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Service-learning model at Lingnan University: development strategies and outcome assessment

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Abstract

Background: The Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS) is the showcase of Lingnan's Service-Learning model, which is the manifestation of Lingnan University's Liberal Arts education and mission "Education for Service". The scheme was a pilot project, from 2004 to 2005, which led to the development of a University-wide protocol for Service-Learning at Lingnan University.

Aims: This paper highlights the processes and the strategies of incorporating Service-Learning into courses, based on the experiences in Lingnan University. Implementation and evaluation models are suggested to provide a framework for other interested parties to apply Service-Learning in their learning and teaching.

Results: This is a descriptive analysis, associating outcome measurement (three outcomes: "ABC" quality – Adaptability, Brainpower and Creativity) through the process of Service-Learning. Evaluation contents and guidelines for doing Service-Learning are developed based on the past experience in doing Service-Learning at Lingnan. The research element procedures offer instructors with guidance as well as a well-defined protocol and evaluation for Service-Learning programs in Lingnan.

Conclusion: In consolidating the above experience and in detailing the validity of the Lingnan Model of Service-Learning, a manual is produced documenting our efforts. This is the first manual which can be the protocol of applying Service-Learning in higher education for students' whole-person development.

Keywords: Service-Learning, Education for Service, whole-person development

嶺南大學服務研習計劃：發展策略和成果評估

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摘要

背景：服務研習計劃正好展示了嶺南大學的服務研習模式。服務研習計劃是嶺南大學博雅教育及辦學宗旨「作育英才，服務社會」的實踐。計劃在2004年至2005年推行先導試驗計劃，並有助嶺南大學發展全校性的服務研習計劃草案。

目標：本文以嶺南大學的服務研習計劃作例，握要說明將服務研習元素融入在課程中的程序和策略，並提供執行政程序和評估模式的架構，以供其他有興趣人士將服務研習融入在學習和教學中。

結果：本文結合了服務研習成果評估方法（三項成果 “ABC” 素質：Adaptability 適應力、Brainpower 智力和Creativity 創造力）的描述性分析。實踐服務研習評估內容和指引是建基於過往在嶺南大學執行服務研習的經驗而制定的。研究元素能為導師提供明確的嶺南大學服務研習執行指引、草案及評估。

結論：本文作者統整過往經驗，以推出執行手冊，手冊並詳細列出嶺南模式的服務研習計劃的有效性。這本執行手冊是第一本有關應用服務研習的草案，推動高等教育界學生的全人發展。

關鍵詞：服務研習、作育英才，服務社會、全人發展

Background of Service-Learning Programs at Lingnan University

Service-Learning is a concept that imparts practical meaning to Lingnan University's long-standing motto, 'Education for Service'. It is a pedagogy that is manifested first and foremost in providing tangible assistance to others, while at the same time involving a reflective element for student participants. Secondly, Service-Learning reflects a whole-person approach to education. It is designed to provide students with a valuable educational tool, while at the same time delivering a meaningful service to individuals and organizations in the community. Lingnan University has traditionally stressed both academic excellence and outstanding service. However, these goals cannot be actualized solely within ideas and concepts; application in real life is needed. Individuals doing Service-Learning should find fulfillment, not in isolation, but rather in a social milieu; Service-Learning promotes 'knowledge transfer' and seeks to provide a vital link between the University and the community.

Service-Learning is a form of education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development in a real-life environment. Lingnan University's Student Services Center (LUSCC) promotes community services in over 137 projects, such as the Integrated Learning Program (ILP) and the Lingnan Off-campus Volunteers Experiences (LOVE) Project, in cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The Asia

Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies further developed Service-Learning program by launching the Research Internship Program (RIP) and the Lingnan Angels Program (LAP). In the first semester of 2004-2005, a pilot Service Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS) was implemented, mainly funded by the Kwan Fong Charitable Foundation. The primary aim of the SLRS was to provide students with opportunities for learning through providing voluntary services to needy people. Through participation in voluntary service under the guidance of course instructors and agencies, students develop positive attitudes and skills, and integrate their knowledge. The specific objectives of the SLRS are to help students to (1) understand the real environment and situation of the local community; (2) experience the spirit of mutual help and develop a sense of commitment to community; (3) enhance problem-solving, communication and organizational skills, and social competence; and (4) apply classroom knowledge to the community. These objectives are believed to be indicative of our University motto "Education for Service" and actualization of Lingnan's liberal art education for developing students' adaptability, creativity and brainpower.

