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In 2004 the University created a separate division to provide leadership in community engagement, giving it a charge of creating and coordinating knowledge, skills, and resources for the common good through reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships.

That division, the Office of Community Affairs, tracks, advocates, funds, promotes, educates, and mobilizes community engagement for campus and community.

A key unit within Community Affairs is the Center for Community-Based Partnerships. CCBP facilitates the creation of partnerships among faculty, staff, students, and community members that integrate curriculum and research to address critical issues jointly identified by the partners.

Since its establishment in 2006, CCBP and its partners have conducted more than 75 projects involving hundreds of faculty, students, and community partners. A 75-person council of faculty, administrators, students, and community partners recommends policies and actions. These actions include awarding $100,000 in seed-funds annually for engagement scholarship. Two other University of Alabama units, the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility and Crossroads Community Center, are also heavily involved in community engagement. Funded by private endowments and the University, these units bring together faculty, students, and community volunteers in practical projects that build engaged, ethical, and culturally aware citizens.

Through these mechanisms and others, The University of Alabama fulfills its obligations to the citizens who support it.

The Division of Community Affairs at The University of Alabama is led by Dr. Samory T. Pruitt, Vice President for Community Affairs. Through its compact with the community, Community Affairs plays a vital role in the University’s mission of advancing the intellectual and social condition of the people of Alabama and the world through quality programs of teaching, research, and service.
The Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship is published at The University of Alabama by the Office of Community Affairs for the advancement of engagement scholarship worldwide. To reach the editor e-mail jces@ua.edu or call 205-348-7392. The NASA infrared image on the cover is of Hurricane Katrina as it approached the Gulf Coast in 2005.
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(Back Inside Cover)
As editor, and on behalf of the editorial board and local production team, I proudly present the second issue of the Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship (JCES). Since release of the inaugural issue in fall 2008, JCES finds itself better positioned to fulfill its vision of providing the premier venue for advancing authentic engaged scholarship. Response to the journal has been tremendous.

In talking with editors of other journals, I have learned that the number of manuscripts submitted to JCES is above average for a new journal. This leads me to thank the editorial board and reviewers, whose generous donation of time ensures the journal’s academic integrity. JCES would not be possible without them.

Inaugural issue feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with readers using such words as “innovative,” “wonderful,” “refreshing,” “excellent,” and “impressive.” At the 2009 Gulf South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education hosted by Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, JCES was the focus of a roundtable discussion arranged by editorial board member Richard L. Conville of The University of Southern Mississippi and led by Meta Mendel-Reyes, director of Service-Learning at Berea College. The program drew the largest number of pre-registrants of any roundtable. The overall summary from the roundtable strongly supported JCES, with roundtable participants specifically mentioning and appreciating “inclusion of student and community partner voices.”

Recognizing a quality product when it sees one, the highly respected University of Alabama Press has taken on marketing and distribution of JCES. Its partnership with the University of Chicago Press will increase visibility and accessibility of the journal, especially by increasing circulation in libraries and with professional associations. This increased circulation and visibility will serve not only to expand our readership, but also to increase our influence in the world of engaged scholarship as JCES moves toward quarterly publication.

Adding to JCES’ visibility, an interview with production editor Ed Mullins was published in the Spring 2009 newsletter Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life. On the international front, Mullins and I, along with publisher Samory Pruitt, will be on a program at the Ninth International Research Conference on Service-Learning and Community Engagement in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in October. JCES will also be on display at the National Outreach Scholarship Conference in Athens, Georgia, September 28-30, and at the Imagining America Conference October 1-3, in New Orleans.

The current issue of JCES reflects the diversity present in engaged scholarship. You will find insights from Gulf Coast researchers staying their course during Hurricane Katrina; a practice piece on the poetic arts in a prison setting; research gleaned from 20 years of service-learning at a prominent college of medicine; an insightful commentary and review of civicly engaged scholars swimming against the academic tides to fulfill personal and community goals; and senior and junior scholars seeking ways to learn research while practicing service-learning. And we get all of this as well as innovative research from the field and perceptive book reviews. Community and student voices are once again present, stressing the importance of acknowledging and understanding what their expertise contributes to our mission.

Just as the specific manuscripts and topics in the journal are diverse, so are their methodologies, presentations, and writing styles. We recognize the need to accommodate the diversity of disciplines and approaches reflected in engaged scholarship and the need to be accessible to lay readers, while maintaining a level of quality that will keep JCES on the radar of the nation’s best engagement scholars. This issue demonstrates this awareness and provides something of interest to a wide variety of readers.

As always we welcome your insights, suggestions, and feedback. Send notes to jces@bama.ua.edu. You may remember from the first issue that I said that, by definition, JCES is not completely charted, and we look to you, our readership, to help us shape it into what community engagement needs. I remain excited about JCES and its potential and am looking forward to seeing what future issues have in store. I hope you are too.

About the Editor

Cassandra E. Simon, from Lake Charles, Louisiana, is an associate professor of social work at The University of Alabama. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Texas at Arlington. She can be reached at csimon@bama.ua.edu
When natural disasters strike, researchers may be called on to perform double duty: generating knowledge while also addressing human needs.

Research after Natural Disasters: Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Roslyn C. Richardson, Carol Ann Plummer, Juan J. Barthelemy, and Daphne S. Cain

Abstract

When natural disasters occur, university researchers and their community partners, particularly those in the disaster areas, are often expected to assume responsibility for generating knowledge from these events. As both natural and man-made disasters continue to occur, more faculty will be unexpectedly thrust into the arena of disaster-related research. This article explores the opportunities and challenges experienced by four social work faculty who made their initial forays into disaster-related research in the midst of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The research projects, partnerships, innovations, and problems associated with their research endeavors are discussed. In addition, recommendations for engaging in disaster-related research for researchers new to this area of inquiry are explored.

Introduction

The need for researchers and service providers to respond to natural disasters becomes more vital as the occurrence of natural disasters increases and the number of people affected continues to rise. Social workers, for example, will be called upon not only to provide services on the front-lines, but also to engage in research to address human needs in terms of coping, stress, resiliency, the ability of organizations to deliver services, and the impact of disasters on survivors (Streeter & Murty, 1996). In the future, university faculty members are likely to be approached to engage in disaster research while they themselves are in the midst of natural disasters (Zakour & Harrell, 2003). However, the realities of research on disaster situations are far different from most empirical academic research, especially in areas that have just suffered greatly. Researchers in the affected areas are often untrained in disaster research; research institutions and their personnel may be adversely affected; and the community infrastructure, people, and services to be studied are often in disarray. Being aware of the challenges, obstacles, and difficulties associated with this area of inquiry prior to the occurrence of a natural or man-made disaster may facilitate more effective and productive research efforts (Padgett, 2002).

This article details the authors’ disaster-related research experiences following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It discusses the opportunities and challenges experienced in conducting three unique disaster-related research studies. Recommendations for engaging in disaster-
related research based on those experiences are provided, especially those new to this area of inquiry.

The Storms and the Need to Respond

In the summer of 2005, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita (which made landfall within weeks of each other) caused catastrophic damage to the U.S. Gulf Coast region. The hurricanes led to major disruptions in communications, basic utilities, and the delivery of social and health care services. Changes to the infrastructure of service delivery systems were exacerbated by the personal and professional challenges of personnel, many of whom had to deal with issues of relocation and loss, among other stressors (Bacher, Devlin, Calongne, Duplechain, & Pertuit, 2005).

While universities, departments, and individual faculty members within the Gulf Coast region were also victimized by the hurricanes, they simultaneously felt compelled to provide help (Allen, 2007). Immediate needs took precedence and resulted in faculty members donating full-time work for several weeks to assist at shelters, area hospitals, pet rescue centers, or in efforts to support children separated from parents at the New Orleans airport (Allen, 2007). Faculty were also faced with accommodating displaced students, helping students deal with personal and educational challenges, and balancing increased teaching loads and overcrowded classrooms. Given their professional training and the severity of needs, responding to the crisis was the primary concern for many faculty for almost a month. This left little time for attention to research issues.

It was within the midst of this environmental context that the authors (four faculty members in schools and departments of social work located within the Gulf Coast area) were introduced to research on disaster situations. Prior to the hurricanes, none of the four had ever conducted work on or had a primary interest in disaster-related research. In fact, each had diverse research interests that included adolescent aggression and school violence; child welfare; religion/spirituality and social work practice; and social work education. However, as both academicians and practitioners, the authors felt compelled to conduct research related to the disasters. This impetus stemmed from the emergence of funding opportunities and numerous requests from other universities to collaborate, as well as from a sense of responsibility to generate knowledge from these events—a responsibility felt even as we ourselves recovered from the disaster and began to respond to extreme community needs.

Research Projects

The three disaster-related research projects undertaken by the authors focused on religious institutions and the provision of services subsequent to the hurricanes; the impact of the hurricanes on undergraduate and graduate social work students; and clinical services for children and caregivers who were survivors of the hurricanes. The first project was a descriptive study of the services provided by religious institutions following Hurricane Katrina. The study employed a mailed questionnaire to a random sample of churches within a metropolitan area and a telephone survey follow-up. Specifically, the study identified the extent to which religious institutions provided both tangible (food, shelter, financial assistance) and intangible (spiritual) support for hurricane survivors. Interview questions related to the churches’ primary sources of funding for these activities were also included (Cain & Barthelemy, 2008).

The second project was a cross-campus survey of five Gulf Coast-area schools and departments of social work in four states. The study examined social work students’ reactions to and ability to cope with the aftermath of the hurricanes. Specifically, the study focused on social work students’ faith, religion, and spirituality; previous traumatic experiences; altruism; volunteer activities (during and after the hurricanes); social work values; and commitment to the profession. This study was initiated by a social work researcher (outside the Gulf area) who had conducted prior studies with social work students related to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Social work faculty within the five programs recruited student participants. All social work majors were eligible to participate, including students who were transfers from universities temporarily closed because of the hurricanes. Data was collected through self-administered anonymous surveys. Initial findings of the study indicated that despite experiencing multiple
hurricane-related stressors, the vast majority of social work students in the sample engaged in some form of volunteer activity. Stressors, altruism, and increased commitment to social work values were found to be the strongest predictors of volunteerism (Plummer et al., 2008).

The third project focused on the delivery and evaluation of psycho-educational Psychological First Aid (PFA) groups for children and their hurricane-survivor caregivers. Groups met weekly in area schools and onsite at one of the FEMA trailer communities. The study included measures of anxiety, depression, coping ability, and educational outcomes. A social work practitioner with a primary interest in the delivery of services to this population initiated this study. A total of 158 children and 18 caregivers participated from May 2006 through December 2007. Pre-and post-test data on child outcomes and lessons learned (Plummer et al., 2009), as well as focus group data on caregivers’ outcomes, are currently being analyzed and will be published.

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the many challenges and obstacles that emerged as a result of the natural (Hurricanes Katrina and Rita) and man-made disasters (the levee failures in New Orleans) (Knabb, Rhome, & Brown, 2006; Murphy, 2005), positive outcomes resulted. These included the development of new partnerships and collaborations, opportunities to expand research directions, and the ability to strengthen community connections.

1. Partnerships/Collaborations

The projects in which the authors participated involved interdepartmental, multi-university, and community-university collaborations. These projects resulted in faculty within the same school (with diverse research interests) serving as research partners, while also facilitating new professional relationships and overall more collaborative ventures. One project helped foster a mentoring relationship between junior and senior social work faculty from different universities, a relationship that sparked ongoing collaborations. In addition, the authors partnered with community organizations, established relationships with researchers who had experience in the research on disaster situations from other universities, and formed ongoing collaborations among faculty and practitioners.

In most instances, the unique partnerships that developed as a result of these disaster-related research studies were not likely to have occurred otherwise. For example, a faculty member from a west-coast university solicited involvement from social work faculty in five Gulf-Coast schools. None of these faculty knew one another previously, but they now work jointly in analyzing and publishing data, co-present at national conferences, and have even found ways to work together on new research projects.

2. Opportunities to Expand Research Directions

Each of the authors was well established in their chosen topical areas and knew a literature that was unique to their specialization. However, the hurricanes led to opportunities to expand their research in new directions. For example, two assistant professors at the same land-grant public university in the affected area who studied child abuse trauma and parenting practices expanded their research areas to include disaster trauma and PFA interventions for children and their parents (Plummer et al., 2009).

Another assistant professor, interested in social work education pedagogy, joined with additional faculty members to study the impact of the hurricanes on social work students, incorporating their adherence to social work values as a variable to consider in their reactions and coping responses (Plummer et al., 2008). Still other faculty members, previously involved in research on adolescent aggression and violence and African-American parenting practices, decided to engage in the study of church response after the hurricanes (Cain & Barthelemy, 2008). While remaining grounded within their original areas of research, all of the authors expanded the scope of their research to encompass disaster-related issues.

3. Funding

The abundance of funding for hurricane-related studies also created an opportunity to engage in research on disaster situations. Faculty within the disaster area were encouraged by department deans and chairs, as well as a variety of university administrators, to take advantage of
funding streams. The unique position of those situated within the disaster area, where culture, place, and tradition were familiar, made the expansion of research into new areas relatively easy.

First, faculty members living within the disaster area were familiar with the culture, people, organizations, and systems with which interaction would be required in order to perform effective research. Second, receiving research support from federal or large foundation sources was viewed as a means by which to recover at least a small part of the catastrophic losses suffered by communities within the disaster area. Third, money would be spent on research, and so it seemed only reasonable that local institutions should receive a fair share of those funds. Finally, faculty were encouraged to utilize disaster-related funding to build their university’s research infrastructure and enhance community-university partnerships.

Further, in this unique position, experienced researchers contacted local faculty members and provided them with opportunities to learn about research on disaster situations. These partners enhanced funding possibilities for local faculty since well-known disaster researchers already knew the questions and literature in the field and had proven records of grant writing and in conducting disaster-related research.

4. Strengthening Community Connections

Because of a pervasive sense that “we are all in this together,” faculty and community groups worked more closely than ever before, sharing resources, asking for help, filling in where there were urgent needs, and providing mutual support. This led to a broad exploration of needs, including research needs. In one case, a community therapist approached one university to pilot an intervention she had adapted for use with children, complete with several funding possibilities. Two faculty members decided to collaborate with her and wrote the grant that was eventually funded.

This partnership led to student involvement under the therapist’s direction, additional research funding for the faculty members, and many services for children and their caregivers displaced by the storms. In addition, this project strengthened bonds between community practitioners and university faculty, extending opportunities for both. Because the practitioner was not affiliated with a private non-profit, her partnership with the university made it possible for her to receive funding both to perform her intervention and evaluate its effectiveness (Plummer et al., 2009).

Another example of strengthened community connections involved meeting the needs of individuals and families at Renaissance Village, the largest FEMA trailer park in the Baton Rouge area. Area schools, the mayor of the town, social work professors, community practitioners, and agencies as diverse as Big Buddy, Catholic Charities, the Children’s Health Fund, and the Children’s Health Project met one another and embarked on joint service and research projects.

CHALLENGES

Engaging in disaster-related research in the midst of the chaos created by the hurricanes was both difficult and overwhelming. Despite the different focus of each of the research projects, the authors experienced many of the same challenges related to conducting disaster-related research. The challenges included managing multiple requests for research participation, balancing personal and professional needs and obligations, funding obstacles, and staying focused on established research agendas. Additional challenges involved difficulties with collaborations and information sharing, ensuring sensitivity to the needs of research respondents, and effectively managing outside influences that sought to minimize results and censor research participants’ remarks.

1. Managing Multiple Requests for Research Participation

One of the primary challenges involved in disaster-related research carried out in areas affected by the disaster is evaluating the feasibility of requests to engage in various research projects. A part of the challenge in responding to these requests was that at the time they were initially made, the authors were in the midst of addressing the immediate needs of their friends, family, students, and communities. In light of this, many of the requests appeared insensitive. So, in addition to dealing with feelings of being overwhelmed and taxed by family and
community needs, faculty also had to expend energy determining diplomatic ways to deny many requests for research-related assistance, information, and/or support. Even opportunities for collaboration and participation in laudable projects that fit firmly within the authors’ areas of interest had to be declined.

2. Balancing Personal and Professional Needs and Obligations

The act of balancing research, teaching, and other professional obligations with personal obligations and needs was an additional challenge. The authors participated in the disaster-related research projects in the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes. Thus, they found it difficult to balance research projects with their hurricane-related volunteer activities, needs of immediate family and friends who were victims of the hurricanes, and the additional needs of their students. Balancing multiple roles and obligations under normal conditions can be a challenge. Simultaneously serving as mentors and advisors for students displaced by the storms, developing and implementing viable teaching methods, and engaging in research seemed at times to be impossible tasks.

3. Obstacles to Funding

Securing funding to engage in the research projects was extremely difficult despite its apparent availability. Part of the problem involved the need to collect the data in a time sensitive way. The immediacy with which data needed to be collected, combined with the stressors associated with being in the disaster-affected areas, restricted the authors’ ability to identify and apply for funding. As a result, the authors themselves provided primary funding for research activities. For example, two faculty members personally paid for the expense of a citywide mail survey on the provision of social services by churches to hurricane displaced individuals immediately following Hurricane Katrina.

Because of the low response rate with the initial mail survey, the dean of the school provided some funding from school discretionary funds to offset the costs of the subsequent telephone survey that provided data suitable for publication of the research (Cain & Barthelemy, 2008). In contrast, universities across the country that were not affected by the hurricanes were able to mobilize quickly and apply for federal disaster research funds. Some of those funded from outside the affected area requested local faculty to provide information, contacts, and consultation, but usually without compensation or an offer to include them in the funding package. In addition, the lack of experience in federal procedures made for a steeper learning curve and was responsible for some critical mistakes by those who had not previously applied for funding at the national level. For example, two of the co-authors worked with a third colleague to write a proposal that studied parent/child relationships in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Using a model similar to a study conducted after the 9-11 tragedy and collaborating with researchers in New York, the group detailed their plans in an inquiry, complete with instruments, consultants, and design details, to a federal project officer. The response was very discouraging and, as a result, the proposal was scrapped. Later these colleagues learned two things: This project officer often initially responds negatively, asking questions in a “devil’s advocate manner,” and that another similar project submitted, despite the project officer’s negative remarks, was viewed positively by the review committee and ultimately funded.

4. Continuing to Focus on Ongoing Research Agenda

Despite being new to the field of research on disaster situations, each of the four faculty members desired to find a way to participate in research projects that would contribute to the body of knowledge on disasters, while in some way relating this research to their specific areas of interest. The challenge inherent in this goal was the need to focus on their own research interests while simultaneously facilitating and engaging in research agendas stimulated by the disaster and in collaboration with university partners. Although some collaborative efforts became problematic, most partnerships were strengthened through frank discussions about shared interests, misunderstandings, and the specific goals of each researcher.

Differences were not always easily resolved. For example, lack of clarity regarding authorship credit resulted in conflict. An additional example occurred when community partners did not
understand the need to adhere to university and Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Specifically, a service provider desired to change an intervention protocol which had already been approved by a university IRB, resulting in broken communications and the eventual suspension of her involvement in the project when the conflict could not be resolved. The authors came to realize that such partnerships must be defined in advance, and that the ongoing research agenda of each member involved must be understood and respected.

5. Lack of Shared Information/Collaboration

In some instances, the authors had to contend with the refusal of some groups, institutions, and organizations to share information or engage in collaborative efforts. This unwillingness of outside entities to partner with or commit to provide ongoing support to the community after research projects were completed led to feelings of anger, frustration, and discontent. The authors perceived that for many of the outside researchers, data collection was the primary concern, and that there was little intention to contribute to ongoing service-delivery needs. At times when out-of-state researchers had money to pay participants, but local researchers had not acquired such funds, the lack of cooperation may even have compromised the ability of local researchers to collect data. For example, at one of the FEMA parks where area faculty had volunteered services for months, residents may have self-selected out of the interviews or surveys where they were not paid, electing instead to speak with those who could give them Wal-Mart gift cards. This may have affected the sample adversely for generalizing and made continued recruitment more difficult.

6. Maintaining Sensitivity to the Needs of Survivors ( Victims as Respondents)

The authors wanted to ensure that they did not allow research to take precedence over the need to provide services. They wanted to engage in service-oriented research that in some way provided practical answers to questions of vital importance. Their primary goal was to assist and find ways to use knowledge gained to promote the effective delivery of services. Along these same lines, it was vital to ensure that the research conducted upheld the highest standards of ethical considerations and was both fair and useful to participants. This goal was all the more important in light of the vulnerable positions in which many of the people who served as research participants found themselves.

As a result of being displaced, many survivors were in temporary housing, including trailer communities. Many experienced depression, anxiety, and other forms of psychological distress and had to deal with issues of uncertainty about their futures. While in the midst of all of these difficulties, survivors were bombarded with requests to be participants in research studies. The challenge for faculty was to find ways to be sensitive to the needs and challenges faced by this population while engaging in their research projects. This included being aware of participants’ research burnout, ensuring that no study was exploitative, and promoting ethical standards while interacting with and collecting data about participants. These ethical standards included the ability to give informed consent, ensuring participants had the mental and/or physical capacity to make decisions, an analysis of the potential risks and benefits to participants, and the commitment to be aware of and eliminate any implied pressure from researchers to participate (Kilpatrick, 2004; Knack, Chen, Williams, & Jensen-Campbell, 2006).

Familiarity with research participants through frequent service delivery made the transition from person to service provider to researcher more fluid and personable. This helped reduce role divisions and facilitated “small talk,” more often than not leading to interviews being conducted on trailer steps or in the laundry room than in university offices.

7. Outside Influences to Minimize Results and Remarks

Shortly after collecting data for one of the research projects mentioned earlier, those researchers were contacted by numerous newspapers and other organizations interested in the study. As a result of this interest, the researchers granted several interviews and shared some of the preliminary findings of the study. While most of the feedback received was very positive, not everyone shared those feelings. For example, at least one agency did not find the
results to be very flattering, and the researchers were contacted by a representative of the agency. The representative expressed displeasure with the results of the study and suggested that the researchers retract their reported findings. However, the agency withdrew its request once it was explained that these findings were derived directly from responses of those who participated in the study and were not the opinions of the researchers.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the authors’ experiences, the following recommendations for engaging in research on disaster situations are provided:

1. **Be strategic about partnerships and collaborations.**

   Successful collaborations require that all roles and responsibilities be clearly defined and mutually beneficial. Goals and specific tasks must be clearly stated and agreed upon. Also, engaging in continuous dialogue is essential to ensure that the ongoing research agenda of each scholar, community practitioner, and others is understood, being satisfactorily met, and respected. These tasks can be particularly difficult to accomplish in the midst of a disaster.

2. **Build disaster research agendas on areas of expertise.**

   Disaster research is a multi-faceted field. Be creative in identifying and developing useful, practical studies that relate to your own areas of interest. Social workers are encouraged to remain focused on their research trajectories with the added variable of disaster. This creates a body of work that is connected to their research agenda. At the same time, be creative in obtaining necessary funding from a diversity of sources.

3. **Determine the feasibility of research projects.**

   One unique element of research on disaster situations is that they occur in the midst of chaos. Therefore, there are numerous constraints relative to time, funding, and access to additional resources. It is important that faculty be reasonable when making decisions about the feasibility of participating in specific projects. Making realistic assessments about other personal and professional obligations, interest in the proposed projects, and the level of knowledge/experience in the area should all be considered.

4. **Meet immediate human needs before considering research interests.**

   Do not allow research to take precedence over the need to provide services.

   Related to community services, applied research is research in which the knowledge gained is used to promote the effective delivery of services. It is vital that disaster-related research, especially research involving those affected, guarantee commitments to the welfare of individuals and communities and that this take precedence over research interests. This is especially true for human service professions like social worker where the first responsibility is to assist in meeting human needs, alleviate suffering, and improve societal conditions. Moreover, disaster-related research specifically needs to be made available to and be useful for end-user communities (i.e., usable by those affected by the disaster).

5. **Use current partnerships/relationships/collaborations where possible.**

   Utilizing pre-established partnerships to engage in disaster research has several advantages. Trust is already established. This eliminates the need to engage in building rapport because it already exists. As a result, lines of communication are already open and roles may be pre-defined. Also, knowledge of one another’s strengths and weaknesses is already established, which may increase the likelihood of success. Finally, future collaborative efforts may be possible since experiences are being built around common interests and concerns.

