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 world wide.
Now there’s another way to put your thoughts on engagement scholarship before large audiences.

JCES has updated its website, www.jces.ua.edu. Along with a variety of new presentations, photos, and reports on research from conferences, the website will begin to reach out to the public via multimedia through photo and video galleries and blogs.

Andrea Mabry, JCES website coordinator and journalist in residence, explains: “A key goal of the redesigned website is to open up engagement research to the public, providing auxiliary arts that will help us assemble an audience not only of hardcopy and e-book subscribers, but also a broader audience that may be less well versed in formal research. That makes our online component extremely important, since most nonprofessionals are not likely to have a subscription.”

Keeping that in mind, our approach is different from much web development work because we are constantly trying to come up with ways to get crossover readers and, through submitted blogs, contributions to fuel an ongoing discussion of engagement scholarship. To that end, we encourage members of our audience to submit ideas to jces@ua.edu. If you are interested in blogging for JCES online, e-mail us or call us at the number below.

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JCES presents its first issue of 2010 with a certain confidence, secure in the conviction that the journal provides a quality outlet for some of the best “scholarship of engagement” (Boyer, 1996). The advancement of JCES toward its goal of becoming the premier academic journal in community engagement scholarship is reflected in this issue. It is reflected in the quality of the articles presented on the following pages. It is reflected in the depth and diversity of the manuscripts and author specialties. It is reflected in our continuous commitment to incorporating principles of authentic community engagement in every aspect of the journal.

In this regard, we are especially proud of the new opportunities JCES is providing students through its graduate student editorial board and student editorial liaison positions. From its inception, JCES committed space in each issue for at least one student-authored manuscript. Please see the call for student manuscripts on page 67. The current student piece, written by Dominique Derbigny, a graduate student at the University of Maryland at Baltimore, chronicles her community engagement experience as an undergraduate student at Elon University in Elon, N.C. Elon is a private liberal arts university repeatedly ranked at the top for engaged learning. The student piece demonstrates the relevance of engaged learning in helping students define career choice, research interests, and community citizenry.

It is important that students have a regular scholarly venue to express their thoughts, opinions, and reflections regarding community engagement—to have their voices heard. The student section of JCES, Student Voices, provides one such venue and will be handled almost entirely by students. This board will be primarily responsible for solicitation and review of student-submitted manuscripts for the section and for making recommendations to the editor for publication. Students in the liaison positions will assist the editorial assistant in day to day operation of the journal, with a focus on the Student Voices section.

The current issue of JCES contains articles that address some of the major challenges and issues facing engagement scholarship. Among them are cross-cultural education, citizen science, holistic learning, and intra-campus community engagement. The significance of engaged scholarship and its ability to promote the common good in society is seen in the cover article, “The Engaged Humanities: Principles and Practices for Public Scholarship and Teaching,” by Gregory Jay. Richard L. Conville and Ann M. Kinnell’s article, “Relational Dimensions of Service-Learning,” advances true collaboration between the primary constituent groups of service-learning (i.e., instructors, community partners, and students) by providing a common language for discussion of their inter-relationships. Combined, these two manuscripts speak to the practicality of engagement scholarship and the need to bring engagement scholarship to even higher levels conceptually and theoretically. JCES continues to grow and attract widespread interest and support across a broad spectrum. As we continue on our journey, we look to you, our readership and contributors to share your thoughts, ideas and needs with us. As editor, I appreciate the support we have received and welcome your feedback.

Leading the Dance of Learning: Using Reflective Questions to Promote Community and Understanding in Classrooms

Marilyn Nash and Judith Oates Lewandowski

Abstract
A major challenge facing teacher educators today is creating a field-based opportunity for pre-service educators in which they are able to connect with K-12 students and differentiate instruction to fit the unique needs, attitudes, and diversity of the classroom. This action-research study addresses this challenge by measuring the effectiveness of incorporating pre-lesson reflection questions as a strategy to consider pre-service undergraduate students’ needs prior to the planning of the lesson. Investigators were successful in utilizing this pre-reflective strategy within three distinct populations of pre-service undergraduate students. The investigators partnered with a group of undergraduate students early in their education program, a group of students just before their student teaching experience, and a group of seniors during their student teaching placements. The investigators and students participated in classroom discussions on information about pre-lesson reflection development, on-campus classroom exercises, and small group feedback conversations about lesson implementation, which enriched the connections between curriculum, classroom learning, and community.

Introduction
This action-research study was designed to measure the effectiveness of incorporating pre-lesson reflection questions as a strategy for considering student needs prior to the planning of the lesson. The pre-lesson reflective strategy was shared with three different groups of education students. The three groups were selected based on the courses being taught by the instructor during the fall semester of that academic year. The first group was composed of 20 undergraduate students just entering the Teacher Education Program. The second set of 19 students included students enrolled one semester before undertaking their student teaching internships. The final group was composed of six students engaged in their student teaching experience.

A major challenge facing teacher educators today is creating a field-based opportunity for pre-service educators in which they are able to connect with the K-12 students and differentiate instruction to fit the unique needs, attitudes, and diversity of the classroom. Struggling students are not fearful of challenging topics and/or information; they simply need classes that strengthen what they know and build on what they value. Lesson planning thereby could be strengthened if teachers are able to connect with...
students at a level that enables them to build on prior knowledge and personal values.

In order to create a learning narrative in the classroom, the teacher must be able to fuse the meanings found in texts and curriculum with the meanings enveloped deep within the lives of the students. In the context of a short-term field experience, it is extremely difficult for pre-service educators to do this effectively. Tisdale (1997) maintained that holistic learning gives a complete understanding of how to interpret and create a community of learners by looking at programs, processes, and persons. By incorporating holistic principles, pre-service educators may be able to build a stronger community for learning and thereby be able to design lessons with differentiated content activities.

Other disciplines encounter similar issues in terms of facing the need to connect quickly with participants in order to create a strong sense of community. Professionals in the realm of theology face a daily task similar to that of teachers. In order to connect with their parishioners, they must know the community in which they are working. Tisdale (1997) advised pastors to consider the use of reflective questions as a means to better understand the beliefs, attitudes, and diversity of the congregation. Additionally, she encouraged pastors-in-training to become active participant-observers in their own congregation as a means of connecting with and validating the voice of the members.

Tisdale (1997) further wrote about the importance of a pastor becoming an ethnographer for his or her congregation to better interface between their places of ministry and their surrounding constituents of faith. Her understanding of local theology was described as a theology crafted for a very particular people in a particular time and place. Tisdale defined congregational settings as churches where people can have a strong sense of belonging. She constructed a model for preaching that arises out of the midst of a pastor’s congregation. There is a strong emphasis on knowing who one’s church members are, what they do, and what is important to them.

