Rundown

1. Background - GLCE Exchange Programme
2. Student learning – Dissonance and civic learning (a research study)
3. Student learning – Leadership development
4. Conclusion
5. Q&A, discussion

Global Leadership and Civic Engagement (GLCE) Exchange Programme

- An exchange unlike any other

Privileged
- Full sponsorship
- At a prestigious university with rich culture of SL&CE

Unique
- International exchange? SL? WIE/Internship? Summer School?
- Advanced ISL scholarship scheme, co-curricular

Immersive and authentic
- 1-2 months in an oversea context
- Living in the host university
- Learning and serving with local students/volunteers
- Working in local NGOs and serving real people

Positioning and objectives

SL 1.0
(the service-learning subject)
- Social responsibility
- Empathy
- Linkage with an academic subject

Leadership 1.0
(Tomorrow's Leaders)
- Self-awareness and understanding
- Interpersonal skills

GLCE Programme
- To develop students' **global citizenship** and broaden their perspective on SL and civic engagement;
- To nurture students to become **SL Leaders** and Ambassadors; and
- To facilitate knowledge exchange, bring in new insights and **contribute to SL development of PolyU and HK**.

Our collaborating partners in the U. S.

University of Maryland at College Park (UMD)

Famous for leadership studies and civic engagement.

Brown University (Brown)

"Ivy League" university, with a long history of social activism and social justice.

University of Southern California (USC)

"College of the Year" in 2000 (Time Magazine) for active civic engagement.

Who we select?

- Overall academic performance
- SL subject grade
- Track record of community services
- Other achievements
- English proficiency and communication skill
- Potential and commitment to serve and lead
- Understanding of SL and social responsibility

Participants (n=12) *

Country of origin

- **All in Asia**
- China (HK) x 8, Kazakhstan x 2, Indonesia, South Korea

Gender

- All female

Year of Study

- Senior year x 11
- Junior year x 1

Disciplines

- Engineering x 4
- Health sciences x 5
- Language x 1
- Social work x 2

* Originally, 13 students were selected. One student was kicked out in the middle of the programme due to misbehavior.

Implementation

Selection

- Motivation to serve
- Potential to be a leader
- Selection by the host

Pre-exchange

Orientation workshop:
- Ice-break
- SL and cultural awareness

Exchange

- US exchange
- Weekly reflections
- Weekly vlogs
- Final report
- Assignments (by the host)

Post-exchange

- Debriefing
- Sharing to others
- Initiate a service project in group (40 service hrs)
- Service report

Host University	Exchange Period	No. of students
Brown	10 weeks	3
UMD	5 weeks	4
USC *	4 weeks in LA 4 weeks in HK	6 + 3 (USC)

Brown University (Providence, RI)

University of Maryland (College Park, MD)

Vlogs from the participants

USC Team – Service site: Skid Row in LA
UMD Team – The hosting office at UMD
Brown Team – The NGO and their clients

Academic content/ Instruction

Host	Brown	UMD	USC
Model	**Service placement** A well-developed fellowship program for American students	**Community-based learning** A learner-oriented program solely for our students	**Thematic SL** A structured program around the "Homelessness" theme
Learning components	Weekly training, guided reflections and assignments, one field trip	Topical learning, reflections, field trips	Weekly lectures, reflections, assignments, experiential learning activities around the theme
Interaction with American students	In the weekly meetings	Only in the 3-day alternative weekend	Learn and serve closely throughout the program

Service (Community)

Host	Brown	UMD	USC
Role	As an intern in one NGO	As a regular volunteer in one NGO	As a volunteer in three NGOs
Service target	Immigrant group (Haitian)	Low-income groups	Homeless people
Working pattern & nature	30-35 hours/week Frontline services with autonomy (teaching) and office admin.	15-20 hours/week Frontline services in different units	15-20 hours/week Unplanned frontline services
Interaction with others in service	Sufficient interaction with the NGO staff and clients	Some interaction with clients, local volunteers, and the NGO staff	Few interaction with clients and the NGO staff

