

Citizenship and service learning: Can school/university partnerships enhance student teachers' sense of citizenship through service learning?

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Students at the Ourimbah campus of the University of Newcastle are attached to a school throughout their entire teaching program. This enables them to be incorporated into the school culture and allows them to build trust and understanding of one school working environment. Students are asked to devote time to the school in return for the school assisting them with their studies, including their assignment tasks. This paper introduces some of the activities that the students engage with in the schools and tentatively explores the extent to which this can be seen as service learning, thereupon contributing to these students' sense of community and engagement as wider citizens of the world.

This paper explores the extent to which a school/university partnership program, where students contribute to the wider school and school community, can be regarded as both service learning and also as contributing to students' sense of citizenship. Previously, (Reynolds, Brown and Williams, 2007), we have argued that this program can be seen as service learning but the extent to which it can also be viewed as contributing to active citizenship is more problematic. The fact that both these concepts are replete with multiple definitions and their advocates often come from different discipline areas, means that the links between the two are not always clear and so to thereafter analyse the extent to which a particular program is associated with both is fraught with danger. The LiNKS program can be seen to fulfill some conceptions of service learning and it can also relate to some aspects of active citizenship. It would seem that a stronger focus on active citizenship will require additional and alternative activities within the LiNKS program. The study used qualitative data collected from student LiNKS logs, surveys of both student and schools and some focus group interviews to explore the concepts of service learning and citizenship as represented by this program. It was hoped that although the program was not instituted as a service learning initiative but rather addressed the theory /practice nexus required by teacher accreditation bodies, the relationship with the school or centre would allow for citizenship skills to be developed. The overall feeling, as a result of looking at the experience through a different lens to that which was initially intended, was disappointing with the lesson being that citizenship can not be caught – it needs to be specifically taught and specifically targeted.

In 1989 the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training report entitled *Education for Active Citizenship*, argued that an active citizen was:

Not someone who has simply accumulated a store of facts about the workings of the political system – someone who is able to perform well in a political quiz. Equally important is the motivation and the capacity to put that knowledge to good use...an active citizen, in the committee's view, is someone who not only

believes in the concept of a democratic society but who is willing and able to translate that belief into action. (p. 7).

It follows from this explanation that an active citizen:

- Knows and understands the political system of their society;
- Knows and understands how to work within that system;
- Has some understanding of how and why it works like it does;
- Is motivated to work for the good of the community;
- Believes in working within the community (both wider and local) and adhering to its principles;
- Practices the skills of good citizenship including listening, working collaboratively, and representing others. (Reynolds, 2007)

Often what is seen as service learning is automatically equally seen as being associated with citizenship education and learning to be a citizen. However it can be seen that there are many different definitions of citizenship and equally many different definitions of service learning. Recent research (Furco, 2007; Desroches, 2006) has attempted to clarify the implications of different approaches to service learning for the wider benefits to the community at large, thus implicitly querying the simple equations that have evolved, and bringing into focus once again multiple conceptions of citizenship and the problematic nature of asserting that citizenship education is an easily identifiable process (Cogan et al. 2000). For many authors (Donahue, 2000; Dudderar and Stove, 2003; Vickers et al, 2004) it is the reflection that is critical when assessing whether what happens in a service learning experience is a technical exercise, born out of charity and with little recognition of wider societal implications, or whether it is an experience that can lead to conceptions of citizenship as a transformative process. In the case of the LiNKS program students certainly see it as an important part of developing professional learning and professional outcomes but is that all that can be said for it? Are they becoming wider citizens of the world by participating in such a program?

What is service learning?

