

Awareness Raising in Higher Education Through Real-Life Project Experiences

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Education should equip students to function meaningfully within the community. A teacher should feel the need to teach his/her students the attitudes everyone would like to see such as caring for others, positive interaction with others and being a useful member of the community. From an educational perspective, it is important for educators to provide opportunity for students to challenge their evolving values, interests and awareness for others to lay a foundation for more holistic personal development. The main problem is that personal development which belong to affective goals of higher education are not emphasized as much as academic goals. Therefore, this paper, with reference to The Community based Service Learning (Cbsl) Projects, presents a useful framework to serve personal development of the learners through awareness raising.

Purpose of the Study: This research looks at the emerging field of organizing community based service-learning (Cbsl) projects for school reform in the context of Eastern Mediterranean University School of Tourism and Hospitality Management and this study explores the utility of Cbsl projects as a teaching method of awareness raising.

Methods: This study consists of an action research project in the mode of case study method as it attempts to explore a unique phenomenon, Cbsl. It employs qualitative and quantitative research. Triangulation, which involve different methods to gather information, was preferred and the desired data were collected through pre-test, post-test, reflective papers and semi-structured interviews.

Findings and Results: The challenging and the dynamic nature of the service had great potential to transform students' lives. Findings are suggestive of a positive change in students' social, self and future awareness development due to Cbsl exposure. Reflective practices about project experien-

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ces made students think more deeply about issues that they normally did not think about.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The results of this study are noteworthy and clearly reveal the importance of Cbsl projects mainly followed by reflection. They are enriching experiences which should be a mandatory component of the curriculum. Implications from this study illuminate ways to improve the design of curriculum especially to meet the needs of community and at the same time raising awareness of students on real life issues. For all these reasons, students should be involved in some kind of community service under appropriate supervision in every stage of their education because applying Cbsl to students have the potential to provide a foundation for life-long learning.

Keywords: Cbsl (Community based service-learning) projects, awareness raising, instruction, reflection, curriculum

Awareness raising covers a variety of activities involving people achieving, understanding and realizing something new, visioning future, trying to change something in life or sharing their experiences with others. One of the most influential keys of awareness raising is the understanding and doing something for the community you are a part of. In this study, projects are organized and designed to appeal community in need and through project experiences, students digest new issues, express and share their feelings and gain new insights through reflective practices assigned by their teacher. These community *service projects enrich students' awareness by allowing them to sense community who need interest. Obviously, it is the teachers' role to create supportive web of interactions between students and wider community (Lovat & Clemet, 2008). Unfortunately, Kiziltepe (2010) argues that higher education is seen more like a private benefit rather than public good.*

Zlotkowski and Duffy (2010) believe that the variety of student reflections on different community settings make students struggle to make sense of what they see and hear which might not fit to their existing worldview. Therefore, these new adjustments throughout involvement in activities help students' maturity socially by providing a setting for student interaction, relationship formation, discussion and all these possibly motivate students to a new vision of reality. *Throughout the projects students are grounded in collaboration and this helps them engage the others in deeper and substantive ways. Additionally, project participant students start to care about others more due to the experiences they lived. Forging a learning community that values wholeness over division, students come to terms with multiple ways of knowing and with meaningful interaction (Ujama & El-Fikib, 2006; Rhoads, 1997). As the everyday world for the participant students change, as they see both the homes for retired and orphans, the questions are raised about their relation to the other human varieties such as homeless. In other words, they encounter the others through these project experiences.*

Awareness Raising

Designing and implementing Cbsl Projects was a good pedagogical practice which enhanced the competencies necessary for consciousness raising of youth on

certain issues orientating them more towards their community (Lovat & Clement, 2008; Morton & Troppe, 1996). Accordingly, project participant students started to criticize their own assumptions and developed an understanding of how they could be more inclusive of others (Carrington & Selva, 2010). Eyler and Giles (1999) concede that when one contacts people who experience a totally different life, he/she questions his/her own world. Actually, most of what project participants do in their daily ventures do not have meaning beyond immediate moment. Projects like these Cbsl projects let them go beyond the immediate situation and raise issues about the provision of care in our society (Keller et al., 2003). However, confronting the homeless and the project experiences helped students move their attention beyond the momentary self. Criticizing themselves for ignoring the diversity in their community, students challenged their assumptions and then developed and understood of the ways they can include others to their lives (Carrington & Selva, 2010).

