ENGAGE STUDENTS Workshop

MULTIPLIER EVENT

of

ENGAGE STUDENTS – Promoting Social Responsibility of Students by Embedding Service Learning into Higher Education Curricula

(2018-2021)

Friday, 17th of September 2021, 9:30 – 11:00 am CET, online

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Workshop Schedule

9.30 am – 9.40 am	**Introduction & Welcome** *Gabriel DIMA, project coordinator*
9.40 am – 10.00 am	**The ENGAGE STUDENTS project at a glance** *Katharina RESCH & Gabriel DIMA*
10.00 am – 10.25 am	**Parallel group activities in break-out rooms** • **Group activity 1: Discussing ethical considerations and limitations of Service Learning**, facilitators: *Katharina RESCH & Agné GADEIKIENE* • **Group activity 2: Integrating Service Learning at faculty level**, facilitators: *Sofia Castanheira PAIS & Loredana MANASIA*
10.25 am – 10.30 am	*Short break to return to plenary*
10.30 am – 10.45 am	**Students' experiences with Service Learning – Main results of the ENGAGE STUDENTS Study** *Teresa DIAS & Sofia PAIS*
10.45 am – 11.00 am	Q & A, Closure of the Workshop *Gabriel DIMA & Katharina RESCH*

The partners

- University Politehnica Bucharest (RO)

- University of Vienna (AT)

- Dublin City University (IE)

- University degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza (IT)

- Kaunas University of Technology (LI)

- University of Porto (PT)

The project

Main topic: Didactic approaches to Service-Learning for Higher Education teachers and students

Aims and objectives

Teachers

- To implement and test service learning in their classes;

- To link theory with real community needs;

- To foster didactic and methodological collaboration between teachers.

Students

- To acquire the ability to develop, run, and reflect upon a service;

- To develop a sense of social responsibility and civic engagement;

- To experience a new mode of learning;

- To broaden career choices and employability.

Background

- Service learning as a **didactic approach**: Teachers play a central role in Service-Learning when they decide to offer this kind of applied coursework; need to be specifically prepared and trained;

- Through incorporating Service-Learning projects within their teaching and research, teachers enrich their courses with multiple benefits for all involved stakeholders: students, faculty, community partners and finally also for their own professional development;

- Bridging the **gap between theory and practice** for students; allowing academic, personal, professional, and civic development;

- ENGAGE STUDENTS project investigated the perspectives of higher education **teachers** and **students** on Service-Learning

Key activities

- **Service Learning Methodology Toolkit (2020)** → comparing community-based research, project-based learning, (participatory) action research, internships, volunteering, action-reflection methodologies and social entrepreneurship with service learning;
  - Data: desk research & n=41 qualitative interviews with teachers (2019)
  - Published: https://www.engagestudents.eu/es-service-learning-methodology-toolkit/
  - Resch, K. & Dima, G. (2021). Higher Education Teachers' Perspectives on Inputs, Processes, and Outputs of Teaching Service Learning Courses. P.117-136. In: Tauginienė, L., Pučėtaitė, R. (ed.). Managing Social Responsibility in Universities. Organisational Responses to Sustainability. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-70013-3

- **Service Learning. A Workbook for Higher Education (2020)** → including texts about assessing service learning, E-Service learning, integrating service learning into the faculty, applying service learning to my course, worksheets, resources etc.
  - Data: desk research
  - Published: https://www.engagestudents.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Service-Learning.-A-Workbook-for-Higher-Education.pdf

- **Mixed-methods study on student experiences with service learning (2021);** measurement before and after the experience; n=14 service learning projects involving more than 150 students;
  - Data: mixed-methods (quantitative survey with n=116 students, qualitative analysis of learning diaries & blogs)

Service-Learning Methodology Toolkit (46 pages)

- How can we **compare service learning** with other practical didactic approaches in higher education? → *mapping*

- How do **teachers** in higher education **assess inputs, processes, and outputs** of service learning? How balanced are the perceived inputs, processes, and outputs? → *interviews with teachers*