Tisdale (1997) refers to this form of deep personal knowing as holistic preaching that leads to the construction of meaning and a dance of faith. Local theology is where a sacred text and congregations come together to encounter a meaningful impact on their lives. The preacher in such a place needs to be an ethnographer who is both an insider and an outsider to the community of believers. The preacher who is subjective as well objective can move throughout the context of the congregation with a deep knowing of self and the lives involved in the faith context.

Applying these same principles to the K-12 classroom seemed like a natural parallel. If pre-service teachers are taught to consider the holistic needs of their students prior to planning lessons, a stronger classroom community and respect for diversity could positively impact the overall effectiveness of the curricular goals. In essence, as stated by Cushman (2006), pre-service educators needed a mechanism to guide their exploration of the classrooms in which they were teaching; they were in need of a structure to guide their view of the students and environment in a holistic manner.

By addressing the culture of the classroom before the implementation of the lesson, teachers can be proactive in advance of preparing their lessons for use with students in their classrooms. Classroom teachers will be able to increase their sensitivity to the diversity of their students and differentiated learning and intellectual capacities if time is spent prior to designing a lesson getting to know the students in the classroom. Kathleen Cushman (2006) maintained that teachers who know their students well can make powerful connections between academic subjects and the things children worry and care about in their lives. When a teacher truly knows his or her students, both the teacher and the students will feel more like partners creating meaningful knowledge that will impact their lives together. Significant learning begins when there are significant relationships.

The use of pre-reflective lesson questions creates a kind of local learning theory crafted for a particular set of people in a particular time and place. Students yearn for those classrooms where they have a sense of belonging and connection. Everyone is born with the ability to connect with others, so creating opportunities for students is critical in their learning experience (Kidron & Fleischman (2006). Teaching that has a meaningful impact on the lives of both the instructor and the students meets everyone at the level of their communally shared lives and gives all the stakeholders access to purposeful learning. When teachers give instruction from out of the midst of the community of learners, then holistically engaged and transformative learning
occurs for all involved.

In support of holistic engagement and transformative learning, instructors must be reflective practitioners. According to Moore and Ash (2002), critical reflection needs to be a central part of the beginning teacher’s early classroom experience, in order to ensure that practice produces new learning rather than merely confirming existing understandings and position(ing)s. Reflective practice not only aids the growth of meaningful learning, but it also can lead to positive teaching and instructional outcomes. To create a stronger sense of classroom community and respect for diversity, greater use of reflective practice is needed to better understand students’ lives and contextual factors. Reflexive activity for educators is productive thought about and understanding of the impact on students’ classroom behaviors of social, cultural, and emotional lives outside the school walls. Reflective practice is an inquiry approach to teaching where knowing one another is of critical importance.

Parker Palmer’s (1993) enthusiasm for compassionate knowing and Rachel Kessler’s (2002) notion of the teaching presence come together at the crossroads of reflective practice. To become fully aware of and present in the lives of the students in the classroom, educators must think about, evaluate, and make changes to improve their teaching and learning. For Ron Miller (2006), reflective educators embody receptive awareness of themselves as instructors and the child’s personality and aspirations as well as the impact the world has on their classroom learning environment.

Reflective practice promotes the development of deeply meaningful knowledge for all involved. However, there usually appears to be a gap in these reflective definitions and processes as a practice that occurs after a teaching event or a learning moment, rather than prior to the implementation of a lesson and/or classroom activity. This study is designed to fill in the gap of missing reflective practice by encouraging pre-service students to systematically reflect on their teaching lesson prior to using their classroom ideas and exercises with children using a set of pre-lesson reflective questions.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study was designed to measure the effectiveness of incorporating pre-lesson reflection questions as a strategy to consider student needs before the planning of the lesson. The pre-lesson reflective model was shared with three different groups of students. The first group consisted of 20 undergraduate students entering the Teacher Education Program. The second set of 19 students was in the final semester before their student teaching internship. The final group was composed of six students engaged in their student teaching experience. This study began with introductory in-class activities about reflective practice, followed by pre-service student implementation and student discussions about the impact of using pre-reflective lesson questions on the learning environment.

The next step in the alignment process was to gather planning tools currently being used by the pre-service educators to determine the theoretical framework for developing education-based pre-reflective questions. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards are currently the foundation for many educational preparation programs. The INTASC standards were designed by a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations to enhance the reform of the preparation, licensing, and ongoing professional development of teachers. Therefore, since these INTASC standards serve as a governing influence in the field of education, these standards seemed to be a strong foundation for developing a set of reflective questions that were local-education based.

The investigators aligned INTASC standards with the pre-lesson questions seen in Table 1. The investigators created questions about the knowledge base of pre-service educators, asking about background information and content skills prior to creating a lesson plan. The pre-lesson reflection encourages and assists educators in knowing the distinctive characteristics of the teacher and their students. Another question asks pre-service teachers for an applicable pre-lesson inquiry about what was learned in preparation for a lesson about the teacher, his or her students, and other colleagues.

Pre-service educators often struggle with lesson plan development and tend to focus upon the compartmentalized sections of the lesson plan (e.g., the opening set, materials, and
procedure) rather than viewing the lesson plan as one harmonious tool for encouraging holistic learning. As a means to synthesize the lesson planning process, the pre-reflective questions were embedded within the steps of designing a lesson plan. The pre-lesson reflection questions were designed to fuse the meanings found in texts and curriculum with the meanings enveloped deep within the lives of the students. The goal of the questions was to help education students becoming more aware of whom they are and are not in partnership with. A pre-lesson inquiry paradigm encourages students to be active participant-observers.

Ethnography is an anthropological method of examining a community closely and discovering what it values, enabling an instructor to become a participant observer or a reflective practitioner. This action-based research method provides the instructor an inside view of those in a classroom. Pre-reflective lesson questions create a space for taking into consideration the classroom culture of the students. These pre-lesson reflections engage the instructor in using new questions and tools to interpret the community of learners. Once the questions were