The proposal to look at the possibility of developing our own Service-Learning model was followed the successful insertion of what was referred to as a 'service practicum' for two social sciences courses; namely "Crime and Delinquency" and "Health, Illness and Behaviour". The practicum component was added in year 2000 where students used their tutorial hours (in all 15 hours) to do a subject-related project in groups of 3-4 in service agencies, so that students were exposed to a real environment for applying their knowledge (e.g.

promoting anti-smoking in schools) and at the same time the project served the needy populations (e.g. pupils at risk of smoking). This modification attracted very good responses from students and service agencies (mainly NGOs). Up till then the practicum component was not taken as Service-Learning, in fact Service-Learning was not a term used in Hong Kong at all. It was not until January of 2004 when the International Partnership for Service-Learning (IPSL) organized an International Conference on Service-Learning in Chingmai, Thailand, that we started to notice the term. Our former Associate Vice-President, Professor Barton Starr¹, with the full support of our former President (Professor Edward Chen²) and sponsorship from the Lingnan Foundation, took a delegation of some 15 faculty members and postgraduate students to the Conference. Our former President secured a modest donation of HK\$500,000 to pilot a protocol of Service-Learning in late 2004. The years between 2004 and 2006 were important landmarks for Lingnan's Service-Learning. Service-Learning represented the mission and pedagogy of Lingnan's liberal art education. This pilot added value to the practicum-based learning: students from University should do community services with a difference, a difference that highlights what they have learned. The Lingnan model emphasizes both research and evaluation aspects. Hence, in Lingnan, Service-Learning became Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS). Following its successful validation, our former President obtained a huge donation of HK\$10m for establishing a University-wide protocol for Service-Learning for the next 10 years. This led to the establishment of "Office of Service-Learning", which is charged with the responsibility of supporting

Service-Learning in all courses, and to make possible within five to ten years at least one third of its total student population (i.e. 1,000) having done Service-Learning before their graduation.

In retrospect, the development of our SLRS was aided with timely support and with legitimacy from the top i.e. President's Office; however, these came with working on the right strategies at the right time. In the following we shall detail the different strategies and components making Service-Learning in Lingnan University a success.

1. Establishing a Rationale/Philosophy for Service-Learning and to turn this into measurable goals

In thinking for a University-wide Service-Learning promotion, support from the top and from the faculties is extremely important. To start with, it is a good strategy to align the learning objectives with one that University mission puts weight on. Lingnan University is a liberal arts University with a steadfast mission, "Education for Service", which emphasizes whole-person education and enables students to think, judge, care and act responsibly in an ever-changing Hong Kong and world. In the age of the "new economy", success depends not only on science and technology but also innovative capabilities. The educational aims of Lingnan University are to equip students with the "ABC" of the liberal arts education, namely, Adaptability, Brainpower, and Creativity. These are exactly the qualities that the "new economy" requires. Liberal arts education at Lingnan aims to cultivate such timeless qualities through its whole-person development programs.

1. Professor Barton Starr: Associate Vice President of Lingnan University from 1999 - 2006

2. Professor Edward Chen: President of Lingnan University from 1995-2007

These principles have been engrained in every Lingnanian’s mind, and Service-Learning has been tasked to implement these philosophies.

Based on the review of the learning outcomes of Service-Learning programs suggested by educators as well as the advocated ABC outcomes of Lingnan’s liberal arts education, the framework of the instruments for the SLRS was developed. The instruments were validated for measuring the effectiveness of the SLRS (Chan et al., 2006). The evaluation design aims to provide cross-checking on information collected by students, social service agency supervisors and course instructors. Each

domain was computed on the Cronbach’s alpha to test the internal consistency of the scales. The reliability values ranged from $\alpha = 0.70$ (communication skills) to $\alpha = 0.93$ (research skills). All the scales’ reliabilities are above average and in some cases highly reliable. The outcome indicators developed are as following:

Adaptability: social competence and communication skills

Adaptability includes two domains, namely the social competency and communication skills. Their item contents and psychometric properties are tabled below:

Table (1) Measurement for Adaptability

Adaptability	Social Competence (5 items with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ I cooperate successfully with other students in a variety of situations	0.63	0.87
Item 2	❖ I remain calm when problems arises	0.72	0.85
Item 3	❖ I am confident in my abilities	0.78	0.84
Item 4	❖ I am more aware of social happenings in the community	0.66	0.86
Item 5	❖ I am dynamic and adapt easily to new environments	0.76	0.84
	Communication Skills (4 items with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions with peers/agencies/course instructors/ coordinators	0.43	0.67
Item 2	❖ Generally, I am comfortable while participating in a discussion with peers/agencies/course instructors/ coordinators	0.50	0.61
Item 3	❖ Presentation in front of peers/agencies/ course instructors/ coordinators usually makes me uncomfortable	0.58	0.55
Item 4	❖ I feel relaxed while talking with clients during practicum	0.41	0.66

The Alpha of overall Social Competency is 0.88.

