2019

The pursuit of compassionate hope: repurposing the University through the Sustainable Development agenda

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https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/handle/10026.1/20855

10.1007/978-3-030-13566-9
Palgrave

The pursuit of compassionate hope – repurposing the University through the Sustainable Development Goals agenda

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Abstract

Warwick, Morgan and Miller offer an important exploration of higher education for hope within the civic context of global social justice and environmental points of crisis. Focusing on the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for societal change they look at ways that education can incubate hope through students' compassionate civic action for the common good. By looking at the place based pedagogical approach of service-learning, this chapter concludes with a case study of emerging practice at a UK University and highlights key challenges to engaging students with creating more sustainable futures in a local context.

Introduction

This chapter looks at hope from the perspective of a positive anticipation that civic life in the future will improve. It considers the role of Higher Education in developing compassionate hope within the context of unprecedented global environmental, social and economic points of crisis. These planetary wellbeing challenges implicate humanity and bring into question common sense notions of prosperity, progress and the very nature, form and purpose of the world's dominant formal education systems. As David Orr (1992) warned; are formal education institutions such as Universities merely equipping graduates to be proficient in pillaging the planet?

In response, here we consider how, through its pedagogy, a primary role of universities can be returned to the civic vision of making a positive contribution to the common good. This is framed with specific reference to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and global agendas for societal transformation such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of 17 global environmental and social justice priorities for worldwide implementation during 2016-2030 (United Nations 2015). It is argued that the purpose of preparing graduates for contributing to these goals within their own civic and professional lives requires a significant rethinking of Higher Education, as set out by the

UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2014a).

Of particular interest in this chapter is how students can be engaged with the SDGs by contributing to the common good within a localised community context whilst also maintaining a sense of hope. This is because of our concern that without careful consideration, educational immersion in the complexity and scale of these global sustainability challenges and their manifold threats to well-being carries the risk of generating in our students the opposite of hope, and instead a sense of pessimism about their world and its future. What the chapter argues is that it is vitally important for Sustainability in Higher Education to be of a form that is both applied and participatory in engaging learners as 'agents of change' personally making a positive contribution to addressing these challenges within their own locality. Using the case of the University of Plymouth in the UK, this chapter highlights the potential of the place based pedagogical approach of service-learning to support civic engagement by the academy. In all of this, our purpose is to move towards repurposing Higher Education to empower students with the hope of a positive anticipation that more sustainable futures are possible.

The compassionate hope mandate: addressing global threats to well-being

In recent years attention has returned at an international level to Higher Education's contribution to the 'Common Good', particularly in relation to concepts such as 'development', 'global citizenship' and 'sustainability' (Bourn & Morgan, 2010). Thus,

> *universities have begun to address their role and relationship to the wider world beyond merely the recruitment of students and the sharing of academic debates. This change has come in part from the influence of globalisation, the impact of new technology and increased economic mobility. But it has also emerged from some recognition of issues concerning sustainable development partly catalysed by student interest in world issues.*

(Ibid., p. 268)

The backdrop to this burgeoning interest is increasing scientific evidence and civic concern over the current state of the world and unprecedented global threats to well-being. Our graduates today are growing up in the cacophony of a globalised media output and educational curricula that speaks of interconnected points of crisis such as poverty,

starvation, violence, inequality, prejudice, xenophobia, climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, species extinction, pollution, and plastic waste. Implicated in all these problems are human beings. It is *us*; our lifestyle and civic choices, our professions within industry, technology, production and services that is behind these planetary issues. Consequently, it is *us* who are increasingly being asked to lead change in order to be part of a net positive response rather than merely doing less badly. Universities are increasingly framed as having a key role to play in this process of societal transformation and civic renewal (Sterling et al 2013).

