

Corey Dolgon and Chris Baker. *Social Problems: A Service Learning Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2010. Pp. 472. \$56.95 (paper). ISBN: 0761929479

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In recent years, we have witnessed a widespread debate about civil life, democracy, and education (Putnam, 2000; Jacoby, 2009). Part of this debate is result of a new breed of education called service learning. The purpose of service learning is to engage students in meaningful service that impacts the community. The goal is to cultivate ethical citizens with a reflective awareness of the interconnections of local practice in a globalized world. Schools around the country have taken to using this approach to learning; students are sent out into the world to compare the theory they are learning in the books with the realities of practice in the streets, clinics, ambulances, trading floors, and disaster relief efforts taking place around the world. The practice is rooted in the work of early twentieth century philosophers, John Dewey and William James, as well as social work practitioner and Hull House founder Jane Addams.

“Hull House integrated service provision with community organizing. It became both a place for neighborhood political activity and a laboratory for applying social research to social problems,” note Dolgon and Baker. Addams tapped into the passion of student volunteers who brought, “a fatal want of harmony between their theory and their lives, a lack of coordination between thought and action. ...The settlement house is an outlet for that sentiment of universal brotherhood.” By connecting education with service, theory with practice, Addams would become a pioneer of social work, applied sociology, and service learning. Learning takes place as one develops skills, the “habits of mind” to borrow Dewey’s words, to observe one’s self in interaction with the community.

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