Table 1: Mapping of methodologies

Mapping	Service Learning	Project-based learning	Action research	Internships	Volunteering	Action reflection	Community-based research	Social entrepreneurship
course-based	X	X	X	X		X	X	
credit-bearing	X	X	X	X		X	X	
organized service activity	X			X	X			X
meets identified community needs	X		X		X		X	X
reflection on the service activity	X	X	X	X		X	X	

*Criteria according to Bringle et al. 2006

Findings | Input Dimension: Institutional support for Service-Learning

Teachers in the study reported either:

1. **Non-supportive** institutional conditions for Service-Learning or,

2. **Supportive** institutional conditions for Service-Learning in terms of matching platforms and portals, support with contractual issues, continuous training for students, practical support, and national supportive framework conditions for Service-Learning.

"My institution does not promote service learning very much and it does not encourage and support it with adequate resources (…), so that often students have to support out of their own pocket (…) which can necessarily only be of very short duration." (IT37)

"A lot of support is happening in silent ways." (IE3)

Findings | Process Dimension: Approaching stakeholders for Service-Learning

- Teachers reported **maintaining existing relationships** with stakeholders in continuous communication processes on the one hand and on the other hand **approaching new stakeholders** through a variety of methodologies;

- Teachers differentiated between:

  1. **self-signaling stakeholders**, who approach the higher education institution on their own initiative, and

  2. **promotion strategies** for approaching stakeholders on behalf of the higher education institution.

Findings | Output Dimension: Benefits from Service-Learning

- Service-Learning was mentioned to bear specific outputs for students, universities, and the communities involved;

- Most benefits were viewed on the side of the students: *"During the Service-Learning process, students turn from passive "recipients" of information into active learners, who study all the time, monitor changes in their knowledge, skills and regulations."* (LT8)

- On the **student level**, teachers perceive an impact for students in skills development, contribution to civic engagement, acquisition of work-related skills, and outputs for personal growth and development.

- From an **institutional perspective**, Service-Learning contributes to reducing the stereotyping of universities as too theoretical or 'unreachable' for real needs and allowing them to be perceived as socially responsible institutions that are embedded in their communities;

- Teachers report specific **outputs for community partners** as well, in particular related to the respective topic of Service-Learning, receiving feedback and contributing to community development.

Service Learning. A Workbook for Higher Education (171 pages)

Part II. Planning tools

Part I. SL as a pedagogy

- SL as a didactic approach
- SL compared to other methodologies
- Benefits of SL
- Assessing SL
- Potentials of E-SL
- Establishing a culture of SL on faculty level

- Applying SL to my own course
- Worksheets …
  - Reflecting SL
  - Identify your own SL idea
  - Step by step approach
  - Action plans
  - Design of reflection strategies
  - Platforms and resources

Training activities

Winter School for Lecturers in Higher Education

Feb. 2020, face-to-face training, Vienna, Austria

23 participating staff

Spring School for Students in Higher Education

May 2021, online training, Porto, Portugal

58 participating students

Hardly any international trainings on SL; different levels of didactic and practical support and preparedness; absence of communities of practice among lecturers to learn from each other

Hardly any summer schools for students on this topic; making sense of the experience; analyzing data together;

Conclusion

- Service-Learning as a method of applied coursework has various benefits (output dimension), but when viewing inputs and outputs they can be out of balance for many still;

- Transferring knowledge and experiences back home to one's own faculty can be challenging;

- In the future we need to strengthen faculties' roles in matching courses and community needs. The "silent support" perceived by teachers has to be turned into visible and traceable support strategies available to all teachers on faculty level.

- The role of supportive technology for Service-Learning (e-Service-Learning) has not been studied much in recent years; currently, higher education institutions are desperately in need of developing digital solutions for Service-Learning;

- We need more communities of practice among higher education teachers & networking;

What's next?

- FINAL CONFERENCE and final workshop

- Academic papers and networking at EOSHLE

- Discussing with you: (25 min.)
    - Group 1: Discussing ethical considerations and limitations of Service Learning
    - Group 2: Discussing the integration of Service Learning at faculty level

- Website: https://www.engagestudents.eu/

Contact us

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