UNESCO's 2015 report, *Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?* reflects this vision of education as an essential common good, recognising the need for it to contribute to both environmental sustainability and social justice. As Irina Bokova claims in its Forward:

> *The world is changing – education must also change. Societies everywhere are undergoing deep transformation and this calls for new forms of education to foster the competencies that societies and economies need … Education must be about learning to live on a planet under pressure … [and help to] weave together the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. (UNESCO 2015:3)*

The executive summary goes on to state:

> *The notion of common good allows us to go beyond the influence of an individualistic socioeconomic theory inherent to the notion of 'public good'. It emphasizes a participatory process in defining what is a common good, which takes into account a diversity of contexts, concepts of well-being and knowledge ecosystems. Knowledge is an inherent part of the common heritage of humanity. Given the need for sustainable development in an increasingly interdependent world, education and knowledge should, therefore, be considered global common goods. (ibid., p. 11)*

So this all points towards not merely the need for 'more' education but fundamentally asks the question what 'kind' of education is required. It proposes that of vital importance at this time is a form of civic education that draws out from us all a sense of hope and compassion. An education that engages learners in actively considering how they can make a positive contribution to the well-being of other people and the natural environment. However, this notion of higher education as sustainable civic engagement needs greater clarification if it is to be both realisable and practically actionable.

Mapping out the hope for sustainable development

A sense of hope that we can each improve the future well-being of ourselves, each other and the environment is what underpins the concept of sustainable development. The movement towards sustainable development has grown in scale and pace over the last 30 years. It is a term that arguably rose to global political prominence in 1987 with the publication of *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987). This proposed a global agenda for change, and defined the desired sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987:41). This concept of development that involves a transformation of society to satisfy humanity's needs and heal its relationship to the environment has more recently led the United Nations to adopt its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015). This outlines 17 integrated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as summarised in Table 1.

Goal 1	End extreme poverty in all forms by 2030
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Table 1 The UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015)

The SDGs set out the hope for humanity to systemically address the manifold global threats to well-being within a generation. Whilst few can disagree with its vision, many will rightly question how realistic this level of societal change really is. Sterling et al (2017) argue that in order to achieve this blueprint for a more sustainable future for all we require a revolution within educational provision that nurtures a global citizenry with a common set of change-leadership competencies. For example, UNESCO (2017) assert eight cross-cutting key competencies for sustainability as being:

- Systems thinking
- Anticipatory
- Normative
- Strategic
- Collaboration
- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness
- Integrated problem-solving

Nurturing these competencies and attributes has become the key focus of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as asserted within the UN SDG 4 for the provision of a quality education that includes the specific target:

> *"4.7. By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development." (United Nations 2015)*

In support of achieving this ESD target, UNESCO has published its Roadmap for Implementing a Global Action Plan (GAP), with the overarching goal to "generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development" (UNESCO 2014a:14). The GAP has two objectives:

1. To reorient education and learning so that everyone has the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that empower them to contribute to sustainable development; and
2. To strengthen education and learning in all agendas, programmes and activities that promote sustainable development. (UNESCO 2014a:14)

The strategies to achieve these objectives are to: build new momentum through voluntary commitments by stakeholders; form networks of key partners; provide a platform for debate through a global forum of stakeholders; and showcase good practice. In addition, in May 2015, the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, was adopted at the World Education Forum by over 1,600 participants from 160 countries, representing the commitment of the education community to SDG4. This framework stated strong support for implementation of the GAP, and that:

> *"Quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education." (UNESCO 2016:9)*

Support for the GAP and ESD is broadened by the understanding that education is an important tool to support the achievement of all the other Sustainable Development Goals (ICSU 2015). In this way it can be seen that globally there is a plethora of mandates, blueprints and declarations to highlight the need for societal change and that these all at least imply, if not explicitly state, the need for compassion for others and for nature. Educational institutions including universities are repeatedly seen to hold a key role to play in preparing people to participate in this transformational process.

Higher Education for the Common Good?

