Intercultural Service-Learning in a Liberal Arts Curriculum

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10 June 2011
Lingnan University:

- The only public liberal arts university in Hong Kong
- Started the liberal arts mission in 1995, but Lingnan University was originally established in 1888
- Undergraduate programs in the Arts, Business and Social Sciences with varying degrees of interdisciplinary training
- Small Size: 2300 students/180 faculty
- High Rate of Residence: 75% now; 100% by 2013
- Pioneered Service-Learning in Hong Kong
- Emphasize experiential and out of classroom learning to enhance life-long learning
Some Guiding Values:

- To provide as many educational opportunities to our students as possible
- Promote a learning environment that facilitates students’ realization of their potential
- Believe in broad based education through General Education
- Students should have strong communication skills to cope with Hong Kong’s multilingual environment
- Excellent teaching supported by quality research
- Small class size where teaching and learning are characterized by close staff-student relationships
Some Guiding Values:

- Believe that education is not just about knowledge and skills but a life-time investment preparing students for life’s challenges.
- Students should have an international outlook: understand diversity and cultural literacy.
- Uphold the long tradition of “Education for Service” (Service-Learning and Community Service).
- Students should be involved and be responsible for their education.
A Liberal Arts Education Curriculum

- Inter-disciplinary offerings/programs
- Minors to add diversity
- Strong emphasis on language training
- Extra-Curriculum that enriches the education experience (Integrated Learning Program/ Campus and Hostel Life)
- A General Education Program/Core Curriculum that is unique to Lingnan and relevant to Hong Kong
- Strong emphasis on study abroad and inter-cultural experience
General Education: Curriculum

Courses are provided in 4 categories, which focus on:

1. Basic modes of reasoning and fundamental modes of argument

2. Issues of value in general and specific contexts

3. Interdisciplinary perspectives reflecting different methodologies and alternative mindsets

4. Explore the culture of science on modern life and thought.
Student Exchange Program

- A central piece of Lingnan’s internationalization program
- One-to-one exchange with 16 partners in Mainland China; over 80 Overseas partners – USA, UK, Europe, Australia, Korea, Japan, Mexico.
- A student centered approach with individualized care and preparation
- Cultural training, briefings, goals setting prior to departure
- De-briefings and self-evaluations upon return
- Assess outcomes to sustain positive impacts upon return and beyond
Community Service

- Reinforce Lingnan’s motto “Education for Service”
- Provides students with opportunities to broaden their learning in the community
- Enhance social consciousness and civic responsibility
- Strengthen organizational and communication skills
- Three types of civic engagement:
  - Organized by Hostel
  - Organized by Student Services Center
  - Organized by Office of Service-Learning
Service-Learning

- First to set up an Office of Service-Learning to coordinate projects between academic departments and community
- First to offer Service-Learning Program in the higher education sector in Hong Kong
- First to offer structured community services tied to the academic curricula (Service-Learning Research Scheme, SLRS)
- Allows students to demonstrate academic rigor while serving the community
- Enhance subject knowledge, organizations and communication skills, cultural literacy as well as problem-solving and research skills
Service-Learning

Number of Local Service-Learning Courses and Distributions by Faculty

Academic Year

2006-07
2007-08
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11

Number of Local Courses with S-L Elements

Social Science
Arts
Business
Others
Intercultural Service-Learning

- Intersection of 3 different domains
  - Service-Learning
  - Study Abroad
  - International Education

- Rationale
  - To develop appreciation for culture, language proficiency, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, communication skills, intercultural empathy and understanding in an international context (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011)
Intercultural Service-Learning

- Three levels of Intercultural Service-Learning Programs
  - Within Hong Kong
  - Within the region
  - Abroad (Students do S-L outside of their home country/city)
Intercultural Service-Learning

Within Hong Kong

- Service-Learning Research Scheme (SLRS) focuses on local diversity: South Asian Children Program
  - Courses: SOC212 Hong Kong Society, SOC321 Social Justice

- Purposes of the project:
  - Cultural exchanges between South Asian children and Lingnan students.
  - To understand the South Asian community in Hong Kong and their challenges
  - To understand the resources allocations of the government throughout the project
Intercultural Service-Learning

Within Hong Kong

- Incoming exchange students joining SLRS
- Cultural exchange between local and international students; Students are pair up to do SL projects in the local community
- From 2004-2011, 11% (n=180) of students who joined SLRS are international students
- Participated in Digital Classroom Project, Youth Companion Program, Strategic Planning on Gardening, Life Story Album, etc.

