Knowledge Transfer Project

Annual Report 2012-2013

Prepared and Submitted by

Office of Service-Learning

Lingnan University

Executive Summary

With "Education for Service" as the University motto, Lingnan University ("Lingnan" hereafter) has its mission to provide nurturing environment to allow future leaders to actively contribute to the society and to realize their potential in full. Being the first institution of higher education in Hong Kong to set up Office of Service-Learning (OSL), Lingnan is dedicated to connect meaningful community service with academic learning objectives to enrich its liberal arts curriculum and adopt Service-Learning (S-L) as a powerful teaching and learning strategy to incorporate Knowledge Transfer (KT) at the University level.

As said, S-L is an experiential pedagogy that, through critical reflection and constructive instruction, students, as well as faculty, actively participate in their surrounding communities on top of their traditional classroom learning. Key components of a successful S-L experience include careful planning and construction of S-L activities, meaningful S-L experience in the community, critical reflection that supports transformative learning, selection of community partners with commitment and devotion. The emphasis embedded in such collaboration placed on not only one-way, but possibly multiple-way transfer of knowledge, expertise and service in even partnership. The following points summarize key achievements of OSL in the past year:

1. Over 2250 students participated in different KT projects organized by OSL at Lingnan and devoted more than 5200 hours for 4385 service-recipients from the communities;
2. Over 580 students participated in the Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS), applied their subject-related knowledge and professional competences to serve and to learn the community, whilst the community partners transferred their expertise, front-line information and primary data to stimulate students' intellectual curiosity, and faculty research interests;
3. Majority of students showed significant positive changes in learning outcomes, especially in area of subject-related knowledge, research skills, social competence and problem solving skills;
4. Over 30 faculty members attended different KT and S-L conferences or seminars organised by OSL;
5. A series of promotion materials and video, e.g. publications (annual report, newsletter, new supplement) were produced; and
6. Over 400 participants from all around the world attended the 4th Regional Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Service-Learning, in which KT is one of the key topics.

Rooted in the virtue of liberal arts education, Lingnan helps students developing greater sense of personal and social responsibility as well as skills, competences and sensibilities that enable graduates to pursue their goals in a rapidly changing social, cultural and economic environment. With the newfound learning and teaching elements, Knowledge Transfer and Service-Learning, Lingnan is confident that our graduates will be equipped with broader and deeper vision through their tertiary education, the desire and capacity for public service, and maturity of judgment through innovative curriculums and experiential learning.

# 1. Service-Learning as a means for Knowledge Transfer at Lingnan University

As mentioned, Lingnan is the first university in Hong Kong to set up a unit dedicated to Service-Learning (S-L). Established in 2006, the Office of Service-Learning echoes Lingnan's long-standing motto to organize different academic related S-L programs as one of the Knowledge Transfer (KT) strategies in the Higher Education sector. Lingnan works closely with various sectors in the community in a mutually beneficial way, within which students play an important role as active agents to foster KT; while the agencies provide opportunities and guidance for students to serve and learn.

S-L has long been proved an effective way in the field of KT as it provides a platform for students to apply learning to real-life situations and acquire stronger problem-solving skills, faculty and community partners to discuss, develop and exchange knowledge and skills with one another. Since 2009, KT was injected into learning and teaching in Lingnan. Theoretically speaking, KT and S-L shares similar but new concepts of learning and teaching stemmed from information acquisition, ultimate information transformation to practically learned knowledge for future development. Students can learn quickly about community partners' needs and problems, build an effective solution and deliver a quality product to the community partner. In such case, both KT and S-L do not only enable students to excel in academic pursuits, but also enhance their community awareness to effectively address the needs of community. The following part will present another perspective showing a connection among KT, S-L, and an essentially important outcome, social capital.

