IO 2 Service Learning Methodology Toolkit – Comparing Practical Teaching Methods in Higher Education

v.4.0

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This methodology toolkit provides an evidence-based insight into service learning and seven practical teaching approaches: 1) community-based research, 2) project-based learning, 3) (participatory) action research, 4) internships, 5) volunteering, 6) action-reflection methodologies and 7) social entrepreneurship.

The toolkit adopted a comparative approach with the main aim of mapping the strengths and weaknesses of the seven practical teaching approaches analysed compared with service-learning.

Community-based research. It is a methodology based on partnership and full, equal engagement between university researchers, students and practitioners in community organizations. Fundamental to Community-based research is to democratize both the ways in which knowledge is created and disseminated. Community organisations (and individuals) are thus not 'researched upon' but rather are equal partners with university academic researchers at all stages of the method. From an educational perspective, the outcome aims at the development of knowledge and a range of skills for researchers and also, potentially, community members, such as: team working; communication skills; research methods – qualitative and quantitative; reporting on research findings to a wide range of different audiences: policy makers, practitioners, community members and researchers. Some of the complexities of this method includes: challenges of identifying research topics of mutual interest to both members of the local and the academic community; complexity of partnership working based on mutual respect and engagement between key stakeholders; differences in impact indicators – publications in the academic sphere; implementation in the community sphere.

Project-based learning. As a method it aims at enabling students to develop both personal and professional skills, such as problem solving; time planning for particular project tasks; decision making; personal and team responsibility; self-directed and -regulated learning; self-assessment and -evaluation. During project-based learning there are a lot of separate steps, including activities, workshops, and research with many assessments until the final evaluation in order for teachers to be more objective and lead students to a better learning outcome. The weakness of the method relates the fact that not all students can learn in the same way, Teacher's role is crucial while applying this learning method. If a teacher is not prepared, lacks experience and competences, the method's application result can be not satisfying. Thus, the method can be limited in terms of teacher's help and support. Moreover, the method is highly demanding in time and other resources comparing to traditional learning methods, which discourages teachers to apply it together with other learning methods.

Action research. It is a methodology aimed at working on practical issues at a community level in a participatory way between researchers and local practitioners. Community members and researchers work together to: (a) identify and analyse community problems, (b) find solutions to those problems through the best methods of research, and (c) test those solutions in the community. Action research needs active engagement on all sides of the process, also on the student's side. Some researchers criticize the method for his lacking of a concrete systematic of the single processes and for a lack of quality criteria or specific characteristics of this research. As the research methodology is very open, it is argued that "everything" which happens in the community can be action research. Therefore, the concrete outputs of action research cannot be foreseen as they evolve while the practice is researched and reflected and depends on the situation. This makes it difficult to plan the concrete research at the beginning.

Internships. An internship is a temporary position offering students work experience. The method is not aimed at promoting a social impact in the community. The focus of internships is on the acquisition of particular career skills and applying knowledge but also skills learned at the university. They are strongly academic based and focus on the interest and learning goals set by the university. In this sense the impetus of what and how to learn is most often related to the university. The typical outputs of internships are practical skills in the respective field of study acquired during the internship. Internships as a method for learning have several advantages. They help students to gain practical experiences in the field of study and increase their job opportunities after study. They also seem to be helpful for closing the theory-practice gap. In some cases internships have been criticised for their use on the part of companies, as a source of cheap labour. Moreover, if mentors and supervisors do not support learning, learning outcomes might be low and dissatisfaction high.

Volunteering. It is generally considered an altruistic activity where an individual or group provides services for no financial or social gain "to benefit another person, group or organization". There are many types of volunteering: skills based volunteering, virtual volunteering, environmental volunteering, volunteering in an emergency, volunteering in schools, corporate volunteering, community and volunteer work, social volunteering or welfare volunteering, volunteering at major sporting events, volunteering in developing countries. The degree of students' engagement is high because volunteering requires a high willingness to improve the sector of the cause they serve. The impact of volunteering generally has 3 dimensions: the impact of volunteers on the organization - social and economic; the impact of volunteers in the community (final beneficiaries) - social and economic; the impact of volunteering on volunteers - personal, social and economic.

The skills the student can develop during volunteering are: teamwork, public speaking, time management, decision-making, communication skills,

interpersonal skills, confidence, self-efficacy and a stronger sense of self-problem solving and adaptability, motivation to make a change or to improve a sector of life. Volunteering is considered as professional experience in the field of study, which means that young people may have higher chances of employment. It requires, however, time, effort and the pressure that is equal with a person that has a job and it is paid for his job.

Action-reflection methodologies. As a comprehensive method it relates to a set of experiences in actual contexts and educational intervention associated with positive changes in students, particularly in terms of deep psychological processes (e.g., cognitive complexity, moral reasoning, social perspective taking). The outputs vary widely depending on the specific contexts where the project develops, and can include artistic outputs (e.g., a play or artistic performance), but also other types of events (e.g., science fair or demonstration). Nevertheless, projects tend to include individual journals where participants write down their own reflections about the experience – with writing appearing as a decisive element of reflection and personal change. Asa matter of fact, it is a methodology time consuming (projects should last for a minimum of 4-6 months for change to occur) and demanding in terms of student's engagement.

Social entrepreneurship. It Is not a method. It is a field of student's engagement, training and working opportunities. However, service-learning and social entrepreneurship share a common goal of engaging students in work to achieve the public good, and a desire to link education to addressing social problems and needs. Social entrepreneurship can also be a didactical approach at the university level. One the one hand, Universities can adopt curriculum for social entrepreneurship, fostering employability and work-experience in this field. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship enhances innovative work-based learning methodologies and extra-curricular activities based on team building, community engagement and interpersonal skills. The collaboration between community partners, students, faculty, teachers, and social entrepreneurs can create new opportunities in terms of community partnerships, collaborative working relationships, and social innovation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Applied course-work is a vital part of higher education, as it gives students the possibility to engage in practical work and experience real needs in the community, the city, an enterprise, or others. However, there is a vast diversity of practical teaching methodologies, which overlap and are hard to differentiate.

This methodology toolkit provides an outline of practice-oriented teaching methods in higher education and highlights the Service Learning approach in particular. Six practical teaching approaches are displayed in this methodology toolkit and then compared to the service learning approach: 1) project-based learning, 2) (participatory) action research, 3) internships, 4) volunteering, 5) action reflection methodologies, 6) community-based research, and 7) social entrepreneurship.

We have applied comparative criteria for these seven teaching methodologies in order to map their strengths and weaknesses for higher education teachers. Bringle et al. (2006) give five criteria for service learning, displayed in the table below (Table 1): It is an experience, which is course-based and credit-bearing and students engage in an organized service activity (e.g. neighbourhood work, community services, services in non-profit-organisations, etc.) and contribute to meeting identified community needs in this service. Also, service learning has to be reflected upon in class – as part of the applied course-work. Against these criteria, the six identified methodologies fulfill these criteria in different ways (Table 1).

Table 1: Mapping of methodologies

Mapping	Service Learning	Project-based learning	Action research	Internships	Volunteering	Action reflection	Cercetare bazată pe comunitate	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

Our methodology toolkit is both research-based and experience-based, and it reflects teaching methodologies that have been found useful in higher education programmes across Europe. The methodology toolkit was developed by researchers and teachers in the framework of the ENGAGE STUDENTS project

and contains research and experiences from Austria, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania, Portugal and Italy.