Outcomes

1. Subject-related Knowledge: 6.22 (pre-Q); 7.50 (post-Q)
2. Communication Skill: 6.73 (pre-Q); 7.65 (post-Q)
3. Organization Skill: 7.04 (pre-Q); 7.57 (post-Q)
4. Social Competency: 7.17 (pre-Q); 7.89 (post-Q)
5. Problem Solving Skill: 7.04 (pre-Q); 7.64 (post-Q)
6. Research Skill: 6.25 (pre-Q); 7.34 (post-Q)
Intercultural Service-Learning

Within the Region

- SLP201 Cross-Border Service-Learning Summer Institute
  - 12 local + 12 international students (from the US, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, mainland China, etc.)
  - Guest lectures and group projects on pressing social issues
- A Service Practicum in Hong Kong
- A Service-Learning trip to mainland China
- Deal with the diversity within the group, as well as the cross-cultural challenges in the surrounding environment
Intercultural Service-Learning Abroad

Students design service programs for the host country/city by applying their academic knowledge

- Students conduct S-L research on topics related to their own major and the host country/city
- Faculty members act as students’ advisor
- Serve and learn closely with different local parties, e.g. university students, service agencies, volunteers, service targets
- Working with Overseas partners
Intercultural Service-Learning Abroad

A Village Adoption Project in Yunnan, China in collaboration with Deloitte

- English students: Summer English Teaching Program
- Business students: develop sustainable micro-economic plan for the villagers
- Social Sciences students: conduct survey and develop health profile for villagers
- Student’s reflection:
  “My group mates and I prepared a series of activities, hoping to ‘improve’ and ‘educate’ local villagers and children… At the end, I realized that we are not coming to change the local culture, but pay attention to appreciate and respect their lifestyle and think considerately about their needs.”
Intercultural Service-Learning

Other Abroad Intercultural Service-Learning Programs

- Summer English Teaching Program in Yunnan
  - with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu
- VIA Asia-US Summer Service-Learning Program
  - with Stanford University
- India Calcutta Summer Service-Learning Program
  - with Fu Jen Catholic University
- Taiwan Summer Service-Learning Program
  - with Fu Jen Catholic University
- Beijing Service-Learning Research Scheme Program
  - with Renmin University of China
- GuangZhou Summer Service-Learning Program
  - with Sun Yat-sen University
Intercultural Service-Learning Abroad

- Outgoing exchange program with S-L scholarship
  - To encourage and award students who do S-L in the host country
  - Selected students will receive HKD10,000 scholarship offered by Zeshan Foundation
  - Submit a report and conduct an oral presentation on a hotly debated issue in the host country after they return from the exchange program
- S-L participation
Curriculum for 2012

- Education Reform in Hong Kong and broadening of curricula in both secondary schools and universities
- A major part of the curriculum reform in Lingnan is the inclusion of a Core Curriculum that will define undergraduate learning experience in Lingnan
- The Core Curriculum enables students to think critically, understand morality, develop historical and cultural awareness, and form a deeper understanding of HK
- Knowledge that is important and relevant to a Globalized City
- Service-Learning will be included in the Core Curriculum to achieve the goals
- Civic Engagement will be a graduation requirement for Lingnan students
Coming-of-Age For Liberal Arts Education

• Modern World: over-specialization, fast and profound changes, increasing diversity and complexity, globalized economy, core values challenged

• Liberal Arts Education will play an important role in nurturing the next generation of Hong Kong citizens
Importance of Intercultural Service-Learning

- Lingnan graduate attributes strengthened in an intercultural context
  - independent critical thinking, sound planning and problem-solving capabilities, excellent cooperative skills based on tolerance, integrity, civility, capacity, and desire for life-long learning, etc.

- Help develop students’ cross-cultural competence and prepare them to deal with a world that is increasingly globalized, but deeply divided by racial, ethnic, class, gender, religious and other cultural differences.

(Jun Xin, 2006)
Thank You