1.1 Linkage between knowledge transfer, Service-Learning and Social Capital for the community-university engagement

The interactive process among students, faculty, community partners and service-recipients occurs in the learning relationship based on KT and S-L. While students and faculty devote their time on S-L, knowledge will be exchanged and transferred among the parties, and networks will be built among different parties. The ultimate goal of knowledge transfer is to implement impacts on community, philanthropic networks, and individual players, so as to generate strategic social innovations through synergy. Through S-L, students have to collaborate with faculty and service agencies on their service project. The communication channel becomes the vehicles to transfer specific and relevant data across sectors through systematic processes. Figure 1 above shows the correlation of academic study, community service and research on the S-L platform. Reflection is an important process to rethink the learning and service process, and identify key issues to strengthen the linkage and impacts on each other. For example, the community service provides a platform for academic knowledge application. Students transfer their knowledge learnt in the class to the service recipients during the practicum, thus more people will understand the concepts and theories written on the books. On the contrary, the service platform at the agency has the closest contact to the community, teachers and students could collect data and information for research purposes, and then facilitate a new round of knowledge building. As a result, the S-L model becomes an organized and strategic model of knowledge flow between the university and community, in which generate social capitals for the community.

Figure 1   The model of Service-Learning
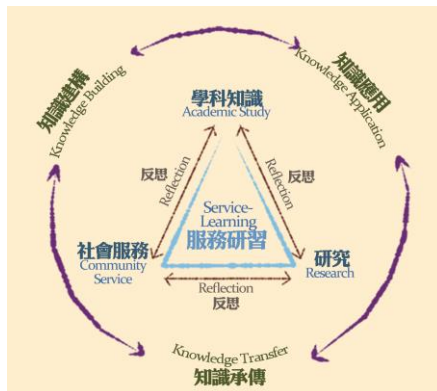
In 2012-2013, OSL has successfully reached over 28 faculty members, with 28 courses and 581 students participated in SLRS. (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1   Number regarding SLRS at Lingnan

Faculty	No. of Course with SL elements	No. of Participants
Arts	12	136
Business	7	278
Social Science	8	160
OSL	1	7
Total	**28**	**581**

Other than SLRS, a number of KT activities have been organized in 2012-2013 to facilitate the knowledge transferred between the university and community (Table 1.2). For example, in view of the rising ageing population, OSL has been adopting different approaches to alleviate the related problems in Hong Kong. Being a significant program among other attempts, Elder Academy at Lingnan was set up in 2008 to cope with the increasing demand of elder learning by providing learning opportunities for the elderly through formal education. In addition to various sit-in programs, our students also take the opportunity of S-L programs to teach elderly up-to-date knowledge and skills like internet surfing to address the learning needs of the older persons in the modern society. Besides, TAC (Think-Act-Contribute) project was first launched in 2011 with the partnership of Tuen Mun Healthy City Association Limited, using dance as a medium to promote health and giving culture to the community. Both young-old generations work together to promote physical, social and environmental health in Tuen Mun through different S-L programs. With these platforms, we believe knowledge and skills could be reciprocally transferred and effectively shared for the betterment of society at large. In this scenario, Knowledge internalization takes place, which is a process of embodying knowledge into implied knowledge, closely related to learning by doing. Instructor provision ensures that the students are intentional with their actions and this intention can be further developed through reflection. The reflecting component of our program allows the learners to actively absorb information and practice what they are learning.