This methodology toolkit aims to help higher education teachers, lecturers, and young researchers to run similar courses, using the methodologies displayed, and encourages them to make their own experiences with applied course-work. It also will be of value to adult educators, departments in higher education institutions concerning with professionalization of teaching, and researchers in the area of higher education pedagogy and didactics. It draws on the practical experience of the partners, from planning and implementing such courses at university level. It can be used as a resource book to guide new ideas and course-work planning, which address practical skills of students during their studies.

Throughout the methodology toolkit you will find boxes with examples for the six methodologies mentioned, derived from interviews (n=40) with higher education teachers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted between April and July 2019 and analysed according to the different methodologies for the purpose of this methodology toolkit.

This methodology toolkit is available as an electronic source only.

2. METHODOLOGIES

2.1. SERVICE LEARNING

2.1.1. INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning stands out as a teaching and learning approach that connects theory and practice by allowing students to participate in a service that meets community needs and to reflect on the experience in class in order to gain a deeper understanding of the course content and an enhanced sense of civic engagement (Bringle, Hatcher, and McIntosh 2006). It can include services in schools, social initiatives, public institutions, non-profit organisations, facilities for the disabled, etc., and aims to strengthen students' relationships with the community and provide impetus for their personal development and civic engagement (Waldstein and Reiher 2001). This includes their active engagement in solving real-world needs, identifying and clarifying skills, developing for this learning process and taking time for critical reflection (Leming 2001; Schön 1983).

According to Furco (2009, p. 47) Service learning is a pedagogy that makes a connection between academic learning experience and community service experience. It is particularly important that content-related skills and knowledge resources are used in order to be able to deal with relevant issues in society. There is no uniform definition for the term Service Learning, since the precise implementation, objectives, content-related and subject-specific objectives of different institutions, which offer Service Learning, are carried out and defined differently. Service Learning involves a complex interaction between students, service activities, curricular content, and learning outcomes. This leads to a high range of programme diversity in Service Learning and makes it difficult to generalize findings from one course to another. Also, the prediction of results and experiences in Service Learning seem to be complicated. The absence of a common, universally accepted definition of Service Learning seems to be one of the greatest challenges because it leads to numerous interpretations (Furco, 2003).

The most well-known and cited definition is the one developed by Bringle et al. (2006, p. 12). It claims that „Service-learning is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and b) 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 personal values and civic responsibility."

This definition underlies that the service experience ought to be embedded in a course and specific learning objectives, but at the same time clearly identifies the needs of the cooperating communities.

EXAMPLE: Defining service learning

"Service learning is a teaching methodology in which students engage in activities directed towards the solving of local community problems and satisfying the needs together with the structured and advisedly projected opportunities to promote student learning and development. Teaching is defined as student orientation, i.e. targeting to promote critical and reflective thinking, as well as personal and civic competence education. According to experts, reflection and interaction are the main service learning elements. Service learning is directly related to the provision of certain services to the community and to the development of democratic, mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between students and other members of the community. Students acquire the skills by solving real organizations' and local communities' problems which are associated with the specific course content, develop empathy for the other members of the community, moral attitudes and a sense of moral solidarity."

(Interview C – Teacher in Lithuania)

Kaye (2004) pointed that "The beauty of service learning is that something real and concrete is occurring. Learning takes on a new dimension. When students are engaged intellectually and emotionally with a topic, they can light up with a revelation or make a connection between two previously separate ideas. What they've learned in school suddenly matters and engages their minds and their hearts."

2.1.2. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning has its origins in the Anglo-American context, where Higher Education Institutions follow academic and public purposes the same time. For the past 20 years, American universities have seen an increase in efforts to engage in civil society that benefits both sides (Anderson, Thorne & Nyden, 2016). The integration of Service Learning into the curriculum marked an important building block for the start of this development.

In the mid-1960s, the term Service Learning was first mentioned in relation to an internship programme, in which students collected credits for their studies or received financial compensation for their work on social projects (Kenny & Gallagher 2002, p.15; Reinders 2016, p. 21). In the 1980s, the generation of American students was portrayed as superficial and self-centered. A student at Harvard University named Wyne Meysel wanted to prove the opposite because of this general and hostile view of students and founded the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) organization in 1984. This organization served as a point of contact, where students got socially engaged and used their skills and abilities in the interest of common good.

A student organization quickly developed from this idea and is still running as a non-profit organization called "Action Without Borders" (Reinmuth, Sass & Lauble

2007, p. 14). Up to the mid-1980s, American universities had occasional Service Learning courses, but only a few students took advantage of them. At the end of the 1980s, the Service Learning Approach started to boom and quickly spread to various American colleges. During this time, students from three major universities merged, namely Stanford, Brown and Georgetown, and founded "Campus Compact". Currently, there are more than 1.000 universities members in Campus Compact, which aims to promote civic engagement and social responsibility of students for society (Campus Compact 2018).

Since the 1990s, the Service Learning Approach has not only become widespread at American universities, but has also reached popularity in Europe (Kenny & Gallagher 2002, p. 15). However, the connection between the community and the university is still relatively new, especially in German-speaking or Eastern European countries.

2.2. PROJECT BASED LEARNING

According to Chen and Yang (2019), "Project based learning is a systematic teaching and learning method, which engages students in complex, real world tasks that result in a product or presentation to an audience, enabling them to acquire knowledge and life-enhancing skills". While applying project based learning method, students are engaged in active learning process with emphasis of student's "I need to know" approach rather than by teacher's "because you should know" approach (Chen and Yang, 2019). *Project* is considered as an act of creation, which involves students in constructive investigation (Chen and Yang, 2019). During the learning process of project based learning, students need to solve problems by defining the problem, discussing ideas, designing inquiries, collecting and analyzing data, and sharing findings with their peers and other stakeholders (if needed). Application of this method requires high level of engagement both from students and teachers. Otherwise, the learning method will not be successful and will not reach its results.

Typical outputs of project based learning include:

- Implemented project, which is based on different research with the aim to solve a particular real-world problem.
- Presentation of the project results to the audience interested in them.

Lasauskiene and Rauduvaite (2015) distinguish major skills, students are supposed to develop during the project based learning. Usually, the method allows improving the quality of teaching and learning. Project based learning contributes to cognitive development of higher level involving students as they solve complicated problem and provide innovative solutions.

EXAMPLE: Project-based learning with waste

"I give classes together with a professor at the class of 'Project of Industrial Design'. (...) The partnership with the faculty happens in this way: the challenge of this project is presented to the students, for whom the objective is to build projects with waste in the city. The students go around town and search for the most abundant waste in the city. The students have to develop products using the waste as raw-material, like: litter from the beach, leftovers from restaurants, etc. The products developed must be easy to produce, since the idea is to have people from the community, with difficulties with social integration in the job market between 35 and 40 years old, to learn how to produce these products together with students from the faculty. The overall objective is that all can learn."

(Interview C – Teacher in Portugal)

The application of project-based learning allows engagement of students into complicated processes and procedures and thus, leads to the development of such skills as planning and communication. In addition, the method promotes authentic research and self-directed learning efforts.

