

INCORPERATING SERVICE LEARNING INTO NEW ZEALAND HOSPITALITY EDUCATION: BENEFITS AND ISSUES

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Abstract

This paper discusses the benefits of offering a service learning component in the current New Zealand hospitality education curriculum. The paper is conceptual and draws on literature to build a justification for including service learning in hospitality education, while specifically discussing multicultural and bicultural considerations in the New Zealand context. Service learning is defined, and the potential benefits to hospitality learners are discussed. An outline of the pedagogical background of service learning is included and service learning is placed in the broader hospitality education framework. It is suggested that service learning could provide a useful counterweight to the rather narrow, traditional curriculum focus on vocational, business and management areas. The paper considers the unique multi-culture and bi-cultural ramifications of applying service learning in the New Zealand educational context. Specific focus is applied to using service learning within the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Māori concept of Manaakitanga is discussed in detail, with comparisons being drawn between concerns over the commercialisation of Manaakitanga and the commercialisation of hospitality. The argument is made that service learning could provide an option for hospitality education that moves away from a traditional commercial/managerial focus. It would instead emphasise the 'true' nature of hospitality and Manaakitanga; a desire to make others happy, compassion, service and care for the community.

Introduction

The moral virtues we do acquire by first exercising them. The same is true of arts and crafts in general. The craftsman has to learn how to make things, but he learns in the process of making them. So men become builders by building, harp players by playing the harp. By a similar process we become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions (Aristotle as cited by Koppel, 2009, p.9).

Koppel (2004) offers that we learn to serve by serving. This paper discusses the benefits of offering a service learning component in the current New Zealand hospitality education curriculum. Service-learning is defined as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key components of service-learning.” (Jacoby et al., 1996 as cited by Cummings, Cole & Myers, 2004, p.23)

This paper is conceptual and draws on literature to build a justification for including service learning in hospitality education, while specifically discussing multi-cultural and bi-cultural considerations in the New Zealand context. An outline of the pedagogical background of service learning is included which highlights the reflective and reciprocal aspects of service learning. These reflective and reciprocal components are highlighted as being congruent with the underpinning concepts of hospitality in the wider social context, as discussed by Lashley and Morrison (2000).

Service learning is placed in the broader hospitality education framework and it is suggested that service learning could provide a useful counterweight to the rather narrow, traditional curriculum focus on vocational, business and management areas. The paper goes on to address questions about the wider social nature of hospitality raised by authors such as Lashley et al (2000) and Ritzer (2004). Service learning is offered as a possible educational antidote to the pervasive spread of ‘inhospitable hospitality’ suggested in this area of literature.

Finally, the paper considers the unique multicultural and bicultural considerations of applying service learning in the New Zealand educational context. Specific focus is applied to the implementation of service learning within the obligations of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Māori concept of Manaakitanga is discussed in detail, with comparisons being drawn between concerns over the commercialisation of Manaakitanga (Martin, 2008) and the previously mentioned commercialisation of

hospitality (Ritzer 2004, Lashley et al, 2000 and 2007). The argument is made that service learning could provide an option for hospitality education that moves away from a traditional commercial/managerial focus and instead emphasises the 'true' nature of hospitality and Manaakitanga; a desire to make others happy, compassion, service and care for the community.

Service Learning

As explained above, service learning involves creating opportunities for students to gain valuable learning experiences while meeting real community needs. The inclusion of reflection is important in the differentiation of service learning from other forms of experiential education such as internship or volunteerism. Furco (1996) adds that service-learning is also differentiated from other forms of experiential education by its intention to benefit the provider and recipient of service equally. Service-learning is beneficial because it:

- Offers students an opportunity to gain career relevant experience.
- Helps to build relationships between the institution and community.
- Makes course material more relevant.

Service-Learning Background

The service-learning concept is part of and draws from experiential education theory. The work of John Dewey, who is considered to be a seminal author on experiential education, provides a foundation for the theory of service-learning (Boyer, 1983; Clark & Welmers, 1994; Lipka, Beane & O'Connell, 1985 and Arthur & Bohlin, 2005). Dewey compares traditional education, which he describes as primarily static and a finished product, to a new and progressive education based on experience.

