

Innovative Pedagogies – A Introduction to Service Learning



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Introduction

Aim of presentation:

- To provide an historical context for embedding civic engagement activities locally and nationally;
- To offer an overview of service learning through exemplars;
- Shared discussion and activity.



Historical Context

- Role of the University pre and post the 19th Century
 - Teaching and Scholarly Institutions
 - Response to change – public v's private good (land grant universities)
 - Recent focus on economic contribution
 - Rise in debate and embedding of civic engagement functions
 - Avowed mission statements (NUIG Research)



International Context

- **USA / South Africa / Australia / Germany**

European Context

- Bologna Process and Diploma Supplement (Declaration signed in June 1999 – now 40+ signatories)
- European Year of Citizenship 2005
- Council of Europe Declaration – Higher Ed & Democratic Culture: cit. HR & Civic Responsibility

US

- US Movement in 1960's
- Creation of Campus Compact by US Presidents
- Wingspread Declaration
- Highly evolved practice and research dimensions



National Context - Ireland

"I have a sense that many people are bothered about changes in social and cultural attitudes and behaviour....it is not just about the practical, day-to-day pressures which shape how we live. There is a concern that we have become more materialist, maybe even more selfish. And if we have, I believe many people would conclude that, for all our new wealth, we are much the poorer."

Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern, 14th September 2006

National Movement

- Celtic Tiger 1990s & level of Social Capital
- Governmental Commitment
 - Task Force on Active Citizenship 2006 (Recommendations x 2)
 - Government Funding to pilot SL for DIT
 - HEA Strategic Initiatives 'Service Learning Academy'
 - HEA SIF Civic Engagement Project



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Forms of Civic Engagement

Some forms.....

- **Community based learning/service learning**
- Volunteering (academy staff & students)
- Community focussed research
- Participative and Collaborative Research (Science Shop, Helpdesk etc.)
- Educational Initiatives (Access, Adult Ed. Programmes)
- SU Politics
- Clubs and Societies and contribution to communities
- Informal Interactions (Buy a Book Day etc.)



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Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI)

CKI aims to:

- Place communities at the centre of debate
- Educate students for civic engagement
 - Service Learning
 - Research
 - Student Volunteering
 - Knowledge Sharing

Funded by Atlantic Philanthropies 2001

CKI Board

International Advisory Board

Independent Evaluations

NUIG Quality Review



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Service Learning

- **Service Learning:** embedding community engagement activities with academic programmes through the integration of theory & practice, giving recognition to the academic potential of such service and encouraging deeper engagement and understanding of the context of programmes of study;

Problematic Language: service learning/community based learning/pedagogy for civic engagement etc.

A definition...

“... an academic strategy that seeks to engage students in activities that enhance academic learning, civic responsibility and the skills of citizenship, while also enhancing community capacity through service.”

Furco and Holland (2004)



Service Learning Strategy

Some strategies since 2004

Appointment of Academic Staff Developer

- Seed funding Scheme
- Development of Pilot SL Group and growth into Meitheal
- Visiting Practitioners/Researchers Scheme - Meetings/Seminars/Opportunities for engagement
- International Conference 2005 and publication of Book
- Facilitating conversations & meeting people where they are at (community/academics)
- Resource gathering, dissemination and emergence of scholarship
- Campus Compact
- Community Contacts – 85 organisations
- Campus Engage – HEA SIF Funded



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SL Opportunities at NUIG

- Arts (BA Connect x7)
- Italian
- Philosophy
- Law
- Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering
- Electronic Engineering
- Nursing Studies
- Women's Studies
- Occupational Therapy
- Information Technology
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Education



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Engineering versus Nursing

- **Biomedical and Mechanical Engineering**

‘Assignments that inspire and distinguish Engineers’

- Mandatory Module
- Third Year
- 3 ECTS
- 65 Students
- Share skills and knowledge with the community
- Engagement with a group different to your own
- 16 hours
- Self selected projects – individual and group
- Reflections service log, poster and public display

- **Nursing Studies**

Issues explored: poverty, conflict transformation, inter culturalism/multiculturalism, 80:20 issues through local and global community experiences.

- Elective module
- Third Year
- 6 ECTS
- 30 Students
- Placement in a developing county
- Aided in community placement choice
- 30 contact hours and 3 to 6 weeks in community
- Self-financed (fundraising)
- Field study, report and journal
- Presentation



Law versus SLT

- Bachelor of Civil Law
'Clinical Legal Education'

- Optional Module
- Final Year
- 6 ECTS
- 15 to 20 Students
- Pro bono work with ngo's
- 10 weeks
- Aided in community placement choice
- Reflection Essay, Interactive Seminar and Placement Evaluation

(Equality Authority, Rape Crisis Centre, National Association for Voluntary Bodies)

- Speech and Language Therapy

- Mandatory module
- Third Year
- 6 ECTS
- 18 to 25 students Students
- Placement in a developing county
- Aided in community site visit selection
- 14 contact hours and 12 hours community visits
- Self-financed (fundraising)
- Report, Poster and Conference Presentation

(HSE Sourced Clients)



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Motivations of local academic staff

- Pedagogical
- Values Orientated
- Institutional/Contextual
 - vehicle for social justice
 - giving something back to the community
 - develops civic responsibility
 - enhances learning experience
 - building university/community partnerships
 - a means of career advancement
 - consistent with personal political standpoints

Source: McIlrath L (2004) Survey of NUI Galway academic staff involved in service learning



Academic Perspective.....

“From my own personal experience of working in different communities and the benefits I obtained from this experience ... I want our students to have similar experiences and opportunities.... Also, the literature supports students undertaking service learning as an invaluable opportunity.”

Response to survey of NUI, Galway academic staff, October 2004



The Utopian University in the land of Dystopia

- Small Groups (Clustered into Primary & Post Primary)
- Create a teacher education module that embeds the methodology of service learning/community based learning and the values of or issues related to development education
(Aim, Objectives, Learning Outcomes, Module Content, Assessment Methods, Potential Community Partners)
- Feedback on Module



Comments/Discussion/Questions welcome:

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