Efstratia (2014) emphasizes that project based learning can be successful if some essential elements of its implementation were followed. Promotion of the method to students in order to achieve their higher engagement and interest into the project implementation and result is necessary in order to guarantee success of the method application. The teacher should clearly express the emphasis on the fact that students are in charge of deciding whether they will use resources, how they will cooperate and communicate in order to achieve the goal of the project. Enhancement of student's critical thinking allowing students to make their own decisions which are the most appropriate to implement the project is also considered of a crucial importance. At the end of the project, teachers should provide feedback and revision insights in order to prepare students for better presentation of the project results in front of a real audience.

Chan and Yang (2019) describe such fundamental features of the project-based learning:

- *Inquiry* guided by the driving question, meaning that students ask their own questions, perform investigations, and develop answers.
- *Student voice and choice*, meaning that students are allowed to make some decisions about the products to be constructed and how they work.
- *Revision and reflection* in which students have opportunities to use feedback to make their projects better, and think about what and how they learn.
- *Public audience*, to which students present their work.

Project based learning as a method has many advantages (Efstratia, 2014; Chen and Yang, 2019; Lasauskiene and Rauduvaite, 2015). Usually projects solve practical complicated and innovative problems of business and / or other stakeholders (Lasauskiene and Rauduvaite, 2015). This allows students to feel their input in real world problem solving during the study process. Students directly see how to apply knowledge they gain during the learning process. The method provides students with the opportunity to transform themselves during the learning process (Efstratia, 2014) as it allows students to develop both personal and professional skills, such as (Chen and Yang, 2019):

- Problem solving;
- Time planning for particular project tasks;
- Decision making;
- Personal and team responsibility;
- Self-directed and -regulated learning;
- Self-assessment and -evaluation.

Project based learning allows reduction of student's anxiety and enhancement of learning quality, increases motivation to learn, higher interest into content, possibility to pursue student's personal interests (Efstratia, 2014). In addition, usually, application of this method increases academic achievements.

Among the advantages that are described above, the project based learning as a teaching method has some disadvantages (Efstratia, 2014; Chen and Yang, 2019; Lasauskiene and Rauduvaite, 2015). It is considered that not all students can learn in the same way, that's why not for all of them this method is appropriate (Efstratia, 2014). More active and leading colleagues can put some of students into shade. Teacher's role is crucial while applying this learning method (Efstratia, 2014). If a teacher is not prepared, lacks experience and competences, the method's application result can be not satisfying. Thus, the method can be limited in terms of teacher's help and support (Efstratia, 2014). Deficiency of finance and technology can also be challenges, which teachers have to overcome (Chen and Yang, 2019). The method is highly demanding in time and other resources comparing to traditional learning methods, which discourages teachers to apply it together with other learning methods (Lasauskiene and Rauduvaite, 2015). The project's implementation is limited in terms of length of the project realization or class periods and syllabus. This can influence quality of the project (Chen and Yang, 2019).

According to Chen and Yang (2019), project based learning method has been widely applied in various subjects from mathematics, technology and engineering to social sciences. As the research results demonstrate, project based learning is very common in business, economics and management study field courses. Teachers apply project based learning for solving real world business problems, while searching for relevant business problems solutions and encouraging students to take responsibility to develop their critical thinking and argumentation abilities in suggesting creative and reasoned decisions for business practice.

During project based learning there are a lot of separate steps, including activities, workshops, labs, and research with many assessments until the final evaluation in order for teachers to be more objective and lead students to a better learning outcome (Efstratia, 2014). Project based learning evaluates both cognitive and emotional-social skills. Application of project based learning encourages students' cooperation, communication and use of their critical thinking under their teacher's guided reflection until their final submission and presentation of the project (Efstratia, 2014).

2.2.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

There are different approaches regarding relations between project based learning and service learning. One approach sees these methods as competing and even opposing ideas; the other as methods, which can be applied together.

As Miller (2011) notes, project based learning can be applied for different real world problem solving. He sees that fulfillment of community service and needs through project-based learning gives synergistic effect for both students' knowledge and skills development and service needs satisfaction and problem solving. Therefore, it is appropriate to view project based learning and service learning as having overlap, especially, in how they are applied (Bielefeldt et al., 2010). Teachers state that they apply project based learning for serving different sensitive groups' needs.

2.2.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

One example at Kaunas Technical University (Lithuania) in the School of Economics and Business, there is a study program "Marketing" and a course called "Fundamentals of Marketing", in which students work together with businesses, which introduce new products into the market. Project based learning is applied there according to the following process:

- Representatives of private or public organization, teacher and group of students meet in order to formulate project problem and to develop plan of the project implementation.
- Students do some theoretical studies in order to get familiar with structural parts to be accomplished in the project. Teacher facilitates their knowledge gaining process and provides necessary resources.
- During the practical lectures, students are assigned and evaluated for the different parts of their project. Teacher provides reflection and recommendations for further project development, other groups of students as well.
- At the end of the project, it is presented to the audiences of students, lecturers and representatives from private or public organizations and evaluated. Participating organizations get value as well – prepared marketing plan to launch a new product into the market.

2.3. ACTION RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is a methodology to work on practical issues of the community in a participatory way between researchers and practitioners from the community. Community members and researchers work together to „(a) identify and analyze community problems, (b) find solutions to those problems through the best methods of research, and (c) test those solutions in the community" (Harkavy, Puckett & Romer, 2000). Action and reflection are repeated in ongoing cycles to co-generate knowledge and to initiate change in the community (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

The action research methodology has its origins in the 1940ies when Kurt Lewin first worked with the method and used the term of action research to describe but also legitimate this form of science (Lewin, 1946). His intention was to bring universities and practice together to collaborate on solutions but also to develop a theory that could ground further actions. Representatives of the community are seen as co-producers of knowledge in this methodology – as co-researchers, who reflect upon their practical experience together with researchers and students.

EXAMPLE: Action research in a biology class in school

"Well there are three levels here: One is the subject level in biology (...) where pupils learn about amphibians, birds and wetlands in theory and in practice and where they also learn about research methods, how to do research with birds in nature for example (...). The second level is participatory learning with pupils, how do we implement this, which possibilities do we have, so this is what I understand by action research in different levels (...), students are guides for learning, which means that they teach pupils how to conduct a mini-research-project und provide guidance along the way. (...) And then there is the third level, which is the level of professionalisation of students, where they get trained for the teaching profession und they experience their professional self in the sense of reflective work about their own development during the course. And this goes in the direction of action research and reflective practice of one's own, subject-related and pedagogical concept and development."

(Interview 12 – Teacher in Austria)

The impetus for research comes from the community. Action research needs active engagement on all sides of the process, also on the student's side. It is seen as an active learning process between researchers and practitioners. The degree of student's engagement depends on their role in the process and the size, scope and responsibilities of the research team. Action research is characterized by not producing specific and certain outputs. It is an open

process of action-reflection for generating useful knowledge for solving the problems questioned in the community. The process of action research can be understood as cyclic between the different phases of „planning, action, observation, reflection and new planning".

