

Service Learning Approaches Instrumentation to Community Development in the 21st Century

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Abstract The expectation of the society from the institutions of higher learning is to produce sound graduates that fit in directly to the society need. These were among the anticipations of the societies, in the 21st century from graduates. The researcher finds utmost important most especially for our Technical and Vocational Education students to be skilled, not only on the technical aspect but also the employability one's that is also known as soft skills. The adoption of experiential learning approach in the era of 4th Industrial Revolution seems to be the solution to the demand of the production of graduates of the trend of the time in the higher schools of learning. The research study sought to establish that Service Learning Model of teaching is suitable for impacting both the technical and employability skill for TVE students in other to fits to the needs of their hosting societies at large. A qualitative research approach was adopted for this research study, an interview protocol, where experts from the Department of Technical and Engineering Education were interviewed. Data collected were analyzed. The findings of the study the teaching approach suitable for the 21st century, as students' centeredness experiential learning. The community gets a better living improvement, long-life learning, the students are confident in knowledge transfer, team working skills, while the institutional got a much more reputable, collaboration and partnership. Based on the findings, it is recommended that as a matter of necessity the TVET teachers/lecturers to adopt service learning in their teaching and learning approach.

Keywords Experiential Learning, Employability Skill, Technical and Vocational Education Training TVET, Service Learning

1. Introduction

The future of any nation depends on their education

standard, and this includes the quality of the school graduates, whom will later be part of the nation's workforce. Meanwhile, for a nation's workforce to be reliable, dependable and technically sound, their education system and not limited to Technical and Vocational Education must be effectively and adequately considered. Largely in the developed countries, this was the case, as priorities were much given to TVE. Maclean and Wilson (2009) stated that the goal of TVET is the acquisition of skills and knowledge of the individual for employment and sustainable living. The expectation of the society in the 21st century demanded for high skilled and intelligent manpower in our industries for the achievement of set goals by our countries. Consequently, this implies that our technical and vocational school must get up to the task of producing graduates to reinforce the workforce, in means of this the teachers need to diversify their model of teaching and learning practices in TVET to the direction of engaging the student in productive educational activities that are relevant in a changing world, these educational activities should leads the students attitude to cultivate social responsibilities inside and outside the school, as this was widely adopted in many developed countries of the World.

Therefore, as an expert in the field TVET, effort should be made to investigate best teaching and learning processes that can lead to the production of graduates that we fits in directly to both the societal needs as well as the industries workforce demand. (Sada, Mohd, Adnan, & Audu, 2015) especially the way students are being taught in classrooms As a teacher of TVET, the task of producing a sound soul student, that will be suitable for the task of the national development depends mostly on the teaching and learning situation in the classroom, this includes the laboratory experience, workshops, field work, field trips and other places where quality education can be obtained through or take place.

2. Literature Review

In the field of TVET many models of teaching have been implemented and work as far as impacting knowledge is concerned, these include problem-based learning, Project-oriented based learning, quantum teaching model to mention but a few, but no-one has a direct impact to the community like experiential learning. In light of these challenges, TVET programmes at the tertiary education level in most part of the world employs an experiential learning practice to support and respond to its objectives. Experiential learning practices refer to project-learning, industry - based internships, clinical practices, pre - service teachers' placements, service-learning, community service numerous to mention but a few (Gamble et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2009; Miliszewska, 2008). This practice of experiential learning (service learning) to be precise is usually integrated into the TVET programme or curriculum in order to support and engage students to acquire practical related skills that can be useful to them in the future career life endeavour. This can make the programme to contribute meaningfully and effectively to the development of the society. Supporting this assertion, it was highlighted that education, specifically TVET must strive to meet the needs of the community through social engineering activities and students' participatory activities that can lead to the development of the society (Akanmu, 2011; Dasmani, 2011).

According to (Parker et al., 2009), Service learning as a teaching approach employed to the deployment of community services into the school curriculum in such a way that the community is the one benefiting from the service and the students acquired learn skills that are relevant to their future profession. This is in a way that the academic objective of the students is not suffering. In addition, the employable skills or the soft skill will also be gained during the process and this the employable skill is not being learned from the four walls of the classroom, but are being gained through the interaction skill, handling of issue techniques, problem-solving skills acquired from the experiential learning in the community service.

Furthermore, (Prentice and Robinson, 2010), sees service learning as a needed and important composite to the theoretical fact that was learned by the student in the classroom situation that helped the learner to engage in community service by directly applying what was learned in school to real-life situation or practical experience that is provided at school. Service learning practice promotes effective teaching of courses and some concept while

engaging students to develop knowledge, skills, and cognitive capabilities to deal effectively with complex social issues. The practical inclusion of experiential learning, particularly, the service learning could have been the most significant approach that can elevate the relevance of TVE in partaking in the academic achievement of teaching and learning, research and community service.