Data – for programme evaluation and research

|	Written		Interviews		
	Weekly Reflection (~800 words)	Completion Report (~1500 words)	Pre-Exchange (30–40 mins)	Post-Exchange (30 mins–1hr)	Post-Prog. (45 mins–1.75 hr)
Brown (2 PolyU students)	18 essays	2 essays	2 audio files	2 audio files	2 audio files
UMD (4 PolyU students)	16 essays	4 essays	4 audio files	4 audio files	4 audio files
USC (6 PolyU students)	16 essays	6 essays	6 audio files	6 audio files	6 audio files

FINDINGS - 1

ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING

Dissonance and Civic Learning

The GLCE

is a special type of service-learning, involving international exchange
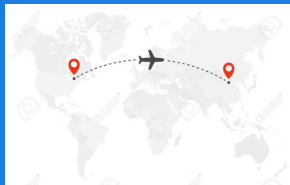
takes place in **developed, urban settings** (cosmopolitan cities in the USA)

Were the program and its settings effective for service-learning?

What outcomes did the program actually yield?

Was the experience impactful for students?

Focus on:
● dissonances
● civic learning and,
● interesting findings

(COGNITIVE) DISSONANCE

Disorienting experiences or critical incidents which, when processed rationally through reflection, can lead to **deep learning, revision of assumptions, attitude or behavior,** or **commitment to act**

CIVIC LEARNING

Encompasses knowledge, skills, and behavioral dispositions that make a person willing and able to promote public good, e.g., **awareness of social issues, empathy, prejudice reduction, community engagement**

Basis of findings

	Weekly Reflection (~800 words)	Completion Report (~1500 words)	Pre-Exchange (30–40 mins)	Post-Exchange (30 mins – 1hr)	Post-Prog. (45 mins – 1.75 hr)
	18 essays	2 essays	2 audio files	2 audio files	2 audio files
Brown (2 PolyU students)	16 essays	4 essays	4 audio files	4 audio files	4 audio files
UMD (4 PolyU students)	16 essays	6 essays	6 audio files	6 audio files	6 audio files
USC (6 PolyU students)	Weekly Reflection (~800 words)	Completion Report (~1500 words)	Pre-Exchange (30–40 mins)	Post-Exchange (30 mins – 1hr)	Post-Prog. (45 mins – 1.75 hr)

Prompt questions to guide student reflections

Weekly reflections	1.	Describe: What did you do this week? <mark>Tell us one thing you would like to share most, an exciting, uncomfortable, or challenging experience</mark>.
	2.	Evaluate: How did you feel about this experience/incident?
	3.	Analyze: Why did you feel that way? What does this tell you about yourself or assumptions you may have?
	4.	Learn: What can you learn from this experience/incident? Is it important to you? Why or why not?
	5.	(*After Week 2*) Follow up on last week's reflection: How is that experience going? Any update, change of view, or new understanding?
Completion report	1.	What have you done and achieved in this exchange?
	2.	Describe a typical day for you during the exchange.
	3.	Apply "DEAL" model for critical reflection to share your experience in the following aspects: civic, cultural, personal, academic/professional.
	4.	Did you encounter anything in this exchange that was surprising or unexpected? What, how, and why?
	5.	How would you compare your previous service-learning subject experience and its influence on you with this service-learning exchange program? Elaborate.

See:
Ash, S.L., & Clayton, P.H. (2004). "The articulated learning: An approach to guided reflection and assessment." *Innovative Higher Education 29*(2), 137-154.

Cosmopolitan cities can be fertile grounds for dissonances and civic learning.

Experiencing urban poverty and other social issues in cities like
Hong Kong led students to see domestic problems with fresh eyes.

# How we used the data set to research on dissonances & civic learning:

> Qualitative case study

> Small group sample (n=12)

> Framework: *Transformative Learning Theory* (Mezirow 1991, 1994)

In adult learning, disorienting experiences that are processed rationally can provoke fundamental changes in perspective and discovery of meaning.