Much has been written about the role of higher education specifically in attaining more sustainable futures (Sterling et al 2013, Jones et al 2010, Blewitt and Cullingford 2004). Higher Education institutions (HEIs) have increasingly sought to declare support for sustainability in their curricula, research, campus and operations. Global initiatives have included a World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century (UNESCO 1998), the Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education (Talloires Network 2005), and the SDG Accord, led by the EAUC and ACTS on behalf of a global alliance of tertiary and higher education sustainability and student networks (Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges 2017). Since its launch in 2017, the SDG Accord has been signed up to by 94 Higher Education Institutions.

These are very welcome developments in many respects. However, we feel that there is a potential danger with integrating sustainability in the curriculum if it is mere didactic transmission of knowledge about the sheer global scale and urgent nature of the environmental and social justice *problematique*. Students might understandably respond to such an approach with the hopelessness of being 'overwhelmed', leading to counterproductive affective responses of either denial and disconnect; or pessimism leading to despair, apathy and a sense of powerlessness. These represent negative, and arguably avoidable, consequences of the current discourses that might actually exacerbate an emerging mental health crisis amongst young people, which is increasingly apparent in HE (YouGov, 2016). With this in mind, it is surely incumbent on those engaged in Higher Education to look for strategies to ameliorate this situation.

Consequently, we are concerned to direct these sustainable and civic ambitions for HE to contribute to the Common Good in a more positive direction; towards the hope of optimism and agency. Furthermore, we feel that there are important pedagogical reasons for reorienting learning about sustainability towards a more active, 'localised' focus, which nurtures the cognitive and procedural knowledge and skills necessary for engaging as active participants in sustainable change. We propose that it is possible to address synergistically the 'good of the student' and the 'common good' in a mutually compatible manner by shifting attention towards a 'real-world' and participatory orientation in which students are able to exercise their agency in a meaningful context. Taking up this challenge, the remainder of this chapter critically considers the implications of such a re-purposing of education with regard to pedagogy and institutional learning.

The pedagogy of community engagement

There is currently a noticeable paradigm shift within Higher Education towards 'learning-centered [sic.] higher education' & the 'scholarship of teaching and learning' (Fink, 2013). Mirroring the societal shift in emphases towards sustainable development, this educational reform has been prompted by concerns expressed by faculty, wider society, and, importantly, students themselves as to the appropriate form that teaching and learning should take in Higher Education (Drayson 2015). This is giving rise to a recognition that

> *"current practices in higher education are not succeeding in generating the kind of learning among graduates that societal leaders believe are important for individuals and for society in the twenty-first century" (Fink 2013:3)*

Fink proposes that the solution is to offer 'Significant Learning' opportunities which are 'active and experiential' and "that makes a difference in how people live - and the kind of life they are capable of living" by

- enhancing our individual lives
- enhancing our social interaction with others,
- becoming more informed and thoughtful citizens,
- preparing us for the world of work

This mirrors the findings of research stemming from the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD; 2005-2014) that points towards the need for ESD that is experiential, applied, active, participatory, collaborative and creative (Tilbury 2011, UNESCO 2014b).

Repurposing higher education to meet the challenges of sustainability very much supports the notion of pedagogical approaches that are change oriented and *in place*; occurring beyond the classroom and in the wider community. This introduces the emerging pedagogy of Place-Based Education (PBE) which orients learning towards the locality within which the students are living and towards the good of the local community and/or environment. Place-based education:

> *"advocates 'hands-on', collaborative, participatory and project-based inquiry approaches exploring locally relevant 'real-world' issues with a view to understanding and taking action and thereby contributing to the improvement of the home locality. Furthermore, they will almost certainly advocate cross-curricular and inter- and even trans-disciplinary approaches to learning."*

(Morgan, 2010:86)

There is a large literature on PBE, especially in relation to sustainability education (e.g. Powers 2004, Sipos et al. 2007, Semken and Freeman 2008, McInerney et al. 2011, Wiek et al. 2014, Power et al. 2014). As Sipos et al. (2007:70) state: "students' localized places of study, work and recreation are the centers [sic.] of their experiences that help teach them how the world works and how they fit into that world."