Cbsl help students experience a variety of learning outcomes related to their community, as project phases challenge them to consider various values and commitments by making them rethink their lives and what they value. Rhoads (1997), who was involved in these kinds of projects, assert that "I know that I am nothing without others to care for and to care for me" (p.71). Similarly, Thayer-Bacon (2004) state that: "The relationship between individuals and others is a transactional relationship relying on a both/and logic that describes individuals affecting their social groups and social groups affecting their individuals, for we are all selves-in-relation-with-others" (p.22). The primary message conveyed at this point is that projects make the students wake up to the reality of a different and unseen side of life.

Nature of the Cbsl Projects Assigned: Projects referred in this study are Community based service-learning (Cbsl) projects which create opportunities for students to use their gifts and talents as resources as they work with group members and aim to help disadvantaged people to improve the quality of their local life. There are several examples to such projects. These range from donating flower packs to community parks, creating a public library and contributing materials to the disadvantaged personages.

The particular focus of this research is the Cbsl projects; which is organizing New Year parties for people living in the retirement house and homeless children living in SOS house in North Cyprus. Students are supposed to plan, implement and evaluate the organizations from the beginning to the end. The researcher's role is only a guide. To start with, students visited almost all the hotels and restaurants on the island to interview several people from tourism sector to find an appropriate location with reasonable price for their event. Then they took appointments from high career people for the sponsorship and met each sponsor until they collected enough amount of money. They found the chance to view their future employment locations. Later on, they started to prepare recreational activities such as dance, theatre, games, competitions and animation shows to entertain their guests. A group of students

visited shops and asked for presents to be distributed during the organization nights. There was a group mainly responsible for preparing brochures for the event and posting them throughout the campus. Another group was dealing with media, such as inviting channels, welcoming them on the day of the occasions, writing to newspapers before and after the event informing the public. The role of media was very significant as the sponsors always wanted their companies' names to be announced. One other committee was the technical committee who were responsible for the provision of sound system, microphone and everything the animation group required.

In this paper, the primary concern is with the contribution of Cbsl projects on its participants through being exposed to issues, situations and unfamiliar environments otherwise which they would not have opportunity to experience firsthand. While investing their out-of-class energy and time for community focused activity, actually, students raise awareness across a broad spectrum of life issues. Yildirim (2009) states that organizing different activities in and out of the classroom utilizes students' several values like moral, ethics, beliefs, character which are all found in the affective domain of learning. Similarly, Alacapinar (2008) advocates the use of projects to improve affective domain.

Community service is a wonderful pedagogy which can be used as an educational resource and has the potential to utilize the common good (Zlotkowski, 2010) and Boodorkos and Pataki (2009). Education should include activities like public work, community involvement and organizing (Burkhardt and Hudson, 2008). Therefore, it is important for college students to be involved in community needs and fulfill them (Kovarik, 2010).

Method

Research Design

This research employs case study method as it attempts to explore a unique phenomenon (raising more sensitive and responsible tourism students, with the help of time and assigned activity of community based service-learning project) in Eastern Mediterranean University, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. The study consists of the descriptive records of the research participants and statistical data. Tellis (1997) stresses the increasing usage of case studies in education which involves a system of action on a selected group of individuals. This case study is an exploratory one and makes use of interviews and documents like all other case studies. The major benefits of case studies are identified as the improvement of case and broadening of the students' horizons.

Sample

The students of this study are from different nationalities such as Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Nigerian and Iranian and their ages vary between 19-22. The researcher had 80 students in 3 different classrooms who take this English course and she invol-

ved them all in this project and used convenience sampling because of students' convenient accessibility and proximity. These students are studying in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management of Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus.