In an early definition of service-learning, Sigmon (1979), suggested service learning was an experiential education approach premised on *reciprocal learning* (Furco, 1996). This focus on mutual benefit to both providers and recipients of service is a common theme throughout service learning definitions over time. Furco (1996); Johnson et al. (1999); Cummings et al. (2004); Koppel, Kavanaugh & Van Dyke (2004); Markey & Holsinger-Fuchs (2004); O'Connor, Dill, Burston & Rainsford (2004) and Swanger (2004) all include mutual benefit in their working definitions. To best understand service-learning, it needs to be contextualised in the broader hospitality framework.

The place of service-learning in the broader hospitality framework

Historically, 'vocational action' has been significant in driving the development of hospitality education (Tribe, 1997 as cited by Lashley & Morrison, 2000). Lashley et al. (2000) gives a chronology of hospitality education from the early 1900's until

today. Until the 1950's most hospitality training was given on the job. A few schools offered recognised standards but it wasn't until the 1960's that diploma level awards were offered at a variety of institutions. Even with the availability of diploma programs "the needs of the hotel and catering industry remained the key influence on the curriculum" (Lashley et al., 2000, p.279).

The strong emphasis on vocational education has had both positive and negative effects on hospitality education development. Curriculum development has been tied very closely to industry needs which has helped to create a clear framework and boundaries, giving the subject area credibility. On the downside, the subject has been prevented from exploring wider issues associated with hospitality (Lashley et al., 2000). Formal hospitality education is fairly recent development and is influenced by western industrial society. Lashley et al. (2000, p.5) offers that "in pre-industrial societies hospitality occupies a much more central position in the value system". Commercial hospitality is credited as an opportunity for guests to use a facility or service without concern for mutual obligation (Lashley et al., 2000).

Lashley (2000) suggests reflection is an important component of higher education and highlights its role in preparing students to positively engage in society. The need for reflection in hospitality education could be met by incorporating service-learning into the curriculum. Reflection is identified as a part of a service-learning by Furco (1996), Johnson et al. (1999), Koppel et al. (2004), Cummings et al. (2004) and Swanger (2004). Arthur et al. (2005) identifies the need to offer students opportunities that prepare them for life-long learning as motivation for academics to consider learning in the community. Service-learning could provide students with the experiences necessary to develop key capabilities for higher education.

An example of a service-learning program is Rutgers' Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) program (Arthur et al., 2005 and Berger & Ackerman, 1994). This program was a result of a university president's proposal that community service become a necessary component of liberal education (Ruben, 2004). Outcomes of the implementation of the CASE program were that students gained increased retention abilities; acquired teamwork and social skills that made them ready for the workplace; and gave them the opportunity to "do what citizens do – engage in the life of the community" (Ruben, 2004, p.280). Behringer et al. (2004), in reference to another service-learning project, discusses how students benefited from the program. Most found service-learning courses gave them the opportunity to contribute to the community by becoming knowledge producers and deliverers. Becoming more than simply passive knowledge consumers could enable students to fill the criteria of Dewey (1997) for progressive or experiential education in its truest form.

Hospitality in a Social Context

Hospitality, while defined as the “disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way (Hospitality, n.d.)”, often is quite the opposite (Ritzer, 2004). It could be concluded that the hospitality industry today is “an immediate paradox between generosity and the market place” (Heal, 1990, p.1 as cited by Lashley et al., 2000, p.12). Although most hospitality theory passively supports the notion that the industry only includes the commercial, a few authors have looked at what it really means to be hospitable. Both Telfer (1996) and Lashley et al. (2000) define a genuinely hospitable person as someone who entertains with appropriate motives (Lashley, 2000). Motives identified as appropriate could include; a desire to make others happy; a desire for company or the pleasure of entertaining, compassion for others and their needs or a perceived duty to be hospitable (Lashley, 2000).