In this sense action research is characterized by the following elements:

- research for and with the community
- practical questions from the community
- the connection of action and reflection
- confronting different perspectives of different people involved
- a contribution to the visibility of practical knowledge in the community by publishing results
- triggering long-term change and development in the community

As an advantage it can be mentioned that action research involves all participants or parties of a problem and draws the resources from all perspectives of this problem (multi-perspective). In this sense action research can bring universities and communities closer together. Zoyer and colleagues (2018) describe that action research lead to results which are relevant for practice and fit the identified questions directly, because they were developed in practice. In their study 70% of the participants rated action research as useful for their practice. O'Hanlon (2003, p. 25) mentions the advantage that „*The action research process itself models democratic procedures that are fully inclusive and gives a voice to all participants, especially marginalized ones.*"

Some researchers criticize the method for his lacking of a concrete systematic of the single processes and for a lack of quality criteria or specific characteristics of this research (Zoyer et al., 2018). The term „action research" is often used as a synonym for "participatory action" research and so it is difficult to draw clear methodological lines (Zoyer et al., 2018). As the research methodology is very open, it is argued that "everything" which happens in the community can be action research. Therefore the concrete outputs of action research cannot be foreseen as they evolve while the practice is researched and reflected and depends on the situation. This makes it difficult to plan the concrete research at the beginning.

By doing action research or participatory action research, students can develop skills like democratic competence, critical thinking and critical community learning, collaboration skills and how to act in a culture of collaboration (see Sales et al. 2011). Managing such a process also affords project management skills (Manoko, 2001).

2.3.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

Some authors argue action research to be a form of service learning as it creates knowledge about how to solve a problem of the community (e.g. Harkavy, Puckett & Romer, 2000; Reardon, 1998). However, compared with service

learning, students do not perform a "service" in action research, but engage in a research process, which is practical and action-driven. The service is only related to the production and dissemination of knowledge. This reflection is performed in the community, together with the participants of the action research. In Lewins' origin the development of a theory is in the foreground – „there is nothing more useful than a good theory". There is also no hint in the literature that reflection also has to be part of the learning process of students at university or in class. If students are involved in action research, their learning processes should also be reflected in class (as it is the case in service learning). But the research with the community is in the foreground of the reflection process not the learning process of the students. Nevertheless, there are approaches to combine service-learning with elements of action research. Before the process of service learning can start it requires lots of time before community partners trust in researchers. Conducting action research can help to identify and address community needs but also solutions how to support these needs, which can build the background for further service learning projects.

2.3.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The example "Productive tensions – engaging geography students in participatory action research with communities" (Pain, Finn, Bouveng & Ngobe, 2013) illustrates a third-year undergraduate Geography module ("People, Participation and Place") which intended "to combine teaching and learning with university-community partnerships, by involving students in conducting research with and for community organizations." In this a year-long and 20-credit long module students should learn how to conduct participatory action research (PAR) by completing research projects in the planed teaching period. The projects had different aims and were coordinated through a Centre, which was founded to support Participatory Action Research and collaborative research projects between the university and community partners. The aims of the module were "i) to support students in developing critical understanding of theories, practices and politics of participatory development and research in a range of global contexts; (ii) to develop students' skills in developing, undertaking and reporting on a participatory project in collaboration with a local community organization and (iii) to encourage reflection on the intersections of theory and practice in participation, and the importance of geographical concepts and methods to this relationship."

In the first term the module contained a set of core lectures concerning the history, theories, politics, practices, methods and ethics of participatory development and research. In the second term students had to work in groups with 4 or 5 persons and realize a participatory research project together with local community institutions. The projects started with several meetings with the community partners to discuss and plan it. These meetings resulted in a written project proposal, which were assessed and shared with the community partners.

The single projects had to be cleared by the local committees before they started. Students were also responsible for the ethics and risk assessment documentation. After that students conducted the field work, which could last up to two months. This was accompanied by weekly workshops at the university to discuss the progress and problems of the projects. Students had do write a group report for the community organization but also individual papers drawing on concepts in the research literature and combine them with their experiences and practice in the field. At the end of the whole module they had to produce a final exam paper assessing their integration of practical and conceptual issues from their learning across the module (Pain, Finn, Bouveng & Ngobe, 2013).

2.4. INTERNSHIPS

Internships have been used all over the world for more than 100 years. Especially with the implementation of the Bologna degree programs, the importance of internships has come to the fore. An internship is a temporary position offering students work experience. Internships are "structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic programme" (Taylor, 1988, p. 393). Internships can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century to internships in the frame of medical schools (Holyoak 2013). The focus of internships is on the acquisition of particular career skills and applying knowledge but also skills learned at the university. They are strongly academic based and focus on the interest and learning goals set by the university. In this sense the impetus of what and how to learn is most often related to the university.

Internships can differ in their duration, tasks of the student, their structure (whole or single weeks, days, hours), their social conditions (teamwork or individual work), their anchor in curricula and study programme (internships can be obligatory or voluntary) (see Hascher 2007). Internships require a high willingness to learn on behalf of the student, but also a high willingness to support learning by mentors or supervisors in the internship (Holyoak 2013). The social engagement of students might not always be very high, as internships depend on the area and the motivation they are completed.

The typical outputs of internships are practical skills in the respective field of study acquired during the internship. Research suggests that students with internships are more likely to find a meaningful job after graduation and increase their job opportunities in general (Holyoak 2013). Other studies also show improvements in academic achievement after an internship (Stansbie et al. 2016).

Internships follow different rules, depending on the field of study and the organization. Possible steps in the process of an internship might be: the formal application of an internship with an interview procedure, preparation for the internship (e.g. clarifying tasks and expectations), the original internship incl. on-boarding process (6 weeks, 8 weeks, 10 weeks … depending on the rules) and documentation of the activities, the end of the internship incl. a reflection and the certificate and final the recognition by the university (depending on the context).

Internships as a method for learning have several advantages. They help students to gain practical experiences in the field of study and increase their job opportunities after study. They also seem to be helpful for closing the theory-practice gap and give the opportunity for a reality check in the sense to get a feeling if they later on want to continue in this professional field. Especially for subjects which are difficult to teach they can support to give insights into these subjects and guide from academia to workplace).

EXAMPLE: Internships in social work

"The bachelor's degree in social work provides a period of on-the-job training. In this context, a social worker with experience of at least five years introduces students to the real world of work (...). It is a curricular activity, for this reason, it does not respond exactly to the concept of service learning, but it has common aspects. (...) Students choose the area of interventio, and try to correspond to their interest, even if it is not always possible. During the internship, which does not provide any financial compensation for the student, we try to encourage a direct meeting with people in social services (...). The student must play a role of direct observation of the social worker's work: professional interview, home visit, documentation, outreaching, group intervention, community work, professional assessment, planning, etc. During and at the end of the course, the student's internship is assessed."

(Interview XXX – Teacher in Italy)

As research suggest they have an impact on knowledge, skills and the abilities of students. Nevertheless, there might appear some difficulties with this didactical approach as mentors and supervisors might support learning and learning outcomes only low and the dissatisfaction of students' increases. The relationship between theory and practice might not be as clear as it was expected. From the perspective of students, internships can also be perceived as cheap labour, as they have to do the same things like professionals but do not get the full amount of money.