Service learning has been given many different definitions (Donahue, 2000, cites over 100 different ones), some which would appear to see it as a charity-focused approach to learning where giving is seen as paramount, and others that emphasise the civic engagement aspect with a view that service learning can help transform society and uncover the political nature of schooling. Service-learning in the academic, higher education context involves linking 'service activities with the academic curriculum to address real community needs' (Ethridge, 2006, p. 50) but can vary between activities such as professional experience in a teacher education context, or helping out in soup kitchens or leading radical action against societal inequities such as becoming involved in anti - abortion campaigns. Even the term itself is put under scrutiny with, for example,

Carpini and Keeter (2000, p. 635, as cited in Butcher et al, 2003) maintaining that the term ‘community service learning’ can be distinguished from the term ‘community service’ by examination of who benefits by the service. If both are beneficiaries then the term community service learning is more appropriate although both terms imply ‘the integration of study with hands-on activity outside the classroom, typically through a collaborative effort to address a community problem’. Furco (2007) argued that service learning is a point on a continuum that maps the extent to which the focus and the primary intended beneficiary is identified. On one hand if the focus of the activity is service and the primary intended beneficiary is the recipient then the activity can be seen to be volunteerism or perhaps community service. On the other hand if the focus is on learning and the primary intended beneficiary is intended to be the provider then the activity can be seen to be internship or perhaps field education. He places service learning as the central point in this continuum somewhere between community service and field education.

Butin (2006) contended that the concept of service learning is a compilation of notions of experiential learning, action research, critical theory, progressive education, adult education, social justice education, constructivism, community-based education, multicultural education and undergraduate research, to name just a few of the many iterations of service learning, and as such it is not easily quantified or validated. However most definitions are inclusive of the idea that service learning is something extra – curricular, and that it attempts to counter narrow and technical approaches to academic learning by including participants in a wider context of society, and in the case of service learning in teacher education, one that should allow them a greater capacity to critique schooling and school practices.

There has been an increased interest in integrating service learning with pre-service education programs. Cox-Peterson, Spencer and Crawford (2005) established a service learning component to their science and language arts program where students attended out of school centres to present lessons in their integrated discipline areas. They found that this experience led to increases in their students’ confidence to teach science and language arts, an increased ability to plan and implement collaborative lessons and an increased self worth as an educator.

Both charity-based approaches and transformative approaches to service learning in teacher education acknowledge that teaching as a technically-focused enterprise is not sufficient to enhance learning and that something more is required. Dudderar and Stover (2003) indicated that service learning must involve interacting with the community for a real purpose and for identifiable goals, using skills usually not able to be developed through interactions in academic classrooms. They argued that it requires the development of cooperative skills and the need for reflection on their endeavours. Vickers et al (2004) argued that service learning can be seen as energising classroom curricula, re-engaging students in their own learning, and promoting forms of social and civic development, as well as establishing linkages between universities and schools, and local communities and community agencies. They likewise warned that there was a need for reflection and that it was important that the community service be linked to academic instruction. Additionally they indicated the need for reciprocity and trust between

partners. Vickers et al found that service learning had been shown to enhance pre-service teachers' behaviour, socialisation, citizenship, self esteem, leadership, mentoring ability, attitudes towards diverse communities, professional renewal and job placement (p. 133).

Likewise Donahue (2000) pointed out, being involved in service learning reveals education as inherently value-laden and not without political factors, although the latter may not be as apparent to the pre-service teacher as advocates would surmise. Stanton (1990, as cited in Dudderar and Stover, 2003) indicated that service learning involves three levels of engagement and that some programs enhance higher levels of engagement better than others. The first level involves the application of discipline knowledge in real situations and the ability to reflect on these engagements. The second level involves the learning of political and social skills from this that can lead to effective citizenship. The third level is when there will be some understanding of the social and economic development of goods and services as a result of this engagement - an ability to critique society at large.

Desroches (2006) points out that pre-service teachers often undertake tourist approaches to learning about other cultures and that studies of cultural diversity are usually associated with looking at deficits in the alternate culture. Service learning, although seen as a method to address this problem may simply exacerbate the situation by treating the interaction between the student and the culturally diverse groups that they are working with as charity and not dealing with issues of power and control. Desroches found that simply placing students in culturally diverse schools and asking them to reflect on the experience could actually lead to less interest in intercultural engagement rather than more interest. She argued that the result of the experience depended on whether the intention and the process established reflected a charity, a civic education or a community building/social change perspective. In her view the latter approach was best if the intention was to challenge deficit views of other than mainstream cultural groups.