The Alpha of overall Communication skills is 0.84.

Social Competence – several aspects form the vital parts of this component. Life skills including confidence and self-presentation to others are necessary for one to be accepted socially. Of course as a University student, knowledge and subject-related practice skills are indicative of one’s expertise too. Cutforth & Puckett (1999) argued that besides enhancing subject-related knowledge, communication and organizational skills are also crucial in making a successful leader. Service-Learning programs can be effective vehicles for preparing young people to become active citizens or community leaders through being engaged in a ‘giving’ culture. The experience improves their self-confidence, care and concern for others, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and most of all the enthusiasm for learning. The alpha of overall social competence in our SLRS is 0.88.

Communication Skills – the ability to express ideas clearly and to listen to the ideas of others. A plethora of research cites communication skills as a

core requirement for senior managers and leaders, and are important attributes for responsible jobs (Bradshaw, 1992; Roebuck et al., 1995; Scudder and Guinan, 1989; Maes et al., 1997).

Tucker et al. (1998) argued that students’ communicating skills can be enhanced by a Service-Learning program as the nature of the program itself utilizes communication skills: students joining the program will inevitably learn how to communicate with people from other departments, organizations and students. In the SLRS, students are also required to liaise with different departments, clients and social service agency supervisors in launching their projects. It is expected that group projects could not have been completed without acquiring good communication skills.

Brainpower: Students need to have organizational skills and subject related knowledge to manage their Service-Learning programs for their learning objectives. Their item contents and psychometric properties are tabled below:

Table (2) Measurement for Brainpower

Brainpower	Organization Skills (5 items with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ I will evaluate myself when an activity is completed	0.58	0.83
Item 2	❖ I have good time management skills	0.63	0.82
Item 3	❖ I can work independently on case work	0.63	0.82
Item 4	❖ I know how to allocate tasks to group members	0.74	0.79
Item 5	❖ Generally speaking, I know how to take a leadership role in organizing a mass activity	0.67	0.80
	Subject-Related Knowledge (1 item with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ Subject-related knowledge learned e.g. social gerontology, society and social change, crime and delinquency, marketing, etc (any one of the related subject)	Various from different courses.	Various from different courses.

The Alpha of overall Organization Skills is 0.84.

Organization Skills– is the ability to put something into working order and arrange parts and people into an efficient and effective system in achieving the goals. Organizational skills are critical to effective job performance, career advancement and organizational success (Cohen, 1999; Messmer, 1999; Roebuck et al., 1995; Warner, 1995). In demonstrating their ability to instructors, agency supervisors as well as the clients they serve, our students need to think and to relate their actions to the pre-set goals in the whole Service-Learning process.

Subject-Related Knowledge – is the understanding of the key concepts and knowledge taught in the course. It has been evident that if students could apply their knowledge in reality, they would perform equally well in examinations or in academic assessments. (Chan, Ma and Fong, 2006) Several studies have also found that there is a positive relationship between Service-Learning and grades. For example, Sugar and Livosky (1988) offered students in a child psychology class a Service-Learning option, which required students to work two hours a week in day care centers. The results showed that Service-Learning students with a grade above C (i.e. those who did well in Service-Learning) scored a higher 3 to 5 percent in normal course Grade Points Average (GPA). Integration of course knowledge to services is an integral part of Service-Learning, it distinguishes Service-Learning from just community services, thus subject knowledge integration is an important indicator in showing students' academic brain power.

Astin et al. (2000) conducted a nation-wide, longitudinal study of 22,236 undergraduate college students with various majors. During college, 30 percent of the students participated in diverse types

of course-based Service-Learning, 46 percent participated in non-course-based community service, and 24 percent did not participate in any service projects. The researchers included student and institutional controls. They found that students who participated in Service-Learning achieved a higher GPA than non Service-Learning students. In addition, GPA was higher for students who participated in course-based Service-Learning than for students who participated only in non course-based community service. Ratings on subject-related knowledge will be given to related parties in order to assess the changes of students after joining the SLRS.