### Table 1. Pre-Lesson Reflections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic questions to aid in self-assessment before each lesson</th>
<th>Questions requiring written responses before each lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well do I know the content material? (#1 Content Knowledge)</td>
<td>What do you bring to the knowledge base of this lesson’s content? Where have you drawn from to enhance the lesson’s content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well do I know the level of the students? (#2 Child growth and development)</td>
<td>What are the distinctive characteristics of these students? What are some of the unique abilities and challenges in this class? What development levels are present with these students? How are you going to address different learning styles?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I plan to meet every students needs? (#3 Diversity)</td>
<td>What is the context of the students’ lives? What are their stories? Who are their heroes and heroines? Who are their “villains”? What challenges do they face? What are the demographics of your class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the teaching strategies I plan to use going to be effective? And why? (#4 Instruction)</td>
<td>Which lesson activities, events, and/or questions do you believe will be effective in your lesson? And why? What if any portions of your lesson do you anticipate may be challenging to implement? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I plan to manage the learning environment? (#5 Learning Environment)</td>
<td>What is communicated by the special configuration of the classroom space? Are any spaces “owned” by various groups of students and off-limits to others? What priorities are communicated by the way the space is set up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well do I communicate with my students? (#6 Communication)</td>
<td>Can all students move easily around the room? What sections of your lesson will receive the most attention, energy, and investment of resources? Is your lesson paced well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How well have I planned? (#7 Instructional Planning)</td>
<td>What have you learned in preparation for this lesson about yourself, the students, and other colleagues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will I know students are leaning the intended objectives? (#8 Assessment)</td>
<td>What artifacts will be produced? What is the value of these materials for your intended objectives? Will the students value the artifacts produced in your lesson? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are my professional strengths and weaknesses? Am I practicing reflection on my own? (#9 Professionalism)</td>
<td>What professional strengths and weaknesses do you bring to this lesson? What remediation do you anticipate for students struggling with the lesson, the learning environment, your teaching approach and/or other learning partners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who have I collaborated with for this lesson? What did I learn? (#10 Collaboration)</td>
<td>What have you learned from collaborating with your classroom teacher before your lesson? Who are those persons and resources used to create an effective lesson?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
completed, it became critical to introduce the students to the concept of pre-reflective questioning and the skills required to become a participant observer in the classroom setting.

Sample Selection
The pre-lesson reflective model was shared with three different groups of students based on the courses being taught by the instructor during the fall semester of that academic year. Due to time and schedule constraints, the instructor decided to utilize fall semester students, rather than delaying the process until spring semester. The first group was composed of 20 undergraduate students who had recently entered the Teacher Education Program during the first semester of their junior year of college. The second set of 19 students included individuals enrolled in their final round of coursework prior to beginning their student teaching internship. The students in the second group were typically seniors. The final group was composed of six students engaged in their student teaching experience. All students in the third group were seniors ready to complete their educational degree.

All three groups of undergraduate student participants were individuals attending education classes on a full-time basis. They ranged in age from their early 20s to approximately their mid-40s. Each group of undergraduate students was predominantly female with a small number of male participants. All of the students were primarily white with two African American students and one Hispanic student. The research sample was a small with 45 undergraduate students in total. The first group of undergraduate students contained 20 people, the second 19, and the third 6. All were from within a 50-mile radius.

Procedure and In-Process Adjustments
As the process of integrating the INTASC reflective questions was set forth with each group of students, careful daily notations and observations were conducted in a variety of ways: (1) following each on-campus class discussion; (2) after every small group in-class exercise; and (3) subsequent to the reading of each student-formulated lesson plan reflection. These notations and observations were methodically recorded in the instructor’s action-research journal to inform the professor of the need to modify the questions and acknowledge an impact (if any) upon the planning success of the pre-service educators in each of the three participant student groups mentioned above. The notations and observations gathered from these student educator groups could also possibly be used in future implementation of the reflective questions with courses in upcoming semesters.

If feedback from the student groups was positive and modifications to the pre-lesson questions were needed, then the investigators, based on student feedback, would modify the reflective inquiries as needed and make the pre-lesson questions a regular component of their education courses. On the other hand, if the investigators discovered that the reflective questions were not helpful, then additional considerations and modifications would be made to the reflections and further analysis would be conducted, working closely with the students. However, reactions gathered from each set of pre-service educators in the original three student groups were quite positive and unique and represented clear differences in the levels of professional development. These differences among the three student groups linked directly to their current classroom and course preparation, ranging from the beginning level to the more experienced.

The first students introduced to the pre-lesson reflective questions had, for the most part, just entered into their methodological courses. They had had minimal exposure to and were only beginners in developing an understanding of the important components in lesson preparation. When the pre-lesson reflective questions were shared with these students, the background information of Tisdale’s reflective questions for preachers and their congregations for using such a tool were presented, followed by small group discussions on why this was or was not a valuable model to use with their future classrooms. When the small groups reported summaries of their conversations with the entire class, the students discussed how they felt it would be much easier constructing lesson plans if they took time to assess who the lesson was actually being created for prior to its implementation. However, the students also raised some interesting questions about their ability to construct an in-depth analysis of a classroom, when at this point in their educational programs, they were “only” at a field experience level.

Further clarification with the first group of undergraduate students about why they were
hesitant to conduct an in-depth observation of the classrooms where they were doing field experiences was needed. There was a misunderstanding and incorrect perception of what could and could not be done in a field experience among the students. The next step in sharing the pre-lesson reflective questions with these beginning education students was to clarify the dynamics and meaning of field experiences. In other words, these students saw themselves as detached from or only as observers in the process rather than as the participant-observers described in Tisdale’s (1997) book on pastoral ethnography and community connections. With this additional dialogue about the meaning of being an active observer in their classrooms, the first group of students was eager to utilize the pre-lesson reflective questions in preparing lessons for use in their field experience contexts. The students were informed that detailed follow-up discussions would be held on campus for feedback about using the reflective questions.

Students taking methodology courses in their senior year before their student teaching experience composed the second group introduced to the pre-reflective lesson questions. These students are several semesters beyond the first group discussed above and typically bring a deeper understanding of the role lesson planning carries in a learning environment to their undergraduate classes. Immediately upon introducing these students to the questions, the students visibly stiffened as if they had been handed some enormous weight or edict concerning their own personal philosophies of teaching.

Additional inquiring into why they had had such strong adverse reactions to the pre-lesson reflective questions clarified for the instructor that the students were currently feeling overwhelmed with the amount of course work they were already being required to generate for their university instructors. An immediate discussion of how the pre-lesson reflective questions could be blended into their everyday observation and interaction with classroom children seemed to help the pre-service educators to feel much more comfortable moving forward with using this new tool within their field experiences. These students were definitely focused more on the products required with their education courses than on the actual process of knowing your students better in order to create the best practice lesson plans.

The final introduction of the reflective process occurred with students enrolled in the third group of student teaching internships. The introduction again began with a sharing of the theoretical basis for implementing such a tool into their classrooms, followed by conversations around the actual reflection questions. The student teachers initially responded with raised eyebrows and higher stress levels due to their alarm at assuming they were being given an additional component to include in their professional portfolios for student teaching. Not only were these student teachers concerned about doing additional tasks, but they also questioned how they would be able to find time in their already busy schedules to justify spending more of their day jotting down information about the children with whom they were working.