However Butin (2006) pointed out the fact that tertiary institutions are more inclusive of diverse populations than they used to be and that this may actually work against the success of service learning approaches. He argued that service learning implies participation by full time, single, non-indebted, childless members of the university, (other members of the university population do not have time); it implies 'border - crossing' (Giroux, 1992) where students are learning about other cultures or ways of doing and thinking, (whereas the participants may be of the so-called 'different' society or community group anyway); and may actually end up being something taken up by the 'whitest of the whites' thereby exacerbating the gap between those providing the service and those receiving it. Nevertheless Furco (2007) pointed out that the benefits of service learning include personal outcomes, social outcomes, learning outcomes, career outcomes and institutional outcomes. A lot of what is listed as personal outcomes and social outcomes could be listed as active citizenship outcomes with interpersonal skills, ability to work with others, communication skills, social responsibility, commitment to service, facilitation of cultural and racial understanding all emerging from the service learning experience. Such experiences could thus additionally assist in enhancing citizenship skills.

What is citizenship education?

Aspin, (2002) argues that education is about transmitting cognitive capital, but also it is about transmitting culture and principal values, customs and traditions and in this country it is about educating for life in a democracy. Thus citizenship education is about giving students an understanding about why and how their society works and as such it should be the crux of educational endeavours. Although citizenship education is also prone to multiple definitions, there are two basic approaches to citizenship education, the first deals with the legal approaches to citizenship and so explores how the political system works and how to learn to participate in this aspect of society in a more learned way. The second interpretation is the social approach which deal with rights and responsibilities and examines issues such as poverty, class divisions and so on. Service learning can be related to both aspects of citizenship by indicating to students how the system operates and why, for instance, charity needs to be instituted and also it impresses upon the students some of the deficits in the rights of some members of society and allows them to take on some responsibility for countering these deficits. Hopefully, as Desrochers (2006) points out, reflection on the issues thrown up by being involved in such experiences can actually lead to overly simplistic notions of superior and inferior groups in society to be examined.

Current discussion in teacher education includes the need to be more aware of the wider view of the teacher as part of a global citizenry and as such involved in actively pursuing roles far beyond the technical teacher approach of classroom tasks. Butcher et al (2003) pointed out the diversity of expectations from teacher education including the requirement that students learn so that they can alter the life chances of the students they teach, know their subject matter and pedagogy, have professional behaviour and interpersonal and communication skills and have strongly developed understandings of equity issues and the notion of multiple perspectives on issues. They argued that teacher education programs should give a higher priority to community engagement as an overriding focus of their programs so that the corporate citizenship of the university and its staff and students can be enhanced. They argued that teachers needed to be socially committed, sensitive to and focused on addressing student injustices.

Battistoni (1997) is one of the few researchers who has tackled the difficulties associated with linking service learning to citizenship education. He argued that if we are to support a democratic society then the content, learning, pedagogies and instruction of our programs should have a view to citizenship education. He posited the need for there to be some 'other regarding ethic' (p.150) associated with education and argued that a charity-focussed view is not sufficient. Instead a civic view of education emphasising mutual responsibilities and rights encourages a view of the interdependence of community and it is this view of community that Battistoni argued is the essence of service learning. He argues that there are three essential components of a democratic civic education - intellectual understanding, civic skills and attitudes and direct action in schools and communities. Under intellectual understanding he argued that service learning encourages thinking and critical thinking in particular about human nature, society and

justice. Under civic skills and attitudes he noted the skills of association, communication, reflection, and moral disposition of judgement and imagination. In other words service learning could contribute to a broad array of citizenship education focuses.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2000) pointed out that the essence of Social Studies is active citizenship and that to ensure active citizenship there must be some intervention beyond the classroom or school – in other words involvement away from the place of academic learning. The NCSS statement on the link between service learning and citizenship argued that:

Service-learning provides an authentic means for using social studies content and skills to investigate social, political, and economic issues and to take direct action in an effort to create a more just and equitable society. Quality service-learning experiences may positively influence the following aspects of student development:

- Academic, problem solving, and critical thinking skills
- Ethical development and moral reasoning ability
- Social and civic responsibility
- Self-esteem, assertiveness, and empathy
- Political efficacy
- Tolerance and acceptance of diversity
- Career exploration