> Process:
Content analysis → inductive coding→ parallel coding

Dissonances in the cities

Types	Sample
Socio-civic [24 items] -problems & issues in society, its organization, politics, and economy	"It shocked me when I realized (that there) is still strong racism against black people."
Cultural [20 items] -characteristics, beliefs, and way of life/doing of locals	"It was my first time to closely encounter another religion… I was surprised to hear that misfortune made their faith stronger when I would expect contrary reaction."
Academic [7 items] -about university learning, persons, or institutions	"I realized the local students read about politics. I hate to admit that I am indifferent to it. I decided to read more articles about politics."
Personal [4 items] -related to participants' specific character, views, background	"I have difficulty empathizing with the homeless. My parents got out of poverty through hard work, (so I think) I should not pity the poor."
Physical [2 items] -material environment & set up, including infrastructure	"We missed a bus and needed to wait for more than two hours… The transportation system here is challenging for me."
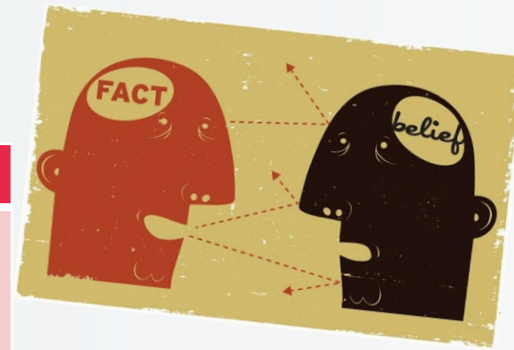
In sum,
➢ There were 5 types of dissonances

➢ These are less than the types experienced in developing countries (cf. Kiely 2005)

➢ Socio-civic dissonances numbered most

Socio-civic dissonances, examples

I was so shocked to find a community of homeless… The hygiene there is I think as bad as in some developing countries… So many flies, homeless eating leftover bread and searching bins. I became aware that there are many disabled people among them. –T

This really tested my ability to empathize and understand people… I couldn't help but think that the situation was partly their fault… I thought that only mentally ill people and children deserve to be helped, adults are responsible for their own situation. –I

In Cambodia, people were underprivileged even though they had jobs because of low income and the country's history. Generally, they were poor but not "hungry", and more stable…
What I saw here made me extremely sad and upset, and is harder to empathize with…
Aggressive behavior, mental health, drug abuse… their problems were so complicated. It scares me to think, if a well-developed country does not have the answer to such a problem, then other countries probably do not have the answer to the problem either, even if they have a lot of resources and development. –Y

Interesting findings from socio-civic dissonances

➢ **Urban poverty in the host cities caused real shock** (i.e., homelessness, plight of low income families, substance abuse, mental disease, social isolation).

➢ **"First-world expectations"** contributed to the shock students experienced during the exchange.

I never thought these injustices could take place in a well-developed and strong country. –L

I never knew the homeless situation could be so severe in one of the richest cities in the world. –J

I watch a lot of American TV shows and influencers in YouTube, and these made me have huge expectations. I feel uncomfortable because I thought a developed country should not have a problem with homelessness. –Y

➢ **A promising pattern:** There was a spontaneous & recurring tendency for students to relate dissonance-causing realities in the host cities to their home city…

"privileged places"

"cosmopolitan cities"

"commercial world"

"developed countries"

"capitalized metropolitans"

Exploring the issue of gentrification in Baltimore caused interior struggle.
Gentrification also happens in Hong Kong. My first thought was, this is very bad, the developer should not do this. However, I do want more modernized communities, cleaner streets, and popular shops, and I think some buildings in old parts of the city should be renovated. But considering the interest of the poor who cannot return to their original home, should I still support re-development? Is there a balance that can be struck?
I do not have an answer to this yet. –L

(**Consumerism**) Hearing about Hurricane Matthew and the discussion about socio-political issues hit me hard. I felt ashamed coming from a privileged country. We consume too much energy and cause irreversible damages to the earth, global warming, extreme weather, and natural disasters...
Developing countries that consume less suffer most. I want to lessen use of plastics, reduce my carbon footprint, and influence my family and friends about this. –C

Homelessness is not limited to L.A. but is a challenge that many cities face. Knowledge I gained from this program can somehow be applied to the homeless situation in Hong Kong. Both cities share similar causes of homelessness, such as high housing prices. –U

The tendency to link social realities in US cities to HK suggests that dissonances and learning from the exchange are *relevant* and *transferable* to home.

