

Service learning: reflections via the lens of lifewide learning and career.





SERVICE LEARNING

Experiential learning offer BA and MA sociology students
Work on live projects determined by not-for-profit sector in Nottingham

- Researching unpaid internships
- Community cohesion – developing creative resources for schools
- Supporting community led initiatives on hate crime interventions
- Campaigns and activism

Service learning is directed by a social justice approach

Social justice is prioritised over employability outcomes

LIFEWIDE LEARNING

'entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise, whereby people ... develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society'
UNESCO definition of adult learning cited in Reischmann (2014:294)

Employability challenge

'...the prevailing policy narratives in a range of Asian and European countries constitute a dominant discourse of 'learning to acquire employability', or what has been referred to as the 'learning for earning' narrative'.
Cited in Reischmann 2014:289

Service learning is complex and tricky - we might argue lifewide

Service learning and 'career'

From a sociological perspective career is deemed to be any social strand in a persons life – Goffman 1961

A strand can therefore be seen as any activity and development that can trace a personal narrative of a situated actor (Gee, 2017)

Academic

Work

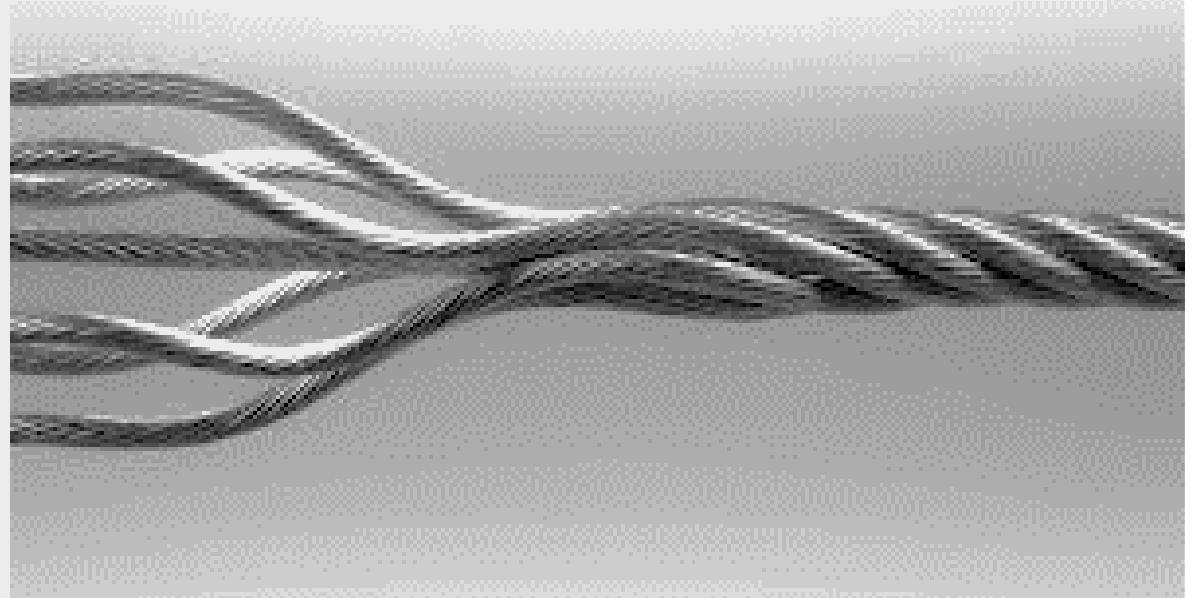
Family

Relationships

Housing

Leisure

Citizen



Are likely to experience transition – interrelated? Providing tension?

Student voice

Disciplinary Theory and application Cross module learning Independent thinking Sociology brought to life Knowledge of topic deepened Feel like a sociologist <i>'We get to use the knowledge we learn in lectures in the real world'</i>	Social justice Citizenship and voice Community perspectives Benefit to self and others Perspective on privilege Mutual benefit <i>'Feel more a part of Nottingham'</i> <i>'Got a real taste for what HC is'</i>
'Career' Leadership skills Communication Teamwork Professionalism Negotiation skills Widen career prospects Networking opportunities Gained experience for after university <i>'Widened my career thinking'</i> <i>'Influenced what I want to do within my chosen career.'</i>	Lifewide learning Think outside box Leadership and communication Negotiation skills Impact beyond own experience/benefit Challenged to develop new skills Working on real projects with real people Become more personable Have an open mind <i>'Get proper stuck in'</i> <i>'Be adventurous'</i> <i>'They're adults'</i>

External Examiner Voice

The Service Learning Module stands out as an example of an innovative course that allows students to see the connections between theoretical work and real-world social problems. It also provides an excellent opportunity for developing transferable skills that will be useful to students after they graduate.

Dr Lynne Copson

The course is a leading example of Applied Sociology within the sector.

Dr Cinnamon Bennett

When I took up this role, the course team were bedding in an innovative and distinctive curriculum based around the theme of Public Sociology. This is an exciting initiative which is now having a national impact via the British Sociological Association. The emphasis on applying knowledge to real world issues is evident across the module content and assessment at levels 5 and 6. It has been gratifying to see this philosophy become firmly established with greater clarity of assessment expectations and tasks.

Dr David Skinner

Concluding thoughts

- Service learning appears to have created opportunities for lifewide learning and career presenting.
- Result is a less instrumental focus on employability and a more authentic and purposeful experience for students
- But, there are challenges in the current HE context to embedding lifewide learning

References

- Goffman, E (1961) 'The moral career of the mental patient'. In Asylums, New York: Anchor
- Gee, R (2017). Chapter 11. Contemplating 'career' across disciplines: reflexive explorations of 'career' in Barnard, A. (ed.) (2017) Developing Professional Practice in Health and Social Care. London: Routledge. Pagination will be forthcoming.
- Reischmann, J. 2014. 'Lifelong and Lifewide Learning – a Perspective.'
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