6. **Be flexible, adaptable, and able to improvise.**

   The nature of work within disaster areas is fraught with unpredictability and change. There may be a need to establish relationships with people who are traumatized; organizations and service providers may be in flux or inaccessible; and there are likely to be fluctuations in terms of needs and resources. Issues of instability and uncertainty often arise. Possibilities are likely to shift, dissipate, and disappear and new ones appear. To successfully engage in research in
this context requires the ability to adapt and improvise.

7. Respond to the needs of communities and practitioners.

There is an ongoing need to make research relevant and useful to end-users (those affected by the disaster) and to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice (Russel, Rodriguez, & Wachtendorf, 2004). Therefore, research on disaster situations should respond to the needs of both practitioners and communities within the disaster area. This is especially important for social work with its professional charge to promote social and economic justice. In some instances, as was the case with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, at-risk populations were more adversely affected by the natural and man-made disasters, and they served as the primary research subjects because of their extreme condition and experiences. As such, researchers should commit to engaging these populations in the initial research decision-making process, as well as making research findings and results readily available to them.

Conclusions

University faculty are faced with multiple and often competing roles and responsibilities, including training the next generation of professionals, conducting research, and competing for funding. While this balance is always difficult, the potential conflicts among the roles of serving both the community and the university are exacerbated when disaster strikes. In the authors’ experiences, challenges to effective research after natural disasters ranged from the governmental and institutional to the psychological and intellectual. The breakdown of delivery systems and infrastructure, including the influx of displaced students, put increased strain on both institutional and personal resources and energy. At the same time, despite an enticing flood of funding opportunities, it was difficult to assess the feasibility of research projects and the value of collaborations, ultimately preventing adequate funding from reaching affected areas.

However, along with these challenges came unrivaled opportunities to improve the lives of those affected and to contribute to academic knowledge, to make research and practice congruent, and to forge productive ties to the community and to faculty across the city, state, and country.

Disaster-related research by definition emerges from catastrophe and tragedy, confusion, and chaos. While understanding the obstacles of such a research environment in advance cannot prevent the challenges associated with disaster-related research, it can help prepare researchers for the difficulties and opportunities ahead. Although beyond the scope of this article, it is also important for researchers interested in this field of study to be aware of a variety of methodological approaches appropriate for conducting research in disaster situations (Norris, 2006; Stallings, 2002; Stallings, 2007) including alternative survey methodologies (Henderson et al., 2009), as well as ethical issues in disaster-related research (Barron Ausbrooks, Barrett, & Martinez-Cosio, 2009; Kilpatrick, 2004). The authors hope that this article will build awareness and preparedness among researchers faced with the unique set of conflicting responsibilities faced by faculty and community partners in the midst of a disaster.

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Knabb, R.D., Rhome, J.R. & Brown, D.


**About the Authors**

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As communities discover the invaluable “wetlands” of organic decision making, some academic institutions are aligning their research with citizens to become “coproducers of democracy.”

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:
Ships Passing in the Night?

David Mathews

Marguerite Shaffer, director of American Studies at Miami University, is one of a surprisingly large number of faculty members who are at odds with an academic culture that isn’t hospitable to their efforts to combine a public life with a scholarly career. She is concerned about what is happening in her field and about the world her two children will inherit. I have often quoted what she said in an interview for the 2008 issue of the Higher Education Exchange because it captures so well what troubles other faculty:

“I have joked with colleagues that I am in the midst of an academic midlife crisis—questioning every aspect of life in academe. In thinking about my future in the university, I have wondered whether my time will be well spent researching and writing a scholarly monograph that might well get me promoted, but that will be read by only a handful of like-minded scholars with similar intellectual interests. I have questioned the time I devote to teaching critical thinking skills to students who are socialized, both inside and outside the university, to care more about their final grades and potential career options than the knowledge they can share and the collective future they will create.”

The Shaffers of academe are one of the forces driving a civic engagement movement on campuses across the country. Not so long ago, the civic education of college students was of little concern. Now, thanks to educators like Shaffer, that indifference is giving way. Leadership programs are common, and students are taught civic skills, including civil dialogue. There are also more opportunities to be of service these days, which is socially beneficial as well as personally rewarding. These opportunities are enriched by students’ exposure to the political problems behind the needs that volunteers try to meet. University partnerships with nearby communities offer technical assistance, professional advice, and access to institutional resources. Faculty, who were once “sages on the stage,” have learned to be more effective in communities by being “guides on the side.” All in all, there is much to admire in the civic engagement movement on campuses.

Another civic engagement movement is occurring off campus. At the Kettering Foundation, we have seen it clearly in communities on the Gulf Coast that are recovering from Hurricane Katrina. We have combined what we learned from several communities into a fictional composite in order to report from across the region. In this representative community, “Don” and his wife, “Mary,” live in an old fishing village much like Bayou La Batre, Alabama. The community traces its origins back to an 18th-century French settlement, and Don’s family has been there since 1831. Mary came from Pennsylvania for a vacation — and stayed — as have other northern transplants. The residents
of the community include Creoles descended from French and West African ancestors, as well as a large group of fishermen who recently arrived from Southeast Asia. There have been some tensions among these different groups but, fortunately, no serious clashes.

The hurricane destroyed a good many houses, and Don and Mary are still living with relatives in the area. Their hardware store was damaged, though not badly, and they were able to reopen within a year. Business is slow, however, because many people left for less vulnerable areas of the state. The fishing industry was hit very hard; boats were blown inland, and it took considerable effort to get them back into the water. Fishing is a competitive business, yet most families pitched in to help one another. When the schoolhouse collapsed, churches that survived made space available for classes while a new building was being constructed. Don volunteers at the local fire station, which received supplies from a station in another small town two states away. This assistance was critical while waiting for state and federal support to arrive. Crime has gone up, but the police chief has begun a program of community-assisted policing, which he hopes will be effective if neighbors will participate.

The big news is that outside developers, aided by a planning grant from the state development office, are considering buying up a large tract of land just south of the town limits. They intend to build a “world class resort.” Some people see prosperity just around the corner; others worry that the developers will dominate the reconstruction and shut them out of the decision making about the community’s future. This prompted some concerned citizens to meet every week at the fire station to develop their own plans for the town. People wanted to restore their community — both its buildings and way of life — and felt that they had to come together as a community to do that. The community was both their objective and the means of reaching that objective. This has been the goal for many of the other civic engagement movements in communities that are trying to cope with natural disasters, economic change, and other problems that threaten everyone’s well-being.

Interestingly, a year or so after Katrina, a group of scholars studying communities that survived disasters validated the instincts of Don, Mary, and their neighbors. These communities were resilient because they had developed the capacity to come together. And the resilience proved more important than individual protective measures like well-stocked pantries (Schoch-Spana, 2007; Dallas, 2008).

People with a democratic bent like Don, Mary, and their neighbors don’t want to be informed, organized, or assisted as much as they want to be in charge of their lives. And they sense that this means they need a greater capacity to act together despite their differences. That is why they say they want to come together as communities to maintain their communities. Unfortunately, they often have difficulty finding institutions that understand their agenda.

According to a recent Kettering and Harwood study, nongovernmental organizations are often more interested in demonstrating the impact of their programs than in facilitating self-determination and self-rule (2009). Even citizens may be uncertain of what they can do by themselves and want to put the responsibility on schools, police departments, or other government agencies. For instance, in one community, citizens decided that there weren’t enough adult mentors for the young people who were getting into trouble. Yet rather than identifying places where youngsters could find adults within the community who would be responsive, these citizens wanted social workers to handle the problem.

The Wetlands of Democracy

Prompted by what we don’t know about communities coming together, the Kettering Foundation has begun to collect stories and analyze case studies (2002, 2006).

One of the first things we learned from people like Don, Mary, and their neighbors is that they absolutely refused to call what they were doing “politics.” They wanted to distinguish what they were about from what goes on in elections and governments, although they usually voted and weren’t rabid critics of the government.

We don’t have a name for what we are seeing, but the more we see, the more we have come to believe that we are looking at something more than civil society at work, more than revitalized public life, and more than grassroots initiatives. We don’t think we are seeing an alternative political system like direct democracy; rather, we
are looking at the roots of self-rule. Democratic politics seems to operate at two levels. The most obvious is the institutional level, which includes elections, lawmaking, and the delivery of services. The other level is underneath these superstructures, and what happens there is much like what happens in the wetlands of a natural ecosystem.

We have been experimenting with a wetlands analogy to describe what supports and sustains institutional politics. Wetlands were once overlooked and unappreciated but were later recognized as the nurseries for marine life. For example, the swamps along the Gulf Coast were filled in by developers, and the barrier islands were destroyed when boat channels were dug through them. The consequences were disastrous. Sea life that bred in the swamps died off, and coastal cities were exposed to the full fury of hurricanes when the barrier islands eroded. The wetlands of politics play roles similar to swamps and barrier islands. They include informal gatherings, ad hoc associations, and the seemingly innocuous banter that goes on when people mull over the meaning of their everyday experiences. These appear inconsequential when compared with what happens in elections, legislative bodies, and courts. Yet mulling over the meaning of everyday experiences in grocery stores and coffee shops can be the wellspring of public decision making. Connections made in these informal gatherings become the basis for political networks, and ad hoc associations evolve into civic organizations (Harwood, 1993).

In the political wetlands, as in institutional politics, problems are given names, issues are framed for discussion, decisions are made, resources are identified and utilized, actions are organized, and results are evaluated. In politics at both levels, action is taken or not; power is generated or lost; change occurs or is blocked. We aren’t watching perfect democracy in the political wetlands because there isn’t such a thing. But we are seeing ways of acting, of generating power, and of creating change that are unlike what occurs in institutional politics.

Recently, we have been calling these characteristics “organic.” Like any generalization, this one has its drawbacks. Still, we were drawn to the term, in part, because it doesn’t have the varied meanings of words like “civic” and “public.” The word “organic” connotes things that are natural or close to ordinary life, things that are human and function like living organisms. That which is organic is also loosely structured, more like a blob than a square or, in political terms, more informal than formal. There are other qualities that seem to be unique to organic politics:

• Citizens are defined by their relationships with other citizens rather than with the state. Relationships are not the same as those of family and friends, yet they are unlike those in institutional politics, which may be based on patronage or party loyalty. Organic relationships are pragmatic or work related. They form when people coalesce in order to rescue and restore during a disaster, when they build houses for the homeless, or when they help police watch for drug dealers in their neighborhoods.

• The names people give to problems reflect the things they hold dear and their basic concerns— their highest hopes and deepest fears as human beings. Safety from danger. Being treated fairly. The freedom to act as they see best. These names are different from those that people use when they are acting as professionals and politicians. For example, citizens want to feel that they are safe in their homes, and this feeling of security is less quantifiable but more compelling than the statistics professionals use to describe crime.

• The knowledge needed to decide what to do about these problems is created in the cauldron of collective decision making. It is formed by the interaction of people with other people, by the comparison of experience with experience. This knowledge is different from the way scholarly knowledge is created, which is through rigorously disciplined science.

• Decisions are based on the recognition that concerns are interrelated as well as competing, which is not the assumption in majority voting. Organic decision making is deliberative. Deliberation involves carefully weighing possible actions against what people consider most valuable, which has to be determined in a specific context. Institutional decision making can also be deliberative, although it is more often based on negotiation and bargaining.

• The resources needed to implement decisions come from citizens’ innate abilities, abilities that are magnified when people join in collective efforts. Citizens’ resources are often intangible,
such as commitment and political will. These are different from the resources of institutions, which tend to be material and technical.

- The citizenry acts in various ways, which are loosely coordinated by a shared sense of direction. Actions taken by institutions are usually uniform and directed by a single plan or central agency.
- The commitment of resources to action is enforced by covenants or the promises people make to one another. Institutional commitments are enforced by legal contracts.
- Power comes from the ability of citizens to make things through their collective efforts and from the relationships forged in these efforts, rather than from institutional authority.
- Change comes about through collective learning and the innovation it generates, rather than from modifications of law and policy.

Organic politics has its own structures: not board tables but kitchen tables, not assemblies like legislative bodies but common gatherings, once in post office lobbies but now on the Internet. These structures are more like sand than concrete. Ad hoc groups and alliances form, then fall away as a project is completed, but reappear when another task is at hand.

Why the Disconnect?

It would seem that two civic engagement movements, occurring at the same time and often in the same locations, would be closely allied — perhaps mutually reinforcing. That doesn’t seem to be happening very often. Research reported by Sean Creighton in the 2008 issue of the Higher Education Exchange suggests the connection is quite limited. Even though academic institutions have considerable expertise and a genuine interest in being helpful, they don’t necessarily know how to relate to the self-organizing impulses of Don, Mary, and their neighbors.

Creighton found that few university-community initiatives “focused on building relationships with community partners, much less on projects that increased the civic capacity of those community organizations and the individuals they served.” There are exceptions, of course. But, by and large, we have found that the emphasis is on institutions serving communities better by listening carefully and communicating more clearly.

Academics and neighborhood associations are quite aware of power differences between them, and universities often try to share institutional power; that is, to “empower” citizens. Yet, communicating with, serving, and empowering communities isn’t the same as building indigenous civic capacity — the capacity of a citizenry to join forces and act.

One study isn’t enough to generalize about all types of partnerships, so the Creighton report is more of a caution light than a stop sign. Efforts by colleges and universities to reach outside their walls is certainly a positive development. Too much benefit has come from the service provided by academic institutions to take their contribution lightly.

Why, though, are these two civic movements in danger of passing like the proverbial ships in the night? More important, how might these efforts become mutually supportive? One reason may be that like the natural wetlands, the value of the political wetlands isn’t easily recognized.

Because politics in the wetlands appear insignificant or deficient by institutional standards, professional staffs tend to colonize democracy at this level and remake it in their own image. The mechanisms for doing this are well-intended and familiar: empowerment projects, participatory mandates, accountability standards, and engagement campaigns. These build support for deserving institutions (like public schools), promote better understanding of government agencies, and provide institutional legitimacy. Their goal is to connect citizens to institutions; yet, in the rush to do that, the need for citizens to first engage one another is often overlooked.

Fixation on institutional politics may be another factor in obscuring the significance of what happens in the larger ecosystem of democracy. And this fixation may contribute to lack of discussion of the various kinds of democracy that are being promoted by both on- and off-campus engagement projects. One common reaction to the variety of initiatives in civic education, for instance, is to think of them as competing methodologies serving the same end. In fact, these campus projects may reflect very different notions of democracy, particularly different concepts of the role of citizens.

Some colleges and universities insist they serve democracy simply by existing. Maybe so, but what kind of democracy? Even when
academics use the same terminology, they may not have the same concepts of democracy in mind. As reported in the 2006 issue of the Higher Education Exchange, Derek Barker found five distinct practices all using the same generic label, the scholarship of engagement.

Nothing is wrong with this variety; nonetheless, wouldn’t it be beneficial if the concepts of democracy in different projects were made more explicit? One of the characteristics of democracy is a vigorous debate over its meaning. A crucial distinction needs to be made between projects that address the problems in a democracy (violence, injustice, poverty) and those that deal with the problems of democracy (moral disagreement, polarization, alienation). Both kinds are worthwhile, yet the problems of democracy may be getting less attention. If so, the potential in making use of what happens in the wetlands of democracy will remain unrecognized.

One indication that the problems of democracy aren’t visible is the way that deliberative democracy has been interpreted. The recent attention given to the important role deliberation plays in democracy has come about because of a serious problem of democracy — how to justify or make legitimate decisions when there are significant moral disagreements over which decisions are best. Deliberation is key because it takes into account the things that are held valuable, which give rise to moral disagreements. That is a far cry from the way public deliberation is often understood today, which is merely as one of many techniques used to promote civil discourse. We could certainly do with a little more civility in our political rhetoric — but public deliberation is far more than a methodology for ensuring politeness. It is an essential element in a democracy in which citizens are actors producing public goods.

Make no mistake; anytime there are moral disagreements, emotions will flare. That happens in deliberations. Far from suppressing emotions, deliberations recognize and help people work through strong feelings. The objective is to make sound decisions that have legitimacy because the concerns that produce the emotions have been recognized. Although not resulting in total agreement, deliberation helps people find enough common ground to act together and become effective political actors. One of the most powerful insights to come from deliberative forums is the political power available in seemingly trivial activities, like giving names to problems that need to be solved. When people fail to see names for problems that reflect their personal experiences and what they value, they feel outside the political system looking in. On the other hand, when people deliberate, they usually rename problems in their own terms. They claim the power inherent in owning their problems.

Moving On

The challenge higher education faces is to not let its engagement movement stall; one way to do that is to align its efforts more closely with those of Don, Mary, and their neighbors. Some colleges and universities are already beginning to do this. Kettering doesn’t know about all of these initiatives, so I can only draw from a few examples we have information on.

As already mentioned, citizens don’t necessarily see the potential in the wetlands of democracy or the power that comes from joining forces with other citizens. An experiment on the Wake Forest campus has broken through that barrier with a four-year program that gave students a better sense of how they can become effective political actors, not just on election day, but every day (2007). Two faculty members, Katy Harriger and Jill McMillan, introduced deliberative democracy as a way of doing politics. Deliberative forums were organized at multiple sites: in classrooms, in the campus community, and in the town where the university is located. Deliberation wasn’t presented as just a way of conducting forums, but as a way of living democratically.

This experiment shows that deliberative democracy challenges academic institutions at every level: from the nature of teaching and the character of the extracurricular program to the very meaning of scholarship. Perhaps the greatest challenge is epistemological. Deliberation creates morally relevant public knowledge about what is most important to people’s collective well-being. This knowledge has to be socially constructed by citizens; it is neither better nor worse than expert, scientific knowledge, just different. The role of public knowledge (perhaps better called practical wisdom) is to generate sound judgments about
what should be done in politics. How institutions of higher education contribute to this knowledge, which people need to rule themselves wisely, is an open question.

On another front, a new coalition of cooperative extension folks is taking on the challenge of finding ways to strengthen the democratic capacities in organic politics in order to form resilient, self-governing communities. We can hope that this coalition will be able to better align the ways their institutions go about their business with the way citizens go about theirs.

Still another group of initiatives is emerging from more than 40 centers and institutes that have sprung up around the country using public deliberation to give people direct experience with organic politics. Some promote deliberative forums to make the collective decisions that are needed to launch collective action on state and local problems. Others use the forums to combat the polarization that creates stalemates in our policymaking. These forums, often based on the National Issues Forums series of issue books, look at the pros and cons of three or more possible courses of action on controversial issues like abortion, race relations, and environmental protection.

Some of these institutes, such as the ones at Hofstra and Kansas State, are embedded in their universities. Others are freestanding, like the one in Alabama, and have ties to several universities. A number of institutes, including the one at the University of Hawaii, have strong connections to state legislatures. Still others are embedded in their communities but collaborate with a nearby university, as is the case for Penn State and the ad hoc Public Issues Forums of Centre County group.

Whether it is these 40-plus centers and institutes, the cooperative extension coalition, experiments in undergraduate education like the one at Wake Forest, or other initiatives I haven’t mentioned here, higher education is not only keeping its civic engagement movement going but also giving that movement a stronger democratic cast. The academy is bringing its efforts more in line with the efforts of people who want to do the work of citizens. This paper hopes to contribute to this alignment, which has the potential to stimulate fresh conceptual insights and tap into new reservoirs of civic energy.

We need more opportunities on and off campus for Marguerite Shaffer and her colleagues to meet with Don, Mary, and their neighbors, not as service providers and recipients, but as coproducers of democracy. The exchange can also help academic institutions renew their sense of themselves.

Colleges and universities are more than knowledge factories to be judged solely by their efficiency. From the American Revolution through the civil rights movement, they have been part of the greatest experiment of all, an experiment based on the proposition that we, citizens, can actually govern ourselves.

References


About the Author

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Research at Ohio State shows that service-learning curricula can improve health care, give back to the community, and help medical students grow personally and professionally.

Twenty Years of Experience in Service-Learning at The Ohio State University College of Medicine

Douglas M. Post, Firuzan Sari Kundt, Eileen Mehl, William A. Hudson, Linda C. Stone, and Franklin R. Banks

The profession of medicine is grounded in the provision of exemplary service to the patient and the practice of effective teamwork (Institute of Medicine, 2001). The typical pre-clinical curriculum for medical students, however, tends to focus on the intellectual pursuit of basic science knowledge and rewards individual achievement in this area of study. Service-learning, defined as a structured experience that combines service in a community setting with reflective learning, can offer an effective curricular balance in keeping with the values of the profession (Seifer, 1998).

The purpose of this paper is to describe 20 years of experience with a required service-learning curriculum, entitled the “Community Project” (CP), at The Ohio State University College of Medicine (OSU COM). The authors consist of the program director for a four-year clinical skills course that houses our service-learning curriculum (Post), a program coordinator for this course (Kundt), a program manager for Medicine Administration who is a former program coordinator for this course (Mehl), the associate director of Medical Education (Hudson), the associate dean of Student Affairs (Stone), and the director of our service-learning curriculum (Banks). Our group has a long-standing commitment to and enthusiasm for this type of educational activity for medical students. We believe that through service-learning curricula we can improve health care, give back to the community, and help students grow personally and professionally early in their careers. This article addresses the following components: 1) a historical perspective on service-learning education at the OSU COM; 2) a description of the CP; 3) lessons we have learned over time; 4) outcome data associated with this educational activity; and 5) potential future directions.

Service-Learning and the Medical Profession

Medical schools are increasingly incorporating service-learning activities into their curricula. Service-learning is defined as a combination of community service and preparation/reflection, an activity in response to community needs, in which students learn about the service context, their roles in the community, and the connection between their academics and service-learning activities (Eyler, 2002). Reflection has been defined as “the intentional consideration of experience in light of particular learning objectives” (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997, p. 153). Reflective practice requires active engagement by the learner in his or her learning. Evidence suggests that combining academic study with extensive reflection leads to positive outcomes, including a deeper understanding of problems and enhanced cognitive development (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

The Pew Health Professions Commission
SPHPC), the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) have addressed the multiple advantages that can be gained from a service-learning curriculum (O’Neil, E. H., & PHPC, 1998; LCME, 2007; IOM, 2004). These organizations exert tremendous influence on health care policy and medical education. Collectively, these organizations assist health care professionals, health profession schools, health care delivery organizations and public policy makers respond to the challenges of improving the health of individuals and their communities. The LCME is recognized as the official accreditation body by physician licensure boards of all U.S. states and territories, the Canadian provinces, and the U.S. Department of Education. The IOM provides evidence-based recommendations to a variety of constituents, including policy makers, health care providers, and the public.

In a service-learning curriculum, students can learn about their social and public roles in the community, and hands-on learning activities may help develop professional values while improving community health. The academic institution can achieve community goodwill through demonstration of the university’s service mission and enhancement of campus-community partnerships. In addition, the promotion of medical students’ professionalism and future civic involvement through service-learning can benefit societal health. Recognizing these benefits, the LCME has recently adopted a new accreditation standard for U.S. medical schools: “Medical schools should make available sufficient opportunities for medical students to participate in service-learning activities, and should encourage and support student participation” (LCME, 2008).

Typically, service-learning programs support underserved populations, tend to be elective opportunities, and are offered both within and outside of required coursework. Outcome data indicate high student satisfaction with service-learning education associated with fulfillment of unmet community health needs, although effects on academic performance have been mixed (Averill et al., 2007; Blue, Geesey, Sheridan, & Basco, 2006; Burrows, Chauvin, Chehardy, & Lazarus, 1999; Elam et al., 2003). We believe educators at other medical and health professional schools can adapt components of our CP model and create or enhance service-learning opportunities at their own institutions.

Background

In the mid 1980s, the OSU COM developed the Medical Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (MHBS) course, designed to be a comprehensive approach to social and behavioral science education applicable to the practice of medicine. One full day per week of the first-year curriculum was dedicated to this required course. The course and its components are fully described elsewhere (Post et al., 2008).

A decision was made to incorporate a community learning experience into the MHBS curriculum during the 1988-89 academic year. The overall goal was to introduce first-year medical students to the wide variety of health and social service agencies that impact the health of individuals and families residing in the community. In addition, rather than working with attending physicians, the originators of the CP believed it was important to expose students to training from nurses, social workers, and other medical and social service providers who work in community settings. The original premise was that our medical students needed to experience the broader spectrum of health care and learn from professionals other than physicians.