Civic learning outcomes

Socio-civic dissonances which led students to reconsider realities back home

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*Service-learning this time made me aware of social issues in developed countries,
and reminded me to serve my own community in Hong Kong. -T*

More sophisticated understanding of social problems

✷

I struggled about why poor people rely on government aid and not find a job or work harder. Many Americans have this struggle as well. This exchange reminded me how macro factors can affect individuals. In HK, we also tend to blame the poor and seldom try to understand how the environment can hinder people from escaping poverty. –L

Ideas for community work, inspired by host city volunteers & Institutions

✷

I asked the (soup kitchen) chef why he insisted on cooking different dishes instead of giving out donated food. I learned from him that offering options to the homeless gives them a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy, and thus promotes psychological well-being. –U

Discovering the social relevance of academic learning

✷

I discovered the significance of media visibility & internet presence for NPOs to attract volunteers & donations, create public trust, & reach potential partners… Since they do not have a full-time programmer, I decided to maintain the website for them after the exchange.–R

What did **WE** learn?

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS of the GLCE Program for Service-learning courses which involve foreign participants (ISLs), or have urban venues (DSLs)

➢ **Urban poverty & other social issues can cause very powerful dissonances.**
Hence, students need emotional support. *We suggest:*
- mid-trip conversation with each participant
- post-trip conversation to follow up powerful or unresolved dissonances

➢ Although students experienced powerful dissonances, **only 5/12 students linked some dissonances to concrete changes in perspective, attitude, or action**. Besides, students did not always realize that social issues they saw in the host cities also exist in HK.
We suggest to help students intentionally consider these matters, e.g.,
-during pre-trip debriefing: challenge them to relate what they will experience overseas to home
-in reflective activities, include appropriate prompt questions, e.g.,
Am I aware of similar issues at home?
What did I learn during the exchange that I can apply back home?
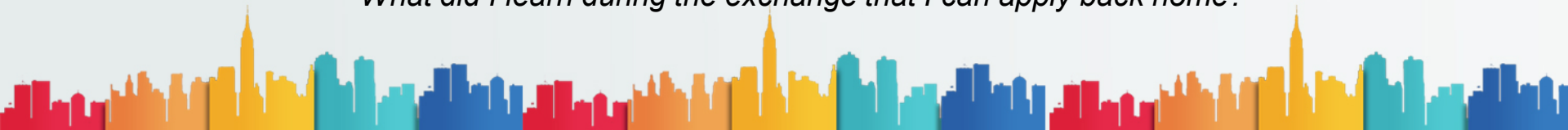
➢ Students had **"first-world expectations"** which intensified dissonances.
We noted, besides, occasional **unbalanced views on social issues,** based on limited knowledge or exposure gained from the exchange.

(An inherent danger in short-term international programs)
*Students come away thinking that they know much about the host country
from direct experience. They may fail to realize that their exposure has
been limited, and reinforce or form stereotypes about the country they visited.*

*It shocked me to realize that US people still have strong racism against black people, decades after emphasizing human rights
and equality… A black student shared her experience with us privately about how she was treated. She said that discrimination still
happens in Brown University. She was not invited to certain events, and may not be the student leader for some clubs. -C*

*We had a community walk in the district to explore the issue of gentrification, guided by a community activist fighting
for racial equality and social justice, we learned a lot. The district was monopolized by Johns Hopkins University…
In the name of developing a nicer community, it gets funding from the government and exploits the community. For example,
it introduced chain stores to the district and earns from these businesses while expelling the original residents who cannot
afford rising prices… As our guide said, this was not an urban renewal project, but a community REMOVAL project! -Z*

We suggest:
-during pre-trip activities, forewarn students about these dangers
-staff-assisted group reflection, to exchange ideas & hear different perspectives about issues

To conclude about civic learning…

Service-learning programs – whether domestic or international – can be potentially impactful and critical experiences for students.

