

Anto T. Kerins, *An adventure in service-learning: Developing knowledge, values and responsibility*.

Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Gower, 2010. 314 pages. £ 84.00 (hardback, also available as ebook PDF & ebook ePUB).

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In *An adventure in service-learning: Developing knowledge, values and responsibility*, Kerins provides a strong literature review and an engaging case study in service-learning. The text covers areas not typically addressed in an academic publication on service-learning. The book examines how religious traditions and social trends have influenced views of service. It also discusses how higher education has influenced views of service as a valid teaching method. The religious and social dimensions of service makes for interesting reading and provides relevant background knowledge not often covered in a text of this nature.

The introduction of the book provides the reader with a frame for the work. The introduction provides the tone for the book. In addition, the introduction alerts the reader concerning what they should expect to find within the book's pages and what separates this book from others on service-learning

The remainder of the book is divided into three sections. The first section discusses service-learning's definition and applications. The second section reviews recent research on service-learning, especially research on its effectiveness as a teaching and learning method. The final section points to the future of service-learning.

Two apparent questions about this book are "why is this text relevant?" and "what can this particular book contribute to the large body of literature in this field?" The book's relevance is in the image it creates for those outside the U.K. with the way service-learning is understood and practiced in the U.K. It paints this image using a case study and then deconstructing the case study to highlight best practices in including service as a path to learning. Research findings discussed here are relevant for practitioners of service-learning and should be considered when developing service-learning courses.

The case study, then, is the most useful part of the book as it provides insight into ways to imbed service-learning into the curriculum and examples of effective

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service-learning practices easy to copy at any campus. This particular section of the book is handy for faculty members interested in curriculum redesign to incorporate service-learning into their courses.

When examining the role of co-curricular activities (what the author terms “ancillary programs”) in higher education, the author misses the opportunity to examine research and best practices in student development theory. Through higher education, we try to develop the whole student and, as the text indicates, to develop values in an effort to strengthen society. In the U.S., many believe that that service-learning and other experiential education serve to strengthen communities by cultivating, and perhaps creating community values and social responsibility. Though sometimes elementary, the section on ancillary programs in higher education reminds us that these programs or co-curricular activities are vital to the development of community values as well as provides evidence for faculty arguing to use service-learning in their teaching.

Finally, the appendices offer specific examples of course assignments, service-learning projects, an analysis of participant grades, and a brief evaluation of the research findings. These tools provide help to use the best practices recommended in the book.

The author intends for the book to have an international audience, focusing on service-learning in courses and programs in colleges in the United Kingdom. Sometimes basic, the book’s rudimentary character makes it easy to read and useful as a primer for those with limited experience in service-learning. While the target audience is not immediately clear, this book could be used to introduce best practices of service-learning and the possibilities for applying this teaching approach. Sometimes, the book seems disconnected, but in the postscript the author admits that writing at this level can often be challenging and is not always logical or linear.

This book does not provide revolutionary research findings, nor does it propose new theories on student engagement. However, new theories and new research finding were not the author’s intent, but rather to show the effectiveness of service-learning in the learning and to provide a guide on integrating service into college work. In *An Adventure in Service-Learning*, Kerins achieves these goals.