During internships students are supposed to develop the following capacities and skills:

- Knowledge and experience in practical training (as part of professional training)
- Social learning
- Learning from the mentor / supervisor through feedback, conversations etc.
- Methodological skills
- Managing people or target groups
- Working effectively with diverse populations
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Problem-based learning and problem-solving skills
- Self-efficacy and a stronger sense of self
- Critical thinking
- Collecting various experiences

Stansbie and colleagues (2016) found that students perceived a development for these skills during their internship: accountability, managing chance, decision making, problem solving, interpersonal skills and flexibility.

2.4.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

Learning also takes place outside the classroom, in a community, company or NGO. Although internships might not be paid, however, they might not be voluntary. They might be part of a regular study programme and students might be obliged to complete an internship. Service learning is more rooted in the actual community (non-profit organisations, associations in the community or neighbourhood, social service) than internships, which can also be done in business or private companies and where students have less contact with members of the actual community. The main difference here is the mission of the respective host organization and if they have funds or are dependent on public funding and have limited resources for services. However, students in both cases are in contact with practical issues in their field of study. In difference internships focus on the acquisition and development of particular career skills in the first place, although it might be a social activity and done in a non-profit organisation. The employability and career of the student is paramount to the needs of the community. Reflection processes mainly take place with regard to the learning outcomes and the learning profit of the individual student, not for the overall process. Service learning is supposed to contribute to social change, which is not the case for internships (Rehling 2000). A core principle of service learning is the balance between the activities of service and learning, but also between the customers and the learner's needs (Furco & Norvell, 2019). Internships are strongly related to the learner's needs and the activity of learning in a practical context.

It is interesting that Peterson et al. (2014) and Rehling (2000) use the term "service learning internship" in the context of US-American studies. While Peterson et al. (2014) seem to use the term service-learning internship as a synonym for internship, Rehling (2000) defines it as "an integration of community service with subject matter learning by informed application of classroom principles within organizations that serve their communities."

2.4.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Depending on different understandings between theory and praxis, different academic disciplines there is a broad variety according the forms and functions in of internships in higher education courses. Schubarth, Speck & Ulbricht (2016) give some recommendations for the implementation of internships in higher education. They suggest integrating internships into the curricula. In this sense internships should not be an addition, but be integrated into the whole concept of the study programme. This also means that the internship has a clear overall

goal. Systematic preparation courses, but also accompanying and follow-up courses offered by the university support students' learning. At the institution where the practical part of the internship takes place, mentors should support students. A contract between the institution and the student apprentice regulates the rights and obligations of the internship. This contract includes the aims and working conditions of the internship, the competences and skills which the student apprentice should acquire and the tasks which the trainee should fulfil. Students should have an easy access to all of the information of the internship and the necessary forms to fill in for the university.

If students could have a big amount of previous practical experience it is good to have guidelines, which forms of experience and to what extend can be acknowledged for the internship. In particular, it should be ensured that the internship is accompanied by an academic reflection and the experience refers to a professional profile. After the internship, students receive a certificate of their internship from the institution and submit it at the university. The certificate documents the skills and competence the student apprentice acquired during the internship. The assessment and evaluation of the internship is an important but also difficult topic. Schubarth, Speck & Ulbricht (2016) advice teachers and students to assure regular participation in the preparation, accompanying, and supervision courses as a requirement for the assessment of the internship.

2.5. VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering has been used all over the world for more than 100 years and his main scope is to provide services for no financial or social gain "to benefit another person, group or organization"(Wilson, 2000). The volunteers are selected depending of the cause they want to serve and their activity is recognized with official documents. Volunteering offers the opportunity to be aware and involved in the progress of the society. It has benefits for the society and the volunteer himself. In this activity the most important is the motivation and the need to have an important input in the society. Now, volunteering activity is recognized to be an important activity that supports different sectors in the world and helps to build a "better tomorrow".

The verb was first recorded in 1755. It was derived from the noun *volunteer*, in C.1600, "one who offers himself for military service," from the Middle French "*voluntaire*". The history of volunteering is associated with the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the first charitable associations were formed to help those in need.

EXAMPLE: Social volunteering

"For example, I know a student who created a social enterprise doing art workshops for people with intellectual disabilities [as part of the entrepreneurial module]. The student already had volunteering experience in Special Olympics, so he worked with people with intellectual disabilities before. However, in the module, he went through the whole process of identifying whether there is a need in the community, and he built a team of students in his social circle and other societies, found talented students who could teach dance, music, visual art, etc. This was seven years ago. He started what now is a fully-fledged society in our university."

(Interview B – Teacher in Ireland)

There are many types of volunteering: skills-based volunteering, virtual volunteering, environmental volunteering, volunteering in an emergency, volunteering in schools, corporate volunteering, community and volunteer work, social volunteering or welfare volunteering, volunteering at major sporting events, volunteering in developing countries.

The degree of students' engagement is high because volunteering requires a high willingness to improve the sector of the cause they serve. Being involved in a cause makes them part of the community progress and improvement and also rises the quality of their life in the future. Volunteering involves a part of their skills

and resources to serve a cause and because the result is visible, they gain the motivation of their work and the involvement increases.

Volunteering can differ in the following elements:

- cause they serve
- duration (short term, medium term or long term)
- activities
- skills developed
- involvement

Typical outputs are:

- Volunteering is widespread and creates economic value;
- More and more global organizations and financiers are aware of the contribution and importance of volunteering;
- Volunteering has several dimensions: one of the attention points is in relation to employment;
- The impact of volunteering generally has 3 dimensions: the impact of volunteers on the organization - social and economic; the impact of volunteers in the community (final beneficiaries) - social and economic; the impact of volunteering on volunteers - personal, social and economic.

The skills they develop during volunteering are: teamwork, public speaking, time management, decision-making, communication skills, interpersonal skills, confidence, self-efficacy and a stronger sense of self-problem solving and adaptability, motivation to make a change or to improve a sector of life. Volunteer record can show an employer that the person has the attitudes and skills they are looking for in a potential employee. Research suggests that volunteers are more likely to find a meaningful job after graduation and increase their job opportunities in general (Spera, 2013).

Volunteering is a crucial renewable resource for social and environmental problem-solving worldwide. The Johns Hopkins Volunteer Measurement Project showed that it is estimated that approximately 140 million people engage in volunteer work per year representing the equivalent of 20.8 million full-time equivalent jobs (http://ccss.jhu.edu/research-projects/vmp/).

2.5.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

Even both service learning and volunteering are forms of community service, the difference between the two can be analyzed in relation with the education dimension, way of organizing the activities, required skills, time commitment, career development opportunities and level of community ties.

Looking from the education dimension point of view, service learning involves a significant higher educational component by combining academic goals with community service projects. Service-learning activities are organized in different

stages starting from preparation, action, reflection to demonstration involving readings, web-based research, classroom-like activities, assignments, reflexive workshops, final presentations while for volunteering are not such requirements.

In terms of required skills, considering that service learning are embedded within study programs related to students' academic focus, we may conclude that service learning require specific skilled participants while for volunteering this is not a compulsory requirement – specific skilled individuals may be required for a given number of volunteering actions, but most of them not.

Time commitment is another dimension that makes a difference – a service learning project might require a minimum number of hours depending on the structure of the educational program implied distributed over a semester or over the whole academic year, while volunteer activities are flexible on the amount of time to commit and might require only several hours or up-to one week commitment.