After lengthy discussions and explanations about how to use the reflective questions, the student teachers became excited about having a tool that empowered them to design better lesson plans that focused on classroom children becoming fully engaged in the learning process. During the in-class discussion, the student teachers in the third group openly asked about the reflective questions and received instructor clarification about inquiry details, and then were able to understand the purpose and goal of using the pre-lesson reflections. Following the in-class discussion, the student teachers were gathered into small groups to begin creating a lesson plan for possible use in their student teaching classrooms.

During the small group exercises, the student teachers began making connections between pre-lesson reflections and knowing more about themselves, the students, and the learning environment. They shared their insights with the instructor and the rest of the class. Given their in-class responses to the small group activity, the student teachers of group three understood that, by using the pre-lesson reflective questions, they would be able to improve their ability to make appropriate assessment and remediation decisions.

All three groups of undergraduate students were given approximately one month to apply the pre-lesson reflective questions into their various learning environments. At the end of one month of using this form of lesson preparation, all three student groups provided the investigators with their feedback about the pre-lesson questions during an in-class discussion. The investigators
recorded all student comments and feedback from this first month of using the lesson inquiries.

The students of group one and two were asked to work in small groups of two or three in order to respond to the pre-lesson reflection questions. Each set of students in both of these groups were able to encourage one another, assist in clarifying responses and look more closely at the educational placements for their field experiences. Their collected written responses to the pre-lesson questions were gathered at the end of the class session. This method was selected in order to provide guidance to the undergraduate students in each group, their peers, and the instructor.

The third group of students, engaged in their student teaching experience, was approached in a slightly different manner since there was less direct interaction with each of them. For this last set of students, an explanatory letter about the purpose and use of the pre-lesson questions was sent to each participant. In the correspondence, the student teachers were notified that the questions were to be embedded within their planning process and that written copies were to be turned in to their university supervisor.

The responses of all three groups were collected and analyzed over a period of three months.

**Analysis and Findings**

The analysis of the student feedback took place through a series of weekly discussions between the investigators and the students which extended beyond the 16-week course semester. After initial readings of the student feedback and reflections, the student data were analyzed through coding where two independent researchers looked for common themes throughout the discussions and reflective meetings. The two researchers examined the data as a means for validating the student feedback. The analytical tool of coding themes examined student responses, investigator reflections, and discussions with students held on campus about comparing and examining their lessons prepared prior to and then following the use of the reflective questions. As the analysis of the lessons and pre-reflective questions occurred, one reoccurring theme was an observable increase of pre-service educators’ instructional abilities as well as an increase in the expectations for performance and achievement of the children. The observable increase was measured through the theme of improved course grades assigned to the students at the completion of their assigned courses as mentioned previously.

The verbal responses and feedback from all three student groups in the extended campus discussions also showed a heightened understanding of appropriate tools and methods to use in their field placements. The majority of the undergraduate students connected with their field experience students and the different instruction required to fit the unique needs, attitudes, and diversity of the classrooms. The students in the three undergraduate groups were able to successfully integrate reflection, tools, methodology and meeting student needs through the use of the pre-lesson reflective questions. The investigators observed the student improvements in their ability to reflect and prepare lessons which increased in detail and planning from the lesson plans submitted at the beginning of the semester compared to the lesson plans completed at the end of the course.

All three of the student groups introduced to the pre-lesson reflective questions had in praxis shed their initial response and concentration on being product oriented to now having a focus on the process of using best practices in the classroom. This shift from a product oriented pre-service teacher to a more process driven educator occurred because the reflective tool had raised each of these students’ awareness and understanding of what it means to be a participant-observer in a classroom whether it is a university learning environment or a school room setting.

In each of the three student groups, students verbalized how the reflective tool assisted them in keeping the whole story or the goal of field and student teaching experiences in mind. The students stated they felt more competent in creating lessons and other materials because they had been given a tool which enabled them to move beyond their unending daily list of tasks and assisted them in focusing on being present and available to the children they were actually teaching.

The first group of students who initially saw the questions as one more task to be completed eventually indicated that they felt much more confident about moving beyond simply being passive observers in their classrooms. The pre-lesson reflective questions empowered these pre-service students to become participant-observers who were then significantly more aware of the
values, actions, and backgrounds of the children they were interacting with in their lessons. For example, in response to INTASC #2, which asks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well do I know the level of the students?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the distinctive qualities of these students? What are the unique abilities and challenges in this class?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(#2 Child growth and development)

| What development levels are present with these students? How are you going to address different learning styles? |

Feedback from the first group of undergraduate students consisted of comments such as:

“After I used these pre-reflective questions, I feel I also know my students like you know us. I can see a much deeper personal connection with the children. It is so much easier to prepare a lesson plan when you know what each of the student needs to be successful.”

The second and third groups of undergraduate students commented that when using the reflective tool, they found they were able to design better materials management plans for their lessons because they felt they knew their classrooms more thoroughly. These groups of students commented that they were better equipped to anticipate problems with children and to field content/subject concerns during the lesson, which also led to fewer discipline situations. Student responses to INTASC #4 questions were numerous. It asks:

| Are the teaching strategies I plan to use going to be effective? |
| Which lesson activities, events, and/or questions do you believe will be effective in your lesson? |

And why?

| (#4 Instruction) What, if any, portions of your lesson do you anticipate may be challenging to implement? Why? |

A student from the second group commented on their response sheets collected at the end of their small group work:

“The thought of taking inventory of a class before you teach makes a lot of sense because when you know your students, you know how to keep each of them involved, focused and interested in what is going on in the classroom.”

One of the student teachers in group three stated in their feedback about using the pre-lesson questions:

“I can make students feel welcome to ask questions any time during the class lesson because they know I am much more relaxed since I’ve taken time to think about what I’m doing, what they’re doing and what being partners is all about in a classroom. I made sure everyone understood what was being discussed and presented so I didn’t have as many students as I typically do who are off task, restless and causing problems during a lesson”.

With an increase in student awareness of their field and student teaching classrooms, there also seemed to be an improvement in the class assignments and lesson plans required for the university courses. Specific improvements in the lesson plans were made follow the series of on-campus feedback discussions between the investigators and the pre-service students. From the student comments and shared educational experiences, lesson improvements included a number of items such as well thought out materials management plans, clarification in contextual factors, more attention to components of diversity and developmental levels, and greater connections between lesson objectives, standards, and assessment tools.

It also seemed that the students who used the reflective questions also became better at reflecting on their work in the schools because they understood the particulars for which they were observing and responding to in their portfolio materials. These undergraduate students had a higher level of understanding for using educational tools in the classroom. Again, this shift from a product oriented undergraduate student to a more process driven educator occurred because the reflective tool had raised each of these students’ awareness and
understanding of what it means to be a participant-observer in a classroom whether it is a university learning environment or a school room setting.