In our pilot we have found similar trends. Reasons for Service-Learning students to do well could be attributed to several observations. Service-learners are mostly a self-selected group who would wish to learn more and therefore tended to be highly motivated. Service-Learning itself is a process demanding more time and more commitments from learners and instructors (i.e. course instructors, agency supervisors and Service-Learning co-coordinator), hence quality and quantity inputs yield quality outcomes. The third observation relates to a natural creation of a constructively competitive environment. As the student's service would be seen by other students and rated by their users, their service standards or performance is therefore made public, this will drive the students to do better than others!

Creativity: The information students can access and make sense of (i.e. research skills) is crucial for students developing their creative thinking and also enhances their problem-solving skills. The item contents and psychometric properties of research skills and problem-solving skills are tabled below:

Table (3) Items of Creativity between Research Skills and Problem-Solving Skills

Creativity	Research Skills (5 items with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ I know the major research methodologies in social sciences/ business studies	0.72	0.92
Item 2	❖ I know how to collect for Service-Learning and Research Scheme	0.87	0.89
Item 3	❖ I know how to write up a research proposal	0.82	0.90
Item 4	❖ I know the process of doing both qualitative and quantitative researchers	0.81	0.90
Item 5	❖ I know how to write up a research practicum report	0.78	0.91
	Problem-Solving Skills (5 items with 10-point rating scale)	Item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
Item 1	❖ When faced with a hard problem, I believe that, if I try, I will be able to solve it on my own	0.67	0.82
Item 2	❖ Before I solve a problem, I gather as many facts about the problem as I can	0.77	0.80
Item 3	❖ I know how to design innovative methods to solve social issues	0.65	0.83
Item 4	❖ I go through the problem-solving process again when my first option fails	0.74	0.81
Item 5	❖ I used my imagination in designing my SLRS project	0.56	0.86

The Alpha of overall Research Skills is 0.93.

The Alpha of overall Problem-solving skills is 0.84.

Research Skills – the ability to search for relevant literature, to understand types of research methods and to collect and analyze data, a process which enables logical thinking and making reflective and reflexive actions i.e. able to evaluate oneself and to generalize meaningful actions.

Problem-Solving Skills – is the ability to recognize the core problems and to solve problems effectively. Owning two sets of skills is the prerequisite for being creative. A recent survey of over 200 faculties and administrators at 65 American colleges and Universities (Oak Ridge Associated Universities, 1993) found that academics hold a strong belief that research experience benefits the education of students and helps them select career goals and future activities. Research skills also help

to develop problem-solving and communication skills. Glenwick & Chobot (1991) found that actively involving students (particularly undergraduates who may not pursue graduate training) in community-based research projects will equip them with critical-thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. It is believed that by integrating research projects focusing on improving the quality of life of others, students may be nurtured with self-pride, sense of belonging and willingness to give to a larger community they see themselves as part of (Ferrari & Geller, 1994). In our SLRS, students are required to complete research methodology training. At the same time, students are expected to develop many of the research skills by themselves through the process of designing and organizing the programs.

2. Procedure

Service-Learning affects the quality of teaching and learning of our students. As such of its acceptance requires soul-searching and the procedure in accepting it should correspondingly be the most stringent. The trial started in 2004 with three courses with about 18 agencies with whom Lingnan University, through Asia Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, has already a good collaboration in elderly projects. Upon its success, a proper pilot was launched with proper funding support from the Kwan Fong Charitable Foundation. A design covering all the major programs offering a wider range of service experience, including elderly, children and youth, new immigrants, disabled and other disadvantaged groups, were adopted. The completion of this University-wide pilot properly established the validity of Service-Learning as a pillar of learning in Lingnan University's liberal arts education (Chan, Ma and Fong, 2006). The project further promotes the image of Lingnan University especially in the North West New Territories in which the University resides.

In 2004-2005 academic year, a total of 199 students enrolled in the SLRS from nine courses in three major academic programs. The SLRS worked with over 17 partnership organizations serving about 2000 people in the community, including children, the elderly, parents, ethnic minorities and mentally-handicapped people. In order to ascertain the effects of these Service-Learning programs, students' performances on the three domains (i.e. Adaptability, Brainpower and Creativity) were measured before and after the programs (i.e. a pre and post design). The reliability scores for the scales ranged from $\alpha=0.70$ (communication skills) to $\alpha=0.93$ (research skills) (stated in the previous tables). More than one

data sources were solicited for data, these can be considered as a triangulation of methods to cross-check the data collected from both quantitative data (pre-test and post-test questionnaires) and qualitative data (log sheets, self-reflective essays, interviews, fieldwork observations and agency feedback forms, especially those related to the processes of learning). The mean percentage differences in learning in pre and post-tests ranged from +13% (organization skills) to +27% (problem-solving skills). Most students' confidence increased after socializing with the elderly, children and agencies' staff. They developed good interpersonal skills from the interactions. Most importantly, they experienced learning beyond lecture rooms and applied their knowledge to serve and contribute to the community.