Research Instruments

In this case study, triangulation method of data collection is used. Data was collected using a variety of qualitative techniques including semi-structured interviews and reflective papers. Besides these, the pre-test and post-test provided quantitative results. Different data collection methods, qualitative or quantitative, possess different strength and weaknesses; therefore upon using multiple methods, the probability of creating a better picture out of the data is much higher (Daymon & Halloway, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Mason, 2002; Smith & Thorpe & Lowe, 1991).

Procedure

Pre-test is applied to 80 students at the beginning of the semester and consisted of items intended to gauge the participants' previous experiences, motivations, expectations and feelings in short, preconceptions of students' about community service. Then, the students are introduced Cbsl projects and worked on the projects until the end of the semester. Reflective essays are written and semi-structured interviews are conducted at the end of the semester upon the completion of the projects. Finally post-test was applied to all the students.

Reflective Method. Asking students to write reflective essays was important to find out the ideas which the experiences have stimulated and focus on them. Several students' similar expressions on the same idea signified ideas' generability and therefore gave way to potentially wider acceptability. Reflective papers were assigned to elicit responses to open ended reflection questions indicating what they learned as well as how they thought, felt and processed their experiences during the project. Reflective thinking is seen as a crucial skill which in turn enhances skills such as critical thinking (Kızılkaya & Aşkar, 2009). Students were asked to write answers to the given question sheet (including questions like their responsibilities during project, their feelings, difficulties, favorite part, the role of technology in collaboration and social interaction) in private at their homes to express their thoughts about the project. In this way representative excerpts were reported to signify what students drew from their service experiences. Students were given 2 weeks time to answer the questions on the question sheet and to submit it to their teacher.

Semi-structured Interview. To take further views on the similar issues, interviews are also carried out to allow students elaborate on more ideas during the dynamics of interviewing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the end of the course and individually with the students and was be designed to provide an additional means of reflection for the student participants and to allow for more in-depth discussion about the personal outcomes for each participant. Conducting the interviews permitted the students to think more about the experience. The interviews were held in the researcher's office one by one on appointment. Each interview lasted 10-15 minutes and all were recorded.

Before using the pre-test and post-test, there were several steps applied to the questionnaire to test validity. The survey instrument was originally developed in English and firstly it was back-translated to be employed in Turkish culture as well (Aulakh and Kotabe, 1993). This was necessary as many of the respondents would be Turkish (Turkish students were given Turkish version of the questionnaire and the foreign students were distributed the English version of it). After that, the study instrument was translated into the Turkish language by experts fluent in both English and Turkish. The verbal equivalence between the Turkish and English versions was checked through a back translation with other bilingual translators (Brislin and Pederson, 1976).

The newly developed survey was administered to a pilot sample of 25 tourism students in a similar group. After the survey was completed, students had an opportunity to give verbal and written feedback on the survey instrument. Their input included a few ambiguities and suggestions for word changes. In other words, there were a few compelling reasons to make some changes in the questionnaire. Therefore students' feedback was incorporated into the final version of the survey. The changes of the questionnaire were made under the permission of the Director of the Virginia Tech Service-learning Center, Michele James-Deramo who was the responsible person for this survey referenced in the article named Associations of Civic Attitudes. The questionnaire's wording and the face validity of the questions were examined by three supervisors in the field of education and to form a consensus on some vocabulary or expressions, more researchers' ideas have been asked. As a result, some adjustments were made for the final version of the study instrument.

Pre-post Tests. This test was taken from Virginia Tech Service-Learning Center student survey referenced in the Associations of Civic Attitudes article. The pre-questionnaire consisted of items intended to gauge the participants' previous experiences, motivation, expectations and feelings about participating in the project. Pre-test presented the data to describe the preconceptions of students about community service. Next, by the end of the semester, post-test was given to the same students to check whether there had been a shift in the community service perceptions of students' after being enrolled in a service project. Only after the post-test the students' perceptions would be realistic and conceptually textured as students met and interacted with homeless citizens.