The implementation of the CP has evolved over time, mostly in response to student feedback. In the original design of the curriculum, first-year students were scheduled to complete their community experience over three consecutive weeks. They were randomly assigned to agencies and learning took place primarily through observation and interviewing clients and staff, rather than through the provision of direct service.

During the early years of CP, evaluations revealed that a substantial number of students wanted to provide active service and work with an agency of their choice. In response to this feedback, “The Community Service Project Option” program was implemented as a pilot project in 1995 (Banks & Heaney, 2000). Twenty-four students submitted written
proposals for their service activity to the co-directors of the project. The service requirement was set at 12 hours minimum. Evaluation data indicated student enthusiasm for the service component; however, many felt it was difficult to identify and make contact with an appropriate agency.

This led to the formation of a Community Project Fair. This initiative, more fully described below, began in 1996. That year, representatives from 29 agencies presented their service opportunities to all first-year students at the OSU COM and recruited student volunteers. At this same time, the structure of the pilot “Community Service Project Option” was expanded and developed into a required educational activity for all first-year students. Both of these changes were highly successful and remain intact today.

During the 2002-03 academic year, the CP was awarded a $5,000 service-learning course development grant from the Service Learning Initiative (SLI) at The Ohio State University (service-learning.osu.edu/). This university organization provides training and assistance to enhance courses in service-learning across the university, offers grants for course development and provides awards for student and faculty excellence in service-learning activities. The grant was written to address student feedback regarding inconsistency in the quality of learning experiences across agencies, as well as to fulfill our need to enhance communication with the agencies.

The grant funded two incoming second-year medical students to contact and interview community agencies over the summer months. Incoming second-year students were selected because they had recently completed their Community Service Project. They reviewed medical student evaluations of agency sites from previous years. Based on the numbers of students who partnered with an agency, the nature of evaluation comments, and length of commitment to the program by the community partner, 20 agencies were chosen to be interviewed. The purpose of the interview was to receive feedback from the agencies regarding the quality of our program, gather information regarding how we could better address their needs, and use their feedback to improve program effectiveness. Written reports on each agency were completed and an agency assessment template (Table 1) was developed.

Each academic year, the completed assessments are made available for review to first-year students during our Community Project Fair as well as on the restricted access course website.

Description of Community Project

The CP currently consists of several components: the Community Project Fair, the performance of community service, and the completion of several assignments designed to promote student reflection on their service activities.

The Community Project Fair

The Community Project Fair takes place early in the academic year. Community agencies are invited to present their mission and services to all first-year medical students. Agencies usually bring brochures and distribute “freebies” such as pens, markers, and other promotional material to students who express interest in volunteering with them.

The CP program has a large database of actively participating agencies that work with our students. Since all community agencies that participate in CP are not able to attend the Fair, students are encouraged to review other agencies from the CP agency database and to initiate contact on their own. The work of our community agencies ranges from area student mentorship programs, to state-subsidized and privately-owned public health programs, to addressing diversity-related issues of the local population. Our criterion for acceptance of new agencies includes a strong mission orientation towards a health and/or social service goal, as well as the ability to provide meaningful service-learning projects for our students. The Community Project leadership team reviews agencies that express an interest in participating in our program; almost all are approved. In addition, students are allowed to create their own agency. Several student-led initiatives continue to be active and effective after several years of involvement. Agencies have remained loyal, very few have ceased involvement over
time, and each year they express appreciation for our students’ efforts. The OSU COM provides funding for the Community Project Fair and supports the efforts of the CP leadership team in creating a quality service-learning curriculum. Funding for the Fair is approximately $1,400, and includes costs for food and beverages, set-up (tables/chairs, tablecloths, balloons, etc.), and parking tokens for our community agency representatives.

**Community Project Assignments**

The various learning activities associated with CP are listed below:

1. **Project Proposal**: Within one month after the Community Project Fair, students are required to submit a proposal stating where they intend to complete their CP, what they will be doing and contact information for the agency representative with whom they will be working.

2. **Community Agency Report**: Three months after students complete CP proposals, they are expected to write a community agency report. Students respond to a series of questions (Table 2) that address the mission, staffing, finance, and organizational structure of the agency. They also describe their service activities and critically assess and reflect on the agency’s effectiveness.

3. **Patient/Client Interview**: The patient/client interview is due one month after the community agency report. Students assess the agency’s services and the quality of these services as perceived by patients or clients. They respond to a series of questions (listed in Table 2) that address the type of services received, assessment of services, barriers to access of services, suggestions for improvement, and agency qualities that were appreciated by the patient/client.

4. **Minimum of 12 Service-Learning Hours over 9 Months**: Students track their agency service hours over the course of the academic year and record these on a tracking form. Their community agency representative signs off on the same form to verify hours provided.

5. **Project Presentation**: Each student is required to make a 10-15 minute reflective presentation to a group of 11 other students and a facilitator regarding their CP experience. In the clinical skills

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**Table 1. Community Project Agency Assessment Sheet, 07/08**

1. Student name ___________________________________________  
2. Name of organization _____________________________________  
3. Supervisor name ________________________________________ 
4. Phone number __________  
5. Brief description of what you did at the agency ________________  
6. Time commitment ________________________________________  
7. Travel time/distance ______________________________________  
8. Was it easy to establish contact with your agency?  
   Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
9. Was agency flexible with your time commitment? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
10. Were there training/orientation sessions? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
11. If yes, was there a cost involved? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
12. Was it easy enough to gather the information you needed for your assignments? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
13. Was the agency responsive if you had trouble with your assignment and/or wanted to be involved with something else? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
14. Was your experience rewarding (did you make an impact)?  
   Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
15. Were the clients responsive to your efforts? Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
16. Would you recommend this agency to next year’s students?  
   Y ___ N ___ N/A ___  
17. Briefly describe why you would or would not recommend the agency to next year’s students.  
   ____________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________  
18. Any additional comments  
   ____________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________  
   ____________________________________________________
course that houses the CP, 12 students and a physician facilitator meet approximately once a week in three-hour small group sessions over the entire academic year. The CP presentations take place during one of these small group sessions towards the end of the academic year. Students must also complete a one-page description of their agency and distribute this to peers prior to beginning their talk. In past years, presentations primarily addressed the nature of the students’ volunteer activities, as well as the staffing and organization of each agency. Recently, we shifted the focus from recounting activities and tasks to the sharing of a reflective narrative. This change resulted from discussions among the CP leadership team regarding the benefits of reflection. Our group believes that medical education can be a transformative experience through a process of critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991). These presentations provide students with opportunities to reflect on their volunteer experiences and how these may have changed their perspective on community service and their role as future physicians in the community. Students who participated in the same service activity often present projects together. Presentations are evaluated by the small group facilitator using a structured checklist.

6. Agency Assessment Sheet: These are collected by facilitators to assure complete records for future classes. As previously described, the agency assessment sheet is designed to assist first-year students with their agency decision, as well as to enhance quality control of the CP program. This form is listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Patient/Client Interview and Agency Report Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient/Client Interview Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What kinds of services does the patient/client receive from this organization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the patient/client assessment of these services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What does he/she especially appreciate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there anything about the services that the patient/client would like to see changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has the patient/client experienced any barriers obtaining these services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have any additional comments or observations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Report Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the agency’s mission and how it contributes to the health of the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe its staffing, including professional providers and support personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how the agency is financed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe the agency’s organizational structure. What are its lines of authority? Who reports to whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relate one incident or encounter that significantly impressed you, either positively or negatively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe in some detail your service activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critically assess the agency and its effectiveness in providing health or social services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you have any suggestions regarding how the agency could improve its work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Patient/Client Interview and Agency Report Questions

Scoring weights for student performance on the different CP components are listed below.

**Project Proposal: 10%**  
**Community Agency Report: 20%**  
**Patient/Client Interview: 20%**  
**Completion of a minimum of 12 service-learning hours: 10%**  
**Project Presentation: 30%**  
**Agency Assessment Sheet: 10%**

Each of the above written assignments is graded by the director of the Community Project, who also provides feedback to students on the quality of their reflections.

Methods

We have used a variety of measures to investigate the impact of the Community Project program. To assess student involvement in this activity, we track the total number of hours students devote to service-learning projects. Most students submit their hours by completing a one-page form which requires the agency contact information, a brief description of their service-learning activities, the number of hours contributed, and the signature of their supervisor at the agency. Some students,
particularly those who volunteer outside of the Central Ohio region, have their agency representative send the CP coordinator an e-mail with the information as outlined above. This information is then entered into an excel database.

In order to obtain feedback from students regarding the quality of their CP experience, they are asked to complete an evaluation of their service-learning curriculum during the end-of-year Community Project presentation session. Using a five-point scale, ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5), students are asked to rate the quality of the various components of CP, including the Community Fair, the agency report and patient-client interview assignments, the end-of-year presentation, as well as their overall experience.

This academic year, we invited agency representatives to a spring recognition luncheon for the first time. The purpose of this program was to recognize the community agencies

**Table 3. Community Project Program Evaluation for Agencies, 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The CP was beneficial to me/my agency/organization.</td>
<td>m Strongly Agree m Agree m Neutral m Disagree m Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students were eager/happy to volunteer with me/my agency/organization.</td>
<td>m Strongly Agree m Agree m Neutral m Disagree m Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In general, how would you evaluate the performances of OSU Medical students who have been assigned to your organization?</td>
<td>m Strongly Agree m Agree m Neutral m Disagree m Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Please explain your rating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is (are) the strength(s) of the Community Project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is (are) the weakness(es) of the Community Project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How would you rate your experience at the Community Fair?</td>
<td>m Excellent m Good m Fair m Poor m Very Poor m N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Please explain your rating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How would you rate your experience at today's luncheon?</td>
<td>m Excellent m Good m Fair m Poor m Very Poor m N/A m N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Please explain your rating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I would recommend the Community Project to other agencies/organizations.</td>
<td>m Strongly Agree m Agree m Neutral m Disagree m Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Why or why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How would you recommend the CP be improved or changed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Do you plan on participating in the Community Project next year?</td>
<td>m Yes m No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. If you would like to make any general comments about the Community Project, please do so in the space provided below.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your time to take this survey and provide us with valuable feedback. Hope you have a great summer and we hope to see you in the fall for the Community Project Fair!
for their valuable contributions to student education and to secure their input regarding the quality of the program. Representatives who attended the luncheon were asked to complete an evaluation form. Using a five-point scale, ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5), agency representatives were asked to rate the quality of the CP from their perspective. The form is listed in Table 3.

The Medical School Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) is a national questionnaire administered by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). It has been administered annually since 1978 to U.S. graduating medical students. The GQ consists of two parts. Part 1, the Program Evaluation Survey, includes questions related to the student’s medical school experiences, student support programs, and potential problems, including mistreatment. Part 2, the Student Survey on Priorities in Medical Education: Diversity, Career Aspirations, and Indebtedness, includes questions related to educational and non-educational debt, specialty choice, and the medical school’s cultural environment.

One of the questions on the GQ asks: “Do you believe that the time devoted to your instruction in the following areas was inadequate, appropriate, or excessive?” (Lockwood, Sabharwal, Danoff, & Whitcomb, 2004). Under the Population Based Medicine section, the questionnaire assesses student opinion regarding their education in the role of community health and social service agencies. All fourth-year students are requested by the OSU COM to complete the GQ during the month of February.

Findings

We began to track students’ CP hours during the 2003-04 academic year. Over the past three academic years, the total number of service hours has increased from 3,497 to 5,665 hours, a 62% increase. Our first-year students currently average 27 hours of service to their agencies, more than double the 12-hour requirement.

For the 2007-08 academic year, the response rate for student completion of the CP evaluation form was 74% (148) out of a class of 200. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate means and confidence intervals for each of the survey items. The mean rating of students’ overall CP experience was 3.83 out of a possible 5.0 (95% CI = 3.70-3.96). Results for each item on the evaluation form are listed in Table 4. Both mean scores and comments listed on the evaluation form indicated a higher rating by students of experiential learning activities, including the Community Fair and the actual service component of CP, as compared to those designed to promote reflection. Students often mentioned increasing service hours while decreasing or eliminating written assignments in their comments regarding improvement of their CP experience (Table 4).

Starting in 2004, the yes/no responses on the agency assessment sheet (Table 1) for three consecutive academic years were summarized. Corresponding percentages for yes/no answers by students are listed in Table 5.

We invited 39 community agency representatives to our recognition luncheon, and 14 (36%) were able to attend. All attendees completed the agency evaluation form. Although the sample size was small, we did get a 100% response rate from attendees at the luncheon. The evaluation form listed a variety of questions concerning the effectiveness of our students and the CP for their organization. Both mean scores and comments listed on the evaluation form indicated a high rating by agency representatives. Results for each item are listed in Table 6.

Table 7 compares responses of OSU COM students to responses by a national group of medical students over the past 10 years on the AAMC Medical School Graduation Questionnaire’s Population Medicine section. Return rates for this questionnaire have averaged 74% over the past eight years. Results of a 2x3 chi-square analysis revealed that on average, over the past 10 years, OSU COM students believed the time devoted to their education in the role of community health and social service agencies was significantly more appropriate, as compared to the national group of students (p < .001).

Discussion

Educating medical students on the use of community resources is a high-priority
recommendation (Institute of Medicine, 2004). Through the Community Fair, the provision of services to a self-selected community agency, and the end-of-year presentations to their peers, medical students at The Ohio State University are taught about resources that are available in the Central Ohio community to enhance patient care. Our program exceeds the LCME recommendation of encouraging participation by requiring all first-year students to complete a service-learning curriculum. We fall somewhat short, however, of fulfilling the recommendations of the PHPC to require a significant amount of work in community service settings and to actively involve agencies in building service-learning programs. The recognition luncheon we offered this past spring is a positive step towards more actively involving our community partners. We are planning to offer this function again next year and will more actively recruit the agencies with whom we work to attend. Increasing the number of minimum service-learning hours would bridge the gap between our current requirement and the PHPC recommendation.

Evaluations from students and agency representatives, as well as the number of hours students commit beyond their requirement, for the most part indicate a very positive response to our service-learning curriculum. Regarding the higher ratings by students of experiential learning activities, the literature on service-learning indicates that service loses meaning without reflective practice (Eyler, 2002). Perhaps incorporation of alternative reflective learning activities would enhance students’ experiences in this area and subsequently improve evaluation scores (Epstein, 1999).

We believe the greatest strengths of our program include the following: 1) required participation by future physicians in a service-learning curriculum (identical to required participation in a basic sciences curriculum); 2) offering students a diverse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Student Evaluation of Service-Learning Curriculum, The Ohio State University College of Medicine, 2007-08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Community Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Agency Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Patient/Client Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The End-of-Year Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating of Community Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rating scale = 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)  
** N = 148, total = 200, response rate = 74%  
*** Significant at p<0.05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Average Student Responses on Agency Assessment Sheet 2004-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Was it easy to establish contact with your agency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Was the agency flexible with your time commitment?  
91.8 | 5.4 | 2.8 |

3. Where there training/orientation sessions?  
68.1 | 29.8 | 2.1 |

4. If yes, was there a cost involved?  
07.7 | 67.6 | 24.7 |

5. Was it easy enough to gather the information you needed for your assignments?  
93.9 | 4.7 | 1.4 |

6. Was the agency responsive of you had trouble with our assignment and/or wanted to be involved with something else?  
66.9 | 5.6 | 27.5 |

7. Was your experience rewarding (did you make an impact)?  
90.2 | 7.2 | 2.6 |

8. Were the clients responsive to your efforts?  
90.4 | 2.3 | 7.2 |

9. Would you recommend this agency to next year’s students?  
91.6 | 7.2 | 1.2 |

Note: Over 3 years, N = 429, total = 617, response rate = 69.53%
choice of educational experiences through a community fair or similar program; 3) student self-selection of their desired learning environment; and 4) active student participation in curriculum design and continuous quality improvement efforts. Weaknesses include the relatively passive involvement of the community in building and improving the curriculum, an area we are currently addressing. Obstacles we have encountered include the relatively large class size at the OSU COM and associated administrative difficulties. In addition, we have been struck by the variability in student attitudes towards service-learning work. Each breakthrough in the curriculum has been a result of listening to students’ concerns and constructively responding to their suggestions. There are a few limitations that warrant discussion. Limitations include the relatively narrow outcomes we have examined up to this point. The next step involves an investigation into how a service-

Table 6. Agency Evaluations of the Community Project, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The CP was beneficial to me/my agency/organization</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3.79-5.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students were eager/happy to volunteer with me/my agency/organization.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>3.30-5.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, how would you evaluate the performances of OSU Medical students who have been assigned to your organization?</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3.79-5.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your experience at the Community Fair?</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>3.23-5.97***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rate your experience at today’s luncheon?</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.03-5.61***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend the Community Project to other agencies/organizations.</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.07-5.59***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rating scale = 1(poor) to 5(excellent)
** N = 14, total = 14, response rate = 100%
*** Significant at p<0.05

Table 7. AAMC Medical School Graduation Questionnaire Results 1998-2007

Population Based Medicine: Role of community health and social service agencies

Do you believe that the time devoted to your instruction in the following areas was inadequate, appropriate, or excessive?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>OSU Inadequate</th>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Excessive</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% Total OSU Grad.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>OSU 23.1</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>N=143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 33.86</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>12,525</td>
<td>TN=194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>OSU 30.2</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>N=53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 32.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11,412</td>
<td>TN=202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>OSU 20</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>N=80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 33.1</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9,444</td>
<td>TN=211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>OSU 29.1</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>N=175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 33.4</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>10,712</td>
<td>TN=198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>88.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>OSU 30.7</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>N=176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 34.5</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13,653</td>
<td>TN=188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>93.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>OSU 29.5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>N=207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 36.5</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>14,177</td>
<td>TN=211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>OSU 26.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>N=191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 36.7</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>14,159</td>
<td>TN=196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>OSU 34.6</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>N=191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 41.6</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>14,094</td>
<td>TN=193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>OSU 28.6</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>N=192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 41.6</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12,680</td>
<td>TN=209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>OSU 45.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>N=157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 45.8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>13,863</td>
<td>TN=206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aver.</td>
<td>OSU 29.9</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>N=1556</td>
<td>TN=122,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nat’l 37</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>N=1556</td>
<td>TN=2,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learning curriculum may impact broader outcomes, including medical school graduates over time, the agencies and clients/patients served by the agencies, and the health of the communities we serve. A second limitation involves the self-report nature of most of our outcomes, and the bias that may result.

Lessons Learned

1. Graded Course Requirement

We have learned a number of lessons over the 20-year existence of CP. The first has been to establish a graded course requirement and allot protected time in the curriculum for completion of service-learning activities. From its inception during the 1988-89 academic year, the CP has been a required educational activity for first-year students. Three weeks of the behavioral science course schedule are devoted to CP and no other course activities are scheduled in order to give students protected time to work with their agencies. This stems from our belief that all medical students should experience the educational benefits associated with community involvement as part of their professional education. This requirement sends students the message that the learning associated with the CP is valuable and that community service is an important professional responsibility.

However, until fairly recently, performance on the CP did not count for a grade. During the 2002-03 academic year, we decided to change our system of grading so that CP performance would count for 10% of the overall grade in the first-year behavioral science course. As part of this effort, we determined how much weight to allocate to the various CP components in the overall grading scheme. These percentages have been previously described.

Two years later, we decided to create deadlines for assignments and consequences for turning in late assignments. Prior to this change, many students ignored assignment deadlines and turned in late work at the end of the academic year, without penalty. For example, only 57 students (28% of the class) completed and returned their agency assessment sheet during the 2004-05 academic year. When the new policy was enacted, 181 students (93%) completed this assignment on time. Making CP part of the overall course grade and creating consequences has led to significant changes in student behavior.

2. Variety and Flexibility in Service-Learning Opportunities

A second lesson involves the development of a wide variety of service-learning opportunities and adaptability to students’ personal choices. We believe in the value of offering students a diverse choice of service-learning options and support students working with agencies who have not been part of the CP program in the past. Our students typically enter medical school with strong service backgrounds and many desire to continue their previous agency affiliations. Some of these agencies do not participate in the Community Project Fair. We review non-participating agency requests and almost all are approved. This flexibility of choice is widely appreciated by the students.

3. Student Involvement and Leadership

A third lesson involves tapping into the valuable contributions of our students. This has been most apparent in the growth and support of student leadership efforts over time, a change best exemplified by the establishment of two recent student-directed projects, Medical Students for Kids and MD Camp.

Medical Students for Kids was originally created under faculty leadership through grant funding. When funding ended, students formed a non-profit entity and have maintained the project since 2003. Second-year students direct the program; first-year students mentor local elementary students who attend school in underserved areas. Some of the first-year students who complete the program move into leadership positions during their second year, sustaining the program over time.

MD Camp was created in 2004 by a first-year medical student for his CP. It is a summer program for local high school juniors and seniors from groups that are under represented in medicine. This program was designed to inform such students about career opportunities in the field of medicine. The medical student received grant funding and donations for the program and also recruited other first-year
students to staff it. With faculty help, student organizers wrote a curriculum and recruited under-represented high school students. This past summer, over 20 local secondary students attended MD Camp. This program recently received an Alpha Omega Alpha Student Service Grant.

Over the past five years, student involvement in all aspects of medical education has become a hallmark of the OSU COM medical curriculum. The umbrella organization that provides opportunities for student ideas to flourish is Project Professionalism, created by students in conjunction with the associate dean for Student Affairs (Stone, 2007). Project Professionalism is a student-driven initiative fully supported by the service-learning culture of the College of Medicine. The Project serves as an incubator for student initiatives that reach out to members of the medical center, the local community, and the global community. The Project consists of 15 student activities, including Humanism in Medicine, which highlights humanistic behaviors of the medical team; MedServe, which brings students into an on-going relationship with a local clinic that serves the underserved; MedPaws, which trains owners of cats and dogs in therapy techniques; the graduation class oath project; and Podemos, our Honduras global health initiative. The Project provides an environment for students to be innovative and to work with other students who share similar goals. A CP working group within Project Professionalism was created by students in 2003 with the intent of improving students’ service-learning experiences. The medical student chair and co-chair of this group collaborate with CP academic leadership to help meet this goal.

4. Rewarding Excellence

A fourth lesson involves our growing awareness of the importance of rewarding excellence. During the 2003-04 academic year, we began to participate in an award program sponsored by SLI at Ohio State. At the end of each academic year, several awards are presented at a university-wide recognition ceremony sponsored by the SLI, titled the “Celebration of Excellence in Community Scholarship and Service Awards Presentations.”

Past awardees associated with our service-learning curriculum include the CP director for the past 12 years (Banks), who received the Faculty Award for Excellence in Community-Based Teaching. This award recognizes one faculty member across the entire university who demonstrates outstanding leadership in service-learning education. During the 2003-04 academic year, three medical students received the Award for Excellence in Volunteer Service for participation in more than 100 hours of service-learning activity. Over the next four academic years 6, 24, 20, and 26 students received this award.

In addition, the student who originated the MD Camp concept was honored with the OSU Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award. One person at Ohio State received this award each year, and it carries a $1,200 honorarium. We believe this public recognition of excellence benefits the students, the College of Medicine and the university, and supports the culture of professionalism and service for which we continuously strive.

Conclusions

We believe OSU COM students have benefited from our 20-year history with service-learning education. A number of future directions are currently in either the planning or early implementation stages.

We are exploring the potential value of establishing a group of faculty physician mentors for the CP. Faculty mentors would have established relationships with specific agencies (i.e., serve as a member of the board of directors of the Ohio American Cancer Society or Columbus AIDS Task Force) or possess a passion for service-learning work (i.e., provide service to a homeless shelter, be involved in local charity organizations). This framework could provide valuable role models for students and further contribute to a service-oriented culture in the OSU COM.

In addition, a student group within Project Professionalism is currently researching the organizational structures of other medical schools’ community service and service-learning programs. Their goal is to assess the feasibility of a college-staffed community service administrative office. Potential benefits of
this initiative to the college include increased service-learning opportunities for students, expansion of services to the community, and coordination of grant funding activities.

Another potential future direction involves extension of this initiative into the second, third, and fourth years of medical school. Working with student representatives of the COM Professionalism Council, an integrated, longitudinal professionalism curriculum for undergraduate and graduate medical education is being developed. The underlying philosophy is that a professional approach to education and standards of professionalism should be taught from the first day of medical school and continued over the entire course of medical school and into residency. The service component of the CP is a natural bridge to this framework.