Table 1.2   Other Knowledge Transfer Activities at Lingnan

Target	Category	Examples
For Faculty & Staff	Local or overseas conferences/seminar grants	Four staff were granted to join the Social Enterprise Summit 2012 organized by the Hong Kong Policy Research Foundation Limited
	Faculty / Staff Training	Organized a seminar to share the good practice on doing service-learning in a global version with Teaching and Learning Centre on 3 June 2013.
For Students & Service Agencies	Mainland and International Service-Learning Programs	In 2012-13, 66 Lingnan students joined MISLP to serve and learn in programs all over the world.
	Community Service-Learning Programs	Elder Academy at Lingnan promotes active ageing and intergeneration harmony since 2008.
		TAC (Think-Act-Contribute) promotes sustainable health knowledge from individual to the community since 2011.
	Service-Learning Student Association	Four events were organized at the first establish year in 2013 to promote S-L and Knowledge Transfer.
	Service-Learning Pilot Project	Twenty-three exchange students at Lingnan carried out educational workshops to 16 primary and 23 secondary school students.
	Events with Community Engagement	Spring dinner was organized in March 2013 to serve as a platform for exchanging information and sharing best practices among around 60 academic staff, agency supervisors and students.
For General Public & International Partners	Publication, News Supplement & Video	Three Singtao Daily newspaper clips supplement about S-L were printed as a dissemination of S-L knowledge and experience to readers.
	4th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Service-Learning	Over 400 participants from Asia-Pacific, range from education, government, non-government organizations, corporates etc, to discuss and share about S-L experience.

2. Evaluation of Knowledge Transfer Activities

Since SLRS is the main agenda for knowledge transfer activities at Lingnan, the evaluation has been conducted based on students' self-reported questionnaire, course instructors and service agency supervisors' feedback on students' learning experience.

2.1 Evaluation by Students

A set of pre-test and post–test questionnaire were developed for assessing students' learning outcome. There are seven learning domains that students are expected to enhance after participating Service-Learning Program. They are subject-related knowledge, communication skills, organization skills, social competence, problem-solving skills, research skills and civic orientation. In this academic year, a total number of 474 sets of questionnaire were collected and analysed.

As shown in the Table 2.1 below, students are having enhancement in all seven domains. The most significant domain is subject-related knowledge (16.28%), followed by the research skills (14.90%). This figure also confirmed that Service-Learning was an effective tool for students to acquire their knowledge, which in return the knowledge enhancement would have transferred between the community and the university through the Service-Learning platform.

Table 2.1   Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test Questionnaire in 2012/13

Domains	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Percentage Change
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
Subject-related Knowledge	470	6.47	1.59	7.53	1.38	16.28%
Communication Skills	474	5.95	1.12	6.18	1.17	3.76%
Organization Skills	474	6.83	1.35	7.46	1.20	9.25%
Social Competence	474	6.90	1.27	7.68	1.13	11.40%
Problem-Solving Skills	474	6.79	1.25	7.55	1.11	11.20%
Research Skills	474	6.28	1.47	7.22	1.32	14.90%
Civic Orientation	474	7.22	1.19	7.79	1.11	7.82%

2.2 Evaluation by Course Instructors and Service Agency Supervisors

In ensuring the knowledge transfer and students' performance, course instructors were invited to conduct evaluations. As shown in table below, course instructors noted that students had greatest improvement in their "Subject-Related Knowledge" (8.14) after enrolling in the programs, which match with the students' self-evaluation, and proofing the knowledge enhancement and application happen most effective among the seven domains in the Service-Learning programs.

On top of the evaluation from course instructors, we also collect opinions from the service agencies supervisors. As they work directly with students and keep close collaboration with us, their evaluations are equally valuable to the students' learning and knowledge transfer. The service agencies supervisors had indicated a different perspective that the students had enhanced most significantly in the areas of their "Social Competence" (7.56) and "Communication Skills" (7.49). It indicated the agency supervisors have a pleasure interaction with students, which possible could have facilitate the knowledge exchange and transfer through their communication.

Table 2.2   Result of Evaluation by Course Instructors and Service Agency Supervisors in 2012/13

Domain	Course Instructor (N=14) Mean (out of 10)	Service Agency Supervisor (N=23) Mean (out of 10)
Subject-Related Knowledge	8.14	7.24
Communication Skills	7.82	7.49
Organization Skills	7.61	6.87
Social Competence	7.87	7.56
Problem-Solving Skills	7.90	6.96
Research Skills	7.76	6.94
Civic Orientation	7.56 (N=12)	7.33 (N=15)

3. Impact Case Histories

Lingnan has chosen two impact cases for sharing, including impact study of the Service-Learning and Research Scheme and the Common Outcome Measurement in Service-Learning.