The use of the pre-lesson reflective questions both strengthened and challenged the investigators to know education students as well. As with all three of the student groups, the instructor had increased her observational skills and abilities to know the students in the classroom. For example, in each step of initially creating this reflective tool, the investigators took time to answer each of the questions for their own methodology classes. After thoroughly reflecting on each of the classes and coming to know the students better, the investigators also experienced a newly discovered confidence in their teaching strategies just as each of the three groups had in their field and student teaching experiences. These new insights provided a framework for how to better design educational courses and exercises that would have meaning and purpose for all involved.

**Personal Reflection from the University Instructor**

Using the questions myself and participating in implementing this tool with three of my classes helped me as well to see what areas of improvement I had as an instructor. For example, I very quickly realized that I needed to focus on what language I used and/or how I articulated various concepts and instruments to my students so that the focus remained on utilizing and implementing the information into their field and student teaching contexts rather than creating an undue shift onto the course artifacts themselves. I am much more sensitive now to keeping my classroom focused on the learning process and creating high quality course materials.

And as I had suspected in the first place, when I took the time to know my students better, I saw relational improvements among and with my students as well. Responding to the pre-lesson questions encourages higher education students to know themselves, their teaching and their own students’ learning experience. Osterman (1990) believes reflective practice is critical in meaning making and understanding of the learning experience. For example, the students’ sensitivity to the importance of respecting each other and their field or student teaching contexts increased because once again everyone had much higher levels of familiarity and background knowledge about themselves, the classrooms, and the schools.

The communal dynamics increased both in and out of my classes. I observed that the undergraduate students’ sense of validation and affirmation increased since they became a stronger community of inquirers. I knew the distinctives of my students which empowered me to tap into their knowledge base, their learning styles and their developmental skills. Partnering with the students’ abilities created a collaborative learning environment for all the stakeholders in the classroom. This research allowed me to have an insider’s view of those in a classroom. Teachers who know their students well, make connections between academic content and student interests (Cushman, 2006). When a teacher truly knows his or her students, both the teacher and the students will feel more like partners creating meaningful knowledge that will impact their lives together.

I found this perspective on relational dynamics to be true for myself, my undergraduate students, and, hopefully, for my future education students as well when time was taken to know one another more deeply. The pre-lesson reflective questions gave all of us an avenue to be engaged in and to engage each other in the process of experiencing affirmative communal dynamics. Being an educational ethnographer confirmed my understanding of holistic learning that looks at programs, processes and persons for a complete understanding of how to interpret and create a community of learners through reflection.

By incorporating Tisdale’s (1997) principles of sermon preparation where a minister knows his or her congregational members and prepares for preaching based on reflection prior to sermon delivery, these pre-service educators were able to build a stronger community for learning and thereby able to design lessons to meet the unique needs of each group of learners. Tisdale (1997) advises pastors to consider the use of reflective questions as a means to better understand the beliefs, attitudes, and diversity of the congregation. Additionally, she encourages the pastors-in-training to become active participant-observers in their own congregation as a means to connect with and validate the “voice” of the members.

From the small group discussions between the investigators and the three student groups,
lesson planning thereby can be strengthened if teachers are able to connect with students at a level that enables them to build on prior knowledge and personal values. The use of pre-lesson reflection questions with education students shows that these students simply need university courses and instructors will to support their learning that strengthen what they know and build on what they value. In order to create a learning community in the classroom, these students were able to fuse the meanings found in textbooks and the curriculum with the meanings enveloped deep within the lives of the children in their field experiences.

These students discovered in their teaching experiences that connections between subjects, students and themselves were a powerful platform for learning. When an undergraduate student truly knows their classroom students, both the instructor and the students create a partnership of meaningful knowledge. The use of pre-reflective lesson questions creates contextual learning crafted for a particular set of learners in a particular time and place. Students of all ages yearn for those learning environments where they have a sense of belonging and connection.

Everyone desires to connect with others in some way so creating positive educational opportunities for pre-service students and their field experiences is critical in their learning experience. From this action-research study designed to measure the effectiveness of incorporating pre-lesson reflection questions as a strategy to consider student needs prior to the planning of the lesson, the investigators and the students found that reflection develops a paradigm for cycling through the experiences of the educator, the student and the learning process. Dewey (1933) first pointed out and promoted the use of reflection because he believed that educators who are speculative and contemplative will be more open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible toward all stakeholders in the learning process. The reflective praxis becomes the connective link for every educational experience which in turn creates multiple opportunities for professional growth. Lasley (1990) explains an effective knowledge base for educators as a model that includes reflection with a deep knowing of the learning community rather than repetitive focus on techniques alone. Effective teaching and best practices involve communal dynamics and communicative reflections.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the pre-lesson reflective question process may have been a success in implementation in part because the instructor utilized the questions in the best situation possible with students who were excelling in their education program and who had high familiarity with reflection. However, building on these strengths, both the instructor and the students realized reflection develops a paradigm for cycling through the experiences of the educator, the student and the learning process. Dewey (1933) first pointed out and promoted the use of reflection because he believed that educators who are speculative and contemplative will be more open-minded, wholehearted, and responsible toward all stakeholders in the learning process. The reflective praxis becomes the connective link for every educational experience which in turn creates multiple opportunities for professional growth. Lasley (1990) explains an effective knowledge base for educators as a model that includes reflection with a deep knowing of the learning community rather than repetitive focus on techniques alone. Effective teaching and best practices involve communal dynamics and communicative reflections.

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On-campus partnership between students and college employees proves to be a valuable educational experience with both groups undergoing change.

Teaching and Learning in Community: Staff-Student Learning Partnerships As Part of a College Education

Alice Lesnick

Abstract
This paper offers descriptive analyses of two staff-student educational partnership programs of the Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLI) at Bryn Mawr College. The focal programs partner college employees with undergraduate students in unique, reciprocal learning partnerships and student-mentored introductory staff computing courses. While community engagement traditionally focuses attention beyond the campus and identifies off-campus community members as beneficiaries of college students’ efforts, these programs focus on students’ relationships with people whose labor sustains the campus in egalitarian, collaborative, educational experiences. In focusing this argument on the educational benefits of such experiences to students, I explore the connections to liberal education. I also argue that intra-campus community engagement enhances students’ understandings and capacities to challenge limiting hierarchies and divisions. I further argue that this kind of engagement enables students to learn within and across diversity, while developing as people and leaders of campus-based civic initiatives.

