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Office of Service-Learning, Lingnan University

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Faculty Newsletter

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Transactional or Transformational?

When Prof. Robert Bringle delivered his keynote address at the Faculty Symposium in October 2015, he compared community partnership to a romantic relationship. Many scholars of campus-community engagement have used this metaphor to describe the unique challenges of working in and with the community. For Service-Learning projects to be transformational rather than merely transactional, communication and a shared vision is key. Whether you are an experienced S-L practitioner, or just starting out, The Office of Service-Learning can help facilitate the matchmaking process.

A Newcomer Explores his Options

A self-proclaimed storyteller, Prof. Mark Alan McGinley's eyes light up when he talks about his students. His passion for engaged teaching is evident. According to Prof. McGinley, who brings over 30 years of teaching experience to his position as Head of the Science Department, "if Service-Learning is done right, it can be life-changing." The "right way" to do Service-Learning integrates classroom learning with the needs and objectives of the community.

Currently, Prof. McGinley is exploring potential partnerships with three local schools as he develops a Service-Learning course in Science. Gaia, an alternative primary school in Tuen Mun which emphasizes experiential learning, left an impression. Prof. McGinley recounts that during his visit, the principal made an announcement in Cantonese and the children started running to see a snake that had been captured; "at a normal school, the children would run away from the snake, here, they were all curious." In the coming academic year, Prof. McGinley will embed S-L elements into his course Ecology: Science and Environmental Issues. By designing activities for primary school students, Lingnan students will reinforce their knowledge and promote environmental awareness .

Exploration is a key aspect of both scientific inquiry and Service-Learning pedagogy. Prof. McGinley explains that what he would like Lingnan students to do with younger students is "to teach them the exploration aspect of science" by designing and implementing activities that encourage engagement and discovery. "[Students] want to explore. Some of them think science is the boring things you learned in school, and I want them to leave here with a better feeling; science is not just memorizing all the chemical formulas." Regardless of which school Professor McGinley partners with, a strong and collaborative partnership will help Professor McGinley continue his work as an innovative teacher.

Professor Mark Alan MCGINLEY
Professor & Head of Science Unit

Received his Ph.D. in Ecology from The University of Utah. At Texas Tech University he taught Biology and Ecology and served as the Assistant Dean of the Honors College. A 2010 Fulbright Scholar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Prof. McGinley is also a certified Scuba Instructor.

Sustainable Partnership: Walking Hand in Hand

Final project presentation at Christian Family Service Center

Service-Learning is "a symbiotic relationship between meaningful service to the community and rich, academic learning."[1] These types of relationships require sustainable partnership!

According to Prof. Law Suk Mun, Sophia, effective collaboration with agencies requires "a humble heart—my students grow to understand that they are accompanying the client to walk forward, rather than simply helping or providing a service."

Professor Law has years of experience working in and with the community. Her research engages university students, clients, social workers, artists and NGOs. One of these organizations is **Christian Family Service Center** in Tin Shui Wai—a promising partnership with an agency that has liaised with the OSL since 2014 on projects spanning the different faculties. In Prof. Law's course, students work with children to create a shadow puppet story. Lingnan students work well the children, and the agency's expectations are realistic.

Professor Law Suk Mun, Sophia Department of Visual Studies

She has some advice for fellow scholars wishing to embark on a partnership journey: "Use your discipline-specific expertise to target a specific client." In other words, you know what assets your discipline has to offer the community. Building sustainable relationships is a key factor that requires both patience and adaptability. But, the payoff is great; "It is only through engaged partnerships that you can see the transformational power of Service-Learning for all involved", says Prof. Law.

1. Abravanel, Susan, "Building Community Through Service-Learning: The Role of the Community Partner" (2003). *Partnerships/ Community*.

Let the OSL connect you!

We have cooperated with 210 distinctive agency partners. (up to Feb 2016)

Our network is far-reaching. We have cultivated sustainable relationships and can help facilitate meaningful partnership between courses and communities.

contact: Ms. Constance Chan
constancechan@ln.edu.hk
2616 8079

Tips for Service-Learning

Based on the needs of your community partner and the learning objectives of your course, you may choose to engage in any of the four types of Service-Learning!

