Reflecting on Service Learning Experience to Deepen Students’ Learning

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Institutional community service learning project

- History: 2004 – present
- Objectives
  - To apply and practise professional knowledge and skills while serving the community
  - To enhance students’ generic competencies
    - social responsibility
    - teamwork skills
    - interpersonal effectiveness
    - problem solving skills
Tri-party mechanism

A
- coordinate
- promote
- resources

B
- Encourage staff & students to participate
- Plan and organize CSL
- Consolidate learning experience

C
- reflect the needs of the society
- Identify the clients
- Provide opportunities to serve
Tri-party mechanism

- Coordinate
- Promote
- Reflect the needs of the society
- Identify the clients
- Provide opportunities to serve
- Encourage participation
- Plan and organize
- Consolidate learning experience
- Provide opportunities to serve
- NGO
- Academic Departments
- SAO
Participation

Students & Staff Participating in Community Service Learning Programme (Cumulative)

No. of Participants


Academic Year

400 1,900 3,100 4,100 4,900
Clients served

Clients Served (Cumulative)

No. of Clients Served

0
50,000
100,000
150,000
200,000
250,000
300,000

2003-2004
2004-2005
2005-2006
2006-2007
2007-2008

Academic Year

500
50,500
95,500
118,000
270,850
NGO and departments

NGOs and PolyU Departments Involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The learning process
Solo taxonomy: Levels of understanding

Based on Structure of Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) Taxonomy (Biggs, 1999)
“The kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious thoughts.”

Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it lends...it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality."

(Dewey, 1933)
“It [the cycle of inquiry] is initiated by the perception of something troubling or promising, and it is determined by the production of changes one finds on the whole satisfactory or by the discovery of new features which give the situation new meaning and change the nature of questions to be explored.”

(Schön, 1983)
The reflective process

- Record of incidents
- With Personal thoughts
- Make meanings out of experiences
- To reflect!

Making connections
Identify learning outcomes
Evaluate success or failure of goals/ achievements
Plan for improvement

Thoughts, feelings, emotional response

facts, actions
Reflection in Service Learning

- Service learning as a form of experiential learning

- Reflective Observation

- Active experimentation

- Concrete Experiencing of an experience

- Abstract conceptualization

- Reflective Observation

Based on the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984)
How to facilitate reflection throughout the CSL process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Briefing/orientation</th>
<th>intended learning outcomes</th>
<th>Guidance from faculty / SAO:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service training</td>
<td>Emphasize importance of reflection, skills training, principles and considerations of planning a service project</td>
<td>Ask questions to stimulate the reflective thinking process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting with community partners</td>
<td>Understand community needs, plan and organize service</td>
<td>Help students understand their learning process</td>
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<td>Serve the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debriefing</td>
<td>Consolidate learning experience, submit reflective journal</td>
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</table>
Purpose of writing reflective journal

- To deepen the quality of learning, in the form of critical thinking
- To enable learner to understand their own learning process
- To facilitate learning from experience
- To increase active involvement in learning and personal ownership of learning
- To explore self, personal constructs of meaning and understand one’s view of the world
Guided Questions

- What is the need for the serving target(s)? What have you done to cater for these needs? Can you describe the tasks that involved?
- Were you able to apply any knowledge of your profession or soft skills at this community service experience? How did you apply these subject knowledge or soft skills? *(Knowledge and skills application)*
- Think about a problem that you have solved in this project. What was the outcome? Were you satisfied with it? *(Problem solving)*
- Describe a situation working with others that you found difficult. What happened? What role did you take? What was the result? *(Teamwork)*
- How do you feel about caring for the community? Do you know what problem(s) your community is facing? As a member of the community, how would you contribute yourself in the future? *(Social Responsibility)*
Learning outcomes

Students’ submission of reflective journal

For physiotherapists, the elderly is the main group of people we will serve in the future. This service project has enabled me to get in touch with them before our career starts. I have learnt the skills of talking with the elderly people.

(a Rehabilitation Science student)

- strengthened professional skills through an understanding of work setting
Learning outcomes

Team spirit among team members has built up throughout the whole process. It was important for the entire team to cooperate and assist one another in order to get things done effectively and efficiently.

(a School of Hotel Tourism and Mgt student)

- Enhanced teamwork skills
Learning outcomes

- Developed an attitude to care for the community (i.e. social responsibility)

I become more aware of the needs of and the difficulties faced by the mentally-challenged people, and would like to engage in more community service in the future.

(a Applied Biology and Chemical Technology student)
Learning outcomes

The project provided our team and me with an invaluable opportunity to understand the culture, lifestyle and study atmosphere of Zhaoqing, which was so different from those of Hong Kong. This project allowed us to think more deeply about what we, as nursing students, should do to help and care for the people in need in the community.

(a School of Nursing student)

- Raise cultural understanding
- Understand and care for the community (i.e. social responsibility)
Happy and wonderful opportunity to serve in the community.

Happy, happy and happy. Because we teach the students via this CD-Rom. Also, I drew so many interesting characters.

We followed our discussion with client and then visualized them out on paper, then I passed it to another group mates to colouring them.

FAIL TO MAKE MEANINGS!
Problems with reflection

- Fail to express clearly in words
- Do not familiar with the reflective thinking process
- Do not have (enough) guidance from an instructor
- Do not have (much) chance to practise reflection

We think giving what we can give make us happy. Because the children we serve are happy.
Future development

- Encourage students to keep diary/learning log during the community service experience
- Allow time for reflection and feedback in the entire process
- Reward attempts to reflect and good reflection
- Use of ePortfolio: allow submission of video and pictures at the journal, with simple reflective notes
Thank you