Cogan et al. (2000) have a notion of multidimensional citizenship for the 21st century which extends beyond the usual view of national citizenship often envisaged when the concept of citizenship is employed - ‘multidimensional citizenship centres on the development by individual citizens of their personal civic beliefs, their capacity for joint social and public action, their ties to their localities and the world outside, and their awareness of past, present and future’ p.50. Simply placing an individual student in one or many sites in the local community will not necessarily develop such broad conceptions of citizenship. What can be established however is that service learning promotes civic participation and social responsibility and as such is an instrument for encouraging good citizens and good citizenship. It is an approach that can extend the participation of preservice teachers beyond what they would normally be comfortable with in their daily lives as citizens. As Battistoni pointed out service learning can assist with various aspects of becoming an active citizen but it is not a seamless relationship and depends very much on which notion of service learning and which notion of citizenship the observer subscribes to.

School/university partnerships as an extension of the notion of traditional teaching: venturing into citizenship

Some of the key recommendations of the Ramsey Report (2000) were that initial teacher training should be reconnected with schools, that professional experience should be at the centre of initial teacher education, that there should be an improvement in the quality and effectiveness of school-based induction and that we should be effectively preparing present and future education leaders to be highly responsive to rapidly changing societal

and educational contexts. Although not actually acknowledging the long history of university – school partnerships beginning with Dewey, Ramsey’s contention that there should be improvements, and preparation for new teachers in rapidly changing societal and educational contexts is supported by the literature (Leiberman, 1992; Russell & Chapman, 2000; Sachs, 2003a; Seddon, Clemans, & Billett, 2005; Smith & Edelen-Smith, 2002; Yinger & Nolen, 2003). With this in mind our LiNKS program has been developed to work towards reconnecting our university with schools and early childhood centres in a reciprocal and collaborative relationship. These varied approaches to learning to be a teacher should also work towards producing good learners as defined by the Australian Council of Deans (2001) – assisted and self-directed, flexible, collaborative, good communicators, of open sensibility, intelligent in more than one way and broadly knowledgeable. The NSW Institute of Teachers (2005), *Professional Teaching Standards* has two of its seven elements associated with the importance of teachers continually updating their professional knowledge and working in their communities – Element 6: *Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice* and Element 7: *Teachers are actively engaged members of their profession and the wider community*. The DEST Ministerial Discussion Paper, *Higher Education at the Crossroads* (2002) argued that one of the purposes of higher education is to enable individuals to adapt and learn at local, regional and national levels. There is thus strong support Australia-wide for working towards a greater regional profile and involving our teacher education students in a wider variety of experiences to enable them to be flexible learners. These initiatives encourage a conception of the teacher as someone who does not simply meet the children at the school doorway, but instead is involved at all levels of examining the context and the conception of schooling, thereupon being involved as a citizen.

It is not only in Australia that exploration of the role of teacher as a citizen in a wider world than the classroom is being encouraged. Internationally there is strong support for increased partnerships between schools and their community and for teachers to take more initiative in their own continuing professional development. This requires that the learning of a teacher much be more encompassing than simply learning tried and true approaches to classroom tasks at the feet of an academic or school-based mentor. Groundwater-Smith and Dadds (2004); Day and Sachs (2004) and Honig, Kahne and McLaughlin (2001) argue for the need to develop a broader conception of what learning is and where it takes place, to focus on what enables school-community connections for opportunities to learn and teach and to reconsider traditional relationships between researchers and practitioners in order to expand knowledge about opportunities to learn and teach. Educational research demands focus, partnership and wide approval if it is to become a part of the culture of teaching and an action learning approach to this study should enhance this aspect of the professional development of all partners (Garner, 2000). However is simply establishing a partnership relationship with schools going to reach into the essence of both service learning and citizenship education?

Service learning, citizenship education and the LiNKS program

The LiNKS program, established at the Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle, enables pre-service teachers to be connected to a particular school for a

considerable length of time. Some of the time spent in the school is used by students to complete set tasks for university assessment items. The other half of the time (usually a minimum of ten hours per semester) is for the student to be involved at the school in whatever capacity they and the school staff negotiate. Although many students pursue standard classroom activities such as helping a group of student with their lessons, a number do extra-curricular activities such as participating in excursions, running school sports day, helping in the school library, helping with school productions and so on. The extent to which this can be seen as service learning and thereupon can this be seen as essentially citizenship experience and civic engagement on the part of pre-service teachers is problematic.