However, mere exposure or direct experience is not enough for them to derive deep, fruitful learning.

The program should include elements that help students rationally process what they experience and draw practicable conclusions.

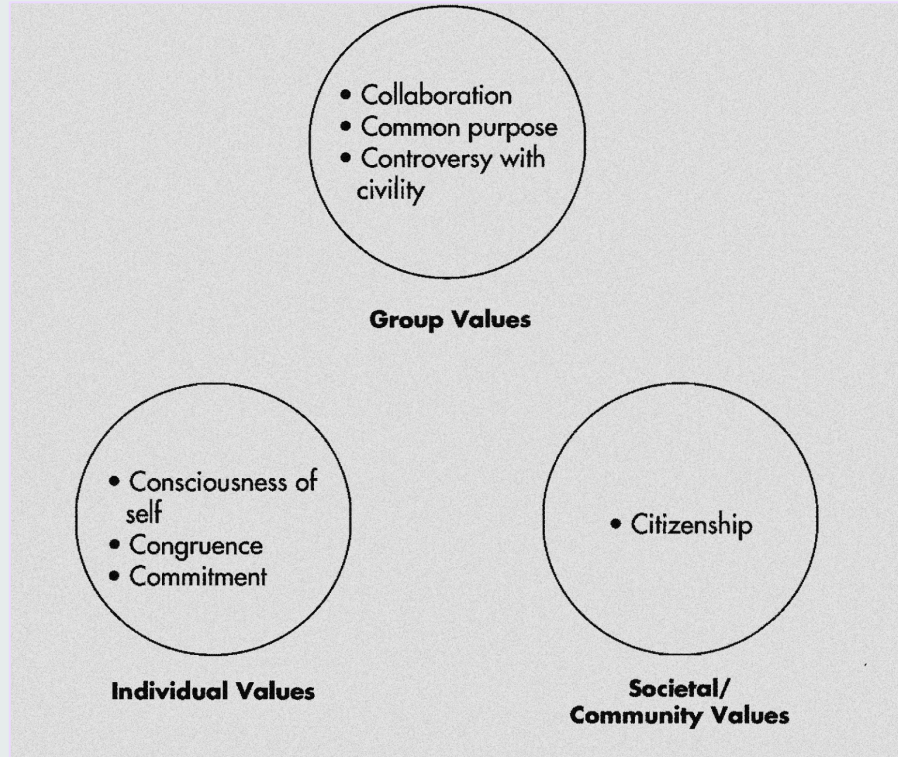Staff facilitation/accompaniment is valuable for personalized learning.

FINDINGS - 2

ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING
Leadership Development

Social Change Model of Leadership Development

Group Values
- Collaboration
- Common purpose
- Controversy with civility

Individual Values
- Consciousness of self
- Congruence
- Commitment

Societal/Community Values
- Citizenship

➤ promotes **socially responsible leadership** for making positive social changes.

Note. In Astin & Astin. (1996). A social change model of leadership development guidebook. p. 22.

Social Change Leadership Model – Individual level

✓ **100% demonstrated evidence of leadership development at this level.**
- Consciousness of self
- Congruence
- Commitment

➢ Aware of what motivated them, critically reflected on what hindered them to take action—their struggles, emotions, weaknesses, perceptions and values;

➢ When their values were conflicted with the status quo or the group norms, they tried to act congruently to their values or seek alternative ways out;

➢ Strengthened commitment to serve the community.

