



Service Learning: Common Roots and Ties in Asia and America

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Service-Learning: Actually An Old Idea

- ▶ Some believe the idea for service-learning started with Bob Sigmon and Bill Ramsey in the 1960sthis is origin of modern US effort
- ▶ However, many philosophers and historical individuals have discussed the elements of service-learning long ago.



Confucius

- One of the key Chinese philosophers was Confucius (551-479 B.C.) who lived a little before Sigmon and Ramsey
- Confucius had several virtues that were the foundation for a person living a meaningful life
- These ideas form the basis for Confucianism in China and other countries and form an understanding of what it means to be a purposeful human being
- These principles form the basis for many philosophies about how to live and grow in society

Confucius : 5 Virtues

- Ren (仁): **Empathy and benevolence**, kindness and politeness are a way of interacting with others. This is an obligation of altruism and humaneness toward others
- Li (禮): involves **acting respectfully**, with a level of humility
- Yi (義): is based on the idea of **reciprocity**; may simply mean what is ethically best to do in a certain context
- Xin (信): means to act in ways that are not hurtful to others; **be mindful of how you interact with others**, both in mind and action
- Xiao: **involved with relationships with others and moral obligations that people have to one another**: elders are to be respected and cared for; children shown loving care and nurturing
- Zhi (智) referred to knowledge. **Learning and knowledge were an integral part of growing in life and learning to be a responsible member of society.**

仁
義
禮
智
信



Buddhism

Three Jewels:

- the Buddha : enlightenment
- the Dharma (the teachings): the understanding of tensions in life and movement toward Nirvana....a perfect state of being
- the Sangha (the community).: the place where people interact and share their wisdom
- A life process of doing, reflecting, seeking to attain enlightenment by understanding the conditions/sufferings in life and moving to a place of understanding and humane treatment of the world and all its people; attainment of peace and tranquility




Wang Shouren

- ▶ Wang Shouren (1472-1529) who was famous for “shingaku” and had similar philosophy to Confucius; proposed “walk the talk” (knowledge and action are one)
- ▶ “Learning” in old China was separated into “Xue” (study) and “Xi” (exercise)



Japanese Influences

- Dewey visited Japan in 1919 when he was invited by Nitobe Inazo
- Nitobe had studied in the US (at Johns Hopkins, where Dewey did his doctorate)...became a Quaker and worked to spread notions of education and working toward world peace and human rights
- Dewey made 8 presentations at Tokyo Imperial University. At this time, two American students who were in Japan, and who had studied about education in China, asked Dewey to visit China.
- Dewey fell in love with China and stayed there for 2 years.



John Dewey Comes to China

- John Dewey was one of main philosophers in US who developed “pragmatism”; learning by doing, connecting learning to real life
- Dewey developed programs in US, laboratory school at University of Chicago; promoted experiential learning, to learn about democracy and social issues (1895 to 1930s)
- Dewey went to China in 1919 and stayed for 2 years at request of Hu Shi and Chiang Monlin (his students)
- Gave almost 200 lectures in China, worked with Chinese students to promote “pragmatic” education
- Called the “Second Confucius”



Modern Movements:

Tao Xingzhi: life is education

- ▶ Studied at the University of Illinois and Teacher's College
- ▶ Contemporary of John Dewey
- ▶ 1923: organized the Mass Education Movement, 5 million students, 100,000 volunteer teachers: develop programs in rural China (partly result of Dewey efforts)
- ▶ Xingzhi – means action-knowledge; action/praxis produces knowledge
- ▶ Helped expand experiential learning programs in China

Y. C. James Yen: Civilian Education

- ▶ Studied at Princeton (M.A.) and Yale, and with Doctor Hons from Syracuse and other 2 colleges;
- ▶ 1922: built 200 schools and recruited 2500 students/400 teachers(including Mao); 1923 established “China civilian education promotion association”;
- ▶ **“Scholars must become farmer’s apprentice”**; promoted rural construction movement; learn to connect with average people



3 Contemporary Efforts: China Youth League

- ▶ Started in 1920: Chinese Socialist Youth League (中國共產主義青年團); several name changes; renamed China Youth League in 1957
- ▶ Organized around 31 provinces; local members and Central Committee connections
- ▶ Goal is to promote patriotism, **youth employment**, and **volunteerism**
- ▶ **China Youth University for Political Sciences** is connected to Youth League – one of leading research universities on issues of children and youth
- ▶ Houses China Youth & Children Research Center, central organization for research in all of China (established 1991)