The philosophy behind the LINKS program is that 'real life' experience in 'real life' schools, experience closely aligned with their on campus activities, will produce better educated and better technical, practical and critical teachers (Hinde-McLeod and Reynolds, 2007). How the program works is that pre-service student teachers give of their time to assist in daily school or early childhood settings. In return the school or early childhood centre provides guidance for them with the work they are undertaking at university. The LiNKS program is intended to put theoretical perspectives and practical ideas from university courses into context and allow students to develop a greater commitment to their studies and the education community. It is hoped that students are able to perceive that what they are learning is worthwhile and that they will have an increased disposition to excel in this demanding career. It is hoped that the LiNKS program engages both partners. Student teachers will hopefully gain a more thorough understanding of the school curriculum and bring back to the university classes up to date classroom experiences. The school or centre, and its staff, benefit by gaining access to a valuable human resource, gain an understanding of our Teacher Education programs, and learn from skills students have developed from university programs. However, it is also anticipated that they will gain an insight into the politics of schools, the fairness, the equity, the power relationships that occur and will also bring these issues back to their university studies (Giroux, 1992). Students are assigned to a LiNKS school/centre for the majority of their program and so hopefully will develop collegial and professional relationships with the staff. The LiNKS program is separate to Students' Professional Experience or Internship which take place in different contexts. The activities are individually negotiated by students with their schools or centres. Although students are mandated to offer ten hours of time to the school that acts as their mentor throughout their teacher education program, most of the students volunteer much more than the minimum hours. This is where the program starts to move into the area of service learning and to some extent citizenship education as the student go beyond the realms of set technical responses to course requirements and take control of their relationship with a community centre.

Feedback on the LiNKS program

The progress of the Links students, and the validity of the program, has been monitored in a number of ways. Students have LiNKS log books in which they record all the activities they participate in at their schools, the hours they attend and any comments that

they and the teachers have to make. Additionally surveys are sent to schools and to students every year to ask about how they used the students, what the problems were, how the program can be enhanced and what if anything they got out of it. Teachers and students were asked if they would be happy to be interviewed about their LiNKS experiences and students have been asked if they are willing to show some of the material they worked on during their LiNKS visits. Additionally and anecdotally the academic staff communicate with teachers about their LiNKS placements and any problems or positive benefits that may have emerged.

The data indicated that students involved themselves in the every day life of schools which, as can be seen by the activities described, rarely involved participation in the wider community. They were however involved out of the single classroom in many occasions and did get to meet multiple staff members throughout the school. This was mentioned as one of the important new areas of learning for student teachers - to realise that learning and teaching happens everywhere in the school environment - not just in the classroom. They:

- attended staff meeting, parent teacher meetings, grade/stage meetings, assisted with training sporting teams, musicals, concerts;
- lead school assembly, grade/stage assembly;
- took small groups for literacy and numeracy, and science and technology.
- related to teachers in staff room relaxed conditions;
- accompanied teachers on play ground duty and bus duty;
- attended excursions as helpers;
- interacted with children 0-5 in centres, K-6 in primary and 7-12 in high schools;
- planned lessons and mini programs of work;
- assisted in the school library;
- supervised teams during school sport;
- provided computer classes;
- provided homework support.

Number of Students involved in particular school-based activities (N=184)

Tasks they are involved in	Number of students
Engaging with normal classroom activities	177

Observing lessons in all grades.	184
Teaching small groups of children within view of teachers.	167
Shadowing teachers on playground duty.	70
Assisting with arrival and departure (transport) duty.	6
Helping with sports teams and events, as a volunteer.	3
Attending and helping at sports carnivals, cross country events and themed activity days.	28
Attending school assemblies - speaking at assemblies to give announcements.	46
Attending staff meetings.	14
Shadowing teachers as school discipline procedures are put in place	18
Meet and chat with the Principal, Deputy and Assistant about roles and responsibilities of the executive (eg at morning tea or lunch time).	22
Sitting in on parent / teacher interviews.	0
Attending excursions as a volunteer helper.	10
Taking lunchtime activity groups as a volunteer helper eg. Guitar group, choir, sports teams and clubs.	2
Assisting in school musicals / extravaganzas.	9
Organiser for class based assembly items.	0