Career development opportunities are higher for service learning compared with volunteering as having service learning on a resume shows not only your experience in working with communities but having hand-on experience on a specific field that make you valuable for contributing to employer community projects.

Finally, the way the community is involved within service learning is significantly different from volunteering – while for service learning the benefit is reciprocal, both sides being involved in learning and exchange of knowledge, for volunteering the process is in most cases unidirectional.

2.5.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The Student Tutoring Volunteering Program is one of the initiatives of University of Porto, Portugal based on a protocol with the City Hall program 'Porto of the future' that aims to combat school drop-out and failure in basic and high school levels, and to promote progression of studies. Students from University of Porto serve as individual tutors of 5th-12th grade students of 5 schools of Porto. Each high school student has one tutor that helps on learning skills, motivation for studies, and decision-making regarding school and life in general.

In 2015, 61 volunteers/students of University of Porto had participated in the program, tutoring 64 high school students for 1215 hours in total. The numbers of volunteers (and high school students) have doubled since 2010. Each year an evaluation of the program is made by tutors and school supervisors and directors. This evaluation is qualitative and is not synthetized but overall results show that school directors manifest that the program is very positive and that most high school students have an increase in their grades.

2.6. ACTION-REFLECTION METHODOLOGIES

Action-reflection methodologies (AR) operationalize basic elements of experiences that generate personal change. In fact, classical authors like John Dewey (1916), George Mead (1934), Jean Piaget (1941) and, later, Paulo Freire (1970) emphasize how action – and action is always, as Hannah Arendt (1958) would underlie, interaction, action *with* inevitably different others – and critical integration are central to generate more complex, flexible and integrated ways of thinking and signifying the world.

In the early 1980s, Norman Sprinthall (1980) discussed the role of psychology as a subject in secondary schools, wondering how one could study developmental psychology and still not grow in the process. Following that seminal paper, a series of research projects tried to identify the elements of educational intervention associated with positive changes in students, particularly in terms of deep psychological processes (e.g., cognitive complexity, moral reasoning, social perspective taking). The designation "deliberate psychological education" (DPE) is often used to name these projects.

The attempt to put the theoretical principles into action, led to an emphasis on experiential learning, and research that followed identified five core elements of AR/DPE methods that play a central role in the effectiveness of the intervention:

- Action involving experiences in actual contexts dealing with real-life problems that imply role-taking (as opposed to role-playing);
- Reflection as individuals should have the opportunity to express, explore and integrate the meanings of their experiences and how they are challenged to view the world in different ways (thus operating a transformation of contingent events into structure);

EXAMPLE: The importance of reflection

"Promoting more reflection moments with other students from different areas could be interesting, because the greater the diversity, the richer the subject."

(Interview B – Teacher in Portugal)

- Balance between action and reflection, to avoid a stronger focus on one of those dimensions;
- Emotional challenge and support as "growing is painful" (Sprinthall, 1991) and there should be an empathic monitoring of the process that sustains individuals efforts to make sense of the experience, but also the active questioning that fosters new ways of reading the world; and

- Time as personal change implies continuous (vs. irregular) projects that last from a significant amount of time (vs. episodic), i.e., from 6 to 12 months.

The outputs vary widely depending on the specific contexts where the project develops, and can include artistic outputs (e.g., a play or artistic performance), but also other types of events (e.g., science fair or demonstration). Nevertheless, projects tend to include individual journals where participants write down their own reflections about the experience – with writing appearing as a decisive element of reflection and personal change.

Besides some more general social and interpersonal competences, action-reflection projects have proven effective in terms of promoting participants' cognitive complexity and moral reasoning (Reiman & Peace, 2002). Complexity, autonomy, flexibility or creativity are conceptualized as individual structural attributes rather than as specific discrete functional skills.

2.6.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

Action-reflection methodologies are a more general methodology, that point out to elements of the intervention process that are associated with positive results. As such, it combines pretty well with Service learning, as Service learning projects can easily incorporate the elements of Action/Reflection/Balance/Challenge-Support/Time that are essential for effectiveness.

2.6.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Although not as popular as service-learning, DPE has been used in the context of higher education to support high-risk students in their transition to college (McAdams & Foster, 1998) and to foster the moral or ethical development of law-enforcement agents (Morgan, Morgan, Foster & Kolbert, 2000) or business students (Schmidt, McAdams & Foster, 2009; Schmidt, Drees, Davidson & Adkins, 2013).

Susan E. Halverson, Russell D. Miars and Hanoch Livneh (2006) from Portland State University explored the impact of a DPE based counselor education program "on student's moral reasoning, conceptual level, and counselor self-efficacy" (p. 17). Students were involved in a three years Master program: on year 1, courses were mainly theoretical and therefore did not fulfill DPE criteria; however, on year 2 and, especially, 3 students had opportunities for supervised practicum, initially on program-run clinics and later on "internship experiences at community or school-based sites" (p. 20). Authors conducted a longitudinal design across the three years with self-report measures to evaluate moral and cognitive development, and self-efficacy in counseling -and an external assessment of clinical skills.

Results show that "academic courses alone did not appear to be sufficient to produce gains in cognitive complexity, but with time and the addition of an

intensive practicum clinic experience, students made gains in conceptual level" (p. 26). Similar results were obtained for self-efficacy. Additionally, this cognitive complexity appears to influence "students' actual clinical performance" (p. 27). As such, a training model based on DPE produced changes on important dimensions of personal development that are determinant for professional development.

2.7. COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Community based research (CBR) is a distinctive methodology, based on partnership and full, equal engagement between university researchers, students and practitioners in community organizations.

CBR can be defined as a

> …form of action research that involves research partnerships between university-based academics and communities, emphasizes lived and experiential knowledge to guide the research process, and promotes capacity building to empower communities to take a leadership role in the research process. CBR projects bring project stakeholders together throughout the research process, from identifying the issues to collecting and analyzing the data, to developing strategies to bring results to policy makers with the goal of producing systemic social change. (Tandon et al. 2016, p.1)

EXAMPLE: Community research in Torpignattara in Rome

"The most significant case concerns a local project started in 2009 focuesd on the development of an urban Ecomuseum in a Roman suburb (Casilino - Torpignattara). This project is the result of research in the Roman district of Torpignattara (...) with personal commitment in the local community to improve the image and local perception through issues related to cultural heritage. I have worked with neighbourhood committees in years, when the main critical issues were represented by the risk of cementing an important green area and by a strongly stigmatized image of the neighbourhood, following the presence of numerous migrant communities, the latter considered responsible for most of the "degradation" of the neighbourhood. The community started the Ecomuseum and has redefined itself with it. I think the experience of the Ecomuseum has produced and is producing many positive results, first of all it has given some students of our faculty involved in the course the opportunity to participate in processes of civic engagement."

(Interview XX – Teacher in Italy)

Fundamental to CBR is an approach to *knowledge* which aims to democratize both the ways in which knowledge is *created and disseminated*. Community organisations (and individuals) are thus not 'researched upon' but rather are equal partners with university academic researchers at all stages of the exercise – from identifying a research issue/question which is a high priority for them, through to decisions about the methodologies to be employed, conduct of empirical work, analysis of material, communication of outcomes and follow up in terms of analysis of impact (or lack thereof).