Based on the concept and context of the Service learning, (Ahmad, 2015) stated that service learning as an instructional model or approach, it's the relevant and adequately suitable way that can enhance the delivery of technical and vocational education. This was concluded as the practical relevance of the service learning in demonstrating the idea of community service is obviously clear. In his statement, there is no doubt, if service learning is properly and effectively implemented in TVE; it could support and promote the delivery of the TVE program while making students to appreciate and understanding the developing knowledge, skills, and other cognitive capabilities that can make them to effectively cope with difficulties of social life, real-life experience, and issues after graduation. Virtually, service learning can help to connect the academic experience learned in the school to real life situation in the community.

3. Research Questions

To the scope of this study, the two main research objectives are, firstly, to determine the teaching approach that influences the acquisition of TVE skills. The second objective is to verify impacts of TVET students on service learning in term of community development.

4. Methodology

The data in this study were collected through a qualitative method, this was to let the researcher explore and get an in-depth view of the research study, as expert who have been implementing Experiential Learning (Service Learning) from the field of TVET and that had more than 10years experiences in the teaching and learning from the higher institution was selected for individual interview sections. While the literature study was sourced from journal articles, textbooks, and other reliable data sources through Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) library database website. The findings were presented in a meaningful way. Meanwhile, the pattern adopted for the research was illustrated in figure 1, below.

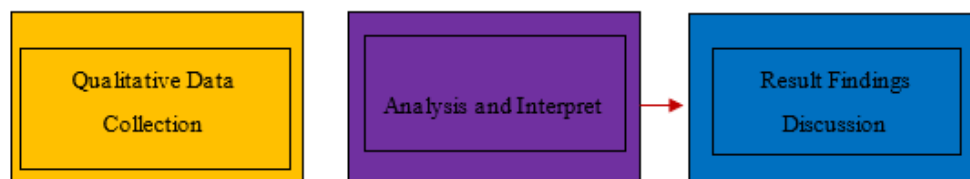


Figure 1. Showing Research Design

5. Research Sampling

Lecturers from the Department of Technical and Engineering Education was chosen for the study, as 4 experts who have been implementing service learning from the field of TVET and that had more than 10years experiences in the teaching and learning from the institution was selected for individual interview sections.

Creswell (2012) stated that the non-probability purposive sampling technique, researchers intentionally decides individuals and places to study or understand the foremost observable fact; the approach utilized in the preference participants is whether they are resourceful regarding the incident. The non-probability purposive sampling is the type of research approach technique whereby interviewees are selected as a sample for an exacting rationale (Mathew & Ross, 2010).

6. Validity of the Research Instrument

The instruments were validated by two (2) experts from the University of Technology Malaysia, in the Department of Technical and Engineering Education.

7. Reliability of the Research Instrument

Peer debriefing approach was adopted; the instrument was given to a more experience researchers who happen to be versatile in the qualitative research studies University of Technology Malaysia. The results of the interview protocol were transcribed, coded, and categorized, to generate a befitting theme for the study. The obtained results from the peer debriefing activities were

used to update the result in reflection of principled, interpretive norms and other development issues that a raised in the debriefing session.

8. Result

The research finding shows that service learning helped students to make connections on what they have learned in the class in relation to their daily activities or to the community or how they can contribute the knowledge and skill to the communities. Service learning benefits the students on how important the skills, the knowledge they have learnt during the class courses and how it impacts the society and also as preparation for them when they enter their workplace or to school when they go to school.

Service learning as a teaching model, it was widely accepted that no one single teaching method can be suitable for all teaching and learning situation. Meanwhile, SL had been proven as one of the best teaching model among the teaching method in TVET. According to the result, service learning as a unique model of teaching, has important vital role in Technical and Vocational Education because for Technical and Vocational Education the curriculum itself requires the students to see how their knowledge the skill that they learn in their institution related to their future workplace and related to their community needs and SL provide just that.

The study discovered that service learning focuses on student centered learning. This, according to the findings was by taking the students to the community with the main purpose of knowledge transfer. As the student, goes to the community to teach the community the skills that has been learned from the classroom. The illustration of how service learning benefited all the parties involved was shown in the figure 2.

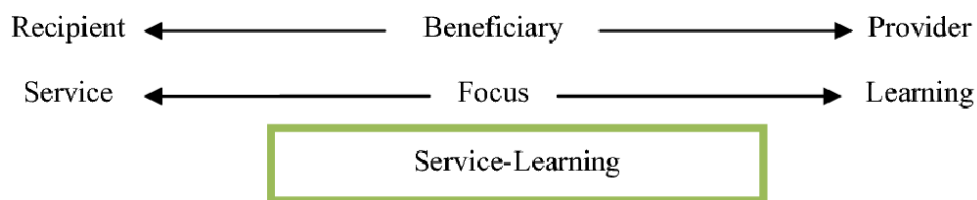


Figure 2. Uniqueness of service-learning

The study proved that Service learning is about complete circle that includes the practical knowledge transfer connection between the communities, the second of it is about the practical aspect or what is called the skill. The students meet together with the community and respond to the community development needs and the third aspect is about the academic. Academic in the sense that learning take place during the service provided and the gained knowledge through interaction between the students and the community. The skills include communication skill, problem solving skill, thinking skill the team working skill.