Organising take home readers / library borrowings.	17
Spending time helping in the school or centre's administration office.	18

It is obvious from this data that there are certain aspects of teachers' work that has been targeted by the schools as appropriate for these LiNKS students. They have overwhelmingly been experiencing classroom interactions, adopting the role of teacher's aide. Many have had the experience of teaching a small group of students under the supervision of the classroom teacher. They have had less experience in seeing and experiencing the wider role of the teacher in their interactions with community, in whole school events, in working with teams of teachers in curriculum work, in working on assessment and professional development activities and particularly in observing in parent - teacher interviews. They have variously been involved in Stanton's (1990) three levels of engagement in service learning. They have applied discipline knowledge in real situations and have reflected on them (although the latter could be improved upon). They have also learnt political and social skills such as negotiation with their school supervisor, developing or at least practicing emotional intelligence that can lead to effective citizenship. Whether they have been made aware of the third level of understanding and have an enhanced capacity to critique society at large is debatable. It is probably dependent on the context in which they find themselves and it is also dependent on the ability of our staff to help them better reflect on their experiences. Specific courses in their program do just this - explore the social context of the in-school experiences.

The LiNKS Program is considered valuable by 74% of schools surveyed with 3% considering it had both valuable and not valuable aspects and 16% considering that their experience, so far, had not proven to be valuable to them. In 12% of the not valuable responses the school could see value for the students but not for the school. In the early childhood sector 60% of respondents indicated that the LiNKS Program had a valuable role to play with 30% indicating the opposite. In the pre-service student data 76% found value in the program with 5% indicating that it was of no value. Schools, early childhood sectors and pre-service student teachers' data combined indicated that 73% valued the LiNKS Program and 15% didn't. Obviously what they valued about it varied considerably and it would seem, by the number of student doing school aide jobs, that it may be valued for its technical skills rather than for its impact on building citizenship - type beliefs and actions.

The connection between service learning, citizenship education and the LiNKS program

The LiNKS program thus offers an opportunity for our students to be educated but also to be committed citizens and many take the opportunity to give of their time beyond what is required by their program. As Hustinx et al (2005) found, the socially contagious nature of volunteerism is of great importance in building a culture of community engaged

individuals. The sheer mass of students out there doing volunteer work related to schools hopefully should infuse a culture of socially committed teachers although it will be the individual student who will know whether they are developing a citizenship focus or whether they are simply complying with university requirements. This in itself is an important aspect in building university-community partnerships, perhaps leading to the formulation of new community-defined priorities (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002, 2000; Angelique, 2001).

However it would be difficult for this to be seen as more than civic engagement and is usually not in the dimension of transformative action. Thus being associated with a school to assist in negotiated activities definitely allows for the notion of charity work (for those that give more of their time than is mandated), an understanding of the wider environment of the school – other than the school classroom, and the act of negotiating the work enables many skills necessary for citizenship (listening, assertiveness, learning the political mechanisms evident in a public organisation). It could also be argued, by examining the types of activities that the students are engaged in, that the schools themselves do not see their role as being associated in the wider community, thereupon not providing opportunities for students to engage as citizens of a broader world beyond school confines. The LiNKS program could rarely be seen as enhancing students' knowledge of how the broader national political system works and even less engaging Cogan et al.'s (2000) view of global citizenship. The values and attitudes developed by students can be seen to vary considerably with some seeing the experience as an imposition on their already busy lives, and others strongly valuing the opportunity to be seen as an important and valued member of a school community.

Increasing the reflective nature of the students' experiences can enhance both service learning as a transformative practice and civics education although they each require different styles of reflection. More strongly addressing these aspects of the LiNKS program may achieve a stronger citizenship focus thus acknowledging that simply becoming part of a school community does not lead to multidimensional citizenship. To become a multidimensional citizen is a much more complex process. We must ask ourselves to what extent should we be advocating and encouraging a critical stance and how far back do students need to stand to see their role in the wider global community? A This school/university partnership is not sufficient to provide a service learning and citizenship focus.

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