# Service Learning for global citizenship: theories, pedagogies and student and community experiences.

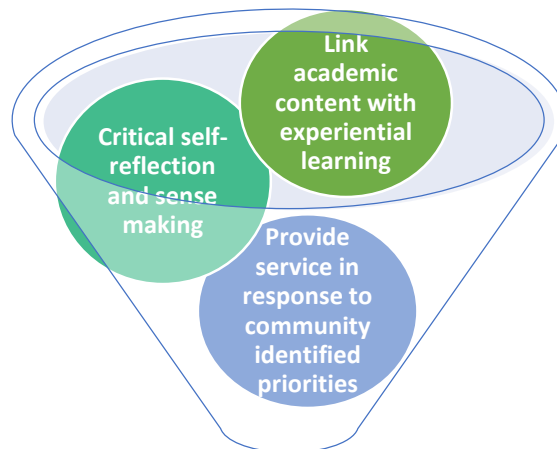## Findings from a review of relevant literature.

### What is service learning for global citizenship?

**Social, cultural, institutional and disciplinary values and norms shape conceptions of global citizenship:**

| A citizen acts responsibly and abides by social systems and structures | A citizen actively volunteers for good causes and gives to charity | A citizen has global awareness and empathy | A citizen is competitive in the international marketplace | A cosmopolitan citizen understands global issues, has an ethical response and comprehends their position in the world | A citizen seeks justice by challenging the status quo |
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**Frames academic content and positioning of a service learning experience**



- Link academic content with experiential learning
- Critical self-reflection and sense making
- Provide service in response to community identified priorities

Service learning for global citizenship

*Drawn from: Bamber & Pike, 2012; Britt, 2012; Butin, 2003; Caspersz, Olaru & Smith, 2012; Chong, 2014; Gerstenblatt, n.d.; Goldberg & Coufal, 2009; Khane & Westheimer, 2004; Permaul, 2009, Rhoads & Szelenyi, 2011; Rizvi, 2009; Ross, 2012; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2013; UNESCO, n.d.; Wood & Black, 2014.*

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### 🔴 How do students from diverse backgrounds view themselves as global citizens?

Policies and practice to facilitate global citizenship tend to be institutionally driven and research that gives student voice to constructions of global citizenship is limited. Studies of small cohorts have found that students are able to articulate concepts of global citizenship with nuanced understanding (Bourn, 2010; Hendershot & Sperandio, 2009).

Students can view the global citizen as a privileged position and be cynical about rhetoric or shallow actions that may be construed as citizenship, such as purchasing wristbands for a cause. Students can also be pessimistic about their potential to influence the state of the world (Bourn, 2010). When faced with pressures of assessment, students will tend towards lower risk, more efficient means for achieving outcomes, which is counter to the journey required for development of global citizenship (Leask, 2012). This highlights the importance of responding flexibly to a diverse student cohort (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011).

### 🔴 How do the unique dispositions of a diverse student cohort, including socio-cultural background, attitudes, beliefs, values and previous experiences shape study abroad goals?

Approximately one in seven Australian students will undertake a study abroad experience and there is a significant disconnect between study abroad aspirations and uptake of experiences (Olsen, 2014; Nerlich, 2015). Socio-economic status has been found to have a clear impact on the fulfilment of study abroad goals (Nerlich, 2015). In international studies, factors influencing study abroad goals include institutional and personal characteristics such as relevance to studies and links with curriculum or socio-economic status and gender (Trilokekar & Ramsi, 2011). Information is lacking about the curriculum or range of supports surrounding study abroad to enhance student learning from these experiences.

Given exchange opportunities are accessed by the minority of students, internationalisation of the curriculum requires a broader focus than international mobility experiences alone (Gothard, Downey & Gray, 2012). International mobility can be prohibitive for students financially, logistically and intellectually. There is a need for curriculum frameworks to support internationalization that are inclusive of global perspectives, development of intercultural capabilities through local experiences, and normalising global perspectives as an everyday experience (Clifford, 2009). By recognising and embracing diversity within local communities, there is a chance to connect local experiences with global learning (Battistoni, Longo & Jayanandhan, 2009). In addition, it is important to recognise that it is difficult to predict the extent to which students will engage with and learn from experiences as they will have diverse motivations, circumstances, interests and emotions. Students come from varying backgrounds and ways of constructing knowledge (Enberg, 2013; Billett, 2009, 2010; Permaul, 2009).