With the success of the SLRS, the Lingnan model of Service-Learning has been developed. The scheme gained valuable support from the community, and further donation was secured. The generous donation enable the University to set up, in May 2006, the Office of Service-Learning (OSL) which aims to provide a vital link between the University and the community so that students can find fulfillment in their academic pursuit as well as in serving those in need.

With enhanced institutional support, a manual regarding the content, modes of Service-Learning programs, implementation process and evaluation was developed which further consolidated the foundation of the Service-Learning model at Lingnan.

3. Content

Three distinctive programs were proposed for tackling the problems/challenges of the community,

developing student motivation and extending life-skills learning through commitment to voluntary work participation.

Lingnan Health Care Program (LHCP) aims at promoting health education and elderly care services at elderly or medical care centers. Students will be trained as health care ambassadors under the supervision of professional and academic staff in the medical settings. This program suits courses on ‘Health, Illness and Behaviour’ and health sciences.

Lingnan Community Care Program (LCP) aims at enhancing the development of civic engagement skills among students in different settings through inter-generational and cross-cultural activities. Courses on social policy courses and social enterprises fit this program.

Lingnan Service-Learning Evaluation Program (LS-LEP) aims at training students with basic social research skills. Each group is required to design a research project under the guidance of an experienced researcher. This program compliments social and marketing research courses.

4. Modes

In addition, we have developed different learning and teaching modes in our Service-Learning programs to accommodate the diverse student-learning and instructor-teaching experiences.

(a) Mode 1: Community-based ILP Mode

Students are awarded with Integrated Learning Program (ILP) credits by providing community services. The number of ILP credits depends on the nature of program.

(b) Mode 2: Partially Integrated Course Mode (PICM)

PICM is a learning mode that combines both lectures and service practicum. Students are required to submit a service practicum proposal and a report at the end of the program.

(c) Mode 3: Fully Integrated Course Mode (FICM)

FICM is a type of community-based Service-Learning program in which students are required to submit their research proposal and senior thesis. (Please refer to the Table 4: Summary of the three modes of the SLRS in 2004-2005)

Table 4: Summary of the three modes of the SLRS in 2004-2005

	Mode 1 Community-based ILP Mode	Mode 2 Partially Integrated Course Mode (PICM)	Mode 3 Fully Integrated Course Mode (FICM)
Entry Requirements	Mostly Year 1	Year 2-3	Year 3
Enrolment	OSL/ SSC	Department	Department
Award	12 ILP credits	3 credits for each course or 3 <i>credits and *6 / 12 ILP credits</i>	6 credits for each course or 6 <i>credits and *12 ILP credits</i>
	Xian Exchange Tour (held in mid-April 05, only for nominated students in the first semester) / SLRS Certificate for both semesters / Bonus point for students in SLRS semester presentations		
Duration	One year	One semester	One year
Training	Minimum 20 hours	Minimum 20 hours	Minimum 30 hours (to be discussed with course instructors)
Hours of Service	Minimum 30 hours	20-30 hrs/over 30 hrs	60 hours
Forms of Service Practice	Assigned by social service agencies	(i) One-to-one work/ (ii) Group work/ (iii) Community program	
Field of Study	All disciplines	Examples: SOC 203: Social Gerontology SOC 204: Society and Social Change SOC 330: Crime and Delinquency HRM 352: Teamwork and Leadership BUS 301: Strategic Management SOC 327: Social Welfare and Social Problems in Hong Kong SOC 333: Health, Illness and Behaviour CHI 219: Creative Writing in Chinese	
Student Output	(i) Weekly log sheets (ii) Assignments	(i) Service practicum proposal and report	(i) Research proposal and Senior thesis
Supervision	Agency supervisor	Course instructor Agency supervisor	Course instructor Agency supervisor
Agencies	Various NGOs and medical settings	Various NGOs and medical settings	Various NGOs and medical settings
Assessment	(i) Attendance record (ii) Weekly log sheets	(1) Pre-post test questionnaires for students (2) Summative questionnaires for course instructors, social service agency supervisors and program coordinators (3) In-depth interview with social service agency supervisors (4) Attendance record (5) Service practicum proposal and report	(1) Pre-post test questionnaires for students (2) Summative questionnaires for course instructors, social service agency supervisors and program coordinators (3) Social service agencies' evaluation forms (mid-term and final) (4) Course instructors' assessment reports (mid-term and final) (5) Students' self-evaluation reports (mid-term and final) (6) In-depth interview with social service agencies (7) Attendance record (8) Research proposal and senior thesis

* ILP Units will be awarded by Lingnan University Student Services Centre.