Finally, we are discussing the potential for using the CP to help establish relationships with students from other health sciences disciplines. Students from medicine, veterinary medicine, optometry, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, allied medicine and public health could cooperate to provide team-oriented, service-learning work to community agencies. This mechanism could provide the education regarding teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration often lacking in the medical school environment. Working as a team to provide meaningful service would require learners to identify needs and formulate action while transcending cultural differences in various professions (Vella, 1994). An interprofessional approach to service-learning could benefit students’ transitions into the team environment of the clerkship years and introduce them to differing perspectives on service work and clinical care (Mareck, Uden, Larson, Shepard, & Reinert, 2004).

Various components of our service-learning curriculum can be adapted by other institutions to help meet the new LCME accreditation standard. In addition, it would benefit other institutions if programs with successful service-learning curricula could disseminate their experiences through panel discussions at medical conferences or joint publications. This type of dialog would help other medical schools consider curricular options and determine if and how to follow suite. The creation and improvement of service-learning curricula can provide substantial benefits to communities, students, institutions of higher education, society, and the patients we serve.

References


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In-class and public prison arts performances are viewed as instances of gift giving, yielding major benefits but also potential problems.

Widening the Circle: Prison Arts Performances as Gifts

Ryan Browne

Abstract

After outlining the major benefits — and problems — of both in-class and public prison arts performances, and presenting an explication of gifts found in Lewis Hyde’s *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*, I offer a normative lens through which these performances should be viewed: as exemplary instances of gift giving.

Mechanized doors, spools of razor wire, electrified fences, bars, grating, flickering fluorescent lights: These are not the settings of a typical art studio … unless one creates art in prison. The occurrence of art within prison has a robust and well-documented history, from inmate sketches of pastoral scenes on the walls of centuries-old jailhouses to the contemporary poet Jimmy Santiago Baca composing and publishing poems while incarcerated. Indeed, “There are many working artists in prison — men and women who have already determined that the creation of personal or cultural expression helps them to do their time” (Hillman, 2003, p. 17). For almost as long as prisoners have been at their art behind bars there have been artists coming in from the outside to instruct, supply materials, and serve as an audience. Many artists have begun prison arts programs in order to find a space, bracket time, and provide greater opportunity that is officially endorsed by the prison’s staff for the artists and their art.

This kind of space is not empirical, as in Newtonian or quantum space, though it does encompass location – the gymnasium, the chapel, the law library; space, in the prison arts context, is less scientific, more humanistic: the attitudes, the intentions, the feelings present, in addition to physical place. Certainly some places are more conducive to the creation and appreciation of art, places that are not found in prisons, such as a studio, workshop, or gallery. But carving out space that facilitates and nurtures the creation and appreciation of art within the prison is one of the most important goals of prison arts classes.

The dominant metaphor used by the artists who enter correctional facilities and find or create spaces where art happens is the circle; as Leslie Neal (2003) asserts, “The circle must always be made” (p. 76). This identification makes sense for the dedicated space of an arts class within a regimented and oppressive prison atmosphere. Although circles are enclosed and definite, they are shielded, insulated, protective, symbolically much more like a “womb” (p. 76) than a confining prison cell. Simply the presence of a circle differentiates space; the space within a circle is different from the space without. So too with a prison arts class: The arts occur within the prison, yes, but specifically within the circle, and so are distinct from the prison. Ask anyone who has visited a prison arts class, and he or she will confirm this fact. The work done in these classes is fundamentally different from (perhaps even in direct opposition to) the workings of the prison.

However, prison arts programs do not just provide sanctioned space, time, and opportunity in the classes they offer. A thrill and joy
accompanies the knowledge that others are reading your poem or considering your drawing. This is why “most curricula are organized around producing culminating events — performances, exhibitions, and publications” (Hillman, 2003, p. 18). The presentation of a prisoner’s work, whether in class or in public, enriches the benefits of prison arts classes by widening the circle. It may be surprising, then, to learn that there has not been a detailed consideration of prison arts performances and their benefits.

I attempt to offer just such a consideration here. After outlining the major benefits — and problems — of both in-class and public prison arts performances, and presenting an explication of gifts found in The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property (Hyde, 1983), I supply a normative lens through which to view these performances: as exemplary instances of gift giving.

**Prison Arts Performances Within the Circle**

Often at least one performance takes place within the circle each class meeting, and depending on the art form, the class may consist entirely of in-class performances. These performances can range from a prisoner volunteering to read aloud a poem that is under discussion, to the demonstration of an original dance-step during stretching and warm-ups. The in-class performances can be as formal and organized as inviting a visitor or guest artist to class for an arranged performance, or as informal and spontaneous as a teacher holding up a student’s painting in order to illustrate a shading technique to the whole class. In the poetry courses I teach, I like to bring in audio recordings of poets reading their own work; this, too, is a performance, which often leads to another performance, when students, inspired by what they just heard, stand up and recite their own poems.

Some of the major benefits of performances that occur within the circle go hand-in-hand with their drawbacks. First of all, in-class performances lead to increased comfort, familiarity, and trust among peers and between the students and the teacher. Recently, during a miniature workshop in one of my poetry classes, a student’s poem was up for discussion, and, as is customary in our class, another student volunteered to read the poem aloud before the author read it. After that student read it aloud, another student, having enjoyed the poem and the reading of the poem so much, requested if he too could read it to the class. Once the original author read it to us, the other students lauded their fellow poet and the poem. Because the poet was quite shy and often reluctant to speak up during class (he did not say a word for the first three weeks of class), the gradual opening-up of the poet — he was deftly and confidently answering questions about his process and poems by the end of the workshop session — and the enthusiasm of his peers makes this incident particularly noteworthy. The reading of the poem, the performance of the poem, allowed for a deeper relationship to take hold among the students.

Unfortunately, in-class performances also leave both teacher and students vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by those who might take advantage of such intimacy. It may be the case that some people teach prison art classes to satisfy (sometimes unhealthy) personal desires, such as sadomasochistic fantasies or “savior/saint complexes” (Williams, 2002, p. 296), and some prisoners take advantage of sincere, earnest teachers. Manipulation of this kind can occur at any level of an educational institution; however, the repercussions of such manipulation in a prison can have more immediate and dangerous consequences.

**Times may arise during or after a performance within the circle that are sometimes referred to as teaching moments, instances where the teacher notices an opportunity to highlight a technique or draw attention to a main emphasis of the class that appears in a performance. Moments like these can be particularly powerful and illustrative because the students get to see a concrete embodiment of an abstract concept under consideration enacted in the art and performance. What better way to illuminate how the enjambment of lines in a poem can create tension for readers than to point out that very technique in the poem a student just read aloud?**

However, problems can occur during an in-class performance when what the teacher identifies as a teaching moment impinges upon the attitudes, instincts, or culture of the prison and prisoners. For example, take Pat MacEnulty’s (2003) recollection of a discussion in an in-class fiction workshop of a prisoner’s story:
I saw the raw material for a fabulous short story, and I began to suggest ways to improve the piece, to heighten the dramatic potential, and to deepen the characterization. Like pioneers under siege on the Oregon Trail, the rest of the participants formed a protective circle around the writer. They insisted that the story was perfect as it was and that the writer shouldn’t change a thing. I tried to convince them that good writing required manipulation and revision. I wanted them to look at their experiences objectively in order to be able to turn these events into the stuff of fiction or memoir (p. 63).

MacEnulty (2003) recognized the power of the material in the student’s story, but also its need for refinement, and saw this story as a great opportunity to point out the importance of revision in writing. The students also recognized the power of the story, its power to “validate their worth as human beings” (p. 64), not (only) the deft narrative or apt metaphors, but the value in the fact that it was something this prisoner created with her own abilities and skills. When MacEnulty began to critique this creation, the defenses went up; the critique was interpreted to have come from outside the circle, so the circle narrowed to exclude MacEnulty. In this case, the goals and interests of the teacher came into conflict with the goals and interests of the students. “Fortunately, I had established a rapport with these women, and the writer whose work was in question and I were ‘homies.’ Otherwise, I would have lost the group” (p. 63). The trust and intimacy that MacEnulty had established, perhaps through other in-class performances, helped her neutralize the unanticipated backlash from this teaching moment and maintain her place within the circle.

A compelling in-class performance can also serve as inspiration for the prisoners. When I have my students listen to a recording of Jimmy Santiago Baca reciting a poem, the first thing they want to do — after heaping praise upon the formerly incarcerated poet — is stand up and share their own work. At no other time am I more assured of the efficacy of the arts in prison. A possible problem with such moving performances, though, could be the withdrawal of a student with a fragile ego or low self-confidence. Incarcerated men and women experience a barrage of implicit messages, from the very condition of the facilities in which they live, from society’s overall attitude toward prisoners, and from explicit messages in the form of physical assault, rape, and theft by other prisoners and sometimes staff, all of which (re)affirm a sense of personal worthlessness. Individuals with long histories of neglect and abuse at the hands of others and society understandably have shaky confidence in anything they produce [How could anything that comes from this battered being have any worth? a prisoner may think.] and they may compare their own work to the work they come into contact with during a performance within the circle. In a situation like this, a performance may cripple instead of inspire.

Journeys from the Circle: Public Prison Arts Performances

All of the benefits and problems of performances that happen within the circle, in the security and familiarity of the space of that particular prison arts class, accompany performances that move beyond the circle, that leave the circle, or that are sent out of it to the outside world. Public readings, dance recitals, mural projects, Shakespearean productions of Hamlet, any prison arts performance that does not take place within the classroom, can build trust, concretize abstract elements of study, and inspire; but they can also precipitate exploitation and manipulation, result in conflicts of interest, and seize hold of creativity and confidence.

A public performance can increase the trust of the students in the teacher; it affirms that they were instructed, guided, and provided with the opportunity to create something compelling, and the performance stands witness to the students’ abilities to create art that can hold its own outside of the circle. The teacher also begins to grow comfortable with the students and to trust them as artists. As Grady Hillman (2003), a long-time teacher in correctional facilities, points out, “If we are attentive, our students teach us the power of the tools we use in our art” (p. 14). Reciprocity deepens any relationship, and a public performance is a materialization of teacher/student reciprocity.
At the same time, efforts must be made to assure that the prisoners are not the objects of the performance, but the subjects, that they are the “participants and creators” (Thompson, 2003, p. 57). The prisoners, and their art, should not be paraded around frivolously or put on display “as a simplistic one-way statement about their offending” (p. 57). Such exploitation only serves to perpetuate the abuse of incarcerated men and women. Ideally, the paintings of serial killer John Wayne Gacy (and the paintings of anyone, for that matter) are exhibited and purchased as art, not as kitsch or as a joke. A prison arts performance should “open up questions and doubts in both the prisoners’ and the audiences’ minds,” (p. 57), not serve as the first stop on a personal freak show.

It is, however, a remarkable thing that incarcerated men and women can produce and perform such gripping art in such adverse conditions. When I imagine my students’ staying up until the early morning hours working on poems because it is the quietest time to write, when I think of the small cell, the lighting, the dearth of materials and yet poem after poem after portrait appears in the annual anthology produced by the prison arts program for which I teach, my own work is invigorated. William “Buzz” Alexander (2003), a champion of prison arts, asks, “Who imagines prisoners dancing with a focus and passion that causes an audience to catch its breath” (p. 132)? Not only can the performance inspire and give confidence to the prisoners in pursuit of their art, but it also can enkindle the artistic spirit in those who witness prison arts performances.

Just as an in-class performance can provide teaching moments, so too can a public performance by the prisoners themselves offer rich opportunities to teach. There are few better ways to learn a lesson or familiarize oneself with a technique than by enacting that lesson or technique. Public prison arts performances can be viewed as a consummation of what has been transpiring within the circle, and therefore as one big teaching moment.

Unfortunately, as with performances in the circle, sometimes the goals the teacher has for the public performance differ or come into conflict with the goals of the students, and to stubbornly march on despite these conflicts can lead to manipulation, exploitation, and arrested creativity and confidence. As evidenced by the previous example from MacEnulty (2003), care must be taken in adjudicating the goals of the teacher — in MacEnulty’s case, writing with the “aim to publish” — and the goals of the prisoners — who write “to save their lives” (p. 64). A teaching agenda must not displace the space created by the circle or transmogrify what leaves the circle.

There are certain benefits, though, that can only arise from a public performance. Prison arts performances are typically grand events: a professionally published anthology, an invitation-only dance recital, a performance of Hamlet’s fifth act complete with set and props. Buzz Alexander (2003) describes an annual art exhibit facilitated by The Prison Creative Arts Project at the University of Michigan:

The annual art exhibit is talked about and prepared for by prisoners throughout the system all year, on evaluations the artists rate every aspect of the exhibition above 9.5 on a 10-point scale, and artists testify again and again that public exposure has meant everything to them in terms of confidence, determination, and hope (p. 127).

Public performances generate excitement — importantly, positive excitement — among the prisoners. They promise a release from tedium (even if only for one evening) and are a rare occasion for which outsiders come into the prison to enjoy something inmates have produced and not to scrutinize, survey, or condemn. And, much more often than not, the performances are well received, which confirms the prisoners’ sense of worth and reinforces confidence in their abilities as artists.

The audiences benefit from these performances, too; they get to satisfy their own aesthetic thirst by attending a play or an exhibit. In addition to the artistic merit of these performances, the audience also gains information and insights about prison, although many prison arts performances are not about prison or the prisoners’ experiences of incarceration (Johnson, 2002). However, as mentioned above, care must
be taken by the audience not to objectify the prisoners’ experiences or performances, especially when recounting the performances to others who were not in attendance.

Because a public prison arts performance is produced with the explicit intent that what’s created within the circle leaves the circle, it can also create unique problems. Any public performance can be a logistical nightmare, but a public performance in prison further complicates already stressful preparations. Take, for example, a theatrical performance, and some of its typical concerns: assembly of sets, acquisition of props, casting, and booking a venue.

In a prison, these concerns can become nearly insurmountable roadblocks. How is a set constructed with nails, hammers, and saws, when certain kinds of ink pens are not even allowed in a prison? How are props procured (think of the sword in Macbeth!)? During artist Judith Tannenbaum’s (2000) work on a performance of *Waiting for Godot* at San Quentin Correctional Facility in California, a particular prop, a length of rope, had to be kept “in a special locked box” (Johnson, p. 150) and signed out for each use. With the ubiquitous possibility of transfers, inmate infractions, and facility-wide lockdowns, casting a play requires a flexibility and open-mindedness that can be disastrous for rehearsals and, ultimately, the production of a high-quality performance in a reasonable period of time. Determining a suitable venue within the prison for the performance can also be difficult, since very few productions are granted permission to be taken on the road. Is it to be produced in the unairconditioned gym? The cramped chapel? Among the stacks in the library? Add to all of this the necessary presence of correctional officers at any event held in a prison and the fact that most prisons are severely understaffed, and a public prison arts performance can run into a slew of problems right away.

Logistical problems seem insignificant, however, when compared to another problem that a public prison arts performance can create. Whether a dance recital, a theatrical production, an art exhibit, or a poetry anthology, these performances are enacted and produced by men and women who have perhaps victimized someone, and any encounter between a victim and a victimizer can lead to revictimization. Victims reasonably assume they will not have to speak to, see, or in any way interact with their victimizers once their victimizers have been incarcerated. But, because a public prison arts performance leaves the prison, leaves the circle, is produced with the intention that it will enter the outside world, a serious concern arises. For some victims, the pain, suffering, and thoughts of the trauma they have endured never ceases, and sometimes the only solace they have is the fact that the person who so profoundly injured them has been caught and cannot return to harm them again. The damage to a victim caused by an unexpected encounter could be untold. Something seemingly inconsequential, like a name at the end of a poem, if that name is the name of a victimizer, may actually be wrought with problems. The threat of revictimization is the single most dangerous aspect of any public prison arts performance. However, I think an introduction and consideration of Hyde’s extended study of gifts will prevent a sweeping condemnation of prison arts performances based on this, or any other, possible pitfall.

**The Gift Circle**

*The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* is a historical, anthropological, and philosophical survey concerning art, gifts, and gift exchange. There are many kinds of gifts — peace gifts, death gifts, gifts of maturation — but Hyde highlights one kind of gift that is relevant for our purposes: artistic gifts. Everyone has had a transformative experience with art. I still remember the first poetry reading I attended, where poet Kate Daniels read a poem about how, after she had given birth and returned to her work at Vanderbilt University, she relieved the unbearable pressure of the milk in her breasts into her office trashcan! A door had opened up to me; I never knew you could write about stuff like that, let alone poeticize it. I felt as if I had been let in on a secret, a secret that fundamentally altered my perception and approach to poetry. This is why Hyde seems exactly right when he says, “for it is when art acts as an agent of transformation that we may correctly speak of it as a gift” (p. 47).

The secret that I felt I received was actually a gift, not a secret at all. In fact, as we shall see, a gift is quite different from a secret.

Hyde outlines a number of characteristics
of gifts and draws transformational art into the realm of gift. Gifts come to us by or through another’s volition, not our own; gifts must be “bestowed upon us” (p. xi). A true gift must continually circulate, or as Hyde emphasizes, “the gift must always move” (emphasis original, p. 4). Paradoxically, Hyde points out, “a gift isn’t fully realized until it is given away” (p. 50). A gift, then, entails two parts: receiving the gift and giving the gift away. But, importantly, there is no obligation of return explicit in the giving of a gift (pp. 9, 20). Instead, “Between the time a gift comes to us and the time we pass it along,” we embark upon the “labor of gratitude,” not to even the score with the original giver because we must, but to cultivate the gift in such a way that we can then bestow a gift upon another (p. 47). And the end of labor entails the passing along of a gift. Additionally, because gifts are given by one person to another, “the giving of a gift tends to establish a relationship between the parties involved” (p. xiv). But Hyde stresses that some gifts should not be accepted because the gratitude and relationships it creates can be prohibitively complex and even dangerous (pp. 70, 72).

When speaking about the space created by prison arts classes, we have used the term circle; coincidentally, Hyde speaks about the circular nature of gifts and their exchanges. The prison arts performances either stay within the bounds of the circle, or they journey out beyond the circle (during a public prison arts performance). In this way, the circle functions as a boundary, at times a quite permeable boundary, but a boundary, a demarcation, a border, nonetheless. The circle, for Hyde, also represents “the container in which the gift moves,” but he refers to it as a “body” or “ego” as well, and the body or ego can expand to encompass many or contract and exclude all but one (p. 16). So, our talk of the circle and prison arts performances translates quite well into talk about gift and gift exchange.

In light of Hyde’s phenomenological account of gifts, I know that when I heard Kate Daniels read her poem, she was not imparting a secret — something to be squirreled away, kept to myself for my own pleasure — but passing along a gift, a transformational art experience. For weeks I retold what I could remember about the poem to my friends (to my delight, they also seemed amazed that someone could write a poem about milking her breasts into a trashcan). Her reading changed poetry for me, uncovered what could be written about and how it could be written. It ignited a sense of gratitude in me, as well, and awakened the feeling that I too had something to share, that I must labor in this something’s production and assure its entrance into the world.

What I have experienced with prison arts performances echoes Hyde’s characterization of gift. I have been gifted many times over by the men with whom I have worked. When certain students read poems in class (whether their own work or that of others), my understanding of those poems — and poetry — changes. The way they read, the tone, the pace, the rhythm, their seemingly instinctive comprehension of the life of the poem, opens the poem up to me in a way that had never been available before. At these times, I also know reading the poem transforms them; the gift stirs them, alters them, impresses upon them to reciprocate. Similarly, the prison program’s annual anthologies change the men who decide to submit work. Now, poetry is not just a bit of self-expression jotted down on scraps of paper; it does not just serve as a break from tedium; the men are not simply unskilled toilers. No, the poetry is an exercise in craft. The men are poets, artists who labor in the production of their poetry. And they now feel the gratitude and the pull to continue to labor for their gifts. When I leaf through the annual anthology, I am taught about poetry’s plasticity, its caches, through the forms, metaphors, and uses of language found in those books. And, just as with Kate Daniels’ reading, I am struck with the desire to write my own poems. I feel I have to write, to labor to create something that could stand as a kin to the work in the anthology. I must return the gift.

Providing a population that is at best ignored, and at worst dehumanized, the means to create art in poetry, drawing, and photography classes — and then sharing that art with others through the annual APAEP anthologies and art exhibits, so that it may move, may circulate — is a gift. My relationship with students, their relationships with me, with all the artists who visit my classes,
with each other, with other inmates, with the prison staff, with the readers of the anthology, with the exhibit-goers, and the sense of gratitude and call to return that which has been received, are all parts of the gift.

The effort, practice, and revision that culminates in the performance the prisoners give is their labor of gratitude, the second part of the gift, the circulation of the gift, for they have already received the gifts the art class offers: the poems, paintings, photographs, dance steps, voice training. The performance itself — the anthology, exhibit, theatrical production — is a gift to be received.

A Gifted Response to Pitfalls

Now we may return to the two unique pitfalls of public prison arts performances: the logistical problems such performances create and the potentially disastrous revictimization that could arise from prisoners’ public performances. First, if the energy expended, the fretting, the successful navigation of bureaucratic hoops, the near-breakdowns are all viewed as the labor of gratitude, then the complicated logistics simply become a part of the production and circulation of a gift. A look at Hyde’s distinction between work and labor will clarify this point. “Work is an intended activity that is accomplished through the will”; sweeping the stockroom for minimum wage is work (p. 50). “Labor,” says Hyde, “can be intended but only to the extent of doing the groundwork, or of not doing things that would clearly prevent the labor” (p. 50).

Even though composing and distributing mountains of memos, confirming officer and staff schedules, compiling a guest list, arranging practice, and scrounging up props, may seem like work to be done in preparation of a public performance, they are, in fact, the labor of a public prison arts performance. Yes, many of these things can only get done because of the strong wills of the teachers and administrators of the prison arts programs, but the assertion of will here is all groundwork for the gift, for the performance; if the actual performance is willed into being, willed to take a certain shape, if the labor mutates into work – and there is not genuine reception and return of the gift – then the gift is lost. As the performance nears and stress mounts and unexpected hiccups disrupt plans, it is important for those strong-willed teachers and administrators to keep this distinction in mind or else risk corrupting their labor and losing the gift.

The threat of revictimization is the second problem particular to public prison arts performances. It is naive to overlook the fact that some students in prison arts classes have, as a result of their previous criminal activities, victimized others. The trauma of victimization can last long after the perpetration, prosecution, and penalization of a crime; therefore, any connection (or reconnection) between a victim and victimizer may be the catalyst for repeat victimization. And since I have argued that public prison arts performances are gifts produced within a circle, within prison, with the explicit intention that the gift will leave the circle, pass through the prison gates, go “around the corner” and “out of sight,” and work within the receiver, inspiring a relationship and labor of gratitude, these gifts may pose a danger to victims who may be the unintended and unwitting receivers of public prison arts performances (Hyde, p. 16).

Even if a victim was invited to a staging of Waiting for Godot in which her or his assailant is cast, it is difficult to imagine that victim actually showing up to the performance. In fact, with the precautions taken by a facility in compiling a list of guests cleared to enter the facility the day of a performance, it is equally difficult to imagine that an invitation from an inmate would ever make it into the hands of a victim. However, when the public performances are exported outside the prison walls – in the form of art instillations, poetry readings broadcast on public radio, anthologies of collected work – it becomes easier to conceive of a situation where a victim might see the name of a victimizer below the title of a charcoal portrait or catch a snippet of an assailant’s voice on the radio while flipping through stations in the car and be forced to confront the trauma of victimization all over again.

In instances like these it would be correct to say that the public performances are not seen as gifts at all but as anathema. Indeed, Hyde recognizes that certain gifts ought to be refused: “We often refuse relationship, either from the simple desire to remain unentangled, or because we sense that the proffered connection is tainted,
dangerous, or frankly evil. And when we refuse relationship, we must refuse gift exchange as well” (p. 73). When the connection essential for gift exchange is rebuffed or severed, then there is no gift. The attempted relationship between victim and victimizer is rightly refused if the result would be “evil.”

