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Proposal for a Paper Presentation

The Integrative Model of Undergraduate Students' Learning and Service: A Example of a Service-learning Course in NK University

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Abstract

1.   Introduction

Service-learning has been implemented by different means in mainland China. The present study investigated a service-learning course focusing on child service in NK University. We aimed to examine how the service-learning course impacted on undergraduate students' understanding of child welfare, child service and service model.

2.   Theoretical framework/literature review

Service-learning is an integrative education model that incorporates youth voluntary service and university education, which began in 80s of twentieth century. Service-learning has

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been promoted in different counties and regions, including United States, Singapore, Hong Kong etc.(Shek, Ngai, & Chan, 2019). In mainland China, there was no university having the course of service learning until 2007. In the year of 2008, NK University was the first to provide service-leaning to all the undergraduate students as a public selective course open to all majors in the university (Peng, 2012a; 2012b). Afterwards, a number of universities in mainland China launched the practice of service-learning activities. The service-learning course in mainland China consists of the theoretical research on social policy and practices and action stages of implementation of service learning.

The development of the model of service-learning course was influenced by a number of theories, and experiential learning theory was the fundamental theory of service-learning (Waterman, 1997). The experiential learning theory proposes four stages of learning process and each stage involved the service-learning participants' different activities (Kolb, 1984). At the stage of experiencing, service-learning participants learn experience from service. At the stage of reflecting, service-learning participants reflect on the basic experience, think the relationship between their original knowledge and the experience attained from service, as well as ponder on how to apply this knowledge into service. At the stage of new concept generating, service-learning participants propose new concept and principles through reflecting on specific experience, observing the service object and environment, and incorporating the original knowledge. At the last stage, the stage of applying new concepts, participants use the new concept attained at the third stage in the process of service-learning process. Reflection is of particular importance for discovering new concepts and new experiments.

3.   Methods/analysis

We provided a public elective course of service learning in our university's curriculum system, built the teaching structure of social work teachers + service learning seed students (major in social work) + service learning normal students, as well as practiced the teaching model of class teaching + voluntary service design + voluntary service practice + voluntary service presentation. Students' participation in the service-learning course included four stages: (1) the experiencing stage; (2) the reflecting stage; (3) the new concept generating stage; (4) the applying new concepts stage. The service activity was providing service for children in a community.

Before the course began, we measured participants' understanding of the basic child rights and the international conventions regarding child rights, the motivation to engage in voluntary activities, and their social responsibility and competence in service. After the course, students completed the same questionnaires as in the post-test. There were total

4. Results and Discussion

The results showed that the course helped the students get a better understanding of the four basic child rights, but there was no difference was found in students' understanding the relationship of adults' role and child rights (Table 1). The results indicated that we should emphasize the content of the relationship of adults and child rights.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-test Comparison of Students' Understanding of Child Rights

Child rights	Pre-test（%）				Post-test（%）			
	Totally agree	Agree	disagree	Totally disagree	Totally agree	Agree	disagree	Totally disagree
Adults and child right								
Adults know what is most beneficial to children	5.7	31.4	62.9	——	9.3	32.6	55.8	2.3
Adults fulfill their duty by satisfying children's need	——	8.3	61.1	30.6	2.3	11.6	60.5	25.6
Children's rights are given by adults	——	2.8	44.4	52.8	——	14.0	32.6	53.5
Basic child rights								
Children have the right to be protected	65.7	22.9	11.4	——	83.7	14.0	2.3	——
Children have the right to participate	22.2	44.4	33.3	——	48.8	46.5	4.7	——
Children have the right to develop	72.2	27.8	——	——	86.0	11.6	2.3	——
Children have the right of life and basic protection	86.1	11.1	2.8	——	100	——	——	——
Government and child right								
the government should protect children from armed conflicts	83.3	16.7	——	——	93.0	7.0	——	——

In addition, taking the service-learning course also helped students understand the international conventions regarding child rights (Table 2).After the course, 76.7%, 76.7%, 65.1% and 60.5% of the student knew the four polices regarding child rights, respectively.

Table 2. Pre- and Post-test Comparison of Students' Understanding of Social Polices

Polices	Pre-test（%）			Post-test（%）		
	Knew it	Heard it	Don't know	Knew it	Heard it	Don't know
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	11.1	52.8	36.1	76.7	20.9	2.3
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	27.8	52.8	19.4	76.7	23.3	——
United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination	——	38.9	61.1	65.1	27.9	7.0
Global Volunteer Manifesto	13.9	22.2	63.9	60.5	32.6	7.0

The service-learning course also impacted students' understanding in different aspects. First, service-learning made students be more aware of the characters of a responsible citizen. For example, 97.7% of the students thought they should have the intention and competence to actively participate in voluntary activities, 79.1% of the students thought they should become the person who had the spirit of teamwork. Second, the service-learning course made students realize the significance and influence of service-learning. For example, 97.7% of the students believed that service-learning can reinforce students' personal growth, mental development, social responsibility, value and faith.

5. Conclusions and contributions to theory and practice

In conclusion, the course helped the students get a better understanding of the four basic child rights and the international conventions regarding child rights; the course motivated students to participate in voluntary activities in different ways; students showed more willingness to voluntarily help the disadvantaged groups after the course; students believed that the course could improve the social responsibility of undergraduates and had a positive impact on the community. Therefore, by taking this service-learning course, undergraduate students improved their understanding of child welfare, child service and service model. Implications of implementing service-learning in mainland China are discussed.

Keywords: Service-learning, child right, experiential learning theory

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