactive with people around us and not only examination, paper... you know lots of things in university campus</p>	<p>Of course, I know more about it when SL comes into the curriculum. There are lots of criteria we need to fulfill *</p>
<p>SL is something more dynamic, it has its so call <u>voluntary service component</u>, <u>school-based assessment</u>. This is a little bit new. And at the same time, more interpersonal communications, these are <u>more humanistic and more or less like the idea from psychology or the social worker</u>.</p>	<p>Of course, it is not only a voluntary service. *</p>
<p>It makes sense to me because it is... we always mention that <u>learn it by doing</u>. Now, we turn learning to <u>more active value, action to serve to community</u>.</p>	<p>idea of SL becomes good because we tend to emphasize learning, to articulate that we actually learn a lot, we gain a lot from service, you know*</p>

Understanding of SL: SL Coordinators' perspectives

Before doing S-L	After doing S-L
<p>because I was a <u>social worker</u>, I think when I heard this, I think it is a <u>new term</u>, I try to search it from the web and find that it seems <u>similar to practicum in my professional</u>.</p>	<p>SL to me is as what I said, is not only skill training, but also some attitude training.*</p>
<p>when I was student at Lingnan and it <u>came up as an option</u>, you know, as oppose to the tutorial mode in other classes. So, that appeal to me something really exciting because I have been doing my study, <u>I have been doing my study, I have been doing voluntary services outside of the classroom</u>, but it sounds like the right combination of both. It's a new thing to me and it sounds like a <u>very good option</u> for me to try <u>another kind of learning in my university study</u>.</p>	
<p>I think of <u>community service</u>, which means we have various programs and then students will go into the community to serve the other people</p>	

SL Application: Students' perspective

I think the outbreak of SARS was 10 years ago, it is time for us to **review this history**, which is similar to **reflection**.

if the program relates to dancing, I would consider if dancing can apply the health psychology knowledge in it. Or who will be my service targets? What is the service model? I think more about how to **organize an event** instead of thinking about my own interests.

through SL farming program, I could know more about that place; what farming life would be; **how globalization affected that place and how city affected rural areas**. I thought that It was a key... something guided me to develop more effects.

in this SL program, I could **gain and applied my knowledge**.

SL Application: Faculty's perspective

...was a writer who is famous in **environmental writing**. So, I think... you know... **environment is a concern** in our society. I think it is especially for Hong Kong, which is very commercial, so, I think it is a good way. I think it can link up to care about something of the society.

I have **delivered some chapters** in the reference books and passed them the SL officer for copying and then distribute to the students. And then I said, you know, before you go to the police station, you start your outside classroom activities, please **read this kind of academic contents, apart from what I have described in the lecture**

That's why in the reflection, I tell my students **we just plan, when you run, when you execute, you need to put the theories**, and also sometimes, the other way rounded. **When you see the effect, you suddenly understand that is the theory**. Art is a play. This is a theory we have. And then they suddenly understand that yes, all the kids love playing. ... it can help them to **connect their experiences with the theories taught**.

SL Application: SL Coordinators

When students ask 'will this suggestion work?', 'should we employ more other capable employees instead of all these grassroots women, who need a lot of training?'. And at this point, we will try to **bring up to the community angle that what is the social mission or goal of this social enterprise, what are they trying to do and how does... you know, should affect your plan or thinking.** So, this is what we try to do.

we try to provide guidelines for the consultation happens. So that, students can think about or **reflect about their experience before** they go for the consultation.

I will also talk about the students, try to **get them engage before** they really start the program. Like I **ask them to prepare a proposal** and also **ask them to read the course outline.**

If other **subject matter in pervious courses** that you have learned about, also ask them to **try to figure them out what they have learned** before.

New Perspectives/Action: Students

In the past, I would like to know what I could help them through service; I wanted to list out their benefits. But I did not have this feeling at this program. Er... I **felt the meaning for community** in this program...

I think after taking this course, I **thought more than the book and integrated into what I have learned before**

After joining SL program, I think **many things cannot be conveyed to a dollar sign**. So, I consider various perspectives.

Today, people just concern their own interests, but after joining this program, I found that everything **was shared by the community**. We need to **concern others' needs** and it was important for us to **review our ability to help other people**.

For **confident**, when I do more and more SL programs, on one hand, I **grow up** in this process; on the other hand, I **become more and more confident** as I improve myself in the SL process.

New Perspectives/Action: Faculty

I needed to **more relate to the course activities** that I have conducted. Sometimes, we will conduct some activities for other courses. But after the activity finished, it is finished... But for the course that we just add in SL, I needed **to keep reminding myself** that I need to relate to the activities that I have conducted.

But in my attitude of teaching change, I think so because to start with, as I said, my focus was the learning of students in term of the knowledge... But for the SL, I find that it is **more** than what I **expected in the social commitment and social awareness** and also the **social responsibility**.

I can tell you one major difference is the **reflection report**. The students need to write the reflection, but for other courses, we will not ask students to write reflection.

What they need the supervision from me in particular is the **relationship or the linkage** between what they do in the **community** and what they have learned in the **classroom**

During the activity, it is my personal initiative of the visit, I may like to have some kinds of casual chat in tea restaurant with a cup of coffee,I **ask them what is your reflection, what is the observation you have got**. These are very very important. Of course, it is not in our formal plan, but as an instructor, I think that it is especially useful.