Data Analyses

Concerning the research, the qualitative analysis process of this study (the reflective essays and semi-structured interview) includes three sections; preparation for data analysis, familiarization and coding. After the data collection, each questionnaire was entered and analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 15.0. For the purpose of the study frequencies, descriptive analyses, reliability analyses, validity tests, independent sample t-tests, paired sample t-tests and one way ANOVA were performed.

Results

There were noteworthy implications that Cbsl projects pushed students' preconceptions causing awareness on several issues. Three types of continuously repeated awareness common in students' responses can be categorized as; social awareness, self awareness and future awareness.

Social Awareness

Cbsl projects broadened students' perspectives on social issues by connecting them with the larger world. In a dynamic and constructive environment, projects made the students gain a more sophisticated understanding of the world around them. The charity and care concept of the projects contributed to the development of their own care (Skoe, 2010). Moreover, projects introduced students to current societal issues and provided the recognition of real life problems due to their confrontation with the homeless. In this way, students acquired a greater awareness of social issues by being exposed to different life experiences which in turn may prompt interest in social change (Moely et al., 2008; Bernacki & Jaeger 2008; Carrington & Selva, 2010). Elderly care or entertaining homeless people could be their first positive attitudes towards society. The expressions of students' revealed that, it was a fantastic experience for them to open their horizons to those in need. The recent work in moral domain of education included relational morality and reasoning concerning interpersonal care (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). At the same time, students took individual paths to adulthood.

Being together with homeless people enhanced students' comprehension of the intersections of class and this took them to a personal recognition of their own privilege (Keller et al., 2003). Likewise, students found the chance to view reality through a different set of lens. Some responses selected are as follows:

"I would like to say thank you to my teacher for showing us what real life is all about"

"Conclusively abandoned children, orphans, retired people and other less privileged peoples should given a place in the society and their problems be considered a social issue"

"Through this activity I have observed that problem of the underprivileged, old people and SOS children is a social issue and individual has a role to play in help these people live happily in the society"

Along with gaining an increased concern for societal issues, encounters showed that students became more aware of the consequences of being homeless, being depended on others for food and shelter. They began to question larger structural arrangements.

Besides being aware on social issues, some students were negative about themselves for their past behavior. Some example reflections are as follows:

"I wish I had done such an activity before"

"I felt myself insufficient and ignorant about National/Global/Social Problems"

Cbsl helped students overcome their isolation and students began to see themselves as contributing members of a community embedded within a larger social world. As Campbell and Felderhof (2007) concede, education is not confirmation of the values which already exist but rather to challenge students to rethink about their own values, commitments and aims from life. The experience of meeting homeless aroused sensitivity to issues like poverty and the distribution of wealth as there were some children at youth house who had parents but can't take care of them due to financial problems. Throughout the projects, students were not passive observers of these people but were very close to them may be for the first time. This made students start to identify themselves as active service providers who have resources and ability to empower (Keller et al. 2003).

In general, project participants experienced a feeling of connectedness which in turn developed more caring selves. Students started to think of the place of others in their lives and their sense of social lives. Moreover, they exercised both individual and collective responsibility with the roles they take over (Taylor, 2008). Through projects, students embraced a commitment to improve the social whole and this enhanced the commitment to further external action for the good of others due to the fact that students rethought their lives in terms of connections and relationships with others (Rhoads, 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1997). All these type of experiences broke down barriers decreasing social distance (Keller et al., 2003). In this way, individuality did not loose its connection to other people which otherwise could be a serious threat for the disappearing of the collective conduct (Kenan, 2009).

In the school with social vision, the whole group was made socially conscious. It was taught to consider the effect of their collective conduct upon its individual members (disadvantaged people) and upon the general welfare and to acquire the ability to act cooperatively in the protection of its community interests and in the conscious direction of its own progress. Projects like Cbsl Projects have the moral dimension of citizenship education and it is important for the teachers to see the moral overlaps with curriculum goals such as spiritual, social and cultural goals (Taylor, 2008).