“The conversations I have with Maria are often on quite scholarly subjects, which is interesting because these conversations are in direct opposition to a very unfortunate, but very common, stereotype about people who hold service jobs. College students—at every college I’ve ever visited—often hold very elitist opinions about workers in service positions and frequently use rather pejorative terms when talking about them…. The common idea that the job you hold is directly related to your level of intelligence or your personal worth is ludicrous. I wonder, however, how many people even at Bryn Mawr College believe this ridiculous stereotype, and how staff-student learning partnerships would be able to break that idea down. While elitism isn’t confined to college campuses, they are prime places to test out ways to eliminate it and to produce people who will fight it. While this might be a little much to ask of a simple staff-student learning partnership, I don’t think I’m exaggerating the impact of these partnerships by suggesting that they might have that effect.”

—Student, spring 2006, writing about her educational partnership with a member of the housekeeping staff at Bryn Mawr College

Introduction: Staff and Students as Teachers and Learners
Studying at college without engaging beyond functional roles with the people who work there distorts students’ understandings of where they are, what they are doing, and the social and political relationships that underlie their activities. It also obscures what they can achieve in relation to, rather than in ignorance of, the people whose work literally makes their studies
possible. As a response to this common problem, campus-based civic engagement is an important part of liberal studies.

At Bryn Mawr College, a small liberal arts college in the northeastern United States, undergraduate students and college staff members collaborate as teachers and learners through their participation in the Teaching and Learning Initiative (TLI). The students claim a variety of majors, backgrounds, and ages (though most are of traditional college age). The staff comes from a variety of departments including Housekeeping, Dining Services, Public Safety and Transportation, and Facilities. The two faculty coordinators (including the author) are professors of education who believe that teaching and learning occur in most human interactions and occupations (Lesnick, Cohen, & Cook-Sather 2007). Collaborating with these faculty and staff are many campus colleagues, including administrative leaders, variously positioned staff, and students who participate in and help lead the project.

This paper explores how two of TLI’s staff-student educational programs support students’ engagement with what Schneider (2004) calls the “liberal arts of practice”: (p. 4) inquiry and intellectual judgment, social responsibility and civic engagement, and integrative and culminating learning. The goal of this paper is to contribute to the conversation about how a college may, and why it should, model educational structures and practices that connect all campus community members to the college’s educational mission and enable diverse people to participate and reflect as subjects in the educational process. I will argue that such modeling is best understood as part of undergraduate education, rather than as a complement to or extension of it.

Student participants in the ELP and computing programs report significant benefits of their participation to their education. For the purposes of this discussion, I highlight several overlapping areas of student development, each of which shares in the liberal arts of practice:

- New Understandings and Experiences of Learning
- Social and Emotional Growth
- Increased Awareness of Social Positioning

In the discussion that follows, each area is discussed, together with a synthesis of their significance to the liberal arts of practice.

While a focus on staff members’ experiences is beyond the scope of this paper, I do not mean to suggest that students are dominant in the exchange of teaching and learning. From the outset of the staff-student branch of the TLI (discussed in Cohen, Lesnick, & Himeles, 2007), stakeholders have rejected the frame of “community service” or “service-learning” that would position the staff as beneficiaries of service on the part of students and the college. Instead, we have chosen to describe our efforts as “community building.” The mutual respect of a learning partnership, as well as the support afforded staff (through two hours paid release time per week for the semester) and students (through an hourly wage or field work credit), expresses the founding principle that each partner’s contribution is equal and worthy of recognition, and that no matter how they are positioned by the institutional division of labor, each is both a giver and a receiver.

While staff members at all institutional levels, service/craft, clerical/technical, and administrative/professional, are active in the TLI, this paper focuses on educational partnerships and mentoring relationships between students and service/craft staff. Given the position of service/craft employment within campus hierarchies, staff in these occupations are especially subject to the elitist attitudes like those discussed by a student in the opening of this article. Further, the positions of the staff render it more likely for the knowledge and skills that enable their work, and that go beyond it, to remain invisible.

**Theoretical Context**

Until recently, colleges and universities themselves have not been considered sites of civic engagement (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2003), as service-learning and community-based research have been understood mainly to apply to communities beyond the campus. This is changing. In the words of Anderson (2003), co-founder of Learning for Life (L4L), a student-staff educational partnership program at Swarthmore College that pioneered this approach, “By conceiving of service as that which only serves those outside the immediate college community, we risk failing to recognize the needs of those who work among us” (p. 47). Importantly, we also risk failing to recognize the strengths and contributions—within and beyond institutional role and paid job function—of college employees and the needs and desires of staff, students, and faculty to relate to one another in...
ways that affirm our shared humanity and engage productively with the hierarchies and divisions around race, class, age, and formal education on and off campus.

Anderson (2003) speaks to this broader set of needs and desires in concluding that, through educational partnerships, “A mutuality of learning and teaching has brought students and staff close to what it means to be ‘liberally’ educated and educating…. This is perhaps the noblest and most lofty of liberal arts college goals” (p. 53). At the time of its enactment, Anderson’s and her colleagues’ participatory assessment of L4L focused on the experiences of staff members [“At this time we are less interested in research findings about students than about staff (p. 53)"], because they saw students as already beneficiaries of privilege and oriented toward progressive change and service-learning. In the context of this prior work, this paper focuses on the educational impact on students, as reported by students, of teaching and learning with staff.

While colleges often speak of being sources of new knowledge and thinking, education at all levels too often amounts to teaching students to divide the world (Willinsky, 1998) by ranking different traditions, forms of work, and people. These lessons are not always the product of instruction; they result from the social organization of work. They undermine the “sensitivity and alertness” (Nussbaum 2003, p. 8) to the experience of others, without which people cannot be well educated as global citizens.

In response to this challenge, educators are rethinking the unproductive opposition of scholarship and practice. Schneider, president of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, identifies three formative themes that integrate study and action through the “liberal arts of practice” (p. 3): inquiry and intellectual judgment; social responsibility and civic engagement; and integrative learning. While these pursuits in various guises are not new to liberal education, in today’s educational climate they are newly visible, and valuable, as evidenced by growing media attention such as the “College Guide” published by Washington Monthly (2006), which ranks institutions by “how much a school is benefiting the country” (p. 1). The editors define such benefit in terms of three indicators:

- How well it performs as an engine of social mobility
- How well it does in fostering scientific and humanistic research
- How well it promotes an ethic of service to country.

Notably, Bryn Mawr College was ranked first in this list of liberal arts college when TLI was launched in 2006. Schneider’s first theme, “inquiry and intellectual judgment,” focuses on “the thoughtful and creative use of human reason; …From intensive first-year seminars on liberal arts topics to writing in the disciplines programs to undergraduate research to senior capstone projects and courses, colleges and universities are pioneering new educational practices clearly intended to teach all students how to make sense of complexity, how to find and use evidence, and how to apply their knowledge to new and unscripted questions” (p. 3).