Finally, service learning gives very good exposure for the students because they have to engage with the community and sometimes they themselves identify the community that they want to contribute and work with and these opportunities provide them with new knowledge especially on developing their generic skill.

Meanwhile, in the table 1, the participants praised the impact of the service learning on the student positive orientation after the SL activity. The table below summarized students' performance in relation to service learning.

However, the institution is known to be a provider of attitudinal change to individual as well as enriching the students with a sound academic education for them to be successful and useful to the society that trained them. This was attestation as the study discovered the benefit of

service learning to the society. Having gone to the community for service learning development, the community experience quality of live and this also help to promote TVET program to the community, so the community can see what actually the students of TVET is doing and from there maybe it help to a change the community negative perceptions of TVET as second class citizen course. Meanwhile, SL to the community, was seen as a welcome development as the community want to learn i.e. gain ideas from the university, they want to have university brings a name or reputation, so when they have these activities with the collaboration of the university, they are very happy and fulfilled.

Furthermore, SL is also about long life learning, the community wants to learn the new skills from the university, so they need to understand, they need to learn and they can practically do things themselves.

On the impact of service learning to the communities, study findings show that the community can be sustained, self-reliance and self-dependent with the natural resource blessed with them. The methods of exploring the nature was concerns in service learning exercise in the community as the case may be. It was discovered that the communities benefited the most from service learning as latest knowledge, skills, needed by community are always been shared by the students with the community, based on service learning for free.

Table 1. Summary of Qualitative Results on the influence of service learning as a teaching model on student performance

Research Questions	Participant 1 UL1	Participant 2 UL2	Participant 3 UL3	Participant 4 UL4
What is the influence of service learning as a teaching model to student performance?	It assists the students to make connections. It enabled students to be aware of how important the skills, the knowledge they have learned in the class. And prepared them when they enter their workplace or to school when they go back to school after the SL activities.	SL is very good; it's exposing the students in engaging with the community. In the class and I can see that after the engagement of service learning activities, they became more active in class, their team working is very good and they improve their communication skill and also their confidence in doing the core task in the subject	SL focuses on students centered learning, so in students centered learning. We focus on what project to do. And on all aspects of generic skills	SL is a student-centered learning, we aim to develop our students' capacity in terms of their leadership skills, in term of managing people, in term of engaging with the community

Table 2. Summary of Qualitative Results on the impacts of TVET students on service learning in term of community development.

Research Questions	Participant 1 UL1	Participant 2 UL2	Participant 3 UL3	Participant 4 UL4
What are the impacts of TVET students on service learning in term of community development?	They implement all the projects and how to solve the problem of community challenges. TVET students engage with the community. I make a plan for the students to do service learning in the community, let say go to houses that need some improvement and install pendaflour, so they have the opportunity of looking the actual problems of pendaflour wiring, on how to apply their skill and their knowledge to install the pendaflour light and at the same time it will help the community to improve their condition like having good lighting in the house.	TVET students go out and to contribute something to the community, such as a school, or village. They demonstrate the exchange of knowledge from the student to the community.	We need to make sure we have a knowledge transfer from the students to the community. The community development is one part that our university in particular volunteer to make life easy for, the community that they involve and solve certain problems if they have a problem.	Student share with other people at the outside in the surrounding, at the community teaching them, for example, they know about the skill. They have to deliver their technology to share with the community they would like to teach the community, to ensure after the teaching, en the community can survive and can monitor the expand the project into commercialized or soon to be self-reliant. The most important thing in service learning is the community, we need to educate the people outside there, and we have the knowledge and skill. But we have to share with others, it is very important for free.

However, table 2, summarized the impact of students engagement in service learning to the community development. Participants expressed the sense of belonging exhibited by their student towards the community the service learning delivery.

Service learning was known for its capital intense sometimes. However in most case this was not a problem, as most of the community were very encouraged to involve in SL because they benefit the most. Meanwhile, in the process the community students who are the service provider teach the community on practical bases and also guide the hosting community on the maintenance of the project.

Lastly and most importantly in this sense, the service learning gave the university to engage the students for exchange of knowledge transfer to the hosting community, creating networking, gain generic skills, and most importantly provide the community the improvement in life, through sustainable development, embedding entrepreneurship skill to the community, and making the needed community a self-reliant economically, commercially through the community untapped available nature and natural resources surrounding them.

9. Conclusions

The findings of the research show that the implementation of experiential learning is the way out to community engagement, where meaningful impact can be exhibited by the student to empower their immediate surroundings (communities). It has also been cleared in the research that the future of any country lies in their education, so therefore the teachers/lecturers should centered their teaching and learning towards students centered learning. After education of any students, their

aspirations is to get a good job, with the proper implementation of service learning in the field of Technical and Vocational Education, call for assurance that TVET students will be surely employable in the favour labour market of jobs.

Moreover, service learning benefits to the community is numerous and lastly to the institution that engaged the students in service learning also favoured with more recognition, reputation and enjoy collaborations with NGO's and also from the hosting communities.

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