3.1 Impact study of the Service-Learning and Research Scheme

Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS) is an emblem of knowledge transfer practice at Lingnan. It integrates the service practicum into the liberal arts curriculum, thus students utilize their subject-related knowledge to tackle various social issues.

3.11 Underpinning Research

OSL has been conducting different quantitative and qualitative studies for investigating students' learning outcomes after participating in the SLRS. Students play a major role within the knowledge transfer process as they disseminate the theories and knowledge acquired from the courses into the service site. Course instructors act as part of the knowledge source, offering academic advice and monitoring student performance in order to ensure the teaching and learning quality. Community partners have benefited from the professional knowledge produced by students, as it may help them enhance their service capacity and quality. Ultimately, this interaction helps reutilize students' learning experiences. Thus, OSL conducted a study to analyse Service-Learning impacts on student development in 2011-2012, referencing the seven domains (Subject-Related Knowledge, Communication Skills, Organization Skills, Social Competence, Problem-solving skills, Research Skills, Civic Orientation), Civic Responsibility scale and Career Exploration have been adopted to evaluate students learning outcomes on different perspectives.

3.12 Corroboration of impact or benefit

From the impact study, the most prominent finding of the study is that students with SL experience score significantly higher in Civic Responsibility than their counterparts without S-L experience: they are more willing to engage in community services after graduation and are in fact doing more hours of service per month. They also had significantly higher mean scores in all Seven domains, in particular communication, problem-solving and research skills, and civic domains, which include connection to community, civic awareness and civic efficacy and the. This could have indicated substantial knowledge learnt and transferred through the service practicum when students learn to apply their subject-related knowledge into practice.

Apart from investigating how much students have improved using the quantitative approach, focus groups were organized to interview how students have learnt through the Service-Learning process and how community partners see the impacts that students' have made. For example, one student mentioned, "To a certain extent, I might be able to memorize the theories from books and obtain satisfactory results on examinations, yet the memories are shortly lived. However with S-L, the practicum experiences helped me internalize the knowledge and theories for my future use." A community partner said, "It is enjoyable and inspiring experience to collaborate with a group of passionate students, who always come up with valuable recommendations on how to empower the children! Their impacts were there while we noticed the kids treat them as big brothers and sisters as well as role models. Children would like to be

university students someday!" These comments are strong indicators to show not only the effectiveness of knowledge transfer, but also the impacts made to the community. .

3.2 Common Outcome Measurement in Service-Learning

Since OSL is the first independent office dedicated to S-L among the tertiary institutes in Hong Kong, it is undertaking an important role of the development of Service-Learning in higher education. The Higher Education Service-Learning Network (HESLN) was first established in 2007 to discuss the local development and opportunities of Service-Learning. Its member includes Lingnan University, Hong Kong University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Science and Technology, City University of Hong Kong, The Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, The Baptist University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and the Hong Kong College of Technology.

The HESLN hence serves as a platform for the experience sharing and ideas exchange of S-L practices. Lingnan, as the pioneer of S-L in Hong Kong, contributes a lot of its knowledge to HESLN. Among the agendas, the Common Outcome Measurement (COM) of S-L is the most significant indicator to demonstrate the knowledge transfer model. Of which, it consists of 9 domains: Self-Understanding / Confidence, Communication Skills, Problem-solving skills, Civic Engagement, Social Responsibility and Willingness to contribute, team skills, self-reflection, general knowledge application, caring for others, intercultural competences.

3.21 Underpinning Research

OSL, as the convener of HESLN, pioneers in sharing knowledge and experiences in order to develop successful S-L programs and evaluation methodologies. Amid the variety of S-L Programs across different institutes, a standardized assessment tool could help to evaluate S-L impacts on higher education upon a common ground, thus to receive stronger support from UGC; as well for UGC to adopt S-L as a pedagogy , ultimately bringing impact to both education and social welfare.