The staff/student partnerships of the TLI carry the educational goals of the liberal arts of practice beyond the traditionally conceived classroom to include new structures and people previously excluded and invisible. Critical thinking, imagination, and judgment are engaged as students collaborate with staff to create respectful, reciprocal relationships and re-envision the college in organizational terms.

Schneider’s second theme, “social responsibility and civic engagement,” focuses on collaborative problem-solving and problem-finding. “Faculty at every kind of college and university are providing students with real-world experience and rich opportunities to address social problems in cooperation with others. Collaborative, intercultural, and community-based learning are the new civic frontiers for our twenty-first century world of diversity, contestation, and inescapable interdependence” (p. 4).

The TLI gives staff and student participants new access to one another’s experiences and perspectives. In Anderson’s terms, it seeks to be both “learner centered” and “community centered” (2003, p. 57). By fostering one-to-one relationships and a range of collaborative forums for planning, consultation, decision-making, and assessment, the TLI provides a framework for community building in which people’s social positionings may be better understood and become less narrow and isolating.

Schneider’s third formative theme is “integrative and culminating learning,” the
deliberate fostering of connection rather than
dichotomization between disciplines, theories,
and practices and personal, scholarly, and
professional pursuits. The TLI attempts to make
integrative learning a resource for all campus
community members by lowering traditional
disciplinary and status barriers to owning,
seeking, and sharing knowledge, thus forging new
connections and ideas.

Context of the Study: Introducing the Teaching
and Learning Initiative

The TLI was designed by a diverse, voluntary
campus team to create new structures and
spaces within which all members of the campus
community collaborate as teachers and learners
(Cohen, Lesnick, & Himeles, 2007). Financial
support for the initiative reflects its boundary-
crossing and collaborative commitments.
Different parts of it are supported variously by
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Bryn
Mawr College’s chief administrative officer,
provost, chief information officer and Office
of Intercultural Affairs. The TLI has three main
branches: student-faculty work, staff-staff work,
and staff-student work. Each branch has several
distinctive projects stemming from it. Through
the TLI, students serve as consultants to faculty
on matters of pedagogy in which students, by
virtue of their position, have deep experience
and important insight (Cook-Sather, 2008; 2009).
Particular programs within the faculty-student
branch of the TLI address new faculty, experienced
faculty working to meet the ongoing challenge of
gathering student feedback on courses, and faculty
concerned particularly with culturally relevant
pedagogy. The TLI also fosters opportunities
for staff members to teach and learn from one
another by creating communities of learning in
various offices and departments. Finally, the TLI
connects students with staff members in teaching
and learning partnerships, called Empowering
Learners Partnerships, in student-mentored
introductory computing courses for staff, and
in adult literacy and continuing education
programs. During the period reported on here, I
served as Faculty Coordinator of these programs,
together with two student co-coordinators/research assistants.

A few snapshots of the Empowering Learners
Partnership (ELP):

In a campus dining hall after the Sunday lunch rush,
a student and a staff member in Dining Services
meet in the office adjacent to the kitchen to conduct
Web research about Islam. He is teaching her
about his beliefs and practice as a Sunni Muslim;
she is teaching him about computer security and
keyboarding. Next time they meet will be to attend a
campus lecture about Islam.

A housekeeper teaches a student a range of arts and
crafts techniques that she herself uses in a craft business
she maintains. The student teaches the housekeeper
how to download and email digital photos and
introduces her to the social networking site Facebook,
which she now uses to keep in touch with friends,
students, and alumni she knows through her work
in the dormitories.

A rowing coach teaches a student the basics of pottery,
which the coach has pursued as a hobby but never
taught. The student teaches the staff member how to
create a Web page using MySpace and together they
chronicle their learning partnership online.

As these examples illustrate, the ELP pairs
a student and a staff member as teaching and
learning partners to access one another’s particular
experiences and interests. The staff-student
pairs work in unique 10-14 week partnerships
with financial support from the College (staff
participants get two hours paid release time per
week; students are paid hourly, as well, or are
afforded field work credit for selected Education
courses) and program support from TLI leaders.
A faculty and a student co-coordinator help
partners identify a focal subject to teach and a
focal learning area that relate to their interests and
goals. The partners meet two hours weekly, one
hour for each subject, and track their activities
and questions through weekly reflection logs
as well as midcourse and final assessments with
Program staff. Student participants meet for an
additional hour of reflection each week; staff,
students, and faculty collaborate in the program
advisory committee. The 49 unique partnerships
that have taken place to date have focused on
such exchanges as: Greek cooking/research
skills; woodcarving/email literacy; fresh fish
preparation/Biblical diction and syntax; baking/
house painting; PowerPoint/Tae Kwon Do; and
Bulgarian language introduction/ESL.

Computing 1, 2, and 3 were designed to help
College staff gain access to computer basics and
the College’s electronic communication system
and to recognize their right to use the educational
and electronic resources of the campus. Again, a
In the library’s computer training room, three students are mentoring three staff members as they learn to use email and gain access to the College’s computer communications system. Two of the staff are public safety officers, each with over 20 years of service to the College. The third is a young man who works in Dining Services. For the past three years he has worked side by side with his student mentor, a student employee in Dining Services. He has joined the computer training class, having learned of it at a celebration for prior participants; he now plans to teach his son what he has learned and is beginning to use the Internet to pursue his interest in music.

In the college’s alumni house and restaurant, a student is helping the staff member who works as the hostess practice checking her email and sending messages. The student has stopped by at the end of the work day, at around 6 p.m., in response to the staff member’s phone call asking for assistance. Both the staff member and student rejoice in their new friendship and in the staff member’s status as an insider in the world of electronic communication.

At the celebration of this cohort’s completion of the program, one of the students and one of the public safety officers perform a song they have co-written and digitally recorded. Two housekeepers from the more advanced computer course give PowerPoint presentations of their learning in the second level computer course. One housekeeper shares her new blog.

Computing 1 is a course co-designed by administrators, faculty, staff, and students with the goal of ensuring that all members of the College community can develop essential digital literacy. Designed with institutional and personal needs and opportunities in mind, the course meets once per week during the academic year; students and staff meet for an additional hour per week for one-on-one mentoring in which the staff members practice and extend their skills.

Computing 2 was created in the spring semester of 2007 in response to requests from staff to continue their computer education. This class meets twice a week to teach the basics of Microsoft Word. Staff learn about software, word processing, how to write a letter, a memo and a brochure in Word, saving files, inserting pictures into text documents, how to change fonts, and other Microsoft Office skills. Computing 3 is an independent study program through which individuals or pairs of staff work with a mentor and a technology specialist on a specially designed project. To date, two members of the housekeeping department have studied Web design and Contribute in order to begin creating a housekeeping department Web page. A staff member in Dining Services has studied Web navigation in order to plan for a Web page for his woodworking business.

