

Abstract:

Service Learning and Academic Excellence: The Latin American Experience

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Service-learning pedagogy integrates rigorous academic teaching and research with hands-on, effective community engagement activities. Students are offered the possibility of developing professional skills and acquiring valuable experience in real-life problem-solving projects along with community partners.

All around the world, Higher Education service-learning programs involve, for example, Architecture students designing and helping to build houses in deprived communities, Economic students developing micro-credit programs and offering business advice to small entrepreneurs, and interdisciplinary teams helping to care for environment and cultural heritage, promoting literacy and so much more.

Community engagement has traditionally been a strong feature of Latin American Universities. In the last decades, a growing movement towards service learning programs has been building bridges between researchers and community engagement leaders, producing outstanding programs with high impact both in the academic and the social fields.

Tapia, Argentinean Director of CLAYSS (Latin American Center for service-learning), will briefly present service-learning complex theoretical roots and methodological framework, and illustrate the theory with some Latin American practices relevant to this exercise of "South to South dialogue".