### 🔴 Service learning and the student experience
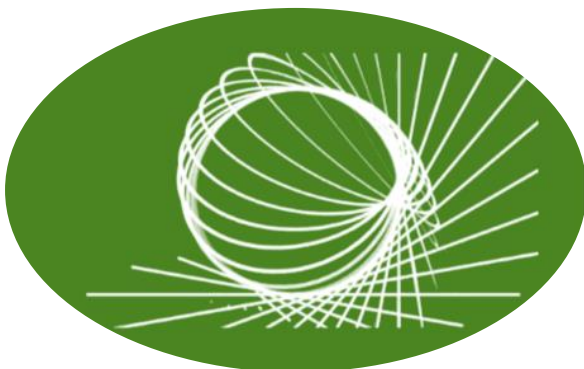


Students will follow multiple learning pathways to achieve a range of outcomes at different points in time, depending on their agency and disposition (Billett, 2010; Lilley, 2014; Rizvi, 2009). A scaffolded approach would recognise that students may start by practising, then critically reflecting on disciplinary skills, this may be followed by cognitive growth and then increased potential to act as a change agent. Some students may progress through all stages, some will take longer than others and some may be content with skills development (Britt, 2009; Butin, 2010).

Aymed, 2012.

There will be gaps or differences between the educator's intentions and the student experience. Critically embracing this difference as part of service learning allows for engagement in complexity, more genuine community partnerships and a focus on longer-term outcomes (Butin, 2010). Educators need to remain open to the potential that students will achieve varying outcomes at different points in time as a result of a service learning experience. For these approaches to be successful, students need to be placed as the agents of their transformation (Bamber, 2015; Billett, 2010).

## Service learning and the community experience

Educators need to be mindful that the community experience of service learning sits within a historical, political and social context that surrounds the relationship between students and community (Caspersz & Olaru, 2013; Inman, 2010). The positive intentions and critical focus of service learning will not ensure unintended consequences or unacknowledged positions of privilege and power (Kistler, 2011; Gilbride-Brown, 2011). While reciprocity is recognised as an important component of service learning, community voices are often marginalised in service learning research (Butin, 2003; Permaul, 2009; Baldwin, Buchanan & Rudisill, 2007; Caspersz et al., 2012; Martin, Seblinka & Tryon, 2009). The proliferation of volunteer abroad opportunities or "voluntourism" tend to focus on the marketability of students and their experience, rather than the experience of the hosts institutions and likely benefit (Bamber, 2015). These opportunities also tend to be taken up by the savvy student or an international class, reinforcing existing privilege and subject positions (Andreotti, 2011; Rizvi, 2009; Biccum, 2015).

Overcoming these risks requires educators to understand how local culture will shape community priorities, the types of "service" that will be considered appropriate and the potential positive or negative cultural impacts of a service learning program. It requires learners to let go of beliefs that they are the expert and will know how to 'help' a community in 'need' and how to solve their 'problems' (Kistler, 2011).

These issues can be addressed by ensuring community partners have a readiness for change and are actively involved in identifying priorities and shaping the service learning experience (Kistler, 2011). Asset based approaches can assist students to recognise the social, physical, environmental and human strengths of community. It is also important to take the time to engage with community ontology and epistemology (Bartleet, Bennett, Power and Sunderland, 2014). Critical pedagogy informed by decolonial theory is important to facilitate students awareness and understanding to challenge historical assumptions and power imbalances (Andreotti, 2011).

Ultimately the educator has a close and nuanced understanding of the service learning experience that they are facilitating for students. Educators need to reflect on the pedagogy, curriculum and experiential factors that will make it a challenging and disorienting learning experience for students as well as balancing benefit for community (Enberg, 2013). Educators can take a proactive role in collaborating with community to negotiate the form of the experience, the level of involvement of community members in the process and their power in shaping the service learning experience to develop mutually beneficial projects. We must keep in mind that the "modest" goals of service learning, to disrupt students in the aim of facilitating global perspectives, sit within a complex history of colonialism and power relationships (Butin, 2010).