Y in USC Team

Aware of what hindered her to empathize the homeless people:

My dad almost became homeless in his teenage life… he could get out of that situation…those people who were not able to get out just because they were not trying hard enough. (Completion Report)

Fear of experiencing complicated and severe situation :

there were moments that I thought it was too much for me. I almost wanted to give up… I realized that I do like doing service but I'm not mentally ready to face people with severe problems in real life. (Completion Report)

Y in USC Team

A year after the exchange, committed to engage in difficult service/serving unpopular groups:

I believe that I'm capable of doing that.... I realized that I can probably solve all the problems as long as I am willing to do it.... the exchange gives me more confidence because I feel like: Oh, I've done this difficult project already, so other stuff becomes easier now. (Post-programme Interview)

Social Change Leadership Model – Group level

✓ **67% (8/12) of students demonstrated development at this level.**
- Collaboration
- Common purpose
- Controversy with civility

➢ recognized the importance of and their willingness to collaborate with others and work towards a common purpose

➢ "form a provocative and engaging vision and then persuade others to adopt this vision as their own" (Astin & Astin, 1996)

➢ respecting others' viewpoints, air openly and handle controversy with civility

I in USC Team

All worked towards the common goal and took their initiatives to contribute:

We tried to be the leader or initiator of the project. All of us were really motivated to do something serious... it's really about responsibility… not trying to push our own ideas for others. We really tried to come up the best idea, what else we could do, and how to do it better.
(Post-programme Interview)

Social Change Leadership Model – Community level

To responsibly connect with the community and work for **positive social change**, and the ability to adapt to the evolving environments and maintain the core functions. (Astin & Astin, 1996).

- ✓ **83%** (10/12) students reported that they **engaged** in different types of community services after the exchange
- ✓ **33%** (4/12) students **initiated**/planned to initiate their service projects by applying their professional knowledge or during the pandemic outbreak when there was a great shortage of masks
- ✓ **16%** (2/12) students involved in social activism or political **advocacy** activities

A in UMD Team: Leadership is…

Before:

> make an appropriate division of labour… ensure the members get their parts done... (Post-programme Interview)

After:

> Leadership is about empowerment.... A good leader doesn't control or manipulate others, trust is built by constant communication, leadership is not top-down or hierarchical…

> "Why should we become a leader?"… bringing a positive change. (Completion Report)

Other outcomes

Academic/Professional

Personal

Cultural

This has been the most rewarding 10 weeks of my life. -E

I started to really think about social work or service-learning as my future career too. -M

I learned about the American style through learning and serving with the USC students. -K

My personal growth during this exchange period was amazing, it really shapes me as a person. -Y

What students liked

- Cross-cultural, immersive experience
- Inquiry-based teaching and learning
- Experiential learning, direct conversation
- Service opportunities

Challenges

- Senior years/Fresh graduates
- Substantial service opportunities
- Interaction with locals
- Political unrest and Covid-19

Reflection (as a programme coordinator)

- Before the exchange – mix and match, team building, manage expectation (about the service part)
- Make programme objectives explicit and concrete – even for motivated students
- During the exchange – Don't hand over the learning to the partners
  > emotional support, facilitate students to relate, connect and apply
  > give space to reflect, filter, no plan is a good plan
- Post-exchange – be realistic and focused on leadership
  > set a framework but don't set a limit (autonomy)
  > goal setting for the future (continuous engagement)
- Mutual exchange to achieve win-win and greater learning gains

Considerations in ISL program design

- Make learning objectives explicit and concrete – even for motivated students
- ISL program can cause different types of dissonances, but not all can turn into positive learning outcomes > need instructor's guidance
- Peer learning can be powerful (esp. a multi-cultural group)
- Don't stop at the peak: Re-entry, post-SL debriefing or assign-ment are important for continuous engagement
- Leadership development – learning in practice

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Thank you!

Quotes for two-way exchange

This two-month experience had a huge impact on my future civic engagement. It made me realize that in the future, regardless of what I do, I have to be involved with something that help address certain individuals' needs in a way that builds **a mutually empowering relationship**.
 – C (USC student)

I thought most of the social issues in developed countries can only be solved a t a governmental level.
After working in CCHA… they need caring and services to change their ment ality, only change the policies cannot help. –K (PolyU students)