To suggest that a potential connection between a victim and victimizer via a public prison arts performance should be refused, however, is not intended to burden the victim or participate in a form of victim blaming. Should a victim take it upon herself to refrain from leisurely scanning through radio stations on the off chance she will hear her convicted rapist reading a sonnet? It is certainly reasonable for any victim to assume that with the incarceration of a victimizer comes a complete cessation of contact, and for many victims this is the case. Unfortunately, there is always a chance, however slight and despite the institution’s best efforts, a letter may arrive in the mail from a victimizer. But, and not to sound callous or unsympathetic to the plight of victims, it would be disastrous to eliminate the mail privileges for all inmates because of the statistical few who would abuse the system. Similarly, I think the positive impacts of public prison arts performances far outweigh the possible – though, admittedly potentially devastating – pitfalls.

Fortunately, most prisoners who stick with prison arts classes and participate in performances are men and women who realize why they are in prison, and the arts classes are steps in a path that will change their lives. The prison artists want to leave – and never return to – prison. They are not using the public performance to terrorize their victims from behind bars; they are there for the gifts, and the gifts for which they labor are not meant for their victims.

Conclusion: Bringing the Gift Full Circle

By drawing upon Hyde’s work, I have provided a normative lens through which to view prison arts performances. Unfortunately, how we treat the typical gift and its giver differs significantly from how we treat prisoners and their art. To consider prison arts performances as gifts is to reexamine our circle – who it encompasses, what it circulates. “For our circle,” says Neal, “truly is the metaphor for community and who we are, who we would like to become, and how we may choose to restructure our world” (p. 76). Our circle contains our gifts, contains our community. Our circle should widen to include those who are incarcerated as they widen their circle to include us.

But, practically, what answers, if any, do viewing prison arts performances as gifts provide? It is unclear whether it supplies an answer for rising incarceration rates or swelling prisons. It is even less clear if treating performances as gifts can defray the enormous costs of imprisonment. Even when considering the treatment of inmates, the introduction of the language of gifts can be problematic. Speaking of prison arts performances as gifts seems to spur even more questions: What changes should be made to the preparation and enactment of performances to ensure the maximum gift output? In the presence of gifts, how should we behave differently as teachers, prisoners, audiences, or victims?

With a conceptual framework, the next step for prison arts programs is to formulate and standardize instructional and behavioral models for the bestowal and reception of gifts in prison arts performances. Fortunately, with the booming emphasis placed on community engagement initiatives by universities and corporate entities (all of which I strongly urge to adopt Hyde’s notion of gift when facilitating projects), prison arts programs have powerful and innovative partners in developing such gift receiving and gift giving models.

References


**About the Author**

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Abstract
Towards the end of 2006 the owners of a small, historic public house withdrew from sale the locally produced beer that had been sold there for many years. Pub regulars instigated a boycott in an attempt to have the beer reinstated. Following a four-month widely supported boycott and considerable media coverage, the pub company owners returned the local beer to the pub. This paper reports on a selection of the experiences of some of those taking an active role in the boycott. Following intensive semi-structured interviews, we extracted a number of themes from participants’ accounts. We identify potentially important factors in the “causal net,” explaining their involvement in the boycott. Affective experience, collective interests, and deontological considerations [the obligation to do the right thing even if doing so could be personally damaging] emerge as important dimensions of people’s discussion of their participation. The findings are discussed in relation to theoretical perspectives bearing on an understanding of action choices.

Collective action spans the interests of a number of social science disciplines. Formal definitions of collective action from within social psychology sometimes reflect the discipline’s focus on social groups: “A group member engages in collective action anytime that he or she is acting as a representative of the group, and the action is directed at improving the conditions of the entire group” (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990, as cited in Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996, p. 19). Perspectives from sociology adopt a somewhat more heterogeneous focus, admitting “many types of collective action” (Oliver, 1993) with many using the term (following the work of Olson, 1965) to refer “to activities which produce collective or public goods, that is, goods with the nonexcludability property that their provision to some members of a group means that they cannot be withheld from others in the group” (Oliver, 1984, p. 602).

In this paper we address a small-scale collective action which took the form of a boycott of a small pub in a small market town in the south-east of England during 2006-07. The reasons for the boycott are explained below. Our concern in this paper is to describe some of the experiences of a sample of those actively engaged...
in the campaign insofar as those experiences provide some potential insights into the motives for people’s engagement with the action.

In the hills above Lewes in 1264, the forces of Simon de Montfort clashed with those of Henry III, his brother, and son (later Edward I). The details of the famous Battle of Lewes (see Mann, 1976) are not important here but the direct link between these events and the setting up of the first national Parliament in 1265 is seen as the “major contribution that Lewes has made to the history of democracy” (Poole, 2000, p. 6). Many people consider that another Lewesian contribution to the public good flows from its one remaining brewery, Harvey’s. Harvey’s beers have been sold in Lewes since the establishment of the brewery in 1790, including in pubs owned by other breweries. One of these pubs is the Lewes Arms (LA) bought by Greene King from Beard’s (formerly a Lewes brewery) in 1998; however, in 2006, the decision was made by Greene King PLC to remove the sale of Harvey’s Best Bitter beer from the pub. The Lewes Arms is a Grade II [a designation by the government for important buildings of special interest] building in the heart of the town, adjacent to the building that was formerly Beard’s brewery. Harvey’s is now the only remaining brewery in a town known to once possess “seven churches, seven breweries, and seventy inns”1 (Davey, 2006, p. 5) and is hugely popular locally. Over the years, Greene King had removed Harvey’s beer from other local public houses, including some in Lewes, and a massive effigy of Greene King had been paraded and burned at the local annual bonfire celebrations in 2003 largely as a response to this. The threat of the impending removal of Harvey’s beer was known to the regulars of the Lewes Arms in advance and opposition was extensive and swiftly organized. A petition calling on the pub company owners to retain Harvey’s Best Bitter was available for signature in the pub itself (it was eventually signed by over 1,200 people), and an initial meeting was convened (in the Lewes Arms) in early October 2006 to discuss possible responses to any removal of Harvey’s bitter from the pub. The local Member of Parliament signed the petition and became involved in discussions with the pub owners in an attempt to resolve the dispute2. On December 19, Harvey’s best bitter was withdrawn from the Lewes Arms and a boycott of the pub was initiated. A “Friends of the Lewes Arms” (FOLA) group emerged in support of the boycott and of “restoration” of Harvey’s to the pub, vigils were organized, a website was set up, media attention developed, informal meetings of FOLA took place, badges, car stickers, and banners were produced, an “Exiles Music Night” was arranged, and – most (in)visibly3 – the local population largely avoided the pub (rumours spread that bar takings were severely damaged) as the boycott remained largely solid. After a very quiet winter for the pub (a “winter of discontent” for the boycotters), on April 20, 2007, the pub company owners announced that Harvey’s would be restored to the Lewes Arms beginning the following week, expressing the view in a press release that it had “underestimated the depth of feeling and level of reaction about our initial decision.”

The decision by Greene King to restore Harvey’s Bitter to the Lewes Arms was widely seen as a local victory. There were great celebrations at the pub that weekend4 and of course the boycott was over. The Independent newspaper ran with the headline “Drinkers win battle of Lewes: a boycott by the locals brought a major brewery to its knees,”5 and many involved with the campaign were unambiguous about the importance of the events that had occurred. The restoration of Harvey’s to the Lewes Arms was seen variously as a great collective effort, a prime example of an effective consumer boycott, an instantiation of the local defiant view that “we won’t be druv,” a victory for those campaigning for local produce, a blow against corporate greed, and an affirmation of the importance of preserving communities, historic local pubs, and hugely popular local traditional beer.

In the series of interviews for this study, we describe the accounts and experiences of some of the people closely involved in the boycott campaign. The purpose of the interviews was both to record the experiences of the campaign that people chose to mention and to explore particular themes of social psychological significance (such

1Davey actually notes nine breweries.
2The MP’s constituency office was located roughly midway between the pub and the Harvey’s brewery.
3Thanks to participant #9 for this “observation.”
4The beer had been delivered and was ready to drink (and was drunk) on Thursday, April 26, 2007.
5The Independent, April 22, 2007.
as participants’ motives for involvement and their perceptions of the campaign’s outcomes). In this paper, we provide an account of some themes relating to background factors and motives that were highlighted by participants during the interviews. In all cases, we construe these themes as embodying potentially important motives for involvement in this campaign or as referencing distal parts of the causal network (van Fraassen, 1980) influencing people’s motives. In taking this approach, we take a cue from Mill (see above quote) in making no clear distinction between “causes” and “antecedent conditions” in the explanation of action. Moreover, we also find it useful to draw upon the ideas of Giddens (1982) about the “unacknowledged conditions of action” as important features of the causal network of action.

Method

Participants. Twenty-one people who were actively engaged in one way or another in the LA campaign were invited to take part in the research. Participants’ involvement in the campaign was indicated by information provided by the Chairperson of the “Friends of the Lewes Arms” group. Nine (four females, five males) agreed to take part within the required time-frame, and it is their accounts that form the data for the present study. Data were collected during July and August 2007. Given the small number of participants in the study and their high distinctiveness within a small community, all identifying information (other than participant numbers indicated in parenthesis) has been removed from the interview excerpts to promote anonymity.

Interview schedule. A semistructured interview schedule was set up: This schedule centered around the themes of participants’ experiences of the boycott, their motives for taking part, and their views on the outcomes of the campaign. Individual interviews were arranged at a place most appropriate for participants and at a time that was mutually convenient to participant and interviewer. Usually this was in the participant’s home. Interviews lasted between 62 minutes and 200 minutes ($M$=132 minutes).

Results

Recordings of the interviews were listened to on multiple occasions by both authors before the recordings were fully transcribed. Broad topics of interest that arose from the interviews and from the subsequent discussions between the researchers were considered and debated as the interviews were listened to (and read) repeatedly and carefully. The findings reported here relate to extracted material that addresses the motives that played a role in participants’ decisions to take part in the campaign. Some of these motives are interpreted as such because they are made in direct response to questions about reasons for getting involved in the campaign, and/or they reflect statements prefaced with direct statements about causes or reasons behind their participation in the boycott. Some of the statements are made in the absence of direct reference to motives, goals, causes, or reasons; however, since the authors identify these statements as encapsulating objects of value for the participants, they are judged as likely to have played a role in the structure of motives that underpinned their engagement with the campaign.

The interrelated themes identified are presented below. Subsequently, reflections on the relationship between these themes and various theoretical frameworks familiar to social psychological perspectives (although these frameworks did not direct the conduct of the research in any structured way) are offered.

The Pub

“I like going in” (#9). Descriptions of the pub were, perhaps unsurprisingly, uniformly positive. The pub itself was described in glowing terms: “a fantastic pub” (#1), “a quintessential pub” (#4), as “quintessentially Lewes” (#4), as “having a certain spirit here not found in other pubs” (#7), as an “important community facility” (#1), a “community hub” (#1), likened to one’s own home (#8) or “a second sitting-room, where you sit around and natter about this and that” (#4). The Lewes Arms was described as being a “completely central part of my life” (#2), “a central part of everybody’s lives” (#6). One participant suggested that “we’re so lucky to have this place” (#2). Another participant described how they “really liked,” this “perfect,” “special” place (#2). Another, redolent of the view that the pub is the “primordial cell of British life” (Charles Booth, as quoted in Brown, 2003, p. 109), suggested “it’s a f----- good pub. People like pubs. It’s an important
part of the community. It’s an important part of people’s lives” (#8).

However, there was also an acknowledgement of the dangers of creating a false image of the pub. For one participant, while it is an “ideal pub” (#5) and “it’s like pubs ought to be” (#5), the sentiment is also expressed that “it’s not a paradise” (#5):

“(I)n fact a mythology had been built up amongst the LA that it was a complete paradise where everybody went in like that awful American Cheers. You know, where everyone knows you. It wasn’t like that … if you haven’t got some sort of irritation, it’s not a proper pub you can’t have … if it were too bucolic and glorious, it would be insufferable … I don’t go there for the whole ‘Cheers’ experience; I go there to see people I know and talk to my friends … I don’t want it to be the apple-cheeked matronly type behind the bar and everything to be all too perfect and wonderful because it would be (the) ghastly tourist faux version … it’s the fact that it can be dull, it can be grubby, it can be annoying” (#5).

Congruent with the simile of the home or sitting-room, the removal of the local beer was likened to “a burglary” by one participant (#8). Ostensibly, the campaign was about the restoration of the local beer to the pub: for some, restoration indicated the success of the campaign; for others, the restoration of Harvey’s was a means to another end: “We want the right to drink Harvey’s back … but it [the declaration] was shorthand for what was important: We want the Harvey’s back in order that we have everything else … the Harvey’s represented … the package” (#5).

Indeed, a dominant feature of the interviews was understandably the wish to “get the pub back to what it was before … The actual campaign wasn’t just about the beer” (#1). The goal of saving the pub was one of saving “the community” (#5). At a broader level, however, there was also the view that the LA was “important beyond Lewes” (#8) and that “good pubs are valuable and rare” (#2).

One participant commented upon the physical structure, calling it “an important building … special … precious” (#2), although another suggested that the pub was not particularly attractive when empty. However, the core feature of the pub seemed to be represented by its social, rather than its physical, fabric.

**The People**

“The pub was the people … it wasn’t the building … it was the people in it” (#5). As a preliminary caveat to the categories that we are presenting, we should note that the identification of the pub with the people obviously makes for an uneasy separation of the two. Essential to the social role that the LA was seen as playing were the people who made use of the pub. At one level, a positive feature was the “variety of people … people from all walks of life” (#1), even “huge variety of people” (#2), the “complete cross-section of people … . One of the best things about the pub … the complete diversity … it’s truly one of those pubs, that’s what makes it so special” (#8). Different groupings were likened by one participant to different “tribes” (#5). Another participant commented on the “disparate group of people who went in there … you could always go in there and you could always meet someone that you knew” (#9). “It is a place where you can just walk in and just bump into somebody you know and just have a chat, even if you don’t know them terribly well” (#4).

The ecosystem metaphor was used by some to describe the social structure of the pub. “Without Harvey’s you don’t get the Harvey’s drinkers and without the Harvey’s drinkers, you haven’t got the pub’s ecosystem” (#2). “If the beer goes, all the people go” (#3). “It was about the beer because a number of people who did say they would no longer frequent the pub if the beer wasn’t there would have changed the dynamics of it all” (#1).

One participant recalled a busy occasion when he recognized everyone there he could see; on the other hand, he later commented how dismal the pub can be when you “don’t know anyone” (#5). While it was clear this was a busy pub and not everyone there knew each other, among some there was a view that:
“... (T)he one thing about the Arms, the best thing about the Arms I always found, is you can go in there any time of day or night and there would always be someone to talk to. It might be that there’s just one other complete stranger that you’ve never met before, but if they are in the Arms ... they’d be worth talking to because they’d found their way into the Arms rather than any of the other pubs in Lewes, and you would also go into the Arms because you’d know you’d see your friends in there; you couldn’t guarantee that they’d be out at that particular night but if they’re going to be out anywhere they’ll be in the Arms” (#8).

The Place

For some, the history of Lewes constituted an important element of the campaign. On the one hand, Lewes as a town was described as having a “strong community spirit” (#3), an “underculture of subversion” (#9), as well as a “history of dissent” (#3), a feature of the town that maps onto an important element of the history of the public house in England (Brown, 2003; Jennings, 2007). One participant suggested that “people were drawn to Lewes” (#3) by that dissenting spirit. Reference was also made to the history and camaraderie of the annual bonfire celebrations and to the town’s connection to the life of Tom Paine. One participant suggested that “you can’t live in Lewes without having a sense of history” (#3). The campaign itself was also viewed as a means of “keeping Lewes as a nice place to live” (#7), as a means of preserving something personally and socially important (#9).

The Passions

The pub clearly elicited a great sense of affection: One participant indicated “I love it very much” (#8), and another described how they “fell in love with the Lewes Arms” (#4) when they first came there. Perhaps as a consequence of the strong affection held for the pub, a number mentioned the strong emotions they felt when Harvey’s had been removed, or had been threatened to be removed, from the pub. One participant reported being “angry and annoyed” (#1) when the local beer was removed, another “angry” (#3), another “absolutely appalled” (#5), another “infuriated” (#9), another “furious” (#4), another’s “heart sank like a stone” (#2). More widespread emotions of people connected to the pub were mentioned: it was suggested that people were “passionate about Harvey’s” (#6), that the removal of Harvey’s was “a deeply felt thing” (#4), which “hit a lot of people’s deep emotions” (#2), and “so many people were pissed off about it” (#8). At the same time, there was also the suggestion that Greene King’s actions served as an “outlet for personal fury against the corporate world” (#5). Allied with the strong feelings aroused by the prospect of the removal of the local beer, and of the removal itself, was the feeling not only of the sense that “we had a very high moral ground … built on a series of very good, carefully discussed, and worked-out arguments” (#3), but also of the “visceral sense of being right” (#4).

The Principles

There is a Sussex adage, “we won’t be druv,” that featured prominently in participants’ accounts. This saying underlines a certain mixture of autonomy, reactance, and bloody-mindedness (#2), a “resistance to being pushed around” (#2), a certain “stubbornness” and “independence” (#4), or more poetically explained by one participant as, “no bugger from outside tells us what to do” (#2) and encapsulated in the view that “this big corporation shouldn’t be allowed to dictate to us” (#4). The “we won’t be druv” adage seemed to be used as a rallying cry for the campaign, treated more literally by some and more rhetorically by others. Ironically perhaps, there was also some reference to some of the few non-observers of the boycott also employing the same aphorism in order to justify their unwillingness to comply with the boycott!

Other principles or rules found their way into participants’ accounts: “always fight” (#5),

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6Author of The Rights of Man and Common Sense, Tom Paine had lived and worked in the town between 1768 and 1774.
7Resonance with “activism does not revolve around considerations of perceived effectiveness but reflects a feeling of moral duty or responsibility to ‘stand up and be counted,’ to register a protest about injustice even if one cannot hope to bring about change, at least in the short term. Not to do so, would be contrary to an important aspect of self” (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996, p.173).
“never give up, never ever give up … you can do anything” (#9). One participant talked of their “conscience” (#8); another suggested that “we have to take responsibility” (#3). Another spoke of offering “moral support to others” and of explaining the action as something that “just had to be done” (#7), by another as “the right thing to do” (#3), another “because it’s what I do” (#5) and “didn’t think much about the outcome” (#5).

Some of the comments appear at first to reflect a non-utilitarian concern with the consequences of the campaign. One participant noted, “The thought of actually winning – I don’t know if anyone ever really thought about that. I don’t know. I don’t know. It just had to be done, I think” (#7). Another suggested:

“People would say, ‘You’re not going to win, you know.’ I suddenly thought, it never occurred to me that we would, and when we did win, I do remember saying I’d never actually been involved in a campaign before where we’d won … it never occurs to me to do it to win, you just do it to fight … it didn’t occur me to think about it … it was only towards the end when we got all this mad press interest after the Guardian article, that it started really hotting up and I remember sitting there with [X] and thinking we might actually win: how alarming! (laughter) … just that sense of I’m not going to lie down and just do nothing, I’m not going to accept this … I like being an active thorn in people’s sides … I didn’t really think much about the outcome, I just thought ‘this is what I do’” (#5).

The negative psychological consequences of inaction and the positive consequences of action were also apparent: “If we don’t do anything, we’ll feel terrible … action makes you feel better” (#3). In terms of a broader impact, one participant observed that “Even if we didn’t win, they wouldn’t try it elsewhere” and the action would “damage Greene King” (#9).

**Personal histories.** It was apparent from some of the accounts that some participants had a history of some kind of activism: “strike veterans” (#5), as one participant put it. This involvement was related to the environmental movement and to trade union activism. However, this was by no means a universal feature of people’s accounts; one participant described themself as not very involved; one even described themself as “not the sort of person who takes to the streets” (#1). One had been actively involved in previous campaigns and petitions organized by the regulars of the pub.

**Greene King [Pub Owners].** “The Leopard never changes its spots” (#2). Unsurprisingly, the brewing company that owned the pub (Greene King) came in for lots of criticism. At one level, there was suspicion of their motives, dislike of their “arrogant attitude,” a feeling that they had a “moral responsibility” (#1) towards the communities within which they operate and within the pub itself: “It’s theirs to run but not theirs to smash up” (#2). At another level, there was a more angry criticism of what was seen as their hypocrisy for promoting local pubs while at the same time “they were about to wreck what was by anybody’s standards an ideal local social pub” (#3). For this last participant, this “gross hypocrisy … was really one of the key things that drove the campaign all the way through” (#3). Another participant suggested, “GK were holding themselves out to be one thing and in fact behaving in another way. They were saying they were … supportive of real ale, local pubs, and local people … and they were actually behaving … corporately in a way that was completely at variance with what they said” (#9). One described a campaign goal as bringing “GK to their knees” (#7); another described the company as “extraordinarily bloody irritating” (#9); another that they “loathe corporate bullying” and described the company as “scum awful” (#5); another described the company position as “corporate bollocks [nonsense] and demonstrable bull---” (#9).

**Harvey’s.** Despite the explicit raison d’etre of the campaign to restore Harvey’s to the LA, the view that Harvey’s was “the one constant” (#5) at the LA, that the LA was “soaked” in Harvey’s, (#4) or, alternatively, “fueled” by Harvey’s (#2), there was a widespread view, as we have mentioned, that what would be lost if Harvey’s were removed from the LA was the Harvey’s drinkers. In fact, some participants were keen to point out that
they themselves were not Harvey’s drinkers, but that if Harvey’s were removed from the LA, a number of people for whom the beer was very important would abandon the pub and thus the social character of the pub would change. For one participant it was obvious “if you took the Harvey’s out of there, you’d kill the pub” (#6).

Harvey’s itself as a small brewery was commented upon as being an important feature of Lewes, the place: “Harvey’s do a lot for Lewes”; “Harvey’s are a big part of Lewes” (#6). And one participant likened drinking Harvey’s to drinking holy water in Lourdes and described one long-term regular of the pub as “part man, part Harvey’s” (#5).

Discussion

“If we stopped doing everything for which we do not know the reason, or for which we cannot prove a justification … we would probably soon be dead” (Hayek, 1988, cited in Gigerenzer, 2007, p. 54). “Don’t let us forget that the causes of human actions are usually immeasurably more complex than our subsequent explanations of them” (Dostoevsky, cited in McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999, p. 19).

The passion for the pub (and all it entails) and the anger at the threats to its existence are dominant features in this handful of accounts of the experiences of those who were actively engaged in protesting about the removal of the local beer. Our overview offers some indication of people’s reflections on their involvement in this local collective action [or their “rationalization of action” (Giddens, 1982)] and of the backdrop to their actions that they chose to mention. We do not doubt that part of these accounts may reflect participants’ wishes to convey their experiences and that part may be motivated by more extrinsic goals (e.g., constructing a particular version of events that took place; cf. Drury & Stott, 2001). Nevertheless, we would hope that these accounts provide some indication of part of the explanation of this local collective action by highlighting some of the motives that are likely to have played an influential role. We have limited our interpretation of participants’ comments and have sought to avoid generalizations, although we have of necessity needed to be selective in the illustrative material that we have presented.

Because of both the nature of the structure of these interviews and of the incomplete insight that people may have into the full causal structure of their actions (cf. Giddens, 1982; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), we should point out that certain influential factors in participants’ engagement may not be well represented in these accounts. For example, the roles of emotional/affective factors, of social influence processes, or of other social-contextual factors (e.g., group size, education levels, social networks [Oliver, 1984]) may be relatively underrepresented. We do not view this as a shortcoming of the research; rather, it is an inevitable yet interesting feature of such accounts that certain influential factors will be highlighted with others remaining unacknowledged (cf. Garfinkel, 1981; van Fraassen, 1980). The accounts elicited here are just that, and we would not wish to downplay the role of conscious or unconscious psychological influences or contextual factors that influenced people’s actions but that are not represented here in these accounts. Nevertheless, the stories of this small group of participants demonstrate a number of motivational factors that are likely to have played a role in people’s decisions to get involved, and stay involved, in this campaign. We make no attempt to judge the relative strength of these motivational factors or to assess the influence of any of their interactions. We would simply point out the diversity of potential explanatory factors: we are not attempting to provide a comprehensive account of the antecedent conditions of people’s actions. It should also be borne in mind that these are just a handful of the views of some actively engaged in the campaign and that the pattern of motives of the hundreds who observed the boycott are likely to have been somewhat different.