The above three modes are foundations for the future development of Service-Learning programs at Lingnan University.

5. Implementation Process

Furthermore, from our trial and pilot, a well defined implementation process has been identified. This helps to liaise with different stakeholders and to create a tedious procedure on organizing Service-Learning programs for agency supervisors, students,

Service-Learning coordinators and course instructors.

The process involves four major stages: preparation, training, practicum and assessment. The following chart 1 shows the implementation procedures and framework:

Chart 1: Implementation Process of SLRS

Responsible Parties	Stages
1. Course Instructors (CI), Program Coordinators (PC) and Agency Supervisors (AS)	Identify interested course instructors and agencies
2. CI and PC	Integrate SLRS into courses, prepare necessary SLRS outline for students Modify pre- and post-test questionnaire for all parties (optional)
3. CI, PC and Students (S)	1 st lecture: Briefing and recruitment of students Students making tentative choices within 1 st week of term visit to at least one agency 2 nd week of term: finalize SLRS student list and practicum groups
4. CI and PC	Pre-test questionnaire to be filled out by all parties (optional)
5. CI / PC	Agency on-site orientation for students
6. CI / PC	Training workshops
7. CI, PC and S	Consultation
8. CI, PC, AS and S	Practicum and supervision
9. CI, PC and S	Reflective meeting during practicum On-site evaluation (i.e. log sheet)
10. CI, PC and S	End of practicum Evaluation (reflective) meeting
11. CI, PC, AS and S	Post-test evaluation (questionnaires, self evaluation report and assessment report by all parties) In-depth interview with agencies
12. PC and S	Focus groups with students (optional)
13. S	Practicum group report, individual reflective essay
14. CI, PC and S	Formal seminars delivered by students
15. PC	Closing ceremony (optional)

At the ***Preparation Stage***, ideally three months prior to commencement, course instructors and program coordinators should identify appropriate courses for the community service element to be added to the teaching module. In the meantime, they should also identify and liaise with interested social service agencies that are able to provide student placements and supervision. Through sharing the rationales and objectives of the SLRS, they should also discuss with the agency supervisors the placement arrangement, such as duties and responsibilities, and come to an agreement before the commencement of the SLRS.

Course instructors should modify the course structure, depending on the course content, schedule, assessment and the nature of service, by integrating the service practicum either partially or fully into the courses in replacement of tutorials as well as providing students with practicum guidelines. Meanwhile, when necessary, pre and post-test and summative evaluation questionnaires for all parties should be modified by course instructors and program coordinators to reflect the academic component, in accordance with the designated courses.

A SLRS website could be set up to provide all parties with easy access to the latest SLRS information, e.g. program brief, application form, log sheets, pre and post-test questionnaires, timeline and participant list. If possible, a UOP (University Orientation Program) booth could be arranged to attract students in late August. Hence, a student kit with all relevant material should be prepared prior to the briefing section in the first class of each course. Followed by a formal introduction to the course structure by course instructors, a briefing section should be arranged and delivered by course instructors and program coordinators in the first lecture.

A student kit (prepared by course instructors and program coordinators), including guidelines, an application form, a list of agencies and practicum groups should be given to the students. Students, therefore, are required to make tentative choices after a visit has been arranged within the first week of the term. In the second week, a list of practicum groups should be finalized. In case an outcomes evaluation is necessary, pre-test questionnaires for students should be completed and returned to program coordinators within the second week of the term.

At the ***Practicum Stage***, a series of workshops, orientations, consultations and Service-Learning programs will have to be arranged.

(i) Training Workshops

Training workshops, i.e. general and specific training workshops, should be held to equip the students with proper skills by course instructors, program coordinators or other professional trainers. For instance, communication skills (both interpersonal and intergenerational), self-discipline and leadership skills are the core skills that all participants should possess and demonstrate in an effective way during the practicum. The specific training workshops, whenever necessary, should provide students with specialized skills for designated tasks, such as child education skills and magic skills. For convenience, workshops could take place after school on weekdays or weekends. Half or whole day training for weekend workshops is recommended.

(ii) On-site Orientation

Before beginning the practicum, it is necessary to familiarize the students with the context of agencies. Course instructors or program coordinators should arrange on-site orientation for students at their chosen agencies and meet with their agency supervisors and clientele at least one week before the commencement day.