Gruenewald embraces the normative aspect of place-based education to enhance social and ecological wellbeing (2003):

> *"Place-based pedagogies are needed so that the education of citizens might have some direct bearing on the wellbeing of the social and ecological places people actually inhabit. (p3) … [and] … A critical pedagogy of place aims to contribute to the production of educational discourses and practices that explicitly examine the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education. It is a pedagogy*

linked to cultural and ecological politics, a pedagogy informed by an ethic of eco-justice (Bowers, 2001), and other socio-ecological traditions that interrogate the intersection between cultures and ecosystems. (p.10)

Thus, we feel that Place-Based Education represents a fruitful approach or strategy for realising the civic education goal of engendering empowered, compassionate students capable of being real 'agents of change' in their places of study and beyond. This relates strongly to the pedagogical practice of service-learning discussed below.

The sustainability of service-learning

Service-learning refers to a form of PBE in which students engage in the praxis of compassionate community action and reflexive contemplation within the curriculum.   More specifically the US National and Community Service Act (1990) defines service-learning as:

"a learning experience where students actively participate in service experiences that meet a real community need; the service enhances what is taught in the classroom and is integrated into the students' academic curricula; and the program provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity. (cited in Yorio and Ye 2012:10)

Service-learning is distinct from other forms of extra- or co-curricular service such as volunteer work, in that it links directly with the learning outcomes of curricula and there is mutuality and reciprocity between campus and community.

Service-learning has long been established within the North American Higher Education model and is being increasingly incorporated into curricular activities in many other countries such as the UK, Australia and China. Amongst the claims for service-learning are that student learning will be enhanced and that the graduate skills required in the 21st century will be more likely achieved through community engagement rather than through a solely-classroom-based education. These graduate skills include critical thinking, creative problem solving and working collaboratively with others. Langstraat and Bowdon (2011:9) argue that in addition:

"It is safe to say that issues of empathy and compassion arise in every service-learning course where experiential learning and human relationships are valued."

The theoretical underpinning of service-learning is often situated within Dewey's philosophy of education (see Giles and Eyler 1994, Herman 2015), with it being seen as a key means of producing this experiential education, i.e. the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience.

A key aspect of our notion of civic hope is students developing through these educative experiences a greater sense of personal agency and the capacity to contribute to the more positive civic futures that they are in anticipation of. This is very much connected to notions of self-efficacy. The enhanced student engagement demonstrated by service-learning initiatives can be situated within Bandura's social cognitive theory (1989, 2015), which foregrounds self-efficacy, a key characteristic within sustainability education competency development. This views humans as producers *and* products of their social systems, enabled by intentionality, forethought, self-regulation and self-reflection. In turn, self-efficacy beliefs affect motivation, achievement, learning and career choices and refer to capabilities "within a given context and to accomplish a specific, related goal" (Leong 2007:29). Evidence suggests that service-learning is perceived to be efficacious and beneficial from both the student perspective (Caspersz and Olaru, 2017), and in terms of cognitive and affective benefits (Davis, 2013).

Another core element of compassionate hope is the space to be contemplative and to reflexively consider what is being gained from the experience of civic engagement. This phase of contemplation and deliberation, or reflection on experience, as described in Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984), is also recognised by educational theorists as being a vital element within transformative learning approaches (Mezirow 1997). In a study of a US teacher education service-learning programme, Lake *et al*. (2015:108) report how the students involved:

> "noted a variety of social-moral skills taught or reinforced during the service-learning projects, such as working together cooperatively, helping others, encouraging, sharing, listening, empathising, communicating, and responding appropriately to others."

It is also suggested that service-learning can advance the civic mission of universities at an institutional level, through developing partnerships with local and regional communities.

However, as Yorio and Ye (2012) highlight, the opportunities and challenges for embedding this approach include key issues familiar to those involved in any change implementation within HE, such as time pressures, incentive structures, and perceived risks of curriculum innovation (Korfmacher 1999).