Service Learning in Japan

- 1900s..to 1930s: T. Makiguchi – history and personal experience developing educational programs that focused on student centered classes that promoted personal growth and happiness
- Developed early idea of community studies, connecting education with real life
- Worked in poor areas of Tokyo; developed *System of Value-Creating Pedagogy*. *Beginning of Soka Kyoiku Gakkai...Soka Gakkai*
- In many ways, similar to Dewey, Nitobe, Tao Xingzhi --- the use of project based learning, community connected pedagogy that led to improvement of quality of life and feeling of contribution to social justice



Current Service Learning in Asia

- Development of Service Learning Asia Network: **started in Japan...spread** across Asia; now housed at Lingnan University in Hong Kong
- SLAN: colleges in 8 countries developing programs, joint efforts

Service-Learning

- ▶ Does provide service – but service is determined through dialogue with community and is connected to real community needs
- ▶ Has a hyphen (-): Assumes **service is connected to learning** for both groups (servants and those receiving service); **reciprocal relationship**
- ▶ Effective service requires acquiring knowledge from community members and using knowledge from academic perspective
(scholars apprentice with farmers)
- ▶ Involves continuous action and reflection



And More Service-Learning

Service-learning is both a philosophy and a pedagogy

- ▶ The reason we do service is to achieve social justice and provide opportunity for those often left out of opportunities to be successful in society
- ▶ Teaching and learning are an active process that requires doing and reflecting
- ▶ Service is a means to teaching academic content and concepts
- ▶ Involves continuous assessment from all perspectives
- ▶ Becoming a citizen requires service-learning



Some current developments in China

- Several universities are developing efforts: Beijing Normal University, China Youth University for Political Sciences, University of International Business and Economics (UIBAS)....
- Beijing Normal U: Civic Service Education...program with 7 elementary schools
- UIBAS: Youth League Branch in charge of one quarter to one third of all the curriculum.
- **China Youth University for Political Sciences:** Starting several programs, originating from School of Social Work, creating efforts in both Social Work and several different departments



Service Learning In US

- ▶ Long history of service....basis for early American society was to help one another; society was based on volunteerism and community spirit.18th and 19th centuries found people working collectively to build society.
- ▶ 1860s: Morrill Act – public universities support assistance to rural communities
- ▶ Henry James (philosopher): The Moral Equivalent of War (1910): require national service to meet the needs of communities



More US History

- **Progressive Education/John Dewey (1930s):** focused on student-centered education, connected to community work to address real societal issues
- **George Counts: Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order** –was purpose of schooling to include addressing social justice issues?
- **1970s: Experience-Based Career Education:** national movement to connect secondary schools with community around issues related to career development; many programs included community improvement and service




More History/Involvement of Higher Education

- **1980s: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education** (focused on role of experiential learning in colleges and schools)
- **Campus Compact (1985):** university presidents commit their institutions to civic engagement –connect academic learning with community issues; now more than 1100 colleges/universities are members) – developed university courses, teacher education programs
- **International Center for Service Learning and Teacher Education** (now a Duke University): group of teacher educators who worked together to promote service learning and literature on teacher ed
- **Financial Support: Foundations** (Kellogg, Kaufmann, State Farm) provide funds for program development



More US Development

- ▶ National Effort: **Corporation for National and Community Service** – supported service-learning and national service (AmeriCorps) 1990s to 2012 supports service learning programs
- ▶ Partnership for Service-Learning: spread across schools in most states
- ▶ Development of national organizations: **International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE)**
- ▶ Focus on many programs involving service and civic education (YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Youth Service America.....)



Asia and US: Some Common Threads

- ▶ Have long histories of service and community connections: From Confucius/Buddhism to Tao Xinghui, to the Progressive Movement/John Dewey, to Makiguchi, and to national initiatives that promoted volunteerism and social justice
- ▶ Have long history of Americans and Asians working together and influencing each other to promote experiential learning addressing social justice (Dewey was connected to Asia; Asia was connected to Dewey and American universities/faculty that believed in the role of connecting experience with learning: "Scholars apprenticing with farmers.")
- ▶ Both have a tradition of connecting education and service with issues of solving problems of social injustice and helping those who are in need; gaining enlightenment about society and self through action and reflection



The Future



- ▶ We need to acknowledge our rich history of collaboration between Asia and America
- ▶ Need to support the current collaborative efforts of US service-learning pioneers in working with Asia (Dwight Giles in Hong Kong; Tim Stanton in Singapore and Hong Kong; Rob Shumer in Singapore, China, and Japan...for example
- ▶ Need to realize that we are all dependent on one another to increase and improve the promotion and delivery of service-learning in Asia, the US, and the world