(iii) Consultation

Followed by on-site orientation, consultation meetings with students on practicum and activity proposals should be held by course instructors and program coordinators. Students are required to write detailed proposals about the activities they would like to carry out at the agencies. Thus, consultation meetings with program coordinators on the feasibility of the activities and agency supervisors should be arranged within two weeks after on-site orientation. The activities should associate with the course, such as concepts and theories. The proposal should clearly state the objectives, provide a brief run-down, including a budget summary, the expected number of clientele and achievements, etc. Regarding funding, students could apply for social activities funds from the Students Service Center (SSC).

(iv) Practicum Implementation

Agency supervisors should provide professional guidance to students in planning, implementation and evaluation of the proposed tasks and programs during practicum. The practicum can be in the following three forms.

(a) One-to-one Work: Students identify the needs of the assigned cases through interviews, home visits and personal contact. They will then be able to suggest intervention strategies for the assigned cases, requiring students to draw from the learnt skills and knowledge from their selected courses.

(b) Group Work: Students organize group activities to improve interaction between service-targets and students.

(c) Community Programs: Students organize mass activities, e.g. exhibitions, workshops, to learn how to liaise with different parties in the community. Meanwhile, reflective meetings should be organized in the first half and at the end of the practicum in order to receive feedback from the students.

On the completion of the practicum, all parties should complete and return the post-test/summative questionnaires to the program coordinators. Also, in-depth interviews with agency supervisors should be carried out. Focus group discussions among students could be arranged to gather an in-depth understanding of the students' learning efficacy. Students are then required to submit a practicum report and encouraged to participate in a formal presentation, in the form of either a poster or panel, preferably after the examination weeks.

(v) Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony, which is optional,

could be hosted to provide a platform for all the program coordinators, social service agency supervisors, course instructors and students, preferably with service receivers as well, to overview the learning and teaching experience, and community impact. All parties could be invited to share their experience with each other.

comment and express their feelings about the program implementation. Formative evaluations can help identify and categorize areas that need improvement. Summative evaluation takes places when the learning experience is complete. The objectives of the learning experience (i.e. the subject-related knowledge, communication skills, organizational skills, social competence, problem-solving skills and research skills) provide the framework for the summative evaluation.

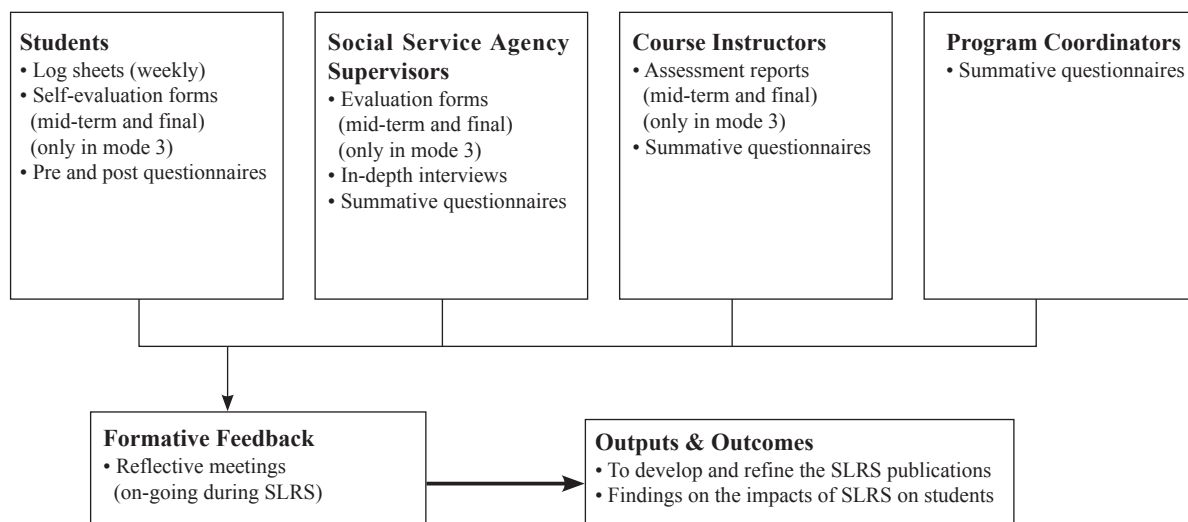
6. Evaluation: Stakeholders' Evaluation for Learning Outcomes

The evaluation design adopts both formative and summative evaluation designs. Formative evaluation is often described as ongoing evaluation that occurs at progressive stages and allows for adaptations and change throughout the learning experience (Flagg, 1990). For instance, if a student is not happy with the program or the experience is not working out as planned, formative evaluation can highlight the need for change and suggest possible directions. Furthermore, different parties, including students, social service agency supervisors, course instructors and program coordinators, can also

Both formative and summative evaluations will provide guide to the implementation of the whole program. In this current validation protocol, both types of evaluation will guide the development of the overall evaluation framework including evaluation methods and the nature of evaluation.