This concern for the future of the pub and the people is marked by a strong sense of affection for the pub. Orwell’s (1946) famous description of his ideal (albeit mythical) pub is not out of place with many descriptions of the “local” at the centre of this dispute and of the formulation of the goal of the boycott campaign to “get the atmosphere back” in the pub:

My favourite public house, The Moon
under Water, is only two minutes from a bus stop, but it is on a side street, and drunks and rowdies never seem to find their way there, even on Saturday nights. Its clientele, though fairly large, consists mostly of regulars who occupy the same chair every evening and go there for conversation as much as for the beer. If you are asked why you favour a particular public house, it would seem natural to put the beer first, but the thing that most appeals to me about The Moon under Water is … its atmosphere.

In this paper we have stayed fairly close to the data in order to provide an illustration of the themes arising in participants’ accounts of their involvement in this boycott. It would be possible to interpret or frame these in any number of ways that might be influenced by well-known theoretical ideas about social action. Motives, for example, might be interpreted in terms of an augmented theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Conner & Armitage, 1998) in which affective influences, identity-related motives or normative/moral judgements might be seen as operating alongside more utilitarian concerns with the likely outcomes of action. Similarly, and highly congruent with the above framework, the accounts might also be viewed from the different kinds of social action put forward by Weber (1947), which include orientations towards zweckrationalität (instrumental outcomes), wertrationalität (compliance with certain values), affective influences, and the influence of habit/tradition. Alternatively, and specifically from the literature on collective action, the findings might be interpreted in terms of material, solidarity [in law, similar to group obligation] arising “from social relations with other participants” [p. 279]), and purposive (arising “from internalized norms and values” [p. 279]) incentives to action (Oliver, 1993). It would also be perfectly possible to compare the themes identified in our participants’ accounts to broader theoretical ideas relating to, for example, collective identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001), participation (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987), and affective processes (Snow & Oliver, 1995) in the literature on social movements, or to the literature on the psychology of cooperative behavior (Tyler, 2008). While we have largely declined this opportunity in favor of a more descriptive perspective less likely to constrain ways of interpreting the data, we don’t doubt that the construction of themes from these interviews was influenced both by our own partisan attitudes and the theoretical perspectives with which we are familiar.

A prominent feature of these interviews is that participants’ stories seem to reflect less of a self-interested, consequentialist account of attitudes and actions than many economic and psychological theories would appear to propose. Given the possibility of alternative interpretations of what participants had to say, such accounts may of course be construed in terms of people’s self-interest (cf. Fehr & Gintis, 2007), but perhaps not readily without losing the usefulness of a distinction between self-interest and other kinds of motive (Holmes, 1990; see also e.g., Singer, 1993). Parts of these accounts provide a hint of what James March has called a concern with “obligations” rather than “expectations,” with “appropriateness” rather than “consequence,” and with a “sanity of identity” rather than “rationality” (1994, p. 268). It is thus perhaps ironic in the face of views that might seem less than “rational” from the perspective of many psychologists and economists that one of the participants complained, with some apparent irritation and incredulity, about Greene King’s apparent lack of rational judgment during the dispute: “If you are engaged in a conflict, you expect the other side to act rationally” (#9). Another participant complained about how some of the handful of those who did not observe the boycott “weren’t susceptible to rational argument” (#4). The arguments for the effectiveness of irrationality (e.g. Frank, 1990) are not unfamiliar to decision theorists and it has perhaps been telling in terms of motivational theories and of great benefit to the Lewes community that its citizens have not turned out to be the “rational,” self-interested, consumerist, homo economicus caricature portrayed in some academic research [a view recently described as a “biased” view of human nature “hitched to the wrong anchor” (Fehr & Gintis, 2007, p. 44)]. A lack of “rationality” in these

As an axiological snippet, we might note that both authors are familiar with the ambience of the pub and the quality of the local beer.
interpretations should not be construed as an accusation of unintelligibility or disparagement; rather, it is an indication that people’s motives are perhaps not that well represented in the kinds of narrow material self-interest, or in the calculation of “objective” costs and benefits (Oliver, 1994, p. 278), that is often portrayed as characteristic of economists’ models of decision-making processes (cf. Marglin, 2008). The passion, the persistence, and belligerence9 of these activists and of the citizens of Lewes more generally, and the importance they attach to a sense of community seem to have served them well.

From participants’ accounts, one gleans the idea that the pub was an important part of their lives and that important values and principles were at stake in their actions. At the same time, the boycott was seen in perspective. One participant described it as “struggle lite” and that “ultimately it was serious but also you know … nobody’s going to die” (#5). Another indicated that he used to “strike for pay, now I go out and strike for beer. How the mighty have fallen!” adding, “one of the most pleasant picket lines I’ve ever stood on” (#4). The campaign itself was marked by “general humour and banter [and] funny stories” (#1); it was “great fun … if you’ve got a bunch of people whose main interest in life is being in a congenial boozer, it’s not going to be a dreary campaign” (#5).

In light of the local legacy of Tom Paine, the recent 200th anniversary of his death10 and his role in the history of the U.S. Declaration of Independence (Keane, 1995) with its inclusion of a right to the pursuit of happiness, it is perhaps apposite to note Hirschman’s (1998) inversion of this idea in his suggestion of the benefits of “the happiness of pursuit” — “the felicity of taking part in collective action” (p. 103). Participants, we suspect, would readily concur both with this sentiment and with the importance of “voice” (Hirschman, 1970), of trying to exert influence on an “objectionable state of affairs” (p. 30) via their participation in this collective activity.

We would hope that our account of people’s involvement with the vitality of their community might provide useful points of reference both for others who study civic engagement and for those who are directly engaged in pro-community actions. The dangers of over-generalizing empirical findings should, of course, always be heeded, but we would hope that the social context and motives discussed in this article provide some potential clues about how the quality of communities and community life might be promoted and enhanced.

References


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9Perhaps this is better (and/or more flatteringly) characterized as “strong reciprocity”: “the behavioral disposition to cooperate conditionally on others’ cooperation and to punish violations of cooperative norms even at a net cost to the punisher” (Fehr & Gintis, op. cit., p. 45).

10June 8th 1809.
Yale: Yale University Press.


Authors’ Note

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A service-learning experience with the homeless, though not a perfect canvas, helps social work students connect the dots of research basics.

Learning About Social Work Research Through Service-Learning

Laura A. Lowe and Jeff Clark

Abstract

Social work educators have struggled to find ways to encourage students and practitioners alike to engage in research. This project examines the impact of using a service-learning experience with a homeless agency on students’ attitudes toward social work research. Quantitative methods were used to collect and analyze data on students’ comfort and self-efficacy regarding social work research, and qualitative data informed the research regarding students’ attitudes toward the service-learning experience as well as their learning experiences in general. Results indicated students’ attitudes toward research improved over the semester and that they demonstrated learning through, found benefit from, and enjoyed engaging in the service-learning project. The authors conclude that service-learning can be a useful pedagogy for engaging students with social work research.

Research indicates that most social work professionals don’t engage in scholarly research and when they do, don’t publish their findings (Lazar, 1991). Preparing new practitioners to conduct research appears to be the most efficient way of addressing this problem. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) considers the mastery of research skills to be an important component of training competent and ethical social work practitioners.

While Secret, Ford, & Rompf (2003) argue that social work students have generally positive attitudes toward social work research, other researchers have reported that social work students are reluctant to learn and conduct research (Epstein, 1987; Forte, 1995; Green, Bretzin, Leininger, & Satuffer, 2001; Montcalm, 1999; Wainstock, 1994). In addition, social work students appear to have higher levels of math anxiety than many other students (Royse & Rompf, 1992) and perhaps have less interest in research than students in related disciplines (Green et al., 2001).

Dunlap (1993) writes: “Social work educators must take the lead” (p. 8) in encouraging social work students to engage in research activities during their professional careers. She goes on to suggest that one way is to “use more effective teaching strategies, notably those that satisfy student preferences by linking research and practice” (p. 8). One such method that clearly links research and practice is involving students in research projects in the community, and several social work educators have advocated for its benefits in facilitating student learning about research (Hyde & Meyer, 2004; Kapp, 2006; Knee, 2002; Sather, Carlson, & Weitz, 2007; Wainstock, 1994; Wells, 2006).

This study proposes to evaluate the impact of a service-learning experience, one type of community engagement, on social work students’ attitudes toward research. Specifically, through the context of a research course required for undergraduate social work majors at our university, we hoped to improve students’ engagement with the academic content by involving them in a research project with a community partner agency in need of help with research. By examining changes in students’ research self-efficacy and
attitudes toward research, we hoped to offer evidence that the service-learning experience contributed to their understanding and perception of the utility for research in social work practice.

**Social Work and Service-Learning**

Texas Tech University defines service-learning as

... a pedagogy that links academic study and civic engagement through thoughtfully organized service that meets the needs of the community. This service is structured by and integrated into the academic curriculum, which provides opportunities for students to learn and develop through critical reflection (http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/servicelearning, 2009).

Williams, King, and Koob (2002) and King (2003) suggest a natural “fit” between the mission and values of the social work profession and service-learning. Phillips (2007) argues similarly, noting that the profession’s central tenets of “values/ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, and social welfare policy and services” (p. 6) coincide ideally with those of the service-learning movement. However, while others have noted the issue, Phillips focuses on the fact that while “one would expect social work to be a foundational discipline of the [higher education civic engagement] movement and at the forefront of service-learning methodological development” (p. 6), the relationship between social work and service-learning is “tenuous,” at least currently. Certainly, few evaluation studies have been published. Lemieux and Allen (2007) found only eight examples which met criteria for service-learning in a recent review of the social work literature published since 1990.

One explanation postulated is the lack of clear differentiation between field experiences and service-learning. It is suggested that social work educators may overlook service-learning as a specific pedagogy because they assume all work in the community to be service-learning and/or that field practica are service-learning experiences (Lemieux & Allen, 2007). However, these types of experiences lack key components of service-learning. Community service alone fails to adequately link the experience of student service with academic content or provide opportunities for critical reflection. Field experiences, while clearly applying academic content, lack the important idea of “reciprocity” in service-learning. As Phillips (2007) argues, students in the required field experience focus on honing their own skills in the provision of services. In other words, field practica are really about the students’ needs to practice providing services rather than on the needs of the community. Ultimately, it is the agency doing us (the university) a favor by providing this opportunity to our students.

Regardless of the reasons for most social work educators’ failure to use service-learning as a central pedagogy, others advocate for its increased use in social work courses. Service-learning has that capability of marrying theory and practice in a way that can potentially engage students and therefore, “there is reason to believe that the use of service-learning in social work education can greatly contribute to the positive academic outcomes and to the professional development of social work students” (King, 2003, p. 45).

**Our Service-Learning Component**

Our community partner, an agency serving the homeless, was a loose collaboration of concerned citizens, social service and religious providers, and others who were currently homeless or had been homeless. At the time of our involvement, they had no formal organizational structure, funding, or employees, so all work was conducted on a completely voluntary basis. Prior to the beginning of the semester, the first author was put into contact with the community partner through referral from the service-learning coordinator at Texas Tech University. The primary contact was with the volunteer coordinator of the annual homeless count, a rotating position. The annual homeless count is a national effort occurring in the early part of each year and is a project of the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2009). Communities involved in the endeavor attempt to collect data on the actual number of homeless as well as to conduct a more in-depth survey with those who consent. The community partner was seeking help in conducting the actual count (data collection) as well as compiling the data from the surveys (data analysis). This project was developed to offer the community partner information and data it otherwise could not afford to obtain professionally.
The purpose of the social work research course is for students to be able to “understand the methodologies of scientific inquiry and be able to apply the principles of the scientific method to the process of professional knowledge building, program evaluation, and practice evaluation” (Texas Tech University, 2007/8). The students’ involvement in the service-learning project consisted of data collection and analysis and dissemination of results. They participated on the “count” day by looking for and interviewing the homeless population in the local area one afternoon and evening early in the semester. They created a database in SPSS, entered data, and obtained statistical data from the surveys. At the end of the semester, they presented their results in the form of a PowerPoint and written report to the community partner and social work faculty members.

All work on the project was conducted under the supervision of the instructor (first author). Apart from the actual data collection, the majority of the work with data was conducted during class sessions. While the data entry was done individually by students, creating the database and running analyses (obtaining frequencies, creating graphs/charts) was done in groups of two or three students. The instructor would introduce the material in the computer lab and provide instructions on what to do. Students would then complete their tasks as a small group. Next, the instructor would compile the results of the different groups for the class as a whole. Students also completed an individual research assignment using the data. For this project, they conducted a literature review and conducted some type of statistical analysis. Throughout the semester, students reflected on the service-learning experience through class discussion and individual journals.

This study examines the impact of this experience on the students. The governing ideology was to evaluate the process of learning from the perspective of the student who learned to conduct social work research by actually performing it.

**Methods**

This study was approved by the Texas Tech University’s Institutional Review Board for research with human subjects. All requirements were followed throughout the course of the study. At the beginning of the semester, students gave written consent for the quantitative survey and were informed of their rights to refuse to participate without repercussion. A childhood address and a phone number were used as identifying data to match pre-tests to post-tests, avoiding use of student names. At the end of the semester, students were asked for consent to use the qualitative data sources, given the stipulation that the instructor would not have access to information about which students consented until after grades were posted. The second author, who was a graduate student in another discipline with no formal power over the participating students, held this data until that time. Students were given course credit for completing journal entries and for participation in the chat session, regardless of content or consent to the research.

**Sample**

Twelve female students were enrolled in this undergraduate level course during one long semester of 2007. Ten students filled out both the pre- and post-survey questionnaires. Of these, seven students were social work majors, while the remaining three were minors. Seven students were white, while one was Latino/a, one African-American, and one indicated s/he was of mixed ethnic heritage. While the course only requires a statistics course as a prerequisite and is open to any student on campus who fulfills this requirement, social work majors typically take this course toward the end of their program, generally the semester before their field placement.

**Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis**

The quantitative attitude survey data was collected from all the participating students at the beginning and end of the semester. The second author attended class, explained the research, and collected the consents and surveys.

**Measures.** The quantitative measures included two scales addressing students’ attitudes toward research. The scales were adapted from Szymanski, Whitney-Thomas, Marshall, & Sayger, 1994; Unrav & Grinnell, 2005; Holden, Barker, Meenaghan, & Rosenberg, 1999. The first scale (named Comfort) addressed students’ level of ease with research activities and the utility of social work research. Students were asked to
indicate their level of agreement with statements such as “The thought of having to understand research articles makes me nervous” and “Many research findings are slanted in order to appeal to funding sources” on a six-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There were 19 total items and nine items were reverse-coded so that higher scores indicated more positive responses. Items were summed for a total score, with a possible range of 0-95. A reliability analysis of these items on the pre-test resulted in an alpha of .88 in our sample.

The second scale addressed students self-efficacy regarding research (Efficacy). Students were asked to rate their level of confidence on a 100-point scale in carrying out various research activities, such as “Design and implement the best measurement approach possible for your study of some aspect of practice.” A rating of 0 was anchored as “cannot do at all,” 50 as “moderately can do” and 100 “highly certain can do.” There were 16 items on the original scale. However, one item had a mistake on the questionnaire which resulted in four students skipping the item; therefore, it was excluded from further analysis. The mean of the 15 items was obtained for an overall scale score (Unrau & Grinnell, 2005). Holden et al. (1999) found the measure to have good internal consistency, construct validity, and sensitivity to change. In our sample, a reliability analysis of these items on the pre-test items resulted in an alpha of .92.

Data Analysis. SPSS 15.0 was used to create a database of the quantitative data and for all subsequent statistical analysis. A level of significance of .05 was used to interpret the results of statistical tests. Cohen’s d was used to estimate effect size using a guide of 0.2 for a small effect, 0.5 for a medium effect, and 0.8 for a large effect (Cohen, 1992).

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Two sources for qualitative data were used. Throughout the semester, about seven students made entries in individual journals kept online. Students responded to questions about the service-learning project and academic content posted on WebCT. For example, after setting up the database and entering the data, students were asked to reflect on this part of the process by responding to this entry by the instructor:

For this journal entry, comment on the lab exercises so far. (1) Do you understand how to set up the SPSS file? What did you find problematic about the survey or SPSS in regard to this part of the research process? (2) How about the data entry? Were the surveys easy to code or difficult? What was problematic? What would you do differently next time?

As previously noted, students were given course credit for making entries in their online journal; however entries were not graded for content.

Additionally, a chat session was conducted at the end of the semester through WebCT, an online learning support program, with the second author as moderator. The moderator posed a series of open-ended questions about the service-learning experience and gave students a chance to respond to the question as well as one another’s comments. Example questions include: “Do you think the experience contributed to your understanding of the course material?” and “If you were the instructor, would you use this kind of approach again?” The chat session was held during a regular course session, but students could participate through any computer with Internet access and the course instructor was not a participant or present. Again, students received course credit of attendance for the session (noted by the second author), but content was not considered for grading in the course.

The data collected from these two sources were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Independently, the two researchers read and re-read the text data before noting initial impressions. Then together we reviewed these initial impressions, discussed differences, and decided upon the emerging themes. Chunks of data were then grouped under similar codes and examined again for overarching themes.

Results

Both quantitative and qualitative data was used to assess the impact of the service-learning experience in the course. Quantitative data consisted of the two scales, Comfort and Efficacy, while the qualitative data consisted of student journals and a transcript from an online chat
Session.

Paired-sample t-tests were used to test the quantitative research hypotheses. Results indicated that the students significantly improved (t(9)=-2.34, p=.044) their level of comfort with research from pre (M=65.14, SD=11.9) to post (M=75.48, SD=9.44) testing. The effect size was fairly large (d=-.74). Similarly, students’ self-efficacy regarding research activities also showed significant positive change (t(9)=-4.09, p=.003) from pre (M=69.83, SD=15.05) to post (M=84.60, SD=10.54) testing. The effect size was large (d=-1.3), supporting the research hypothesis predicting change.

Student Journals

The main purposes of the journals were to allow students to share their experiences and to make connections between the academic material and the project. Two major themes were identified in this data, including 1) feelings and attitudes and 2) learning and engagement. Both are best viewed through a time-wise analysis over the course of the project.

Feelings and Attitudes. Students expressed both feelings and attitudes about the service-learning project in their research journals. In the early entries, the most commonly occurring feelings were anxiety and anticipation. The majority of comments noting anxiety were made before the work had begun. For example, a few students felt some early discomfort in regard to the actual service-learning aspect of the course, for example: “When I first heard about the service-learning project and the subsequent research, I was wary. Working with made-up data seems slightly less intimidating than having to go out into the community to collect the data and then have the analysis of that data actually used by an agency.”

Others expressed apprehension because of the population to be researched. For example, one student stated that after a recent experience with one homeless man, she was “really saddened and disappointed with myself for feeling so impatient” and thought that she would not choose this area of social work for her professional practice. However, at the same time, “I want a better attitude .... It will be good for me to be involved in this project so I can work on seeing the other side of the coin.”

Another student also recognized her own misperceptions about the homeless noting: “I recognize that I do have stereotypes about the homeless because even when the representatives were speaking, a few of my stereotypes were broken. For example, I never thought of homelessness as affecting whole families, but instead assumed that it mainly affected individuals ....”

Students dealt with their own perceptions of the homeless as well as those in society. Once the data collection day was over, students commented on their interactions with the individuals they encountered: “The homeless people I did speak with were very nice and interested in talking to me. ... I was a little surprised that I did not encounter as many mental disabilities as I

“I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. I feel that I am really nervous about the survey. 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expected. The individuals I spoke with were quite coherent and well spoken.”

After interviewing a man living behind the public library, another student said, “He was so easy to talk to. It seemed to me that he just wanted someone to listen to his story. It is hard to grow up in this society and not have a negative view of homeless people. They are seen as lazy, dirty, drunks, and many other horrible things, but those are not true … I think that one thing that I learned is that it could happen to anyone. It was an eye opener.”

As the experience progressed, evidence of new feelings emerged from the students’ comments. Students began to express some disappointment with the reality of the research experience, particularly with the data collection phase. For example, “My experience at the [homeless count] was not what I had expected. I imagined that there would have been much more people there and that we would have received more surveys that we did. I did not take any surveys because the individuals refused. I did not understand why they would not take the survey because it was made clear that this would benefit them in the future.”

As the students gained more experience with the research project, some began to express some confidence about their newly gained knowledge and abilities. For example one student, who had expressed concern with her interviewing skills, saw that she did better than she expected at the count: “Basically, I got comfortable with how I spoke to people – being respectful and natural. I was not as nervous as I expected.” Regarding the data entry phase, a student says, “Working with the SPSS files has been much easier than I had feared. Setting up the variables, though tedious, it not all that difficult. Data entry was easy as well once you get the coding down.”

Another student expresses a similar feeling about analysis: “Working with data was difficult at first because I was not exactly sure what I was doing. After [the instructor] helped us and walked through everything it made it much easier and understandable. The SPSS software is very intriguing. I did not realize how much the program could do. … I understand everything we have done so far.”

One student went so far as to say, “I helped a few of my class mates …. I feel really comfortable about all the things that we have done so far. This class has not been as hard as I thought it would be so far!”

In the end, a couple of students commented on their satisfaction with the end result. One said: “I think that our overall presentation went well. The final PowerPoint and report … made a great resource for those that attended. … I think that our group did really well in organizing our information. A lot of our information was over services and kind of blended together. We were able to organize it into common areas of interest in order for someone looking at the information to not feel so overwhelmed. After working with our information, our group felt very confident in what we were presenting.”

**Learning and Engagement.** The second overarching theme emerging from the online journals was learning and engagement with the research project. Students were asked to reflect on each stage of the research process. Since the planning had been conducted by the community partner, students began their experience with the data collection phase. They demonstrated their engagement with the material by commenting on various problems. For example, one student applied material from the text concerning errors in reasoning to her experience during the data collection: “One of the errors was overgeneralization. I think that this research will help us to see that each person was different. Talking to the few men that I did showed me that they were homeless for different reasons.”

Another reflected on how the data collection should have been done differently, again applying some information from the course text. She thought that “a lot more of the homeless people would have been willing to take the survey had they been able to take it themselves. … This seems to apply to what the book talks about in ‘direct measure’. As a form of gathering information, you are observing behaviors while giving the survey, but at the same time you are being intrusive … and therefore changing the behavior of the person you are interviewing.”

Another student recognized this same problem as an ethical issue: “Although the survey was ‘anonymous,’ the person administering the survey is looking you right in the face while you answer such questions. That is not anonymous in my book.” Another observed a communication
issue noting that “there were not any translators at the Outreach Center to even question Spanish speaking individuals without seeming like extreme ‘outsiders’.”

Students also reported numerous issues with the survey itself. One student commented, “I think that the survey could use some improvement. It did not seem to proceed logically and sometimes questions seemed to repeat … .” Students continued to struggle with this issue about the quality of the survey instrument throughout the semester.

During the data entry phase, students continued to identify problems with the survey and the data collection, noting how difficulties arose in translating the surveys into a database and how some surveys were incorrectly completed. However, through their comments, we can also see beginning-level mastery of the process. For example, one student comments: “Setting up an SPSS file has been seemingly easy. I admit I was confused on the first day that we set up our file, but after working with the data and using the program more frequently, I better understand the dynamics of the program. Initially, our group had trouble developing codes for the survey and determining the type of coding system that would be used for each particular question. The data entry was relatively easy, except for questions that gave the respondent … a variety of answers to choose from.”

Another student highlighted this same difficulty, working with real world data, as well as the necessity of the step of data cleaning: “I thought it was a good plan to have the students double check the data entry. From inputting the first surveys to the last, problems were discovered and resolved. By double checking the data once it was set, the class made sure the results were uniform and accurate.”

Students continued to reveal their developing mastery (as well as their perception of such) in the data analysis phase. One student commented that after spending some time looking at the handouts and types of graphs the students learned to analyze with the program, “it became a little bit easier.” Another student thought that “once you run the analysis process a couple times it’s easier to get the hang of.” Another went so far as to express some delight about the experience stating, “I think I have learned more with the diagrams, charts, and lectures as an aide to my learning. The SPSS is very cool. I am impressed with the capabilities of this program.”

Another reflected about understanding a statistical technique but also some frustration with this particular project: “It was really hard to see real correlations in the data with such a small sample. There were not many tests that were run that came out as being statistically significant. The t-test was easy to run after you saw how it worked.”