Self Awareness

Several excerpts illustrated the overarching point that project participants had learned something valuable or important about themselves as a result of Cbsl experience. Project participants challenged themselves, their abilities and their attitudes. According to Ferrari and Chapman (1999), what such project participants have succeeded causes a feeling of self esteem as they have done something worthwhile. Students began to learn more about themselves and self-awareness was a large outcome of work within our affective minds (Nuhfer, 2005). The following comments were received from the students:

"You gave me awareness my skills like being a very good performer on the stage".

"There was different committee work. For example one group find and meet sponsorships, one group pick up presents, one group interview the hotel....Therefore students

communicate and collaborate each other. They could aware of their own abilities and responsibilities”.

In short, Cbsl projects helped students recognize their efforts and talents. During the semester, they worked hard and succeeded their responsibilities. Hands-on, authentic learning motivated students by engaging them in their own learning (Brophy, 1986). Throughout the project period, students’ experiences signified important steps in their identities. They were challenged to work to change things for people for the better such as a day better than the others. As Rhoads (1997) posited, community project was “an educational endeavor generates a more caring self through a realization of the role that a concern for others might play in one’s life” (p.92).

Future Awareness

Another common theme delineated by students was the fact that Cbsl forced students to confront their future. Responses after meeting community service encounters made students think about their future. This was especially significant for those who were concerned only for today, never about tomorrow. Cbsl exposures prepared its participants for a more humane future and made them more sensitive and aware of the types of existing problems. Actually, the service students had positive impact on them both for the immediate and for the future. Some students’ reflections are as follows:

“I realized some different thing in myself . I tought , one day i will be elderly people and will remember some people me in the future?”

“They were the most happy people when they saw us. Their glances made me think about my future. I wonder if my children will leave me too. They have still the names of their sons, daughters in their tongues; “How on earth a human being can leave his/her parents helpless on the streets?”

“My family is nearly elder, 60-65 years old. I realized they will be same one day. It was like training for me for the future”

In conclusion, the chief distinguishing mark of these excerpts was that students connected their current community experiences with the homeless citizens with the lives they projected for themselves in the future. Cbsl projects, as well as treating schools as a component of community life, provided students with opportunities of awareness raising on several issues within the realm of experiential education. The more critically aware learners became, the more they were able to transform their reality. According to a study carried out by an area specialist Molly Letham from University of Nevada, “the skills and the developmental assets gained by young people who volunteer early in life translate to future benefits for them personally, and for society” (Young Volunteers: The Benefits of Community Service: Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet 03-23).

Students took actions to make homeless people happy and they realized their success in achieving this. If they do nothing in the future for these people, they may need guilty for their ignorance of these people. As Youniss and Yates (1997) claimed:

“Insofar as students incorporated this kind of agency into their emerging identity, any present noninvolvement or inactivity may evoke tension or guilt and the soft promise to become involved again at some indefinite later date” (p.124).

Importance of Reflection

Students in this research explored and consolidated the community issues through reflective papers and the awareness raising process was carried out through these reflections. The teacher also was an important role model at the initiation stage of these projects as she shared her previous reflections about previous projects. Therefore, this study advocates using reflective practices as a partial fulfillment of instruction. Some characteristics of experiential learning in reflection process of this study can be identified. For example, the learners had a concrete experience and then in the second learning activity they reflected on the concrete experience to examine how it made them feel. Arkün and Aşkar (2010) endorsed that reflection speeded the process of learning. When students sat down to write what they experience and learned, learning became easier. For Carrington and Selva (2010), “Reflection is the formation of a thought or idea as a consequence of meditation” (p. 45). Therefore, it was important to prompt students for reflection as a learning process. Moreover, reflection did not lead students what to feel but rather it taught students that thinking and feeling were essential components of life. However, it was important that teachers who would intentionally consider and integrate reflection need to be familiar with the five characteristics presented for effective reflection (Felton, Gilchrist & Darby, 2006): link experience to learning, are guided, occur regularly, permit feedback and assessment and encourage exploration of values.