This orientation around the local context also has benefits in terms of developing in students a stronger sense of 'place-identity' and 'place attachment' (Manzo and Devine-Wright 2013). Engaging students in positive local community action where they are studying can in turn go a long way towards breaking down any 'town versus gown' divisions and animosities that might exist. Furthermore, an emphasis on the local need not result in parochialism and a disregard for issues in other locations and across other scales, far from it. Indeed, advocates of PBE approaches such as service-learning emphasise how the global is often in evidence in the local which can, therefore, easily represent a stepping stone to, and indeed necessitates, examining global issues (Sobania, 2015; Thomashow, 1999, 2002).

With all these potential benefits identified, we now move on to outline an example of a higher education institution that has sought to integrate service-learning within the curriculum, and in so doing highlight some of the barriers and challenges of pursuing such reform.

The case of the University of Plymouth, UK

The University of Plymouth in the UK, is a post-1992 institution with over 21,000 students. Its strategic vision includes a commitment to provide an education that "makes a difference, improving local, national and global communities" (University of Plymouth 2018). With a growing reputation for expertise in Sustainability Education, in 2016 a curriculum development project set out to explore the potential for a new student learning opportunity via a service-learning pedagogical approach. This action research project aimed to:

- Assess the feasibility of the use of service-learning within a UK higher education environment; identifying limitations and benefits of this approach specifically within the context of Plymouth, and

- Identify the potential for service-learning to provide a new place-based learning opportunity for students across the city and local region with a particular focus upon Sustainability Education.

Pilot service-learning curriculum programmes investigated the learning impact and effective practice processes for student place based community action. These were implemented across three degree programmes: BA Education Studies, BA Illustration and BA Theatre and Performing Arts. Each programme used participatory and collaborative workshops for staff, students and community partners to co-design community action opportunities linked to specific sustainable development goals, and dialogic approaches to engage students in reflective and reflexive learning. A qualitative approach was used to research participants' experiences, with 20 students recruited to participate in semi-structured group interviews, to keep a reflective journal and complete a learning gain evaluation matrix.

The data from this curriculum innovation project underlines many of the positive themes highlighted in existing service-learning literature. Students commonly expressed a sense of empowerment from their service-learning experience as illustrated here:

> "when we are in lectures I love learning about what we have to do as educators, but also I feel really small amongst everyone else, I don't feel like I'm a teacher, but in that [service learning] moment I felt like I was an adult, I was teaching, I was doing well and the children looked up to me."

The evaluation matrices and reflective pieces contained a number of self-reported benefits with regard to personal development such as gaining confidence and self-efficacy through collaborating with peers and also developing social capital through working with new groups of people. The sense of community benefit also came out strongly, as illustrated in the following example:

> "they didn't do much stuff to do with [sustainability] in the school beforehand, and then when they left they seemed to take quite a lot away with them, and they seemed like they were going to actively tell their friends and things like that, so that was quite nice, that we'd made a difference to that one school."

There was a sense of enjoyment of the service-learning experiences; for the autonomy and sense of agency that they afforded. As one student reflected:

> *"it was really, really fun and just different from sitting in a lecture and learning, it was really engaging, and also I loved having to make up our own lesson, that was also really fun, I liked that freedom and trust as well."*

The benefit of a local, place-based approach was also appreciated by students when seeking to address a sustainable development goal that was global in scale:

> *"I think because it is so overwhelming and the problems are made to look so massive, you start to think there's absolutely no point. But I think once you make it more localised to people. So maybe what you can do within Plymouth while you're at university is to make a difference to the way you're living your life, and how then that might impact that one area. So rather than thinking I can't change the world with this one thing I'm going to do……. people need to think locally to be able to think well maybe I could start making a difference. Because it's too big for one person to think about a whole massive world of change. So if you can see how you can take little steps to change locally then maybe it becomes more of a reality that we could make a difference."*

These student voice statements underline and give support to the contention that service-learning can contribute to positive attributes of self-efficacy and civic optimism, helping students to avoid the sense of being overwhelmed, despairing and alienated by the enormity of global sustainability challenges.