Not surprisingly, students, like practitioners, feel that “significant” tests are more important or more interesting than those that are not. This concern was reflected in several other students’ entries.

**Chat Session**

At the end of the semester, students participated in the online chat session. Two main themes appeared to emerge from this data including the service-learning experience and limitations in the research endeavor.

**The service-learning experience.** The main purpose of the chat session was to gather students’ ideas about the service-learning component. Students’ comments were overwhelmingly positive about working with the community partner. Students found the experience to be enjoyable, a worthwhile endeavor, and helpful in their learning process. Three student entries illustrated this idea: “I liked that we did actual research and helped an agency. It was more real life”; “I think it helped to make the information real and applicable, instead of just reading about it”; and, “I think that it was great that we were actually able to apply the information we were learning in class. … It helped us learn the concepts better, or at least better able to apply them.” Additionally, students responded that if they were the instructor, they would use service-learning again, while fine-tuning the process.

A couple of comments pointed the instructor toward some possible improvements. One student suggested that there should have been more contact with the community partner and another that she did not enjoy the computer lab work (data entry and analysis).

Students also reflected on issues with the community partner. Of particular concern was the fact that the community partner provided
very limited training on the data collection (true for both students and community volunteers). While the instructor brought members of the partner agency into the classroom to provide this training, the results were inadequate as evidenced by students’ comments regarding the count. The issue with the community partner is related to the second theme emerging from the chat session.

**Limitations of the research endeavor.** While not the intention, a good proportion of the comments during the chat session were about the challenges that the group faced in conducting the research. Even at the end of the semester, after completion of the service-learning component, students appeared to continue to struggle with the limitations they encountered during the research project.

One of the biggest limitations encountered was the small sample size. With only 25 completed surveys, many of the students felt frustrated. One student noted, “I think that we all wanted to help out as best as we could, but we expected more people to be involved (respondents) than we actually had.” Another student furthered this idea with, “I guess the low count made the whole project seem a little bit meaningless, like everything we were working on didn’t represent the population very well since our sample was so small.” During this part of the session, students continued to engage with the material, discussing ideas to increase the sample.

Despite their frustration, some students commented that this was also part of the learning experience: “I learned that research doesn’t always go the way you plan for it to”; “This was interesting – social work research takes many forms. It was important for us to learn how to work with a small sample”; “It showed us how research is not perfect and we really had to deal with the problems and be flexible with the situation so we could get things done.”

**Community Partner**

As a final note, the community partner appeared to be satisfied with the results of the service-learning project. While a formal evaluation was not conducted with the group, members told the first author informally that the presentation and project report would be a benefit to them in their endeavors regarding the homeless. Also, they said that the information was presented in a format that was different and more useful than in past years.

**Discussion**

Overall, the evaluation results appear to be positive. Students saw a great deal of value in participating in such a project as it effectively bridged the gap between classroom learning and “real world” application, linking research with practice as suggested by Dunlap (1993). Students enjoyed the experience, thought it was useful to their professional careers, and believed that it bolstered their learning. The quantitative data indicated that their attitudes toward research did improve over the course of the semester. Despite the differences in content presentation and the frustrations of working with real-world data, students finished the semester with positive attitudes toward research, as well as confidence in their ability to conduct research. Students applied concepts and skills they learned in class to the service-learning experience. Additionally, the students demonstrated a great deal of engagement with the material. Beyond assignments, they continued to express concerns about and debate options regarding the project.

While we were pleased to see that the students enjoyed the experience, it was also crucial that students began to see the usefulness of research and its place as a part of their professional lives. This evidence of engagement and movement toward comfort and self-efficacy as researchers seems particularly important as it may increase the likelihood that these students will participate in research efforts as professionals. Finally, though not related to research per se, data from the student journals suggest that the students struggled with their own feelings about the homeless and many, through this project, developed a greater understanding of the situations and circumstances leading to homelessness. These results lend support for King’s (2003) suggestion that service-learning can be a vehicle for teaching social work values and ethics.

**Limitations**

Serious research limitations in this study include the small sample size, the effects of social desirability, measurement, and the lack of a control/comparison group. With such a small number of students involved, our ability to
generalize as well as the power of analysis were limited. With such a small group of students who are very familiar with their peers and with the instructor, social desirability is certainly a concern. Students may have responded in ways that they felt reflected well on themselves, their instructor, or their peers, rather than expressing their true feelings about the project. In addition, one of the quantitative measurement instruments was significantly modified from the literature and therefore did not have established reliability and validity.

Challenges

Incorporating service-learning into this social work research course was a challenge for the instructor. The biggest obstacle encountered was limited class periods (time) with the students. Whenever we worked on the service-learning project, it never failed that we did not have enough time to complete the tasks set for the day. Just when the students started to figure out what to do, the 50-minute period was at an end. If repeated, the course would be restructured to address this issue by reducing frequency but increasing duration of class meetings. Also, adding service-learning resulted in a heavier workload for the instructor; but, as others have pointed out, it was worth it (Lemieux & Allen, 2007).

Another challenge for the instructor was working with imperfect data. Like the students, she felt some frustration with the training provided by the community partner, the survey construction, and resulting problems with data entry and analysis. However, this can also be a useful experience for students. In truth, research projects rarely go very smoothly and researchers must come to terms with this issue, particularly when working with a community agency.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges of working with real-world data, the limitation of this evaluation, and the difficulties of designing this type of experience for students, the results of our effort were positive. This evaluation contributes to the growing body of evidence that service-learning experiences in research courses enhance student learning, while improving connections between theory and practice. As Knee (2002) notes of her course, our involvement in the homeless count seemed to “make research less intimidating and more interesting, while making [research] more applicable to the real world” (p. 213). Through the project, students had a chance to conduct real research and contribute to a local agency. The data appear to show that this fact was meaningful to students and that they enjoyed the experience. These findings coincide with other instructors’ experiences with community projects in research courses for social work students. We would also agree with Kapp (2006) that service-learning “is an effective method for teaching research to undergraduate social work students” (p. 68). Additionally, this evaluation suggests that service-learning experiences do provide real-world applications of the social work profession’s mission and value base, a point emphasized in the literature (King, 2003; Williams, King, & Koob, 2002; Phillips, 2007). While the previous relationship between social work and service-learning may have been weak (Phillips, 2007), it seems increasingly obvious that this pedagogy has an important place in social work education. Service-learning also offers a way to usefully engage with the community, increasingly a goal of higher education.

References


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From the Field

Research

This section emphasizes manuscripts that help sustain and explain academic and community partnerships. These manuscripts are likely to be practice- or case-study oriented, with less emphasis on theory and extensive literature reviews. Manuscripts that share best practices, practice wisdom, and applied knowledge are especially appropriate for Research from the Field. Unique partnerships have the potential to make highly interesting pieces. Research methodologies of all types are appropriate for this section, and research projects with strong application and practice implications will be given favorable consideration. Research from the Field manuscripts should follow JCES submission guidelines, including APA 5th edition referencing style, and be in the range of 10–20 double-spaced pages. As with all manuscripts we accept, our reviewers are looking for context and clear language and the philosophical, historical, and theoretical principles underlying the work. Teams are especially encouraged to submit candid photographs, along with explanatory captions, that contribute to the research narrative.
A Case Study of a Sustainable Tourism Project in Southern Appalachia: Collaboration Is Key

Cynthia S. Deale

Introduction

This case study describes a semester-long project completed by 46 undergraduate college students involved in courses in tourism planning and marketing, our community partner, and me the instructor.

In spring 2008 our goal was to conceptualize, plan, and produce a day-long festival focused on sustainability to showcase local contemporary music and products to benefit a community and a proposed museum. Constructive, ongoing collaboration and nurturing the relationship between the project’s partners were essential for accomplishing mutual goals. Specifically, this case study was guided by inquiry regarding community engagement and product (an inaugural festival showcasing regional plants, food, and other items), process (reflective experiences of students as they moved through the planning process), and appearance (what does continuous community collaboration look like).

Background

Brief introductions to the scholarship of engagement, elements of collaboration, and place-based education concepts and practices follow to provide the basic foundation necessary to understand how the intersection of many different elements provided the backdrop for the project.

The Scholarship of Engagement. Ernest Boyer (1990) initially proposed discovery, integration, application, and teaching as four types of interrelated scholarship. A few years later Boyer (1996) expanded his definition to include the scholarship of engagement, defined as service that requires the use of knowledge resulting from a person’s role as a faculty member in higher education. Boyer (1996) wrote that “…[T]he academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement …” (p. 11).

In a scholarship of engagement taxonomy, Barker (2004) identified community partnerships as one form and noted that “instead of seeing the public as a passive recipient of expert knowledge, engaged scholarship stresses the way in which the public can itself contribute to academic knowledge. In their undergraduate teaching, engaged scholars typically make a conscious effort to stress the pedagogical value of collaborating with publics instead of providing services to publics” (p. 126). In this manner, the community partner involved in this case study acted as a teacher and facilitator, not simply the recipient of service and therefore, an important component of the community engagement project described here was the act of collaboration.

Collaboration Conditions. As one author noted, “Collaborations between educational institutions and community agencies have become ubiquitous over the last decade,” (Bielke, 2005, p. 12) and as another noted, community engagement for universities is not new (Berberet, 2002). However, researchers investigating collaboration on projects have revealed several useful and interesting findings. One discovery, perhaps not very surprising, is that the closer collaboration gets to a community, the more difficult it becomes (Wiener, 1990). Another is that community collaboration tends to be either for achieving community betterment or for achieving community empowerment (Himmelman, 1992), and although successful community collaboration has a planned pace of development that matches a community’s readiness and the resources available to the stakeholders (Mulroy, 1997), this kind of collaboration is a learned process that is difficult
to carry out successfully (Mulroy & Shay, 1998).

Leadership, goals, resources, power, structure, and personal traits emerged as common issues in many collaborative relationships in a review of the literature on collaboration (Robinson, 2005), and Ellerbusch, Gute, Desmarais, and Woodin (2006) suggested that successful collaboration depends on a common vision in the community; a cohesive community; an opportunity for co-learning; and a commitment among the parties for long-term engagement.

Collaboration is not just based on “soft skills”; it is built on a system that includes identifying the problem, involving all relevant stakeholders, forming the collaborative team, creating a collaborative plan, and designing and facilitating collaborative meetings (Conerly, Kelley, & Mitchell, 2008). Also, according to Giesen (2007), collaboration is not simply an extension of teamwork; it is an entire process that involves parity among parties, mutual goals, shared responsibility and decision making, accountability for outcomes, and mutual trust.

In addition, other authors note that the collaborative process involves three stages of implementation, which they called “visions,” “valleys,” and “victories” (Jones & Wells, 2007). Partners and researchers developing a shared vision of the goal is the “vision”; engaging in the collaborative work that may produce many challenges is the “valleys” stage; and “victory” means completion and celebration of the process. Throughout the process, leaders play an important role in helping people to keep sight of the goal, avoid conflict, and keep motivated (Jones & Wells, 2007). Additionally, frequent, clear, ongoing communication between all participants, inclusion of the outside partner in the entire project, shared expectations, and carefully defined goals are critical to successful university-community collaboration (Deale, 2007).

Place-Based Education. Related to situated learning, place-based education was a theme permeating this case study, and involves learning content in context, in a community of learners (Stein, 2009), and through experience and not merely through the presentation of facts (Lave, 1997). John Dewey (1915) was perhaps an early believer in place-based education when he wrote, “Experience [outside the school] has its geographical aspect, its artistic and its literary, its scientific and its historical sides. All studies arise from aspects of the one earth and the one life lived upon it” (p. 91). Using a more recent definition, that from the website of the Rural School and Community Trust (2009), “Place-based education is learning that is rooted in what is local — the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place. The community provides the context for learning, student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning.”

A classic longstanding example of a place-based educational effort is the Foxfire (2008) project in north Georgia. It has engaged students in collecting and writing about the heritage and traditions of southern Appalachia and resulted in the purchase of property and the creation of a museum to showcase the culture of the area. Festivals that focus on local products and strive to attract local visitors can also be a driving force in place-based sustainable tourism (Quinn, 2006). The project described here represents a place-based, collaborative learning partnership that matched the needs of the community partner and was congruent with the students’ learning outcomes regarding sustainability.

Context of the Project

The setting for this project was a small town in southern Appalachia with an economy based on tourism derived from sources such as the daily visitation of a train; numerous special events including a pottery festival; Christmas luminaries and an antiques fair (Town of Dillsboro, North Carolina, 2008); and a “green” energy park built to capture methane gas produced from an old landfill to operate the world’s only methane gas-driven blacksmith forge; and other environmentally sustainable businesses (Jackson County Green Energy Park, 2008). However, further opportunities to drive the local economy are needed.

The town recently acquired an old farmstead that includes a three-story frame home built in 1907, several additional buildings, and 16 acres of land that belonged to two sisters, Edna and Edith Monteith. The Monteith Farmstead Restoration Committee, comprised of interested community
members, hopes to turn the site into two entities, the Appalachian Women’s Museum and a park to include part of the county’s proposed greenway along a creek that runs through the property (Monteith Farm, 2008). The assistant clerk from the town was actively involved in all aspects of development for the community and called the author of this case late in the fall of 2007 to inquire about getting help from a hospitality and tourism class at the nearby university with a proposed project to put on a fundraising event for the proposed women’s museum. The clerk and the author met and decided to work together with other community members and the students to design, plan, and conduct a festival to benefit the Monteith Farmstead. The following paragraphs describe the process and products involved in completing the festival as a community engagement project.

Questions Answered by the Project

Project outcomes will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Kick-Off. The first product was an opening reception that took place in early January 2008 two days before the beginning of the spring semester. Seventeen students and the instructor served as hosts for the premier exhibit of the proposed Appalachian Women’s Museum, featuring artifacts from the Monteith family, and because the women’s museum was not yet in operation, the event was held at the local county tourism center to develop interest in the proposed museum.

Through this event, the instructor and students learned details about the farmstead and its inhabitants and a student leader emerged who served as a liaison between the town partners and the students, receiving honors credit (a special designation reserved for students who are enrolled in the honors college and then engage in extra work, usually in the form of special projects in a course) for this role in addition to the typical three credit hours for the class. Another student developed an internship with the assistant town clerk to help write grants and public relations materials for the community that provided her with additional academic credit through the English department.

The kick-off event proved to be very important. Viewing the exhibit, talking with community members, and helping with the opening reception acted as catalysts for the semester-long effort and gave students a deeper introduction to the history of the farm and the town’s community development needs related to tourism. It provided students with an opportunity to talk with community members about the importance of the project and the house itself and offered community members a chance to meet the students and begin to develop relationships with them. This event also provided the group with its first “victory” celebration.

Conceptualizing the Festival. This process involved numerous sessions with community partners, in this case the assistant town clerk and a historian, to develop a concept for the festival that would be true to the spirit of the place, the farmstead, the community, sustainability, and in line with the students’ capabilities. Students listened to a lecture about the history of the town and the farmstead, visited the community, walked its streets, and toured the old farmstead to gain a further understanding of the place itself. The culmination of the festival design process was seen as the “vision” and actually the second “victory.”

Design and Selection of the Logo. The next activity students completed was the creation of a logo to be used to identify and promote the event. Nine groups of students designed logos for the event and then community partners selected one for use on all promotional materials including e-mails, fliers, posters, T-shirts, and tote bags. A simple logo utilizing clip-art line drawings of vegetables was selected for use and students learned that while creativity matters, the ability to reproduce an image easily and cheaply is also important in marketing. The selection of the logo was yet another “victory” along the way to the festival itself.

Festival Planning and Marketing Products. Even before the logo was selected, other planning and marketing efforts were under way, giving students an opportunity to engage in varied planning and marketing activities in addition to reading about them in textbooks and selected journal articles. Nine student groups became involved in the following: creation of forms, sign-up sheets, and pricing schedules for vendors; vendor selection and recruitment; festival site design and set-up; entertainment
recruitment and selection; festival sponsorship and acquisition of raffle and silent auction items; volunteer coordination; design and development of marketing strategies and public relations opportunities; design and dissemination of flyers and other advertising opportunities; and design and compilation of an event planning guide for use by future festival planners. Each sponsor added to the festival gave rise to yet another “victory” along the festival journey.

The Festival. The event was a resounding success as a community engagement project. Originally the fair was planned for early April, but due to a slow start to the growing season it was postponed until the middle of April. This provided students with another learning opportunity because several vendors and entertainers were not able to change the date and therefore, students had to scramble to find other vendors and performers to participate in the fair. The change in the date provided one of the major “valleys” in the process. Another learning opportunity, involving a “valley,” occurred the day of the fair when everyone awoke to pouring rain. The fair was to go on rain-or-shine and therefore, at 7:30 a.m. the students set up for an event that they thought might be poorly attended due to miserable, wet weather. However, by mid-morning the rain stopped, the sun came out, and the fair went on as planned. Over 1,000 visitors came, a significant amount of money was raised for the farmstead, entertainers enjoyed performing for an audience, local growers and other vendors made a profit, and the project participants enjoyed a major “victory.”

Post-Fair Products. The event itself was the most positive, tangible product of the project, but students also wrote final group reflection papers about their experiences with the festival and constructed and presented slide presentations to the instructor and the community partner as formal graded assignments related to the event. These products and an event planning guide provided to the community partners offered continuity to the project and represented yet another “victory” and fuel for a future “vision.”

Student Reflections on the Project. Students wrote reflections, before, during, and after the project as suggested by Eyler (2001), and the instructor used the reflections to grasp what students were learning and help determine the benefits of partnering with the town as a sort of living laboratory for tourism education. Forty-six students wrote three reflections a piece with instruction provided by the instructor. This resulted in 138 reflection papers. In the first student reflections their writing concentrated on their own roles in the project, while in the second reflection their focus broadened and incorporated more content; yet, in their last reflections they returned to a personal focus albeit a richer, more informed focus on their projects.

Key words (based on a word count of the reflections) running through the 138 student reflections were not surprising and included: communication (mentioned 257 times), community (mentioned 187 times), coordination (mentioned 141 times), cooperation (mentioned 126 times), collaboration (mentioned 77 times), contribute (mentioned 31 times), and complicated (mentioned 26 times). A word or theme that appeared more frequently in the first set of journal entries was detail or attention to detail (mentioned 98 times in the first set of entries), whereas in the last set of journals a prevalent term was flexible or flexibility (mentioned 74 times in the final set of journal entries).

Students also mentioned the need to brainstorm, select ideas, develop ideas, discard ideas, and start over again. They mentioned that they needed to have the time to pursue an idea and then have permission to omit it if it did not appear to be feasible or worthwhile. For example, students initially thought that they could have many food vendors on-site at the festival. However, in reality water and electricity were extremely limited and therefore, the number of vendors had to be reduced significantly. While the students may have initially felt that they needed to respond to the journals in a particular way due to social desirability bias (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), observations by the instructor and the community partner indicated that as the project progressed, students expressed their views and concerns about the project more freely.

Collaboration Lessons. To understand the role of collaboration in the project, the instructor and the community partner documented their observations throughout the term, and continuous collaboration was encouraged and maintained through the following efforts that were made in the planning and administration of the project:
1. Community and student buy-in to the project was sought. The kick-off reception and a tour of the farmstead provided opportunities for the buy-in of both parties.

2. Open, flexible, ongoing communication between all participants — the community partner, the students, and the faculty member — was critical to the success of the project from beginning to end. The community partner and the instructor made their contact information readily available to the students and responded to questions and concerns of students within one or two days throughout the semester. Weekly meetings in class with the community partner and the entire class, and with each group individually, ensured that students were working on their parts and not leaving them to the last minute. Inter-group communication was critical.

3. An investment in nurturing the relationship between the instructor and the community partner led to a high level of commitment to the project and effective co-facilitation. The community partner and instructor spent time getting to know each other and learning from each other so that as a highly committed community partner-instructor team they coached students throughout the project.

4. Involving students as co-facilitators, liaisons, and leaders of the project was vital to keeping the project running smoothly. Student liaisons were formally chosen, highly valued, and utilized throughout the project.

5. Avoiding ambiguity in roles was a critical component of the project’s success. Time and effort were spent to collectively and clearly define the roles of the instructor, community partner, and students.

6. The project benefited from celebrating “victories” (steps achieved along the way), confronting “valleys” (challenges that occurred along the way), and by keeping the “vision” steady. An important part of sustaining the project participants’ enthusiasm for the project included celebrating the small steps made such as the opening kick-off reception, the creative conceptualization of the event itself, the design of the logo, and acquiring interesting vendors and sponsorships. Rather than just sweeping past the obstacles or “valleys,” these were confronted and used as teaching and learning moments for students, the instructor, and the community partner. Many were out of the control of the festival planners, but all involved needed to be able to cope with the setbacks and move on toward the “vision.” An important point to remember is to honor how project participants climb out of the “valleys” and make incremental gains because these smaller parts of the “vision” will eventually add up to the “vision” in its entirety.

Conclusion

In summary, a group of inexperienced undergraduate students can plan, market, and conduct a successful festival in cooperation with an enthusiastic community partner and a motivated instructor. Instructors and community partners can lead by example to develop student interest and demonstrate a strong work ethic. Students can learn about marketing and planning concepts and practices through the acts of marketing and planning themselves and to do so, an instructor needs to act as a facilitator and coach throughout the project to ensure that students feel supported for their efforts and to reduce confusion. In fact, all those involved such as sponsors, vendors, and volunteers can benefit by being supported and thanked personally for their contributions of time, items, money, and other resources.

Opportunities for the scholarship of community engagement as an educational and service contribution are endless. Future work may involve investigating the learning constructs involved more carefully, evaluating the process and product more specifically (Holland, 2001), and exploring the process undertaken during successful community engagement projects in greater detail. However, a feeling of accomplishment among students because they worked on an authentic project with a real community partner to complete something genuine for a community of real people became very clear as a result of this project. As one student noted, “I feel so good. It beats an ‘A’ on a test any day.” After the fair was obviously a success another student shared: “I feel on top of the world. I feel so tired, but so happy and I feel this way because I helped out others with something that I did.”

Community engagement is all about helping others — it helps students, community partners, and instructors learn from and about each other and their world. Projects like this one require tremendous time and energy, but can
provide people with a sense of connection to place and to action and pose opportunities to create meaningful, transformative, educational experiences for everyone. Journeying through the project’s “valleys” and “victories” to reach a “vision” was worth the effort. Planning and conducting an event such as the festival project described here is of value – as it leaves a lasting, memorable imprint on all those involved and can become a peak experience for the students, instructor, and community partner.

References


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About the Author

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The excitement was infectious. The four graduate students who worked with our community archives collections at the West Lafayette Public Library in fall semester 2008 tore into their work with a passion and a curiosity that amazed me and my staff — and prompted us to see our archival collections, our library, and our city with new eyes and with new interest.

For many reasons West Lafayette, Indiana, has been as much an abstraction as an actual city. For many in the community, West Lafayette’s reason to exist revolves around its immediate presence and interaction with Purdue University; so much so that it sometimes seems that West Lafayette is but an appendix to that great university. Also, the neighboring city of Lafayette with its vibrant downtown and its emphasis on manufacturing sometimes makes West Lafayette seem more of a suburb of the town across the Wabash River than a city in its own right.

So why bother with archiving West Lafayette history? Because the archival class’ work gives us a new lens through which to see and appreciate both the West Lafayette Public Library and the city of West Lafayette — from the early 1900s to the present day.

Studying the Moffitt family — whose members were major donors to the library in the late 1960s — brings the sense-of-city to light immediately. Two students’ efforts to learn more about library donor Bertha Moffitt and her family brought to life a family with significant cultural, political, and intellectual ties to West Lafayette, Purdue, and Lafayette.

The students’ work showed that Miss Moffitt’s father, Dr. William Moffitt, a physician, was a leader in the West Lafayette and Lafayette communities, serving with West Lafayette city government and on the board of one of our two local hospitals; yet his importance to the community had been lost to history. The achievements of Bertha Moffitt, who obtained an undergraduate and then master’s degree at Purdue, seem exceptional for an early 20th century woman. She also served as her father’s office manager, all the while continuing to be active in the West Lafayette/Lafayette community’s literary and arts pursuits and, finally, becoming a major donor of both funds and books to the West Lafayette Public Library. But to emphasize again, until the students’ work pulled together the disparate threads of her life and work, her work and its importance were in danger of being lost.