Gillespie (1991), Eyster (2002) and Kenworthy-U Ren (2003) were some of the researchers who believed that reflection was as essential as experience in service learning. They proposed that reflection provided students an opportunity to think about and interpret their experiences in the community and to share their new knowledge and understandings, noting ways in which their experiences were meaningful to them as well as to others.

Moreover, for Marchand (2008), students should be encouraged to think in more reflective ways and reflective thinking is seen as a crucial skill which in turn enhances skills such as critical thinking (Kızılkaya & Aşkar, 2009). Experience was important; however it was the intentional reflection that constituted learning. Stachowski et al. (2008) argued that Cbsl research “should include a strong reflective component whereby the participants extend the learning derived from experience” (p.43). They claimed that Cbsl experience without reflection was similar to an exercise without meaning. Similarly, Boud et al. (1985) argued that experience alone was not sufficient for learning; therefore it should be followed by reflection. Further, they raised a significant statement as “Perhaps if we can sharpen our consciousness of what reflection in learning can involve and how it can be influenced then we may be able to improve our own practice of learning and help those who learn with us” (p. 8).

Implications derived from this research reveal the significance of reflection. It is pertinent that real world issues need to be incorporated into written or oral reflection. Through reflection, students stop and think about what they are experiencing. Especially, "college students are at a time in their lives when a multitude of forces influence their sense of self; thus they often are in the midst of a period of heightened self-discovery and identity confusion" (Rhoads, 1997, p. 95). Through guided reflection, students discover a meaning out of their experiences. Moreover, NSLC (National Service Learning Clearing House, 2009) state that service learning increases retention rates of students. Students' appreciation of difference and awareness of structural inequality improves. Given these findings, teachers need to show effort to create meaningful and reflective experiences. Besides these, this study implies the significance of using reflection tools within education such as reflective papers. The teachers who will be implementing Cbsl type of projects need to be trained for carrying out a variety of reflective practices.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall it can be said that, the projects fitted in successfully to the recognition of the importance of life students live in. Project participants learned through relationships and experiences that transcend the project practices and take place at all times and in all situations (Mullen, 2007). Being closely together with a variety of people who totally survive in different life standards led important lessons about life. Unquestionably, students learned that life was not equal on everyone. Hence, Cbsl encouraged them to confront differences in individual's social and economical status as they were exposed to a diverse body of public strata. In short, there has been a shift from the first to the third person.

After realizing the existence and situation of other disadvantaged people, some students questioned their own existence. This made them be critical of their own worries, sadness and future plans. In other words, these experiences made them value their own positions. Upon the completion of service learning, some people viewed the world with a new set of lenses (Eyler & Giles, 1999; NSLC 2009). They broadened their horizons and perspectives. To this end, the challenging and the dynamic nature of the service had great potential to transform students' lives.

In the same fashion, students believed that the experience made them think more deeply about issues that they normally did not think about. They became critical of what they knew. As Eyler and Giles (1999) claimed "students develop more complex and adequate ways of viewing the world when they are challenged" (p.184). They appeared to have gained a new awareness of diverse perspectives and greater self - understanding.

With room for people to learn from each other, education evolved from the transmission prescribed information to an active process of transformation. It was understandable from the findings that Cbsl opened wider vistas for students by providing them exposure to a variety of perspectives. Projects facilitated the

transformation of a young person from a passive service recipient into an active service provider (Stewart, 2007; Steinke & Buresch, 2002).

This study introduces and advocates the need for a new way of thinking about our education system. Cbsl is an enriching experience which should be a mandatory component of the curriculum. Implications from this study illuminate ways to improve the design of curriculum especially to meet the needs of community and at the same time raising awareness of students on real life issues. Actually, for the best results every element of the school must represent community values, from management, organization and pedagogy, to curriculum, evaluation and outreach (Ujama & El-Fikib, 2006).

