



# SERVICE- LEARNING AUSTRALIA

Network, Research, Collaborate

# Role of the university:

*[W]hat universities ... are **mandated to make** or to help to make is **human beings in the fullest sense of those words** – not just trained workers or knowledgeable citizens but responsible heirs and members of human culture. ... Underlying the idea of a university – the bringing together, the combining into one, of all the disciplines – is the idea that **good work and good citizenship are the inevitable by-products of the making of a good – that is, a fully developed – human being.***

Palmer, P., Zajonic, A. with M. Scribner. (2010) The Heart of Higher Education.

# Unique SL effects

***...Service participation also has unique positive effects on academic development, including knowledge gained, grades earned, degrees sought after, and time devoted to academic endeavours.***

Astin, A W, Sax, L J and Avalos, J. (2003). *Long-Term Effects of Volunteerism during the Undergraduate Years* in Campus Compact

# Unique SL effects

***...In addition, service participation directly influences the development of important life skills, such as leadership ability, social self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and conflict resolution skills.*** Service participation also has unique positive effects on academic development, including knowledge gained, grades earned, degrees sought after, and time devoted to academic endeavours.

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# Unique SL effects

***Among other things, the study found that service participation positively affects students' commitment to their communities, to helping others in difficulty, to promoting racial understanding, and to influencing social values.*** In addition, service participation directly influences the development of important life skills, such as leadership ability, social self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and conflict resolution skills. Service participation also has unique positive effects on academic development, including knowledge gained, grades earned, degrees sought after, and time devoted to academic endeavours.

Astin, A W, Sax, L J and Avalos, J. (2003). *Long-Term Effects of Volunteerism during the Undergraduate Years* in Campus Compact

# Griffith University Community Internship

- Free-choice elective – all disciplines, all gpa's
- Core, recommended elective, employability elective UG and PG
- Shell course – designed for transformative opportunities
- 50-hour placement-based (NFP)
- Taught through human rights, citizenship and community; and social justice
- 600 or so students enrol every year
- 60% of students continue to volunteer/establish social enterprises
- Recipient 2016 AAUT Citation; 2017 AAUT Program Award, 2018 Qld International Education Award; 2019 finalist in international award

# Designing for Transformation

*Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and **irreversibly** alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves*

- *our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations;*
- *our relationships with other humans and with the natural world;*
- *our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender;*
- *our body awareness,*
- *our visions of alternative approaches to living; and*
- *our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy.*

O'Sullivan, E. (2003). "Bringing a perspective of transformative learning to globalized consumption." *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 27 (4), 326-330.

# Designing for Transformation

*...service-learning [is] an important tool in the development of employment choices and civic leadership. Alumni with a history of high-quality service-learning experiences were **more likely to accept employment in service-related fields**. In addition, alumni with a history of service-learning did increasingly more volunteer service as they got older.*

Warchal, J & Ruiz, A. (2004)



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# Service Learning in Australia: Desktop Audit

- Paper invited for Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement
- Literature Review and Desktop Audit
- Audit: 42 Universities, July 2018
- Search terms:
  - service-learning,
  - community engagement,
  - skilled volunteering,
  - civic engagement

# Service-learning definition

Service-learning [is] a course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

(Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996) Implementing service learning in higher education. The Journal of Higher Education 67(2), 221-239.)

# Clarity of definitions

Today, however, the term ‘service-learning’ has been used to characterize a wide array of experiential education endeavours, from volunteer and community service projects to field studies and internship programs. ... While some educators view ‘service-learning’ as a new term that reveals a rich, innovative, pedagogical approach for more effective teaching others view it as simply another term for well-established experiential education programs.