The posting of the Library Board’s founding documents and first decade of meeting minutes may at first read as a modest effort on the part of the library, but delving into those minutes tells us what institutional history can bring to light. These early board minutes, all from the 1920s, show a library board composed of members deeply involved with Purdue and West Lafayette communities and concerned, too, with the state’s larger library concerns. The archival work shows that these early library board members were not amateurs at governing; from their first meetings the board members developed a respect for clearly differing viewpoints where one group deferred to the other’s leadership concerning certain topics at library board meetings; yet both groups had the respect of the other in setting policy for the community’s library. It is perhaps not surprising that this set a precedent that — with some lapses — continues to this day: West Lafayette library board members more often than not seek consensus in resolving their occasional disputes.

These early members of the board were important members of the West Lafayette community in other ways too (one was a Purdue dean, another a West Lafayette school board president, to name but two). Learning this, combined with the family history of Bertha Moffitt, begins to show a history of the library’s importance to the community and to leaders in the West Lafayette community. This importance

Nick Schenkel
is further reflected in our library board members’ ongoing relationships with more recent city councils and mayors that have enabled us to build and remodel the equivalent of four increasingly larger and more sophisticated library buildings over the past 80 years.

In sum, this work has let us know much more about our library’s history and development and about our library’s involvement with and importance to the larger community.

We are beginning to learn that West Lafayette indeed does have a history of its own, often built around its proximity to Purdue University, yes, but also a city history that stands on its own as interesting and innovative. The early library board was composed of leading men and women of the community, a community interested enough in providing for lifelong learning for its own citizens of all ages to invest in a succession of library buildings deemed worthy of significant book donations. The Moffitt family donations helped our library build a rich public library book collection, but let us not overlook the art donations of talented members of the Hoosier art community such as Bill Cross, Bea Yerian, Robert Browning Reed, and Jacqueline Gerritsen.

Importantly, thanks to the library staff’s enthusiasm resulting from working with the students, our staff is investing real time and effort into our library’s archival and local history collections. We are initiating plans to significantly upgrade our early local history website to include many more local historical/biographical photos, continuing the work of the graduate students in preserving paper and photographic records that deteriorate as time takes its toll. In doing so we are making our local history more accessible to scholarly and popular audiences by cataloging our collections into the Online Computer Library Network, also known as WorldCat, an internationally accessible library computer network.

What began as an interesting excursion into the library’s often overlooked papers and art by graduate students from Purdue University has developed into a new appreciation for our library, our community, and our city and how collaboration can benefit all.

Participating in the project, in addition to myself, were Nancy Hartman, West Lafayette Public Library computer and reference librarian; Purdue University faculty members Susan Curtis and Kristina Bross, and their graduate students Mary Barford, Shivohn Garcia, Adam Hawkins, Deborah Leitner, and Pete Sinnott.

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On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, staggering New Orleans with a 22-foot storm surge. The levees broke and the city began to flood. When Katrina finally blew itself out in the Midwest, 1,836 people in eight states were dead and 705 were missing, making Katrina the fifth deadliest hurricane in U.S. history. Katrina’s damages (estimated at $110 billion) and evacuations (between 1 and 2 million) were the largest in U.S. history (www.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/reports/tech-report-200501z.pdf; see also, www.cnn.com/2005/WEATHER/08/31/katrina.impact/index.html).

Service Scholarship: The Underutilized Component in Meeting Social Needs

Tammy S. Smith

Many academic institutions already embrace volunteerism as part of their institutional philosophy (Hinck & Brandell, 2000), either by requiring that students take a course in it or by incorporating it into the curriculum. Volunteer experience, however, is not the same as a carefully planned service program designed to support community stakeholder goals and educators’ learning objectives while expanding student knowledge, all with an evaluative component. Volunteering provides numerous benefits to both the volunteer and those served that can be incorporated into the curriculum. Service-learning fills a need that traditional courses cannot (Fong, 2005; Gronski & Pigg, 2000).

As college students prepare to enter a world where terrorism, catastrophic disasters, poverty, crime, and drug abuse are prevalent, service-learning in the curriculum can help develop a well-rounded student through civic research and participation in community-driven service projects that address community needs.

I was fortunate enough to participate in one such project, a Hurricane Katrina relief effort that changed both my perception of learning and how I apply knowledge. In the fall of 2005, I began the professional undergraduate social work program at The University of Alabama. Only days into the semester, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, destroying whole communities and causing unprecedented relocation of residents. Of all the statistics I have seen the most astounding was the number of houses lost, 275,000, more than 10 times that of any previous U.S. natural disaster (2005).

But even more alarming to many Americans than the statistics, grim as they were, was discovering that our federal and local governments and their agencies were unable to meet the needs of the stricken. (U.S. House of Representatives, 2006). What a traumatic introduction to my profession and what a shock to someone who had assumed that my country and my government were prepared for anything that came our way!

In my first social work practice course, our professor encouraged our group to help fill this gap by volunteering in the response effort. Our chance to contribute would come almost immediately when Volunteers of America requested that students from the University conduct needs assessments in Bayou La Batre, Alabama, a small fishing village (population 2,313) in Mobile County, most of whose residents are Asian immigrants, all of whom were ravaged by Katrina. You may not have visited the tiny town on Mobile Bay but chances are very good, no matter where you live, you have eaten shrimp, crabs, or oysters from Bayou La Batre.

The Asian population is attributable to a large influx of Vietnamese immigrants following...
the Vietnam War. Bayou la Batre was a popular destination for such immigrants because it fosters a shrimping industry similar to that of Vietnam.

After weeks of planning, several narrow escapes from cancellation due to logistics, and many hours of work by a number of people, 16 students from The University of Alabama and two from the University of Montevallo in nearby Shelby County arrived in Bayou La Batre on November 4, 2005, to assess the population's needs after the storm.

The needs assessments involved home visits to complete questionnaires with residents about their immediate and long term needs as a result of the hurricane. The questionnaires focused on housing and medical needs, as well as a compilation of a long list of household and personal supplies. Volunteers of America used the 120 completed assessments to secure a $50,000 grant from the Wachovia Rebuilding South Alabama Fund to meet some of the community's needs (N. Simms, personal communication, June 6, 2009).

The experience in Bayou La Batre provided my peers and me a new consciousness about human suffering and our mutual obligation to one another. Despite cultural sensitivity training and research on Vietnamese Americans and others of Asian descent that resulted in a cultural handbook for use by our group, many of us were shocked that our first thoughts of these hardworking, economically disadvantaged individuals were stereotypes. In the end, we felt sure of our cultural growth and understanding of our new friends.

In the field, however, much of that information seemed irrelevant. People looked me right in the eyes, with almost a hopeful plea, instead of the downward gaze expected based on our research. No one invited us into their homes, probably because their homes were in such poor condition, so we didn’t have to worry about the expectation of removing our shoes. We expected the men to represent their households by answering our questions, as this is what our readings and research informed us. However, most of the men were not present as they were out working or attempting to find work. I found it especially disturbing when the interpreter working with FEMA, himself an Asian immigrant, declared that the shrimping jobs were once again available, but no one wanted to work because they preferred instead to receive federal assistance. Our own observations were at odds with his assertion. In actuality, I wondered how many of these newly immigrated residents even knew of the available assistance, as the brochures we saw delivered to Bayou La Batre residents were in English (for an example of one such brochure, go to http://www.mcem.net/pdf/disaster_assistance.pdf).

We also noted a clear economic divide while in the community. Many of the immigrants we met continued to live in houses that were in poor, unsafe condition, some without electricity, and others without appliances or intact roofs. Despite these circumstances, the residents were dedicated to remaining in their homes and in the community. Less than a mile away, we saw upscale homes already repaired, debris removed from the yards, and life back to normal. This disparity in ability to recover had nothing to do with the poor residents’ desire to restore their homes and lives to normalcy. Rather, the disparity was grounded in their relative poverty.

Striking visual evidence of the storm damage was apparent in the wooded area near the intercoastal waterway; shrimp boats were perched in the branches of trees. I had never seen a 40-foot ship sitting upright on dry land until the trip to Bayou La Batre. The boats belonged to the immigrants, many of whom didn’t have the insurance coverage to rescue, repair, or relaunch them. For simple lack of funds, the boats remained in the woods for months until a grant from the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund paid for their removal (Barry, 2006; Gaillard, 2007). As 80 percent of Bayou La Batre’s economy is linked to the seafood industry, which also contributes millions to the area’s annual economy, the financial impact of these vessels being grounded was significant for the immigrant owners as well as the local and area economies (Gaillard, 2007).

One person who knows much about the poor residents in Bayou La Batre is Dr. Regina Benjamin, President Obama’s nominee for surgeon general. Benjamin has managed a healthcare clinic in Bayou La Batre for several years. There is no doubt that she has strong opinions about the treatment of this nation’s poor, as evidenced by comments in her nomination acceptance speech. Dr. Benjamin said that “for years I’ve worked to
find resources to sustain a doctor’s office that treats patients without health insurance or the ability to pay out of their pockets” (The White House, 2009). She reportedly used a considerable amount of her own money to reconstruct a clinic that served poor Bayou La Batre residents after Katrina destroyed the original facility (Romero, 2009). Simply put, from this experience, I am now fully also aware of how poverty can take its toll without any fault on the part of those in its grips.

Probably one of the most valuable lessons I learned from this experience was that nobody knows the community better than the people who live there. I’ve heard this from a few professors since Bayou La Batre, but I really learned it from the brave residents of the small fishing community. Amid all the chaos, confusion, and destruction, there was still a sense of community that was evident during the time we worked in the Bayou. The needs assessment recognized the residents as the most knowledgeable about their own needs. I am proud to have been a part of the project.

While the community benefited to some extent from our efforts, the relationship was definitely mutually beneficial. Both the students and the professors gained invaluable insights into an impoverished community’s needs. In addition, most, if not all, of us considered the government assistance to the immigrants of Bayou La Batre to be inexcusably inadequate. Just as the reader is not necessarily able to appreciate the magnitude of Bayou La Batre’s situation after Katrina without having been there, students who simply read about impoverished neighborhoods, at risk individuals, or vulnerable populations cannot truly comprehend the human experience of poverty, vulnerability, confusion, fear, lack of knowledge, political tactics, and the sheer panic over uncertainty about the future. Here the old saying, “You had to be there,” takes on new significance.

References


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Given the longstanding relationship between the arts and social change, one might approach Beverly Naidus’ *Arts for Change* with a wary eye. However, the book is a refreshing surprise and a welcome addition to the literature on socially engaged teaching practices. Naidus does an excellent job of drawing in all kinds of readers by weaving story and academic reflection together as opposing yet familiar textures. The overall effect is a powerful account in which theory develops through history, personal story, and the words of others, making *Arts for Change* an enlightening read.

Naidus first uses personal narrative to introduce the reader to her own story and set the stage for the pages that follow; she lays further groundwork for the book by providing the reader with a brief historical account of the arts – from cave paintings through FDR’s Works Progress Administration on to McCarthy era propaganda and into the Cold War Abstract Expressionism. Building on this history, within the first few chapters, Naidus illustrates how the arts have been used for and against humanity for eons, and have sometimes been successful in changing opinion and rallying people to fight for their beliefs. Her discussion of the artwork associated with these events places emphasis on the social, historical and cultural contexts that shape and are shaped by art, and illustrates that art is not just for the elite or those who have plenty of leisure time. This is key, given that a decontextualized reframing of these art objects’ meanings can make it difficult for students to understand why particular objects hold a significant status in world history.

Naidus moves from a broad historical perspective back to her own personal history in discussing how she has developed her pedagogy through life experiences and art training. The raw examination of her journey – from being an art major who at first did not understand the appeal of abstract expressionism, to achieving a satisfying balance between being an artist and a teacher – will be cathartic for many who have carved a similar path. Many who pursue the balance between art and teaching struggle with combining an artistic need to express, a socially responsible consciousness, and the desire to teach, and Naidus reveals how one teacher’s gift of Ben Shahn’s book *The Shape of Content* (1957) helped her realize that teaching was yet another extension of her creative self. The book, along with Naidus’ involvement in public art works and feminist theorizing, moved her out of the “art for art’s sake” mentality she had witnessed earlier in her career, while also showing her the uglier side of criticism and judgments made about art and the artists who create it.

Crafting a professional life as an artist is often quite difficult; Naidus’ reflections on being rejected from three graduate schools will resonate with many artists who have sought formal training, gotten rejected, and then have had to sit back and ask “why?” Readers may also relate to Naidus’ articulation of the tension between wanting to redefine art as she saw fit, and the realization that she had to discover a way to make her own way in the world. Naidus’ chronicle of her move to New York, where she worked odd jobs and created art in her cockroach-infested apartment, further reflects struggles that many artists have endured. Through these accounts a sense of shared camaraderie allows readers to empathize with the challenges of becoming a teacher of art while maintaining and developing one’s identity as an artist.

In discussing issues of pedagogy in Chapter
3, Naidus recalls the teacher we probably all experienced at some time, the one who thought mimeographed sheets of holiday images were to be considered “art.” Her hope for an art specialist trained as an “artist/teacher/activist/community member” is probably less likely to be found, but Naidus offers examples of promising sites for the development of such specialists that are on the horizon. Groups such as the Caucus for Social Theory in Art Education, Visual Culture, and Critical Theory are beginning to permeate schools of art and art education and are encouraging artists and art educators to be aware of art’s wider implications. Naidus suggests that this progressive school of thought may help others develop school curricula that are interdisciplinary, and she advocates for an approach to art that emphasizes creativity within civic engagement and the role of the arts in promoting an ethic of caring. Often, positive influences on Naidus’ pedagogy have taken shape through informal interactions and practices, such as late night debates with fellow artists, reflections on world politics, journaling, and personal reflections. Though these experiences take place outside of formal education, Naidus finds them integral to informing her identity as an artist and educator and to her development of transformative pedagogical practices.

Naidus devotes most of Chapter 4 to outlining her curriculum for the Arts in Community interdisciplinary program at the University of Washington, Tacoma. Through photographs and descriptions of activities and projects, Naidus presents vivid examples from her classes, where students create art in response to environmental issues, wartime concerns, body image questions, cultural identity, labor, and globalization. The chapter concludes with Naidus’ explanation of the challenges to developing this type of curriculum. Typical barriers such as grading, time limitations, dumbed down products of American schools, and the perennial lack of funding are all hurdles countless art teachers face around the country; and Naidus skillfully articulates strategies she has used to surmount these obstacles.

In panoramic perspective, Chapter 5 presents sketches of the work and experiences of artists and educators working for social change across academic and community contexts. These sketches emerged from a series of one-hour interviews in which Naidus asked each individual to reflect on their practice and pedagogy and offer “stories of transformation.” Ironically, though Naidus frames the chapter as an opportunity for community building, learning, and dialogue, the sheer number of artist/educator profiles (each usually spanning about two pages) precludes a complete achievement of this goal. Rather, these brief glimpses into the work lives, challenges, and triumphs of this unique group of people often leaves the reader with more questions than answers. Given the book’s emphasis on transforming traditional arts teaching to socially engaging art and cultural production, this may very well have been one of Naidus’ objectives. Nevertheless, these short, but powerful representations of practice are inspirational narratives that begin to delineate the possibilities of socially engaged art instruction.

Naidus ends Arts for Change with an examination of her trips to Cuba and her observations about the artists who live and work there. She recognizes the contradiction of the art she saw there as expressionist, while still serving as a tool for what the government wanted people to know. From Cuba, Naidus moves on to consider conversations she had with a young college girl who expressed idealistic thoughts about the impact she could have on marketplace practices, her own observations about the monolithic American health-care profession, and finally a reflective examination of her own dream life. Naidus’ critique of the commercial marketplace and art’s role in it is present throughout the book, and it is within this last chapter that Naidus courageously looks inward as a way to figure out her small place in this very big picture.

Many artists claim to start life with a slightly different or quirky slant on things and Naidus is no exception. She recounts her life as “weird and different early on,” a life influenced by a scientifically grounded father, and by her recollections that she did not have the opportunity to experience indigenous cultures until later in her adulthood. After gaining this opportunity, another mentor persuaded her to paint her dreams and share them with others. The cultivation of her ability to look inward eventually led her to become part of a women’s dream group that uses dreams as a tool to strengthen their creative life. In the end, her metaphoric personal narratives
woven throughout the book are finally revealed as part of this analysis-of-dreams process.

As Naidus looks to herself, society, and others through Arts for Change, she is reminded of how often the answer to life’s questions are located outside the frame, and that thinking outside the box and looking at things from a different perspective are metaphors for what she wants the reader to think about as they ponder their own creative battles, and look through the cracks for ways to serve the many rather than just a few. Through a multifaceted account that merges personal narrative, biography, history and the presentation of strong pedagogical practices, Arts for Change offers all of us an open invitation to become mindful of the unifying ability and eye-opening power of art.


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Within the last several decades, the management of the nation’s public forests has increasingly shifted from an industrial extraction model toward a focus on ecosystem functions, restoration, and forest health. This evolution in forest policy and management has created more opportunities for community involvement in resource management and governance. Forest Community Connections: Implications for Research, Management, and Governance seeks to elucidate the consequences of this shift and examine factors contributing to strong community-forest connections.

Nineteen authors contribute 14 essays to the book, which is organized within three broad categories, examining how social science is used to define and assess communities; how persistent and emerging forest management issues affect communities; and how forest and community connections develop into unique forms of forest governance. The book is well organized according to these three areas and each essay is relevant to the topic and contributes sensibly toward better understanding community-forest connections. Within the first chapter, the editors set the stage by exploring the evolution of forest policy and management from the Great Depression to the current struggle toward integrating communities and forests. Viewed in light of the sociocultural and biological history of our forested landscape, the current relationships between people and forests and forest policy are better understood. Subsequent essays examine issues such as the advantages of involving communities in collaborative research; the growing need to consider non-timber forest products in forest management; and the logic of creating community forests to avoid, among other ills, landscape parcelization.

Donoghue, Sturtevant, and their contributing authors submit that healthy communities and forests are dependent on flexible and dynamic community-forest connections. Socioeconomic, political, and institutional processes operate to either sustain or weaken forest communities. The recognition and the development of human capital within a community and the strengthening of internal and external communal ties are integral to its strength and resilience. Realizing this vision of resilient communities and healthy forests is not something that happens overnight. The path toward fostering strong community-forest connections requires citizen engagement over time and is fraught with several significant challenges. First, the nature of the community-forest connection is continually redefined through timber markets and technology, shifting sociodemographics and environmental values, and changing forest policy. Further, production of timber products in the U.S. has flat-lined while consumption has increased. Products such as furniture, the bread and butter of many communities, are being replaced by imports from China and elsewhere. Finally, the expanding urban fringe into forested areas and the increasing immigration of exurbanites presents new challenges to communities, forests, and forest managers. Finding ways to work with these challenges while taking meaningful steps toward the communal stewardship of our forests is at the heart of Donoghue and Sturtevant’s message.

The authors illuminate the consequences of the shift from single-interest-based forest
management to collaborative stewardship and ecosystem management. Much of the book is devoted to defining and analyzing community forestry and grassroots community engagement. However, engaging communities and connecting them to their forests is not a new idea. Following the Earth Summit in 1992, work began on a set of common criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Following this, the U.S. Forest Service began to partner with community groups to advance understanding of how national, regional, and local efforts to develop sustainability criteria and indicators could be linked. Since then there has been a groundswell of literature and research focused on the community-forest connection. Communities and Forests: Where People Meet the Land (Lee and Field, Eds. 2005) is a good example of work in this area though there is little mention of this prior publication in Forest Community Connections. Further, despite “Community” in the title, most contributors never really define the term. This is unfortunate, since a conversation about what community means to the authors would serve readers well.

To the authors’ credit, they offer honest criticism of community forestry and avoid the elementary notion that it is an elixir fit for every community. The work makes clear that forest communities need the opportunity to act cohesively and to participate in decisions that directly affect them. Helping people engage in restoring the forests to which they are connected involves attending to factors that determine the quality, durability, and meaningfulness of this connection. The book provides social scientists, forest managers, and community representatives with ways to potentially attend to these factors.

Even though this recent effort by Donoghue and Sturtevant and their contributing authors is largely a synthesis of past work, there is much to be gained from continuing and extending the conversation. Their work adds clarity to the complexities inherent in understanding forests and communities by focusing on the nature and quality of the actual connection between them. It will appeal to those interested in human/nature relationships, particularly from a forestry perspective. I especially recommend this book to social scientists interested in exploring new ways to engage the study of communities and forests, as the work speaks well to those ends. Selected readings would also benefit advanced undergraduate and graduate students interested in the human dimensions of natural resources and should be required reading for those students who wish to work with trees and people.

If you would like to review a book relevant to the scholarship of engagement, call Heather Pleasants at 205-348-3282 or e-mail her at hpleasan@bamaed.ua.edu.
Instructions to Authors: Submission of Manuscripts

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship (JCES) invites the submission of manuscripts that relate to its mission: to provide a mechanism through which faculty, staff, and students of academic institutions and their community partners disseminate scholarly works from all academic disciplines with the goal of integrating teaching, research, and community engagement.

All forms of writing and analysis will be acceptable for the journal with consideration being given to research and creative approaches that apply a variety of methodologies. Manuscripts that demonstrate central involvement of students and community partners and advance community engagement scholarship will be given favorable consideration. Manuscripts should be free of racial, religious, gender, ethnic, or any other identifiable forms of bias.

Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish in this journal if accepted for publication. Manuscripts must have been submitted for exclusive publication in JCES and not simultaneously submitted elsewhere. Manuscripts should not have been published elsewhere in substantially the same form. Authors in doubt about what constitutes prior publication should consult the editor.

Inquiries and submissions should be e-mailed to Cassandra E. Simon, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, The University of Alabama, at jces@bama.ua.edu. At this time, hard paper submissions are not accepted.

Manuscript Preparation

Manuscripts should be typewritten in Microsoft Word format with a separate cover page. Manuscripts should also be double spaced in Times New Roman 12-point type. Article length, except in rare instances, should not exceed 25 pages including text, tables, and references. Tables and other graphics should be submitted as separate documents with their place in the manuscript indicated. Do not include the abstract and cover pages in the page count. Manuscripts should follow the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition). See guidelines at http://www.apa.org/journals/authors/all-instructions.html. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition) is also the required reference style. A separate cover sheet with the name(s), affiliation(s), and other identifying information and contact information (address, phone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses) for each contributing author should be supplied. Additionally, authors should include four to six keywords at the bottom of the cover sheet.

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Images must also be submitted electronically, in JPEG format with no less than 200 pixels per inch resolution for black and white images and 300 for color. Manuscripts will undergo blind peer review. It is the intention of this journal to assign manuscripts to reviewers within two to four weeks of compliant and correct submission.

PRAISE FOR Vol. 1, No. 1

Congratulations on the publication ... this journal will provide an excellent opportunity for colleagues in the natural resources education and outreach field to publish their work.

Susan Donaldson
Water Quality Education Specialist
President, Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals

How exciting to get the inaugural copy. ... I rushed home and savored the pages. It was fun to see some of my favorite colleagues on the editorial board and as authors. The format is a nice break away from the usual — rather refreshing to read. I also love the statements about engagement scholarship being transformative — that's my area of research. So congratulations on this great milestone!

Nancy K. Franz
Extension Specialist, Program Development
Virginia Tech University

The journal looks wonderful.

Jay Lamar
Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities
Auburn University

It is impressive! Job well done.

David Mathews, President
Kettering Foundation
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In 2004 the University created a separate division to provide leadership in community engagement, giving it a charge of creating and coordinating knowledge, skills, and resources for the common good through reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships.

That division, the Office of Community Affairs, tracks, advocates, funds, promotes, educates, and mobilizes community engagement for campus and community.

A key unit within Community Affairs is the Center for Community-Based Partnerships. CCBP facilitates the creation of partnerships among faculty, staff, students, and community members that integrate curriculum and research to address critical issues jointly identified by the partners.

Since its establishment in 2006, CCBP and its partners have conducted more than 75 projects involving hundreds of faculty, students, and community partners. A 75-person council of faculty, administrators, students, and community partners recommends policies and actions. These actions include awarding $100,000 in seed-funds annually for engagement scholarship. Two other University of Alabama units, the Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility and Crossroads Community Center, are also heavily involved in community engagement. Funded by private endowments and the University, these units bring together faculty, students, and community volunteers in practical projects that build engaged, ethical, and culturally aware citizens.

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