Conclusion: Finally, it should be repeated that Cbsl work connects to a larger vision students have of the world and their place in that world. Schools become a place of exploration, where people can learn from each other and use education as a means to challenge their concerns in a holistic manner (Thayer-Bacon, 2004). For all these reasons, students should be involved in some kind of community service under appropriate supervision in every stage of their education because applying Cbsl to students have the potential to provide a foundation for life-long learning.

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Gerçek Hayata Dayalı Proje Deneyimleri Neticesinde Yüksek Eğitimde Farkındalığı Artırma

Atf:

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Özet

Problem Durumu

Öğrencileri topluma dayalı hizmet öğrenimi projeleri ((TDHÖP)) yoluyla aktif katılımcılar olmaya teşvik etmek dünyada düşündürücü ve popüler bir uygulama haline gelmektedir. Bir eğitim kurumunun mükemmel olarak tanımlanabilmesi için, öğrencilerin kişisel gelişimine de holistik bir tutum içerisinde olanak sağlanması gereklidir ve bunun mümkün olması ise kampüs sınırları dışında bulunan gerçek dünyayla daha iyi köprüler kurmakla bağlantılıdır. Öğretmenlerin gelecek için hem akademik hem de bilinç sahibi, duyarlı vatandaşlar yetiştirmeleri çok önemlidir. Eğitimdeki temel problem, farkındalık yaratma gibi yüksek eğitime ait olan kişisel gelişimin, akademik gelişim kadar çok önemsenmemesidir.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı topluma dayalı hizmet öğrenimi projelerinin üniversite öğrencileri üzerinde başlıca farkındalık artırmaya olan katkılarını incelemek ve özellikle yaşanan tecrübelerin katılımcı öğrenciler üzerinde nasıl bir etki bıraktığını bulmaya çalışmaktır. Projeler neticesinde sadece akademik eğitim değil, yüksek eğitimin amaçları çerçevesinde olan kişisel gelişimi içeren, duyuşsal ve davranışsal gelişim de güdülmüştür.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Bu çalışma faaliyet araştırması projesinden oluşmakta ve durum çalışması modu içerisinde Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi Turizm ve Otelcilik Yüksek Okulu'nda kendine özgü bir görüngüyü (TDHÖP) ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktır. Çalışmanın örneklemini üç farklı sınıfta bulunan toplam 80 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada farklı veri toplama araçları içeren üçgenleme metodu tercih edilmiş ve istenen veriler ön test, son test, yansıtıcı yazılar ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları

Araştırmanın temel bulgularına göre TDHÖP' ye katılan öğrencilerin sosyal, bireysel ve bunun yanı sıra gelecekle ilgili farkındalıklarında belirgin bir etkileşim ve artış

gözlemlenmektedir. Aynı zamanda, projeye katılan öğrenciler, TDHÖP'nin salâhiyet verici ve zaman harcamaya değer bir deneyim olduđu kanısına varmışlardır. Çalışmanın temel bulguları gösteriyor ki TDHÖP öğrencilerin değerlerini inceleyip, formüle edip açıkça belirtmesinin yanı sıra, onların kişisel gelişimine de önemli katkı sağlayan becerilerini de geliştirmektedir.

