

Combining service and learning- Lit Review

Latin America	Hypocrisy	History	Good intentions	Marginal
<p>Your openness to the idea that the only thing you can legitimately volunteer for in Latin America might be voluntary powerlessness, voluntary presence as receivers, as such as hopefully beloved or adopted ones without any way of returning the gift (Illich, 1968, p. 314).</p>	<p>You close your eyes because you want to go ahead and could not do so if you looked at some facts. It is quite possible that this hypocrisy is unconscious in most of you (Illich, 1968, p. 314-315).</p>	<p>“Mission-vacations” among poor Mexicans were “the thing” to do for well-off U.S. students earlier in this decade: sentimental concern for newly-discovered poverty south of the border combined with total blindness to much worse poverty at home justified such benevolent excursions (Illich, 1968, p. 315).</p>	<p>This is a theological statement. You will not help anybody by your good intentions (Illich, 1968, p. 315).</p>	<p>The marginal masses become rambunctious unless they are given a “Creed”, or belief which explains the status quo (Illich, 1968, p. 317).</p>
<p>I did not come here to argue. I am here to tell you, if possible, to convince you, and hopefully, to stop you, from pretentiously imposing yourselves on Mexicans (Illich, 1968, p. 316).</p>	<p>Intellectual insight into the difficulties of fruitful volunteer action had not sobered the spirit of Peace Corps Papal-and Self-Styled Volunteers. Today, the existence of organizations like yours is offensive to Mexico (Illich, 1968, p. 315).</p>	<p>The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants “develop” by spending a few months in their villages. Of course, this surprising conviction was supported by members</p>	<p>For the past six years I have become known for my increasing opposition to the presence of any and all North American “do gooders” in Latin America (Illich, 1968, p. 315).</p>	<p>Three great areas of the world are challenging the validity of a political and social system which makes the rich ever richer, and the poor increasingly marginal to that system (Illich, 1968, p. 317).</p>

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		of a missionary order (Illich, 1968, p. 316).		
In Latin America, (...) has created ideal conditions for military dictatorships (Illich, 1968, p. 317).	You, like the values you carry, are the products of an American society of achievers and consumers, with its two-party system, its universal schooling, and its family-car affluence. You are ultimately-consciously or unconsciously – “salesmen” for a delusive ballet in the ideas of democracy, equal opportunity and free enterprise among people who haven’t the possibility of profiting from these (Illich, 1968, p. 316).	By now it should be evident to all America that the U.S. is engaged in a tremendous struggle to survive. The U.S. cannot survive if the rest of the world is not convinced that here we have Heaven-on-Earth (Illich, 1968, p. 317).	Next to money and guns, the third largest North American export is the U.S. idealist, who turns up in every theater of the world: the teacher, the volunteer, the missionary....Ideally, these people define their role as service (Illich, 1968, p. 316).	How odd that nobody ever thought about spending money to educate poor Mexicans in order to prevent them from the culture shock of meeting you (Illich, 1968, p. 318).
All you will do in a Mexican village is create disorder (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	Actually, they frequently wind up alleviating the damage done by money and weapons, or “seducing” the “underdeveloped” to the benefits of the	It is no social distinction in the U.S. to have graduated from the second year of college. Indeed, most Americans now do. Anybody in this country who did not	You start on your task without any training (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	There is no way for you to really meet with the underprivileged, since there is no common ground whatsoever for you to meet on (Illich, 1968, p. 318).

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	world of affluence and achievement (Illich, 1968, p. 316).	finish high school is considered underprivileged (Illich, 1968, p. 319).		
At worst, in your “community development” spirit you might create just enough problems to get someone shot after your vacation ends and you rush back to your middle-class neighborhoods (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	If you have any sense of responsibility at all, stay with your riots here at home (Illich, 1968, p. 320).	In Latin America, the situation is quite different: 75% of all people drop out of school before they reach the sixth grade (Illich, 1968, p. 319).	The Peace Corps spends about 10 grand on each corps member to help him adapt to his new environment and to guard him against culture shock (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	Suppose you went to a U.S. ghetto this summer and tried to help the poor there “help themselves” Very soon you would be either spit upon or laughed at (Illich, 1968, p. 318).
The fact that you live in huts and eat tortillas for a few weeks...(Illich, 1968, p. 319).	If you insist on working with the poor, if this is your vocation, then at least work among the poor who can tell you to go to hell. It is incredibly unfair for you to impose yourselves on a village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don’t even understand what you are doing, or what people think of		People that understand that your own bad consciences push you to this gesture would laugh condescendingly (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	People offended by your pretentiousness would hit or spit (Illich, 1968, p. 318).

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	you (Illich, 1968, p. 320).			
			Your reports on your summer work prove that you are not even capable of understanding that your do-gooding in a Mexican village is even less relevant than it would be in a U.S. ghetto (Illich, 1968, p. 318).	Soon you would be made aware of your irrelevance among the poor, of your status (...) you would be roundly rejected (Illich, 1968, p. 318).
			There exists the argument that some returned volunteers have gained insight into the damage they have done to others- and thus become more mature people. yet it is less frequently stated that most of them are ridiculously proud of their "summer sacrifices" (Illich, 1968, p. 319).	The only people with whom you can hope to communicate with are some members of the middle class (Illich, 1968, p. 319).

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			Perhaps there is also something to the argument that young men should be promiscuous for awhile in order to find out that sexual love is most beautiful in a monogamous relationship ...the best way to leave LSD alone is to try it for awhile (Illich, 1968, p. 319-320).	All middle class elites in Latin America benefitted from the Alliance for Progress. You will find a few people who are willing to spend their time with you, they will tell you, you are doing something valuable, and they will confirm your self-image for you (Illich, 1968, p. 319).
			I do not agree with this argument. The damage which volunteers do willy-nilly is too high a price for the belated insight that they shouldn't have been volunteers in the first place (Illich, 1968, p. 320).	
			It is profoundly damaging to yourselves when you define something that you want to do as "good", a	

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			"sacrifice" and "help" (Illich, 1968, p. 320).	
			I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the "good" which you intended to do (Illich, 1968, p. 320).	