Furco, A. (1996). “Service-Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education.” Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning. Washington, DC: Corporation for National Service

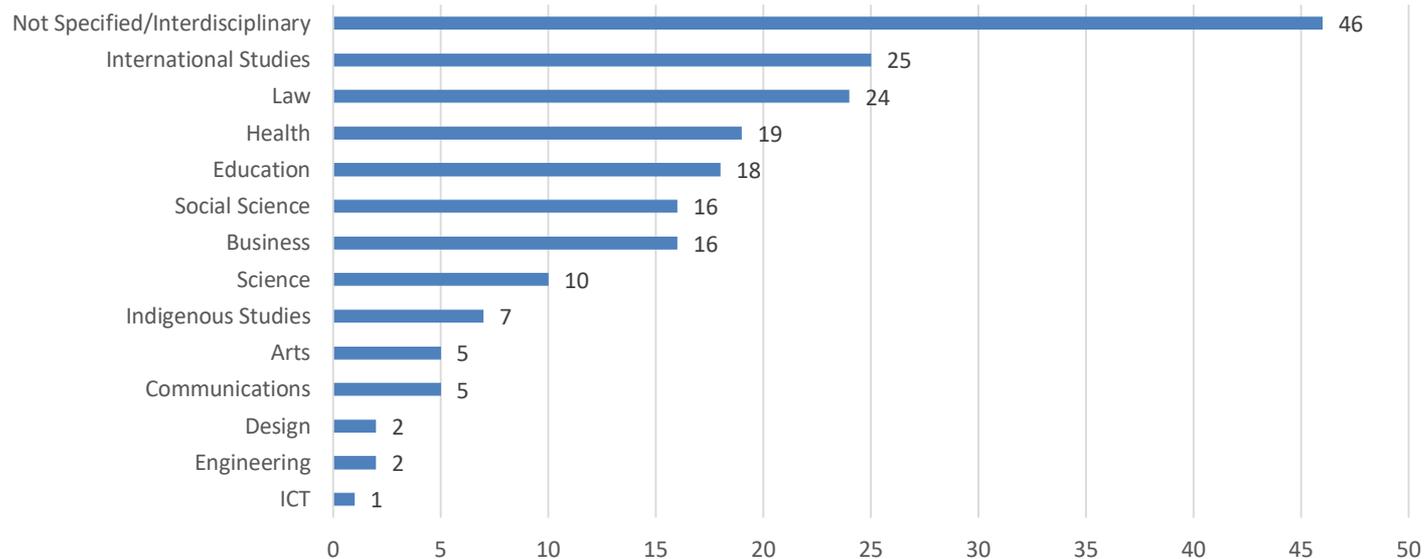
# Audit Criteria

1. Do students gain credit points for the subject towards their degree?
2. Is the placement/practical work within a community organisation/charity or not-for-profit organisation?
3. Is there an element of self-reflection in the course?

# Audit Outcomes

- 42 Universities
- 200 identified contacts emailed (any identified in audit, all DVC/PVC Academic or Community Engagement etc)
- Audit sent to all universities for validation and correction
- 4 did not appear to offer any form of service-learning
- 4-6 appear well engaged
- Around 80% have some engagement

# Service-learning units by discipline



# Do students gain credit toward degree?

...the desktop audit ...revealed some courses at several universities may not offer academic credit for participation in service-learning. While receiving academic credit for service is widely accepted to represent a key tenet of service-learning, the way credit was applied to the service-learning courses that were audited was inconsistent, with some courses receiving credit, others not, and others 'subject to negotiation.'

# Is the activity in a relevant (NFP) organisation?

This was possibly the most defining question in terms of helping to identify whether a unit/subjects was really service-learning.

One university has 800 NFP partners. And while many of their activities are service-learning they don't identify with service-learning.

Another identified 56 different subjects/courses, as being service-learning but activities were not necessarily with NFP's.

# Is reflection included?

Using a sample of 50% of universities: 76% specified an element of reflection/analysis albeit it under the following headings:

- Reflection
- Critical analysis
- Evaluation of outcomes
- Data analysis

# Questions raised?

1. Does data analysis, critical analysis or evaluation of outcomes meet the self-reflection criteria?
2. Where there is the opportunity to do a placement in an NFP/Charity or community organisation, but it could also be done at an industry or government body – should this be classified as service-learning or work-integrated learning?
3. Do subjects teaching the theory and/or concepts of service-learning, but don't actually include a practical component/placement still classify as service-learning?

# OPPORTUNITIES:

Service-learning on the agenda

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