Öğrenciler TDHÖP aktivitelerine katıldıkları zaman, yeni bilgi ve yeni tecrübeyle karşılaşmanın getirdiđi bilişsel bir düşündürücülük yaşarlar. TDHÖP'leri öğrencilerin düşünme şeklini ve mantıksal düşünce yapısını etkiler. Çođu zaman TDHÖP'leri öğrencilerin ileri seviyedeki mantıksal düşüncelerini, problemi şekillendirme, kendi önerilerine yönelik herhangi bir adaptasyona açık olma ve ortaya çıkan farkındalığı aynı konuda ama farklı bir boyutta tekrar düşünebilme aracılığıyla stimule eder. Bunun yanı sıra, TDHÖP öğrencilerin yeni deneyimlerden, yeni perspektifler kazanmasını sağladığından, onların evrensel tanımlama ve içinde yaşadıkları toplumu daha derinden anlama yeteneğini geliştirir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri

TDHÖP'leri öğrencileri köklü prensipleri içeren, kişisel ortamın akademik ortama ek olarak önemini inceleyen tecrübeler yaşamaya teşvik ettikleri için faydalıdır. Öğretmenler sınıflarından bir adım dışarıya çıkıp TDHÖP'lerinin içine girerek toplumun ihtiyaçlı kesimi için önemli olan aktiviteler hususunda deneyim kazanmalıdır. Bu nedenden ötürü, TDHÖP'leri tüm sınıf öğretmenlerine önerilmektedir.

TDHÖP'leri öğrencileri tanımadık ortamlara maruz bırakarak çeşitlilik içeren bir ortamda sosyal aksiyon kapasitesini güçlendirmeyi denemede iyi bir yoldur. Projeler öğrencilere aracısız olarak tecrübe etmeye fırsat bulamayacakları konular ve durumlar sergiler. Gerçek dünyayla ilgili konular TDHÖP'leri boyunca katılan öğrencilerin yazılı ve sözlü yansımalarına dahil edilmiştir. Yansıma yoluyla etkileyici bir şekilde öğrenim sağlamak ise de çalışmanın önemli vurguları arasında yer almaktadır.

Proje katılımcıları sınıf dışında toplumsal ve sosyal ihtiyaçlara hazırlık yaparak ve yapılan hazırlık doğrultusunda hareket ederek toplumun ihtiyaçlı kesimlerine hitap etme fırsatı bulurlar. Öğrenciler farklı özgeçmişlerden, kültürlerden ve yaşlardan insanlarla çalışmalar sergilerler. Hepsinden önemlisi, bu onların hayatla ilgili konularda değerlerini etkiler. Bu aynı zamanda hayat boyu öğrenim becerisini edinmelerini sağlarken öğretim potansiyelini de yükseltir. Öğretmenler gelecek için hem akademik hem de bilinç ve kişilik sahibi vatandaşlar yaratmaya gönül vermelidirler. Kıscası eğitimciler vatandaş belleğine sahip, sadece zeki ve sorumluluk sahibi değil, yardımsever ve şevkatli öğrenciler yetiştirmeye yönelik bilgiyi sıralamada ve bu sorumluluđu almada gerekli tecrübeler sağlamada aktif rol oynamalıdır.

Bu çalışma neticesinde elde edilen etkili bulgular okul yönetimlerini topluma dayalı hizmetten öğrenim projelerini benimseme ve eğitimin kuramsal bir parçası haline getirmeyi teşvik etmektedir. Bu bulgular, ileriki TDHÖ çabalarına, bu programların yönünü belirlemede ve fikir üretmede potansiyel bir katkı sağlamaktadırlar. Sonuçlar birçok eğitimci TDHÖ 'yü kendi müfredatlarına eklemelerini teşvik etmek için

paylaşılmalıdır. Diğer bir ifadeyle, bu çalışma neticesinde elde edilen etkili kanıtlar okul yönetimlerini TDHÖ'ni benimseme ve eğitimin kuramsal bir parçası haline getirmeyi teşvik etmektedir. Uzun süreli çalışmalar TDHÖ' nin öğrenciler üzerinde bıraktığı uzun süreli etkileri incelemek için kullanılabilir. Ancak uzun süreli çalışmalar TDHÖ'nün öngörülen toplumsal yükümlülüğü artırdığı okullarda ve üniversitelerde hizmet öğrenimini yaşamış öğrencileri inceleyerek belirlenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Topluma dayalı hizmet öğrenimi projeleri, farkındalık artırma, öğrenim, yansımaya, müfredat