New Perspectives/Action: S-L Coordinators

Because before I think it is just practicum, and then, now I think it is **more than practicum**. It really gives students a chance to **think their social responsibility**. For me, to think more about what a person should be.

I think student have very **great role** in their own **learning and the service** they are conducted

I would feel important to **grasp it whole is being humble and being respectful** to students instead of acting like I come from very authoritative or you know, a very superior position

Before that, I thought SL is the **bridge or have very heavy responsibility or motivating the faculty or students to learn**. But when coming to these 2 years, I think our responsibility should put more efforts on promoting the importance or promoting the advantages of using SL to the faculty or to the community

Eastern Or Western? : Students

Eastern or Western	Reason
I think it relates to foreign ideas	If you are talking about service activities or something meaningful, it relates to Western culture
I think it is similar to foreign idea.	It is because I found that SL in Hong Kong or China is not as successful as the U.S. after I went to the U.S.
I think it is a foreign idea.	I have many Chinese friends and I know that there are many voluntary teachings or services relating to courses in China. But it seems that they separate two things
In China, I think there are even not many voluntary services. I mean fewer voluntary works.	I think the Chinese cultures are separated. It means that there are not many voluntary services. I think everything in Chinese education is independent.
But do you know SL is a Hong Kong idea or Chinese idea? Is it similar to these ideas? I think it is not similar to... It is because our learning mode is that we listen from the teachers and then work on it. It is seldom to combine learning and working	My dad and mum do not focus on this, as they believe that earning money is the most important.

Eastern Or Western?: Faculty

Eastern or Western?	Reason?
I think it is Hong Kong idea	because Hong Kong... you know, is a city that very close and in some ways, we always want our students to make use of our knowledge to something. So, when this SL comes out, I think actually it fits in very well. I don't know much about Mainland Chinese, but in Hong Kong, in this few years we concern more about social concern...
I didn't specifically think is it Chinese or Western or foreign thing.	Because in Chinese the Confucianism says that you need to love your own youngster, before you really can love the others. And you have to love your old generation, before you can really love the others. And so, I use it as an explicit example because in here, in Hong Kong, there is lots of so call volunteer work for the elderly.
SL or voluntary service should not be Western idea. If we try to have this kind of stereotype, people will think that then the whole schooling system in Hong Kong is Western.	The idea of service has been there. Now bear in mind that Christianity or the Christian idea of service has been in Hong Kong for many many many years.

Eastern Or Western?: Faculty

Eastern or Western?	Reason?
I think Hong Kong students like to serve, like to do service . They have the capacity to reach out to the people.	Despite the fact that we know the emphasis on the individualism in not a Western way, is a kind of Chinese, a kind of both collaborate , but still individualist .
SL, of course is from Western .	Because I heard about when there was an email asking us to attend that conference also come from Western .
Well, my first impression is that it shouldn't be a Hong Kong idea , it should be something come from outside ,	because I don't remember we put these two together in the class, service and learning. So, it must be a foreign idea
I think both Chinese and Western idea	because you know, for the Confucian traditions , serving the people, the grassroots was very much also in the teaching, was in the daily living in your life, which taught us we should actually serve people, it is better to serve than being served.

Eastern Or Western?: S-L Coordinators

Eastern or Western?	Reason?
<p>Probably not a Hong Kong idea, I think. Not a Chinese one. I haven't thought of this.</p>	<p>Because I think it tends to be more Western idea... because I think Hong Kong education system is somehow following the Western education system</p>
<p>I'm not sure if doing volunteer services in the Hong Kong context is already a very Western way, you know, because of the colonial history. But it didn't sound that foreign to me, you know, combining learning and service.</p>	<p>in Hong Kong, we always talk about going sell those tickets on the street on Saturday morning... or talking about how much money elderly people get each month. And all these welfare system, you know, to my later knowledge, actually all come from the colonial establishment by British colony for providing community services, to fulfill the community needs, to settle those voices from the people</p>
<p>it is rather strange new or in Hong Kong context</p>	<p>because we haven't get used to such learning model before. And then in school we use textbook, use other sources of materials for learning, but we don't actually have much opportunities that work outside the classroom or we can try to create something on our own.</p>

Preliminary Summary of Themes

- **Understanding of SL –Before (Community Service/Service practicum); After (Combination of Service-Learning; Integrate Service in daily life; “learning” and ‘reflection ‘were two of the important elements of SL, thus, most students, faculty members and SL coordinators tried to articulate the service experiences to academic studies).**
- **Application of SL: Link up both Academic and Service; Enhance their teaching and learning**
- **New perspective of SL: find a meaning of community; Thinking of the roles of different stakeholders;**
- **Eastern or Western: Most of the interviewees did not think about whether SL came from Eastern or Western cultures. When they were asked, most of them claimed that either the idea of service or Service-Learning came from **Western culture**, especially shown in the students’ and coordinators’ interviews.**

Reflection and Recommendations

- Develop rigorous Coding scheme
- Further research on this area (any difference between local and non-local students/ teachers/SL coordinator; how about other countries?)
- How our culture influence the mode of Service-Learning? Have we missed it while we do our Service-Learning?

- ***Let's do 'Serving to Learn and Learning to Serve' with Mutual Tolerance, Respect, Understanding, Appreciation and Open Minds for building up a harmonious society.***

□ ***Thank you!***

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