The whole evaluation design will be student-oriented where all parties (students through self-evaluation questionnaire, social service agency supervisors, course instructors and program coordinators from summative evaluation) will evaluate from their professional perspectives whether students have achieved their learning objectives (Please refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1 Evaluation: Process elements (Modes 2 & 3) Subjective Measures



Recommendation and Conclusion

The SLRS has successfully demonstrated Lingnan's motto – “Education for Service” and its mission to equip Lingnan students with the “ABCs” (Adaptability, Brainpower and Creativity). Students learn subject knowledge, communication skills, organization skills, and problem-solving skills through service practicum in our Service-Learning projects. The University's reputation is further enhanced when students are trying to build a positive image and are being trained as community leaders. The community too has earned a great deal from student services. For example, approximately 200 students served about 2000 bodies, including the elderly people, ethnic minorities and mentally handicapped people in the local community in 2004-2005. As mentioned, Lingnan University is the first University to set up a Service-Learning office to implement Service-Learning program. Lingnan is perhaps the first institution to formalize learning in its curriculum in Hong Kong. Despite of great accomplishment, there are several outstanding tasks that need to be dealt with.

First of all, there is a need to develop a theory to guide our practice. But this is not an easy task. Though there are bits and pieces of typologies for Service-Learning documented in the US (e.g. Campus Compact), there is not at present a consensus for core theories used for Service-Learning. Cross-cultural adaptations too are issues for practices whether it is in ethnic, age, gender or class contexts. Without theoretical foundations, Service-Learning in Hong Kong will be just practice wisdom. Therefore, the development of a theory for Service-Learning in Hong Kong is a primary concern.

Institutionally, setting up a University wide recognition system and developing different kinds of Service-Learning programs will be our priority agenda. The University wide recognition system should be addressed to our teachers, students, course instructors and community partners, e.g. issue of a certificate for teachers and students, recording Service-Learning practicum in students' transcript etc. Such recognition would enhance participation and opportunity for both students and teachers. It would also enhance the social standing of service agencies. Since course instructors find Service-Learning a good practice to reinforce quality teaching and learning, faculty training about Service-Learning programs would be provided. The most important thing is that our students have also learned a great deal, not just to strengthen their book knowledge, but the application of knowledge in real life. This is the realization of liberal art education and knowledge transfer.

Developing modules or courses for Service-Learning is our second task. What we have done in previous years was to modify part of existing course into a practicum (i.e. partial mode). We are at the stage of development where Service-Learning modules are developed to stand alone as a full-fledged pedagogical package. The design will have to be flexible enough to accommodate students from most academic disciplines, and yet be sound enough in meeting the same academic standard as stipulated by the University. There are course models available from Campus Compact and some famous colleges e.g. University College at Berkeley. But again these need to be modified and tested for local uses.

Another task is the training of Service-Learning course instructors. Much of Service-Learning material

focuses on students' learning without mentioning the importance of instructors being role models and reflective listeners. As 'doers' we do learn that doing Service-Learning is not easy for instructors. They have to be devoted, spend more time with students, more competent in communication (as instructors too are required to deal with agencies) and in general research (as University students involve in their own program evaluation), and more resourceful (as students always ask for resources). Not every instructor can be expected to perform at all these levels. Trainings are needed in order to acquire these qualities. The key is for these instructors to be at least 'reflective' (i.e. able to critically review oneself and express inner feelings), and be the best 'reflexive' (i.e. able to critically evaluate oneself and to transform the experience into other situations).

Finally, we should continue to expand the service agency network, not just the NGOs, but also different corporate firms (e.g. Deloitte Touche Accounting Firm, Towngas) to strengthen community solidity etc. And if possible, we shall also promote the regional/ international Service-Learning programs and set up allies among different institutions for solving/researching inter/intra countries social problems.

These are the tasks ahead of us. Lingnan University has made a bold step forward in establishing the SLRS as the model of Service-Learning. The above basic structure can be the foundation and the stepping stone in support of future accomplishment and development of Service-Learning.

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