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Title of paper: The UL Practicum-Embedding an Emancipatory Action Research Approach within a University

Academic institutions are increasingly required to develop new pedagogies which combine active and experiential learning from within the curriculum. Enabling students to effectively learn by doing, that is; taking responsibility, applying knowledge, working in teams on real-world problems and where possible making a difference. However, as is widely recognised in the literature engaging students in meaningful service learning and binding community-university relationships can be very challenging (Baker, et al: 2007, 2006, 2004; Hart and Wolff, 2006; Hart, Maddison, and Wolff (eds), 2007). In addition, while there is an abundance of research which deals with service learning as a means for reinforcing student learning, there is little focus on the perceptions and expectations of the external partners (Walsh, et. al. 2010).

This paper draws extensively on the experiences a group of academics (author included) and students (from the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick[1]), community based practitioners and individuals who embarked on a highly collaborative service learning project. The aim of the project was to catalogue the experiences of Irish Travellers and people with experience of the asylum process in respect to public services and discrimination. This project derived a creative form of 'emancipatory action research' (Kinsler, 2010, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005; Flicker et al., 2008) which required that the students work as co-researchers with their community counterparts, jointly designing the project, generating ideas, interviewing the subjects, reflecting on the outcomes and suggesting potential policy changes.

The pedagogical framework derived from this project will be discussed as a potential means for successful service learning as it fostered inclusivity, enabled active learning and resulted in mutually beneficial outcomes for the community participants and academic learners.   How such a framework is being further developed within the university setting will be traced by looking at the establishment and work of the UL Practicum**.**

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[1] www.ul.ie/doingcommunityresearch