The degree of student involvement in CBR varies depending on the focus and impetus of the research. In many, if not most cases, students are centrally

involved in CBR activities. Here the success of such engagement is likely to be directly linked to the expertise and experience of the academic researchers in engaging with community organisations, and the quality and extent of the preparation they provide for students in advance of the CBR activity.

It is crucial to successful implementation of a CBR exercise that students are not 'parachuted' into a community, but are well briefed by both academic researchers and community representatives to ensure their full awareness of the socio-cultural environment in which they will be working, along with clear designation of the expected purposes of the research.

In some universities, engagement with a CBR activity may form an accredited part of higher education programmes.

A typical output from CBR is often in the form of a detailed, evidence-based, report on a topic of interest to the community involved. This will be written in a style accessible to the interested lay person and widely disseminated to relevant stakeholders including community organisations, public authorities, NGOs, universities and other educational institutions.

From an educational perspective, the outcome aims at the development of knowledge and a range of skills for researchers and also, potentially, community members. These include:

- Team working;
- Communication skills;
- Research methods – qualitative and quantitative;
- Reporting on research findings to a wide range of different audiences: policy makers, practitioners, community members and researchers.

It is important to highlight the distinctive methodological demands which CBR place on academics which go beyond 'conventional' research training. Some examples of skills required on the part of academics identified in the literature (Cuthill et al., 2014) include:

- Negotiation;
- Conflict resolution;
- Priority setting;
- Project planning;
- Project management;
- Effective communications;
- Consensus building.

While some academics take a positive decision to engage with CBR, others find they are starting to engage with the methodology in practice before learning about its conceptual base – a classic example of 'learning by doing'. It is also important to note that there can be tensions between the criteria used to assess research excellence on the part of individual institutions or national research assessment systems, and the distinctive nature of the research conducted according to CBR principles.

- An orientation towards research ethics and values.
- Development of a deep understanding of partnership modes of working.
- Development of understanding of power relationships.
- Incorporation of multiple modes of enquiry.
- Participation in learning CBR and ensuring a balance between classroom (theory) and field (practice). (Tandon et al. 2016, p. 11)

Some of the complexities of CBR include:

- Challenges of identifying research topics of mutual interest to both members of the local and the academic community.
- Complexity of partnership working based on mutual respect and engagement between key stakeholders.
- Issues of sustainability: how to retain continuing involvement by universities with communities with inevitable student progression.
- Major investment in student preparation and training before engagement in CBR.
- Differences in impact indicators – publications in the academic sphere; implementation in the community sphere.

Tandon et al. (2016, p. 4) draw attention to potential advantages to the different stakeholders – the university, the community, and wider society.

Potential advantages to the university:

- Creating knowledge in the context of application.
- Enhancing societal relevance of the research.
- Enriching research training and university course integration with societal relevance and cultural sensitivity.

Potential advantages to the community:

- Learning how to enhance capacity, such as by conducting research.
- Accessing resources, such as funds, knowledge, and labour.
- Changing social or personal inequities and solving problems.

Potential advantages to society:

- Leads to overall societal betterment by enhancing participatory and democratic processes.
- Provides sustainable solutions to pressing societal challenges.

2.7.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

A key distinction between CBR and service learning lies in the emphasis on research, and development of an evidence base. While a number of different research approaches can be applied to investigate the outcomes from service learning activities, a community-based research approach is particularly

congruent with service learning principles as it works both with and for the community in question.

The underlying aim of CBR is to contribute to positive social change. Furthermore, in engaged research such as CBR, an issue of public interest or concern is advanced *with* community partners rather than *for* them (Adshead et al. 2018). In this respect, CBR can be viewed as an additional stage of service learning activity.

> Engaged research is not about the recruitment of research study participants; or simply raising awareness of research through online, print media, publications of research findings, and outreach activities. For engaged research to be authentic, the relevant research stakeholders should meaningfully and actively collaborate across the stages of a research life cycle. (Adshead et al. 2018, p.2)

Much of the background to CBR lies in community work, public health and adult education. In a review of examples of good practice Stand et al. (2003) highlight important ways in which CBR differs on the one hand from 'traditional' academic research and, on the other, from what sometimes can appear as 'charity-oriented' service-learning.

They conclude that

> …the distinctive combination of collaborative inquiry, critical analysis, and social action that CBR entails makes it a particularly engaging and transformative approach to teaching and engaged scholarship. Moreover, its potential to unite the three traditional academic missions of teaching, research, and service in innovative ways makes it a potentially revolutionary strategy for achieving long-lasting and fundamental institutional change. (Strand et al. 2003, p.5)

The underlying aim of CBR is to contribute to positive social change. In this respect it can be viewed as an additional stage of service learning activity.

2.7.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Campus Engage[1] is a national initiative involving a Charter signed by the Presidents of all universities and institutes of technology in Ireland. Under this initiative there is a commitment to supporting engaged, interdisciplinary research aimed at societal impact. This is defined as research that aims to improve,

[1] Campus Engage (an organisation in Ireland dedicated to supporting Irish higher education institutions to embed, scale and promote civic and community engagement across staff and student teaching, learning and research) (n.d.). http://www.campusengage.ie/about-us/about-campus-engage/.

understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, advanced *with* community partners rather than *for* them.

> Engaged research is not about the recruitment of research study participants; or simply raising awareness of research through online, print media, publications of research findings, and outreach activities. For engaged research to be authentic, the relevant research stakeholders should meaningfully and actively collaborate across the stages of a research life cycle. (Campus Engage, 2019, p.2).

To support the development of CBR a 'how to guide' has been produced and freely available on an open access website[2].

Based on an extensive consultation exercise with researchers, community representatives and policy makers, the guide offers a helpful checklist, suggested whatever the method or approach.

- Has the research question / hypothesis been formulated in dialogue with community stakeholders from whom the research is relevant?
- If your research is addressing a societal challenge or issue of public concern, have you engaged those stakeholders most affected?
- Does the proposed research tap the expertise and tacit knowledge of both researchers and community members?
- Does the design of the research ensure that stakeholders and researchers are clear about the extent of their collaboration, their respective roles and responsibilities, what they can expect to gain from the research, and what they will be expected to contribute?
- Is the allocation of funds appropriate for the roles and responsibilities assigned to each teammate?
- Can the research findings be utilised by researchers and stakeholders in order to address the societal challenge or issue of public concern? (Adshead et al. 2018, p.3).

[2] http://www.campusengage.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Engaged-Research-Practice-and-Principles-Web.pdf

2.8. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship focuses on social enterprises having an explicit social impact through their economic and social activities. These enterprises support local development and social cohesion. By combining societal goals with an entrepreneurial spirit, they are key stakeholders in the social economy and social innovation.