With more than seven years of Service-Learning, OSL has developed a sophisticated Pre-Test and Post-Test questionnaire (Chan, Ma, Fong, 2006)[1] to evaluate Service-Learning programs. When coming to develop the standardized assessment tool, OSL demonstrates how the data provided from the questionnaires, contributes greatly to the Common Outcome Measurement (COM), which is a survey instrument to measure the students' learning outcomes from S-L Programs.

The COM development has taken reference of a number of researches and journals to support, for example, "Where's the learning in Service-Learning? (Eyler and Giles 1999)[2] , "At a Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities" (Eyler, Giles, Stenson & Gray 2001)[3], has been taken into consideration when designing the items.

3.22 Corroboration of impact or benefit

The first pilot test of COM that contained 78 questions was carried out in May 2011, and collected 189 sets of results from 5 institutes for reliability and validity checking. By then, with selection criteria of 1) item-total correlation; 2) reliability and 3) degree of relation to the domain topic, a revised version with 36 items was produced for a new round of collection from Sep 2011 to Jul 2012. 193 valid samples pairs for evaluation were collected and the result was discussed in Feb 2013 during the HESLN meeting.

The COM development framework, together with summaries of COM data analysis of both pilot tests have been prepared and circulated on the HESLN platform. Through the meetings and email communication, the knowledge of

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[1] Chan, C. M. Alfred, Ma, H. K. Carol, Fong, M. S. Florence (2006) Service-Learning and Research Scheme: The Lingnan Mode. Office of Service-Learning, Lingnan University

2 Eyler, Janet and D.E. Giles. 1999. Where's the Learning in Service-Learning? San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass Publishers.

[3] Eyler, J.S., Giles, J.D.E., Stenson, C.M., & Gray, C.J. (2001). At a Glance: What We Know about the Effects of Service-Learning on College Students, Faculty, Institutions and Communities, 1993-2000: Third Edition. Corporation for National Service Learn and Serve America National Service Learning Clearing House. Retrieved from http://www.compact.org/resources/at-a-glance-the-impact-of-service-learning/1200/

S-L evaluation methodology has been discussed and transferred among the HESLN members. As a result, a more comprehensive and resourceful survey instrument has been developed for S-L evaluation purpose across different institutes.

4   Future Development

In 2014-2015, Service-Learning is going to be one of the graduation requirements under the 4-year curriculum. All Lingnan students have to go through at least one Service-Learning project, which mean each of them would have the opportunities to become a knowledge transfer vehicle between the university and community. With the possible increasing number of student participants, OSL will focus on Faculty Development and Community Outreach.

To better prepare faculty members with the models and assessment of Service-Learning, regular faculty meetings and trainings will be organized for the course instructors to exchange their teaching experiences, research and scholarship on Service-Learning. Besides, a number of students will be hired and trained as teaching assistants to facilitate the whole process of knowledge transfer under the SLRS. In order to make sure our community benefits from this process, OSL will link up with different key stakeholders (e.g. Social Welfare Department, Home Affairs Department, etc) from the community and senior management (e.g Vice President, academic Deans,etc) from the University to jointly develop a SL protocol for strengthen the university-community network and community-community network.

5.   Financial Expenditure

With the UGC's support, Lingnan is very dedicated to use S-L as a vehicle for KT practice in the future, especially, S-L will be a graduation requirement starting from 2014-2015. It is shown from the financial report in 2012-2013 that University has also given extra funding for further support of the SL development at Lingnan. (Table 5).

Table 5: Financial Year: 2012-2013

Items	Expenses of KT Fund Amount (HKD)	Expenses of University Fund Amount (HKD)
1. Dedicated Staff	927,115.53	1,700,204.69
2. PR and Marketing	33,374.30	15,326.00
3. Project Funding and Academic Support	96,037.10	3,652.44
4. Training	14,132.12	0.00
5. Operating Costs	5,170.41	811.71
Total Expenses in 2012-2013	**1,075,829.46**	**1,719,994.84**
Approved KT Fund in 2012-2013	**1,090,000.00**	
Unspent KT Fund in 2012-2013	**14,170.54**	