However, this action research project has also highlighted a number of challenges and points of resistance when attempting to implement sustainable service-learning, as summarised in Figure 1. The desired pedagogical relational process was one of reciprocity where all three partners: staff, students and community members had a sense of co-construction, joint responsibility and mutual benefit. But, in a few instances, the community organisation, or the students working with them, reported the experience of feeling the other party had not delivered on the level of engagement and commitment nor all action outcomes that had been expected, and so were left with a sense of dis-satisfaction. In addition, the logistics of implementing such curricular innovations between the academic and the community organisations were perceived in certain instances as being too time consuming and fraught with duty of care risk, lack of control and uncertainty. For some, this resulted in participants being wary of committing to repeating the service-learning partnership in the future and a concern that bridges had been burnt and community partners lost. Lastly, the study observed some students struggling with the reflective and contemplative component of the service-

learning opportunity, unsure of how to draw out and articulate their learning gain from the experience and all too quickly falling back upon the familiar module learning outcomes as framed by their academic programme leader.
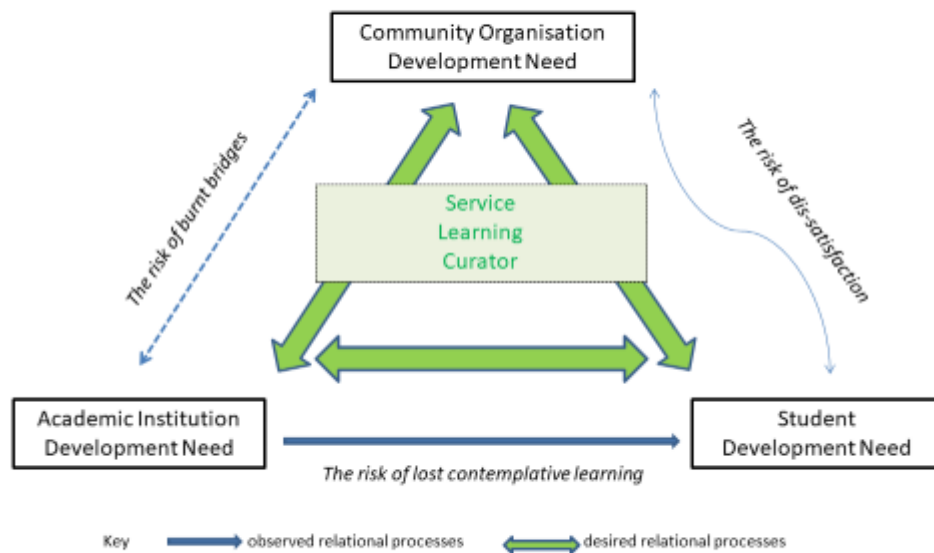

Figure 1 Service-learning at risk model

This case study has supported two important changes to the educational practice at Plymouth. Firstly, the recognition of the importance of having a central service-learning curator who guides and supports the academic, the student and also the community partner throughout the whole process. Having such a centrally based facilitation service also helps to ensure the formation and dissemination of guidelines for good practice as well as collaborative forums for new interdisciplinary community engaged learning opportunities to be instigated. Secondly, the research has helped highlight the importance of providing scaffolding for students that identifies the broad range of competencies and attributes that can be developed through experiential, active and participatory learning opportunities. This finding has helped endorse the development of the Plymouth Compass; a competency and attributes navigational tool for students that identifies aspects of civic, personal, professional and learning development, as detailed in Figure 2. This framework was collaboratively developed by students, alumni, academics and community partners and is now being trialled

across the University of Plymouth with a range of supporting materials and resources (University of Plymouth 2017).