> **Example: Social entrepreneurship in sociology**
>
> "Typically, in first year, I teach sociology, where we study how society works or doesn't work, and in second year, we discuss what can we do about it. And I want it to be applied (course-work) – so we do social entrepreneurship, where students need to identify a behaviour-based social issue and develop a social marketing campaign (e.g. people not voting, texting while driving, safe sex, etc). This year I expanded it to also include a social enterprise, so that students were able to propose to set up a social enterprise as opposed to running a social marketing campaign. (...) For those interested in sociology, my aim is to develop a network of social entrepreneurship organisations. I would really like to have students work in such start-ups""
>
> **(Interview F – Teacher in Ireland)**

According to the European Commission (2015), social enterprises mainly operate in the following four fields:

- Work integration - training and integration of people with disabilities and unemployed people
- Personal social services - health, well-being, and medical care, professional training, education, health services, childcare services, services for elderly people, or aid for disadvantaged people
- Local development of disadvantaged areas - social enterprises in remote rural areas, neighborhood development/rehabilitation schemes in urban areas, development aid and development cooperation with third countries
- Other - including recycling, environmental protection, sports, arts, culture or historical preservation, science, research and innovation, consumer protection and amateur sports.

Social enterprises cover a wide range of welfare policy fields and community-based services. Service-learning and social entrepreneurship share a common goal of engaging students in work to achieve the public good, and a desire to link education to addressing social problems and needs (Lewellyn, Warner and Kiser 2010). Moreover, both service-learning collaborators/providers and social entrepreneurs are both agent of change and social innovation (Green 2009).

Kramer (2005) defined a social entrepreneur as "one who has created and leads an organization, whether for-profit or not, that is aimed at creating large-scale, lasting, and systemic change through the introduction of new ideas, methodologies, and changes in attitude. Social entrepreneurship can also be a didactical approach at the university level. One the one hand, Universities can adopt curriculum for social entrepreneurship, fostering employability and work-experience in this field. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship enhances innovative work-based learning methodologies and extra-curricular activities based on team building, community engagement and interpersonal skills. As stated by Huq and Gilbert (2013) there is growing recognition that social entrepreneurship provides an innovative framework for teaching and learning, given the social goods provided and its returns in community development.

Social entrepreneurship is strictly linked to social innovation as a source of community-based practices aimed at promoting new collaborative solutions involving public authorities, private companies, non-profit organizations, citizens and grass-roots networks, and aimed at providing innovative social outcomes and social policy tools at the local level. Although many initiatives of social entrepreneurs historically deal with non-profit organizations, many studies underlined blurred boundaries between profit and non-profit. As a result, social entrepreneurship dynamics are embedded in companies that may be either non-profit or for-profit but, whatever the type of organization, the innovation process is primarily oriented to a social or societal change (Defourny and Nissens 2010). More recently social entrepreneurship has been widely interconnected with social impact. Social impact includes innovative financing tools (social bonds, social impact bonds, micro-finance initiatives, private investment delivered by institutional investors) and social business models designed to foster social innovation practices, social enterprises and new public-private partnerships in many fields of welfare supply. In the previous years, welfare reforms led to new public-private partnerships for service delivering. Social enterprises and not-for profit organizations were active part of these processes, by promoting new local welfare networks. As a consequence of the rising budget constraints a general rethinking of these relationships is occurring, by blurring the boundaries between private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. This requires measurable social outcomes and methodologies aimed at producing social impact by avoiding negative externalities on users and communities.

Social entrepreneurship is not a method. It is a field of student's engagement, training and working opportunities. Against this background, social entrepreneurship represents an opportunity to gain experiences targeted to public goods and social innovation. Students can address societal problems and needs at community level. Students also are engaged in community-based services useful to their personal and educational growth, including the possibility to become a social entrepreneur. By contrast, working experience in social enterprises can be interpreted as a way to deploy cheap labor in community-

based services. If mentors and supervisors do not support collaborative projects outcomes might be low and dissatisfaction high

2.8.1. MAIN DIFFERENCES TO SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning focuses on learning outcomes at the community level. This focus is collaborative and aimed at enriching student's personal and educational growth. Social entrepreneurship and service-learning engage both students in experience targeted to public goods and social innovation. There are, however, differences between the two approaches. Differently, to social entrepreneurship, service learning has been developed as a "service-based learning approach" (Sigmon, 1994). Against this background, while the beneficiaries of service learning are mainly students, social enterprises focus on a broad set of public and private stakeholders. Social entrepreneurs focus on the change taking place at the community level, targeting financially sustainable projects and services which combine economic and societal goals (Lewellyn, Warner and Kiser 2010).

Nevertheless, there is a potential of combining these goals with the service learning practices. The collaboration between community partners, students, faculty, teachers, and social entrepreneurs can create new opportunities in terms of community partnerships, collaborative working relationships, and social innovation. Social entrepreneurs can easily share information and expertise for students and the wide range of community-based social actors. Likewise, service-learning scholars and universities can benefit from working relationships with social entrepreneurs in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Moreover, service learning represents a suitable approach to teach social entrepreneurship._Social entrepreneurship ecosystem relates to both for profit and nonprofit organisations, aimed at creating business value by addressing societal concerns and generating positive social externalities. In this context universities have the opportunity to support these organisations, by promoting not only curricular and extracurricular activities, but also incubators and accelerators, or spaces where students directly access to community networks and social entrepreneurs.

2.8.2. EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

SocialFare was founded in 2013 in Torino as an innovative hub for social innovation and impact solutions aimed at enabling multi-stakeholders for social goods. It represents the first Italian centre completely devoted to social innovation, grouping together research, community engagement, capacity building, and co-design at community level. SocialFare aims at developing innovative solutions to contemporary societal challenges, while generating new social ventures and civic engagement. Social impact is a the core the SocialFare's activities. It implies a new approach to bring together competences, networks, and experimentations to design, test and grow social impact solutions. In 2017, SocialFare took part in and promoted the UN 17 Sustainable Goals

(SDGs). It implied a series of activities dealing with the aim of contributing to the promotion of a new sustainable social economy with a social impact. SocialFare have developed many relations with universities, all aimed at promoting collaborative projects and extracurricular experiences for students.

3. CONCLUSION

This methodology toolkit gave an experienced-based and evidence-based insight into a number of practice-oriented teaching methods in higher education, highlighting the Service Learning approach. It can be viewed as a contribution to closing the theory-practice gap in higher education teaching. Seven practical teaching approaches were displayed using definitions, examples, and quotes from interviews with higher education teachers: 1) community-based research, 2) project-based learning, 3) (participatory) action research, 4) internships, 5) volunteering, 6) social entrepreneurship and 7) Action-reflection methodologies.

We see added value in applied course-work and in particular in the Service learning approach on many levels. It is not only a contribution to practical teaching, but also a contribution to positioning higher education institutions as relevant stakeholders in society.

Also, we believe that teachers can benefit from intensive discussions among colleagues about methodologies and teaching methods and that regular exchange of experiences would help teachers to reflect current practices. Additionally, the Service Learning approach is still lacking with findings from research according a possible impact on academic, civic or personal learning. The difficulty to distinguish Service Learning from other methodologies aggravates this problem. Being aware of the peculiarly features of Service Learning helps in the practical application and in the research of Service Learning. Collective forms of opinion exchange would be beneficial to teachers and students in the long run.

For the future, we would like to promote the concept of self-assessment of higher education teachers using materials like this: Which applied course-work do I apply and why? What are the differences, advantages and disadvantages of using the mentioned methodologies? What concerns institutional support, we believe that departments responsible for the professionalization of teaching in higher education can benefit from materials like this and use them as resources for trainings and workshops.

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