

Review of Service-Learning and Social Entrepreneurship in Higher Education: A Pedagogy of Social Change, by Sandra L. Enos, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015 *

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This book has its focus on the education system at third level in the USA. However the material dealt with resonates well with discussions being held throughout the world, and thus is of interest to an audience beyond USA shores. The backdrop is the current discussion as to whether third level education should focus upon the marketplace (career focused training), or whether there is a need for third-level education facilities to offer learners the opportunity to make a greater contribution to society, to be more “community engaged” to learn skills which makes learners “better citizens”. With serious cut-backs in funding for education there is a growing debate as to the very purpose and future of education at this level.

The *engaged campus* describes the interaction played between a campus and its community, suggesting that learners need to “give back” to their communities. This on the face of it sounds logical. The counter argument is bedded in the belief that campus faculty engaged in such social interaction should do so on their own time, seeing the campus as “*an isolated community of scholars advancing scholarship and research not political and social agendas*”. The author introduces 2 streams to describe *campus engagement: Services Learning and Social Entrepreneurship*. She then explains these.

* URL: <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/275>

Services Learning links the work that a learner undertakes in pursuit of her/his academic career to those activities s/he engages in as an active citizen..that is to say academic credit are achieved for any community work the learning engages in. She defines it as “a course or competency-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in mutually identified service activities that benefit the community, (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and (c) an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility. Social Entrepreneurship is defined as populated by those who “are seen as society’s change agent, as a pioneer of innovation that benefits humanity”.

Overall the text is interesting in that it fires up the great debate as to the purpose of a third-level education...is it to be focused entirely upon the learner and his /her needs in terms of getting enough from the experience to guarantee a well-paid career. On the other hand is the debate that given the fact that much funding is put into third-level education, it is right and proper that society benefits in the form of at least some percentage of the range of modules being dedicated to the “engaged citizen” idea. Learners are citizens and as such ought to be educated into knowing what it means to be a citizen and what they can add to society during their third-level experience.

Learners should not just be educated about social entrepreneurship, but for social entrepreneurship. It is often the Business School that offers modules in the study area of social entrepreneurship, but the very nature of such a School with its focus upon Business Models that lack emotional intelligence and empathy might very well not be the best home for the furtherance of the “engaged citizen”

The author ends by suggesting that there is now a great opportunity to combine social, civic, and public purpose in third-level education. Third-level education has drifted from its original purpose of creating a graduate of calibre and awareness of his/her place in the world. Today that focus has switched to being very much a training centre for a specific career, leading to a situation whereby the graduate is seen by some as being rather self-focused. There is an opportunity to re-engage learners with society, in a way that will benefit both parties.