

**What can service learning offer to  
students and staff in European  
Universities?**

**European First Year Experience  
Conference, 2014, Nottingham**

- Who am I?
- Andrea Lyons-Lewis, Sociology Division,  
Nottingham Trent University
- Who are you?
- Plan for the workshop

## **Introductions**

**HELP!**

- “Universities ..... are arguably amongst the best placed institutions to ensure a critical dialogue about inequality and injustice is part of the student experience” (Durose et al 2010 in Wood, J, 2012)

- “service learning [is] a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and 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 & Hatcher, 1996)
- Long history in the United States

## **Service Learning: a definition**

- Nottingham ranks 20th out of the 326 districts in England on the indices of multiple deprivation
- Population of Nottingham 305,700
- Student population: circa 60,000
- Bridge the 'town and gown' divide
- Strengthen the links between the university and the community
- Strengthen students discipline identities & sense of themselves as social agents

**Some context**

- An increasing emphasis on 'the student experience' since the 2011 introduction of higher tuition fees – problematic discourse
- Education as a 'public good' not just for the private benefit of individualised students or 'the dictates of the market' (Giroux, 2002, p 107)
- Education as "as a crucial site where students gain a public voice and come to grips with their own power as individual and social agents" (Giroux, 2002, p 105).
- *"Universities ..... are arguably amongst the best placed institutions to ensure a critical dialogue about inequality and injustice is part of the student experience" (Durose et al 2010 in Wood, J, 2012)*

## The Student Experience

- A bottom up initiative
- All 160 students on BA Criminology year 2 in January 2015 will start the Service Learning module
- 40 credit points
- Pre-service classroom preparation and recall days
- 10 week service period
- Discipline based SL model
- Groups of students working together

**What are we planning?**

- What would your advice to me be?
- How can we make this work as well as possible?
- What should we build in/include?
- What should we avoid?

**Questions for the workshop**

- Bringle, R G and Hatcher, J A, 1996, Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education, **The Journal of Higher Education**, Vol 67, No 2, pp 221-239
- Giroux, H, 2002 The corporate war against HE, **Workplace**, 9, pp 103-117
- Wood, J, 2012, The University as a Public Good: Active citizenship and university community engagement, **International Journal of Progressive Education**, Volume 8 Number 3, 2012
- Langworthy, A, 2007, Education for the public good: is service learning possible in the Australian context? **The Scholarship of Community Engagement: Australia's way forward**, (7) available in PDF from [http://www.universityworldnews.com/filemngmt\\_data/files/Education%20for%20the%20Public%20Good.pdf](http://www.universityworldnews.com/filemngmt_data/files/Education%20for%20the%20Public%20Good.pdf) [last accessed 05/06/14]

## References

- A group of students worked with Nottingham City Homes, a provider of social housing
- Tenants have complex and multiple needs
- The students worked on a tenancy fraud project, analysing data and making recommendations
- “This service learning experience has helped me to develop my identity as a sociologist in many ways. Firstly, it demonstrated to me the ways in which organisations can bring about social change. This is significant because initially I believed that housing companies would be unlikely to conduct projects in such diverse areas of operation, and did not contemplate how extensive these projects could be. Furthermore, it increased my awareness of the .... This project also made me aware of ways in which class inequalities can be opposed, and the relevance of appreciative enquiry in empowering individuals to bring about social change” Quote from a student.

**An example from our pilot**