

Jagla, V., Erickson, J., & Tinker, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Transforming teacher education through service-learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Integrating Service Learning into Teacher Education Programs

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Teacher education programs have several purposes. One is to shape future teachers into members of society who possess not only factual knowledge and the ability to teach but also to develop the ability to think critically, to make sound judgments, and work collaboratively with others. It is hoped that teachers will live their lives as or become leaders/change agents in their communities and society, and can make sense of the world and will act responsibly and ethically. That is why many teacher education programs across the globe strives to help their faculty and teacher candidates see themselves as full members of the communities to develop their democratic civic capacity.

The commitment to civic engagement should be encouraged in teacher education programs as the knowledge and “know-how” is vital to supporting the society that creates and sustains higher education as an institution. Through service learning, the teacher education programs can assist teacher candidates become members of a democratic public who possess the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes they require in order to become change agents that impact their students and communities. Jagla, Erickson, and Tinker put out this admirable book to showcase how service learning has been done in various parts of the country and how teacher education can be transformed through service learning pedagogy. Most importantly, Jagla et al. want to find out the answer for the question, “*Why service learning now?*”

Many scholars have defined service learning and suggested how service learning can be implemented in teacher education in

the past. Yet this volume sheds light on how research on service learning in teacher preparation has expanded and the vigorous work that can really help increase our understanding of the essentials of service learning. The chapters of this volume provide an array of service learning projects, the various ways they serve democracy and transform teacher candidates’ lives and the schools/communities, and the kinds of changes that take place in-teacher education programs across the country. The ten chapters of this volume are divided into four parts: conceptual frameworks, field experiences, learning through tutoring, and the pedagogy of service learning for implementation in Pre-K-12 classrooms.

The first part of the book provides “philosophical, theoretical, and visionary context” (p. xvii). The first three chapters of the book offer us a basis for thinking and rethinking about what service learning is in the teacher education programs and what we can do when utilizing service learning pedagogy. These chapters also provide us with a systematized way of thinking about why we use service learning pedagogy and how service learning can be embedded in teacher preparation. Additionally, these chapters remind us of the nature of teacher education (experiential learning such as practicum and student teaching) and why service learning is essential to help prepare future teachers. Mainly, these chapters help us understand that service learning is a complex concept which involves sociocultural, political, ethical, and many other dimensions. For example, in Chapter 3,

it illustrates how service learning can transform teacher education through the lens of ethical responsibility. “Those who choose service learning over other socially engaged activities share the understanding of service as a moral obligation that supersedes prescribed professional duties and expectations” (p. 66). Service learning definitely is the scholarship of engagement as it is based on relationships and the sense of responsibility. These chapters affirm that service learning can move teacher education curriculum and pedagogical practices from traditional to a more authentic, collaborative, and progressive state.

The second part of the book addresses how service learning provides teacher candidates with an authentic opportunity for deeper learning. Field experiences are the theme of this section. Chapter 4 and 5 offer interesting insights into teacher preparation and how teacher education programs need to be modified to meet the demands and the complexities of the modern complex ecology. These two chapters acknowledge teacher preparation as an ever evolving process and as an ecological system that includes many interconnected layers. Field experiences offer concrete and vibrant context to existing learning. Explicitly, teacher candidates are given the opportunities to reach out to the community and to work with people they might not have had the opportunity to work with in the past. Also, teacher candidates get to develop social capital and cultural capital while engaging in community-based service learning. These experiences enhance teacher candidates’ cross-cultural understanding to work more effectively with diverse learners. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 allow “readers a space to reflect on the complexity of practice and the need to offer space (and time) for preservice teachers to develop understanding and self-efficacy across the community” (p. 71). It is

apparent that teacher candidates need the space/experience to learn, reflect, and grow.

When integrating service learning in teacher preparation, there are many choices to make. As a result, teacher educators may want to know about the methods and evaluations to best meet their unique needs. The third part of this volume: learning about service learning through tutoring deciphers how to document and evaluate service learning. Chapter 6, 7, and 8 highlight various aspects of teacher candidates’ tutoring/mentoring experiences, and how these experiences become more than merely volunteering in a P-12 classroom. Many of these service learning experiences center on the topic of social justice as teacher candidates work with marginalized student populations. These powerful service learning experiences not only enrich teacher candidates’ learning and perceptions/attitudes toward working with diverse learners, they also help teacher educators deepen their understanding of many aspects face teacher education. Service learning projects can indeed empower the teacher candidates and their students as well as the teacher educators as documented in these chapters.

The second section in the third part of this volume is about assessment of service learning. Based on Stufflebeam’s (2003) Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model, Chapter 9 describes an effective assessment of a service learning tutoring program that can lead to a more holistic appraisal of a service learning program. The authors provide a list of assessments associated with context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and product evaluation adequately. This chapter illustrates the importance of performing a comprehensive assessment service learning programs/projects in order to understand their impacts. It also argues the effectiveness of using

multiple research methods to document teacher candidates' cognitive learning and their affective growth.

The last part of the book centers on the pedagogy of service learning for implementation in P-12 classrooms as teacher candidates need to be taught to use the pedagogy with their students. The last chapter of the book demonstrates how teacher education can connect the academic content, the Common Core State Standards, and community needs to create cultures in schools where partnerships with community members and organizations are valued and incorporated throughout the service learning process. This is essential if teacher education programs want to build a bridge to connect community, family, and school to solve issues they face. Teaching social justice is not an easy task; it is insufficient and ineffective if we expect teacher candidates to implement such a philosophy while taking their method courses. Chapter 10 argues that service learning can be a great tool for teacher candidates to inquire about social inequities and the dynamics of social and political structure of the community. This firsthand experience can help us better understand the teacher candidates' experience in teaching for social justice.

For successful inclusion of service learning in teacher education programs, Jagla, et al. suggests ten principles as they have appeared throughout this volume. These 10 suggestions are helpful and practical. They help us connect theory to practice but

most importantly they help teacher education programs (re)examine the design, implementation, and evaluation of their service learning projects. Namely, teacher education programs need to think about how to align service learning outcomes with program goals and state/national standards for teacher certification as well as how to reciprocate and collaborate with P-12 schools and the community.

Starting as a philosophical inquiry, "*Why service learning now*," Jagla et al. were given the opportunity to examine service learning as pedagogy to advance the transformation of teacher education. They came to the conclusion that the answer to their question "is crucial as society tackles the incredible challenges of the current global ecology" (p. 263). There is no better time than now to implement/integrate service learning in teacher education. This marvelous book constitutes essential reading for teacher educators and administrators. The editors' attempts at compiling such a comprehensive text are indeed acknowledged. Service learning offers participants to work within complex and dynamic communities and help them to experience life. For many teacher candidates, it is the first time for them to gain a broader perspective on both education and life. As much as we hope our teacher candidates will empower their students, we need to empower them first. And service learning as a pedagogy serves this purpose perfectly.

Reference

Stufflebeam, D. (2003). The CIPP model for evaluation. In D. L. Stufflebeam & T. Kellaghan, (Eds.), *The international handbook of educational evaluation*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.