On the grounds that certain motives constitute true hospitableness, it raises the question as to whether the hospitality industry is, in fact, hospitable. An interesting example offered by Lashley et al. (2000) is a commercial hospitality organisation that encouraged staff to treat guests as if they were in their own home. Although it sounds reasonable in principal, it is unlikely you would ask a guest to pay for a drink. The motivation to be hospitable in a commercial setting is often vastly different. Ritzer (2004) agrees with and expands this idea further. While agreeing that the commercialisation of hospitality expands the industry, Ritzer (2004) suggests that it threatens hospitality at its core.

Ritzer (2004) points out that as consumers have less experience with true hospitality they will begin to forget what it is and know no different. This is not to say that a commercial hospitality operation cannot be truly hospitable. Staff and management need to have appropriate motives for serving the guests. A possible way of achieving this balance could be to apply service-learning theory to the current problem. Although service-learning is a part of experiential education, students who are committed to the communities and guests they serve might be better equipped to tackle inhospitality. Sigmon’s model of service-learning providing equal benefit to that of the provider and recipient could be useful. While hospitality theory draws from the business discipline (Lashley, 2000), and business outcomes such as efficiency are desirable, pursuing them at all costs is antithetical to hospitality (Ritzer, 2004). As looked at in preceding paragraphs, reflecting on practice might lead to a more balanced outcome between providers and recipients. This in turn may help combat the trend toward inhospitality.

As mentioned above, much of the current hospitality theory is informed by economic concepts. A ramification of the focus on the commercial is the development of what Ritzer (2004) describes as 'McDonaldization' or 'McDisneyization'. The process aims for increased efficiency as it leads to higher profits. A byproduct of this process is predictability, calculability and 'Non-human technology'. Ritzer (2004) offers that the negative outcomes of this process, such as increasing homogenization, disenchantment and dehumanization, are the opposite of hospitality. McDonalds and many similarly efficient franchises are examples of hospitality organisations that have become "centrally conceived, centrally controlled and lacking in distinctive content" (Ritzer, 2004, p.43). Ritzer (2004, p.43) contrasts this with places that are "locally conceived, controlled and rich in distinctive content" which the hospitality industry is in danger of losing. Service-learning is very much based on engaging with the local community (Cummings, Cole & Myers, 2004). Looking at the social aspect of hospitality suggests consideration of the local context in which activities take place.

Benefits of Service Learning

Berger & Ackerman (1994) believe that the hospitality industry is in need of students who can focus on community needs rather than their own career progression. Berger et al. (1994) go on to recommend service-learning as a possible means to this end. This idea is further supported by DeFranco and Abbott (1996) who describe the aim of hospitality programs to include the education of managers as well as encouraging responsible citizenry. Many other benefits of service-learning to students, institutions and organizations are offered. Both Clark (2000) and Markey & Holsinger-Fuchs (2004) agree that service-learning makes course material more relevant and gives students an opportunity to gain career-relevant experience.

Markey et al. (2004) also list other advantages to include; the building of relationships between the institution and community, integration of communication skills as well as satisfying the core components of active learning and teamwork. Although many benefits are present, it is acknowledged by Clark (2000) that service learning also encounters problems. Two of the most common issues are; lack of organisational commitment from community partners, and lack of participation from student group members. From the information gathered, the problems associated with the implementation of service-learning seem insignificant when compared to the benefits. The service-learning concept should be considered as a viable addition to New Zealand tertiary hospitality curriculum.

Application: A New Zealand Context

Most literature available on the application of service learning is set in the United Kingdom and the United States. A significant problem with the available body of knowledge is the lack of emphasis on service learning in a culturally diverse environment. Most literature on service learning pays little attention to issues such as cultural diversity and educational equality (Boyle-Baise, 2002). New Zealand continues to become more multicultural over time as the percentage of people who identify with the European ethnic group decreases (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Country wide, European is still the largest ethnic group accounting for 67.6% of the population with Māori being the second largest at 14.6%. The most ethnically diverse region is Auckland with 18.9% identifying with the Asian ethnic group, 14.4% with the Pacific peoples and 11.1% with the Māori ethnic group (Statistics NZ, 2006). Service learning in a local New Zealand community, especially in Auckland, will be influenced by multiculturalism.