## Pedagogies of service learning for global citizenship

A '*glocalised'* approach to service learning offers the potential for local issues to considered in a global context, adaptive to diverse communities. This requires students to consider their position in the world, the relationship to political and social institutions and to think outside of cultural boundaries (Roberston 2012; Bamber & Pike, 2012; Batistoni et al., 2009; Rizvi, 2009; Lilley, 2014).
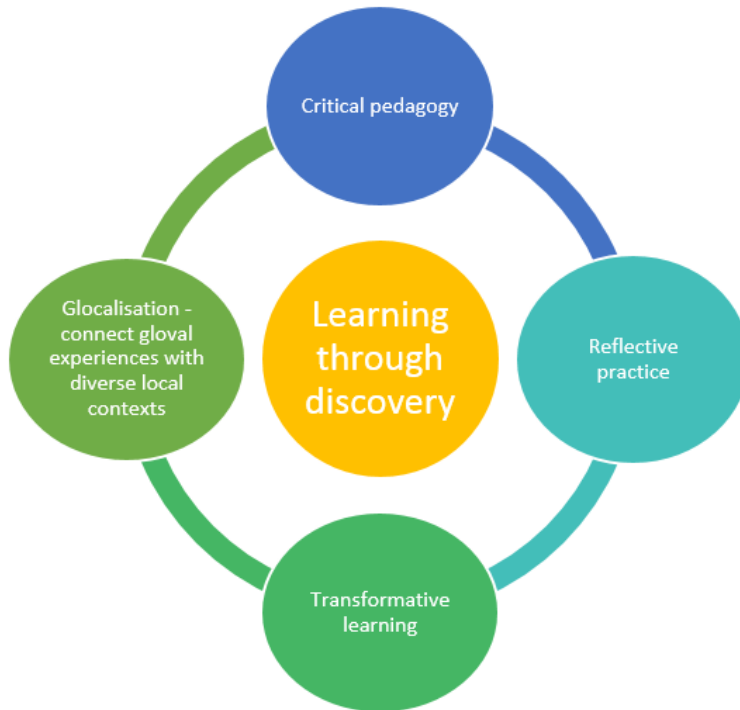


*Critical pedagogy* is a form of experiential learning that seeks to challenge inequality by confronting divisions created by race and class, instead promoting equality and democracy through education. This requires students to question existing structures, reflect on power and the cognitive dissonance brought about through increasing critical consciousness (Dewey, 1996; Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2003; Friere, 1970; 1986; Gilbride-Brown, 2011; Kahne & Westheimer, 2004).

Service Learning can be constructed to create the conditions required for a *transformative learning* experience, by creating ambiguity, dissonance, disorientation and disequilibrium. Conditions can be created locally to create a similar transformative immersion to an international experience (Farnsworth, 2010; Che, Spearman & Manizade, 2009; Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Bamber & Pike, 2012; Lilley, 2014; Smith & Shaw, 2012; Butin, 2010; Lilley, Barker & Harris, 2014).

*Reflective practice*, ethnography and online environments can be used to assist students to connect local and global experiences, reflect on their position in the world and relationship to political and social institutions, any tendencies to "othering" and to consider agency of community partners (Batistoni et al., 2009; Rizvi, 2009; Lilley, 2014; Kistler, 2011; Merry & Ruyter, 2011).

Rather than a transfer of knowledge, the educator is focused on developing students' critical analysis skills, awareness of global conditions, comfort with ambiguity and difference and an understanding of their potential to reproduce the status quo. It is about "facilitating students' acceptance of and comfort with "strangeness" as *being in the world rather than knowing the world*" (Carrington, 2011, p. 8). This requires a shift from transmissive pedagogies to *learning through discovery, learner-centred, collaborative, praxis oriented, cognitive based learning*. Learning from staff and peers is important (Carrington, 2011; Merrill, Braskamp & Braskamp, 2012; Enberg, 2013).