Direct

face-to-face contact with individuals who benefit

Examples
① Conducting developmental groups for ethnic minority children
② Giving presentations on drug prevention
③ Helping in a homeless shelter

Indirect

actions that benefit the community or environment, but not necessarily individually identified people

Examples
① Creating a strategic plan for a social enterprise
② Building low-income housing
③ Farming activities

Types of Service

Research-Based

finding, gathering and reporting information on areas of public interest and need

Examples
① Testing local water quality
② Creating information brochures for an NGO
③ Engaging in a community needs assessment

Advocacy

educating, creating public awareness or fostering civic action on issues impacting the community

Examples
① Planning and coordinating public forums
② Conducting public information campaigns
③ Working to improve public policy

Berger-Kaye, C. (2004). The complete guide to service learning. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Best Practices and Recommendations

Jeffrey Howard's Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy, is among the most widely accepted and adopted documents addressing Service-Learning practice. The principles were originally published in the **Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning**.

Principle 1:   Academic credit is for learning, not for service
Principle 2:   Do not compromise academic rigor
Principle 3:   Establish learning objectives
Principle 4:   Establish criteria for the selection of service placements
Principle 5:   Provide educationally sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives
Principle 6:   Prepare students for learning from the community
Principle 7:   Minimize the distinction between the students' community learning role and classroom learning role
Principle 8:   Rethink the faculty instructional role
Principle 9   Be prepared for variation in, and for some loss of control with, student learning Outcomes
Principle 10: Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course

Coming Soon:
Online Service-Learning Management System

The new system facilitates your teaching and understanding of student experiential learning experience!

To prepare for Service-Learning as a graduation requirement in 16/17, the Office of Service-Learning is creating the **online S-L management system** with the University's support. The new system does not only allow the students to manage their S-L experience by themselves, but also provides a platform for instructors to understand their students' learning experience in real time. More understanding on students' learning experience can facilitate both effective collaboration in both teaching and learning.

In addition to the project management function, the new system also provides a comprehensive database for the past and existing S-L projects (searching function), provides a platform for instructors to create their own interested S-L project with targeted agency (matching function) and provides useful S-L materials to different stakeholders for their integration and implementation of S-L projects (e-resources).

The new system will be piloted in 2016/17 summer semester and implemented in 2016/17 1st semester. Keep an eye out for more information about the system!
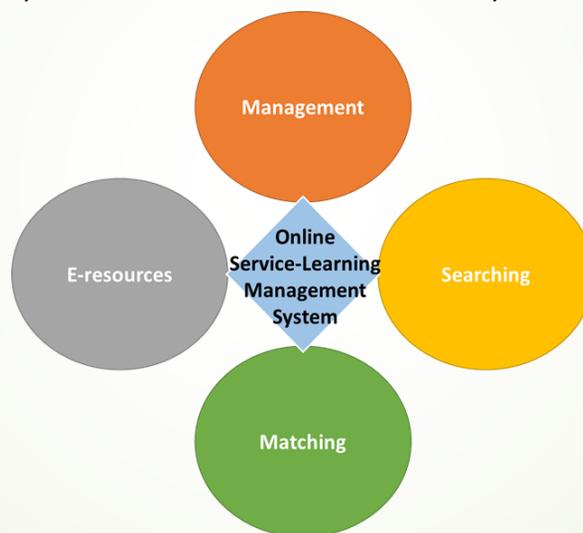
Service-Learning Publications by Lingnan Faculty:

1.   Wong, A.H.K. and Tse, F.W.L. "An Investigation of How Networking Improves Social Enterprise Performance." *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Science* 4.11 (2015): 25 – 35.

2.   Wong, A.H.K. and Tse, F.W.L. "Identifying the Benefits and Challenges of Using Social media as a Promotional Tool for Social Enterprises." *International Journal of Marketing and Technology* 5.12 (2015): 105 – 117.

A working paper has been presented at the following conference:

Wong, A.H.K and Tse, F.W.L. "Social Media, Networking, and Marketing Performance: A Study of Social Enterprises in Hong Kong." Academy of International Business Southeast Asia Regional Conference 2015, Penang, Malaysia, 3-5 December 2015.