THE CRITICAL AND CREATIVE LEARNER
1. Specialist subject knowledge & expertise
2. Critical thinking
3. Creativity & enterprise
4. Research skills & information literacy
5. Learning and study skills

THE COMPETENT AND CONFIDENT PROFESSIONAL
1. Self-organisation & management
2. Team-work & collaboration
3. Professional & ethical manner
4. Negotiation & persuasion
5. Effective verbal & written
6. communication

THE RESILIENT AND THRIVING INDIVIDUAL
1. Connect with others
2. Be active
3. Be empowered – you can make a difference
4. Keep learning
5. Give back in social & community life

THE SUSTAINABLE AND GLOBAL CITIZEN
1. Sustainability Awareness
2. Systems thinking
3. Openness to cultural encounters
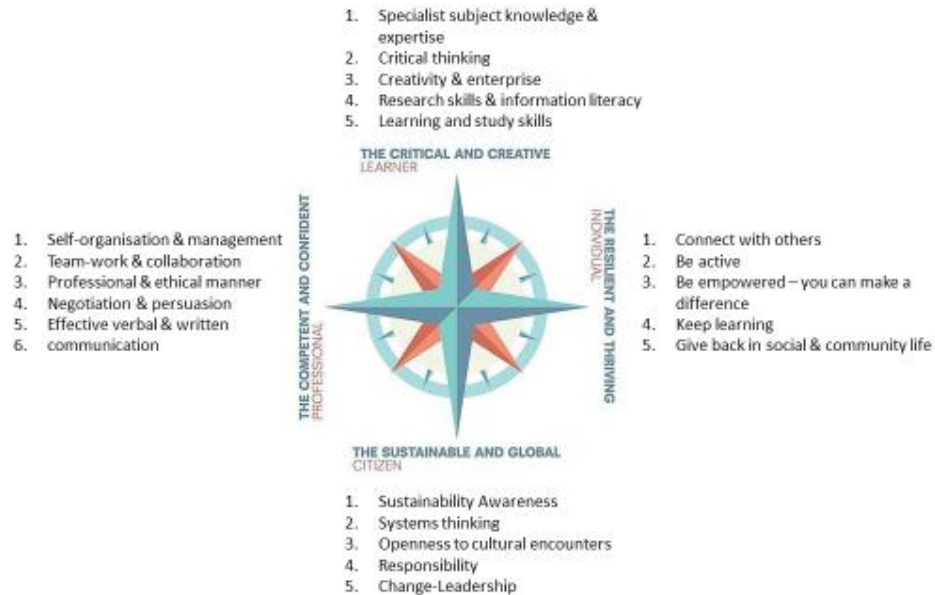4. Responsibility
5. Change-Leadership

Figure 2 The University of Plymouth Graduate Compass

All points of the compass are potential areas of benefit for students participating in service-learning. Although, in this particular pedagogical approach to re-purposing Higher Education, it is perhaps global and sustainable citizenship and resilient and thriving individual dimensions that best value the development of civic compassion and hope for the future.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the idea that within troubled times of global challenge, hope is an imperative within education (Orr 2011 Hicks 2014). Rather than being swamped by narratives of wicked global problems that can seem insurmountable; higher education institutions can provide localised learning spaces for the experience of sustainable change. Through the place based pedagogical approach of service-learning, students can have an affective positive experience of making a difference and making a contribution to the common good. Implied in this will be the need for universities to allocate resources to mitigate time pressures in developing service-learning experiences, to put in place incentive

structures for doing so, and allay the perceived risks of curriculum innovation, as identified by Korfmacher (1999). This story of one University's introduction of service-learning for sustainable development offers some important lessons, such as the need for collaborative, co-constructed and co-created approaches where civic engagement is developed *with* the community rather than *on* the community.   But crucially it also gives a lived experience that change is indeed possible and that higher education students can hold a positive anticipation of, and participation in making, more sustainable futures. Whilst early signs of this repurposing of higher education are very positive, much still needs to be done to realise this vision of developing the civic university and the empowering of graduates as compassionate change-leaders in their communities. The work continues.

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