While applying service learning to pre-service teachers, Boyle-Baise (2002) raises some concerns as to the ramifications of treating service-learners as an undifferentiated group. Boyle-Baise suggests that applying principals of mutuality and reciprocity without considering difference in culture or privilege can have a negative effect. Service learning could become a modern form of “patronage from the privileged to those in adversity” (Boyle-Baise, 2002, p.2). Service learning could also lead to exploitation of underdeveloped community groups as learning opportunities for students. Despite these concerns raised, Boyle-Baise (2002) goes on to offer that service learning in the community, when responsive to cultural diversity, can be a standard for multicultural education.

The need for a multicultural approach to service-learning projects in New Zealand arises when looking at the demographics of a local organisation. Figures released by ‘Women’s Refuge’ show a disproportionate number of Māori women using their services. Over half of the children and 42% of the women served in 2006 were Māori (National Collective of Independent Women's Refuge's, 2006). If a service-learning project was undertaken with this organisation, it would likely be better received and a better learning experience if culture was considered. This literature review does not assume these figures are representative of all local organisations. The figures could however, highlight the need to consider multiculturalism before implementing a service-learning approach in a New Zealand context.

Biculturalism

As part of multiculturalism, we also have a bicultural aspect to consider. In 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was established, which formalised the relationship between Māori and the New Zealand Government (New Zealand Government, 2006). Māori are concerned that “the acknowledgement of group-based rights for, or recognition

of, migrant groups might undermine prior bicultural commitments to Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi” (May, 2009, p.5). This concern has been raised previously in the area of education. In the 1980’s the Department of Education attempted to instigate a multicultural curriculum in New Zealand schools (May, 2009). This development was seen as a disadvantage to Māori as it denied them equality as one of two treaty partners. The inclusion of Māori with other immigrant groups in multicultural education minimises the importance of Māori status and interests (Benton, 1988 as cited by May, 2009). As New Zealand Universities are obligated to honour the Treaty, any service-learning initiative should be sensitive to biculturalism in New Zealand.

An example of how University’s incorporate biculturalism can be found in the Strategic Plan of Auckland University of Technology (AUT). An objective of the plan is to “honour the commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi by being the university of choice for Maori” (AUT, 2007, p.11). To achieve this objective the university is prioritising the building of relationships with Māori communities, conducting research that will be beneficial to Maori, including Maori pathways into the curriculum and valuing Māori language (AUT, 2007). Harmsworth (2005) alludes to the values of collectivism and community in Māori culture. Service learning also places emphasis on working with community. Although there is a lacuna in the body of knowledge on how biculturalism relates to service-learning, there are commonalities between the two that could be explored further.

Manaakitanga

Literature on the Māori concept of Manaakitanga could help inform possible applications of service learning in a New Zealand hospitality context. Manaakitanga can be loosely defined as hospitality and has several other meanings and plays an important role in Māori Society (Martin, 2008). This Māori concept also refers to the nurturing of the relationship between a host and guest as well as sharing with and caring for the needs of others (Martin, 2008 and Harmsworth, 2005). Harmsworth (2005, p.14) summarises Manaakitanga to mean “reciprocal and unqualified acts of giving, caring and hospitality”. An example of a business that employs this concept is ‘Tohu Wines Ltd’. This Māori owned and operated business incorporates a balance of cultural values with western financial systems. There is an emphasis on social responsibility and helping the community through the provision of employment, educational grants and training as well as engaging in sustainable business practices. They describe the business focus as looking after the whanau (family) as well as having a quality product, being representative of New Zealand and of indigenous culture (Harmsworth, 2005).

There are mixed feelings among academics and the tourism industry as to how Māori culture has been marketed in the past. Tourism New Zealand (2007) cites Manaakitanga (hospitality) as a core value of its 2015 campaign. It identifies the tourism sector and communities working together for mutual benefit as an outcome of this strategy (Tourism New Zealand, 2007). In contrast to this, Martin (2008) talks of the tendency for tourism to be exploitive as dominant cultures impose cultural values on indigenous people. This practice is likely only to financially benefit a select few. As the demand for authentic experiences increases, indigenous branding and marketing of cultural experiences have become a more lucrative business. Being true to an authentic Māori cultural identity by incorporating values such as Manaakitanga and collectivism is a key marketing strategy (Martin, 2008). Manaakitanga is a value that does not include monetary exchange. For some Māori Tourism operators, tourism can be considered a more spiritual venture with the mindset of sharing without putting a price on it (Martin, 2008, p.88). Martin (2008) explains further that to put emphasis on financial gain would be to go against the value Manaakitanga and make an experience inauthentic. Businesses who are driven by profit will struggle to meet the needs of a tourist seeking an authentic experience.