## 🔴 Assessment challenges

There is a tendency in higher education to construct a linear connection between subject objectives and content to student outcomes. This has the potential to place boundaries around a service learning experience and an artificial focus on outcomes. Current tools available for assessing students' learning from mobility, intercultural or community based experiences are limited, have arisen from Western traditions and have a tendency to reductionism (Singh & Qi, 2013; Lilley, 2014). As highlighted earlier, assessment pressures can lead to students focusing on efficiency, at a cost to the journey required for transformative learning (Leask, 2012).
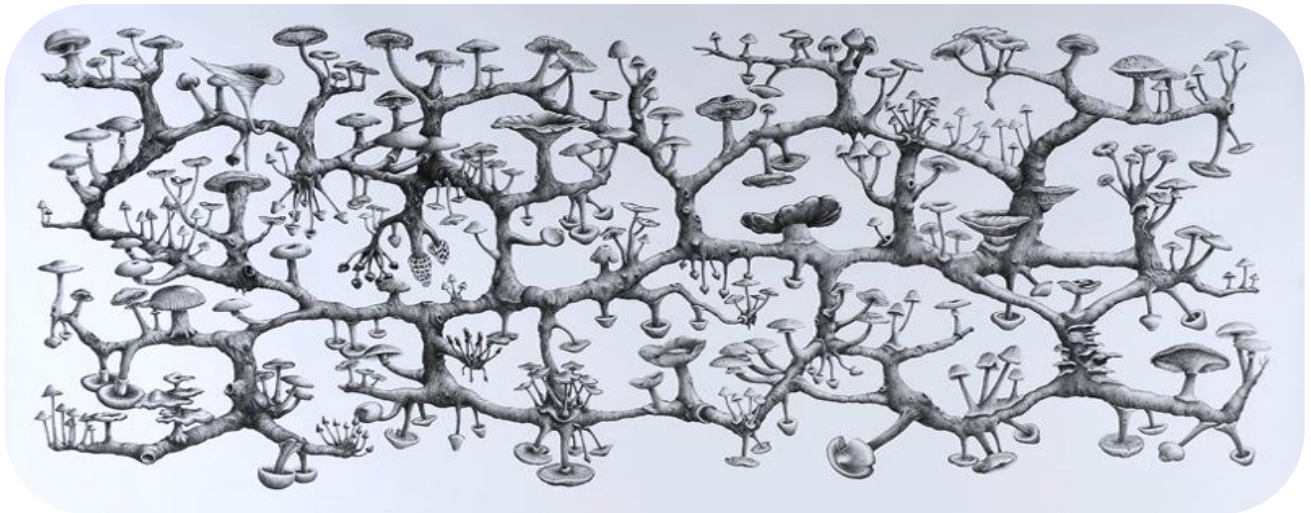


Giblett, 2009

A flexible approach such as rhizomatic curriculum mapping would provide space for student agency, diversity in experiences, engagement in responses and multiple learning pathways. The rhizome is conceptualised as a series of nodes with multiple connections which will be developed depending on context and student agency. In this sense, a subject offering would be cast as a series of nodes from which connections can be developed by the student according to their personal interests, motivations and disposition (Carrington, 2011; Wang, 2014).

## 🔴 Implications for curriculum development

It is important to be explicit about the theoretical and philosophical framework informing service learning. Tensions exist between educational agendas which promote neoliberalism and the production of entrepreneurial global citizens and the democratic cosmopolitan, based on principles of social justice and deliberative democracy (Rizvi, 2009; Camicia & Franklin, 2011). These agendas need to be reconciled with a student's own goals for academic and personal development, recognising that service learning will not achieve the same outcomes for all students (Britt, 2012). Further to this, educators need to create space for community to articulate their goals and what they hope to get out of the service learning experience (Gilbride-Brown, 2011). This requires thoughtful, evidenced based approaches to connect and align the goals of the curriculum, the institution the student and the community.

While educators may have intended and enacted curriculum surrounding these experiences, these must also be informed by the student voice to develop programs that will engage students as active, agentic learners in their own construction of themselves as global citizens. Ultimately, it is this holistic approach that will lead to the deep and sustained relationships across the Asia-Pacific region that is hoped for through the internationalisation of the curriculum.

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