Further research could explore parallels between this Māori concept of Manaakitanga and service-learning in hospitality. Manaakitanga could be relevant to the body of thought on both the concept of 'true hospitality' and social hospitality. From the literature referenced, some interesting similarities can be seen. Both hospitality and Manaakitanga seem to have lost something as a result of commercialisation. While the hospitality industry is becoming inhospitable (Lashley et al., 2000 & Ritzer, (2004), the tourism industry which has been closely linked with Manaakitanga has become inauthentic. There are also host guest obligations that need to be met within the concept of Manaakitanga as in hospitality (Mead, 2003). Obligation of host and guest is an interesting thread and possible future research direction. Not only does it relate to both the hospitality industry and Māori cultural practices but also to a wider social context. There is a trend towards social and environmental responsibility within the commercial world and this creates a whole new set of industry obligations. It would be interesting to see what going back to the root of hospitality and Manaakitanga could add to both academia and the wider industry.

Conclusion

Literature shows that the practice of service-learning is beneficial and has developed over time to differentiate itself from other forms of experiential education. Although one concise definition is not available, analysis of several definitions and key trends can lead to a greater understanding of the concept. Reflection and

equality of benefits to recipient and provider are key areas of development. Service-learning fits into the present and future of hospitality education theory. Previously limited by industry needs, the subject has reached a point where it could branch out into new territory. Lashley et al. (2000) identifies cultural, social and anthropological areas of hospitality that could be explored. Lashley et al. (2000) also identifies reflection as a new and essential direction for future development. Breaking free from simply being 'passive knowledge consumers' would enable students rich learning opportunities difficult to acquire in a classroom setting.

The benefits of breaking hospitality education out of its 'business focus' shell are two-fold. As described above, service-learning could help AUT to meet its current strategic objectives. Incorporating a community based (social) approach to hospitality, may also help to combat greater industry wide issues such as inhospitality. Ritzer's (2004) concern that the commercial focus of hospitality organisations is destroying 'true' hospitality at its core could be addressed by service-learners. Another interesting aspect of service learning is the potential to alleviate some of the financial burden of education from the tax payer (Ruben, 2004 and Taylor & Maas, 1995). The Government is involved in funding both universities and social services within New Zealand. Providing learning opportunities to students while meeting real community needs is a highly efficient use of resources. An extension of this idea would be the service-learning project becoming marketable for international students.

Ritzer (2004, p.38) raises an interesting question: "what might a hospitality industry without hospitality look like?" In response to this question, this literature review raises another: 'could service learning equip hospitality students to become hospitable?' As well as offering a possible solution to inhospitality, service learning also offers a practical application to social hospitality. Broadening the hospitality discipline out of its narrow commercial focus could add depth and breadth to the subject area. Most of the literature on the implementation of service learning is set in the United Kingdom or the United States. In the application of service-learning, students became competent in the areas of communication, teamwork and problem solving. The application of service-learning in a New Zealand context was hindered by a lack of research into the implications of multiculturalism and more specifically biculturalism. An interesting thread throughout the literature was that of mutual obligation between firstly, the host and guest and secondly, business and greater society.

The ramifications of implementing a service-learning project in a bicultural environment need to be explored further. Within the New Zealand context the second largest ethnic group is Māori (Statistics NZ, 2006). A possible direction for

future study is the Maori concept of Manaakitanga. Some interesting parallels can be drawn between the effects of commercialism on both Manaakitanga and hospitality as a whole. The use of cultural principals could inform future directions in theory and help in the implementation of service-learning. Returning to the roots of hospitality could be beneficial to hospitality academia, the industry and greater society.

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