In addition to the ELP and computing courses, two further TLI programs bring students and staff together in educational partnerships. Each program has arisen through the collaboration of administrative and faculty leaders, staff participants, and students. The programs include:

- Reading, Writing, and Communication—a partnership program through which staff interested in developing literacy skills work with other staff, students, or faculty mentors using the twice-weekly model.
- Continuing Education—a partnership program designed to provide coaching and informational support to staff seeking to complete a first degree: GED, Associate’s, or B.A.

The computing and ELP programs began at the same time, and the planning team chose to adopt two different paradigms for staff education: one more traditional in its training process and one open-ended. We have hoped, and found, that the existence of both models proves generative.

Methods

This paper is a descriptive analysis of students’ reflections on the impact of the two original programs, the Empowering Learners Partnership and computing. Since their inception in January 2006, 91 staff members (out of a staff of 500) from dining services, public safety and transportation, housekeeping, athletics, facilities, and the president’s house, and 82 students have participated in a total of 99 partnerships through these two programs.

With IRB approval and in the role of faculty coordinator of staff-student partnerships, I began a program assessment in January 2006. The goal of this assessment, which I undertook as a form of action research, grew out of goals resonant with
Carr’s and Kemmis’s general definition:

“Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 162).

I sought to explore the significance of program participation to the students in it, and to contribute, via a descriptive analysis, language that might help others within the community and beyond it interpret and assess the import of the program in the context of a college education.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The data for this assessment came from reflective processes built into the program. These reflective processes included weekly reflective logs completed by student participants, required as part of program participation, and non-graded field notes students completed as part of field work when their program participation counted toward an Education course I teach. They also included notes I took while facilitating weekly, hour-long reflective discussions among student participants. These discussions, part of program participation for students, took place outside of any formal course structure. Additionally, the course itself included discussion of students’ experiences in the program and the preparation by students of more formal written analyses of their experiences in the program. These discussions and formal written analyses were part of the data set.

Most quoted material in this descriptive analysis comes from individual students’ reflective logs, though a small amount comes from in-class and reflective discussion and, in three cases, a formal course paper. Specifically, the data set for this study encompasses the following kinds of documentation: 47 participant reflective logs, written by 14 students who participated in ELP and computing partnerships in 2006 as a paid campus position. These logs consist of 1-2 paragraph, weekly reflections on students’ activities, successes, challenges, and questions through the partnership and transcribed audiotapes of fall 2006 class sessions of an undergraduate education course, Education 225: Empowering Learners: Theory and Practice of Extra-Classroom Teaching. The audiotaped class sessions represent sessions that took place after the IRB approved the study and that focused on students’ presentations and discussions of their work with the Empowering Learners program. In this course, five students, out of the 14 whose logs were included in the data set described above, were active in the program as a course field placement.

Also included were:

- 11 sets of field notes I took during fall, 2006 during weekly reflective meetings among student program participants (those doing the work as campus employment or as a course field placement).

- Seven course papers written by 5 students involved in partnerships as course field work during 2006. These papers were in fulfillment of assignments for which students were required or allowed to analyze field experiences. The 5 students whose work was included in the data set were those whose field work was the TLI.

In addition to the material above, I had access to the following supplementary data sources that I read and considered repeatedly, and discussed with student co-coordinators/research assistants, during the process of formulating the focal areas for this paper. I used them as reference points for triangulating my evolving interpretations during 2007, a year-long period of data analysis and writing, and during 2008 and 2009, through revising the arguments and accounts presented in this paper:

- Four sets of minutes and transcripts from once-per-semester meetings, two held in 2006 and two held in 2007, of the program’s advisory board (a cross-campus group of 16 stakeholders including representatives from staff, student, and faculty)

- 13 observations I conducted of individual partnership meetings, during which staff and students taught and learned their focal topics.

Data Analysis

The analyses reported here derive from constant comparison/grounded theory methods (Creswell, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987) and member checking in the form of
critical feedback on successive drafts from five student participants and three staff and faculty stakeholders to arrive at focal themes and framing literature. The process of data analysis occurred over the course of a year. The author and the two student program co-coordinators/research assistants met weekly that year to discuss and categorize the data listed above. The process of preparing interim program reports, and planning for and experiencing advisory board meetings and biannual program celebrations, also served as opportunities to name themes relevant to student learning. Such is the process of action research, which is undertaken in the context of ongoing participation in the study context. Ultimately, this process, a blend of analytic and experiential engagement not possible to replicate literally, led to the themes discussed here.

Some categories that the group generated, such as “risks and barriers to program participation,” “conceptions of space (public, private, open, hidden),” and “access to campus resources,” did not prove important to the focus on student learning, while others, such as “re-framing knowledge,” “new knowledge and skills,” “communication,” “humility,” “friendship,” “patience,” “giving/gifts,” “re-seeing self and others” were resonant with the evolving focus on student learning. Categories such as “learning about teaching” and “inquiring into adult learning,” while generative for a consideration framed by teacher preparation, did not ultimately connect with the framework of the “liberal arts of practice” which a later review of literature suggested would be a useful analytic frame for this paper. Schneider’s discussion of judgment, engagement, and integration as central to this frame suggested the value of analytic categories able to distinguish and clarify possible connections between cognitive, relational, and intra-personal arenas of learning. Given this frame, I settled on the three categories used here—one focused on “new understandings and experiences of learning” (extensions of and reflections on education), one focused on “social and emotional growth” (the affective dimension of learning), and one focused on “increased awareness of social positioning” (the political context of learning)—to maintain a focused yet inclusive examination of students’ perspectives on the impact of program participation on their learning.

RESULTS

Impact of TLI Participation on Students’ Learning

In this section I discuss three inter-connected forms of students’ learning through the programs: new understandings and experiences of learning; social and emotional growth; and increased awareness of social positioning. The discussion of these results is situated in terms of the goals of liberal education.

New Understandings and Experiences of Learning

Educational collaboration with staff brings students new experiences and understandings—and uses—of learning, the chief goal of undergraduate study. An illustrative case in point concerns the student who learned about Islam from a staff member who practiced it was also taking college courses in Religion. The student’s reflective logs during this partnership show how her academic study of Islam was informed by the perspective of practice and a practitioner. As she wrote, “I was able to grasp a better understanding of some of the daily things that must be taken in consideration if one is living his life as a Muslim.” She also gained familiarity with source material oriented to practitioners: “I learned the five pillars of Islam, the six articles of faith, and he also directed me to an amazing website (islamicfinder.com) that has a lot of information about Islam. It has prayer times, the direction you should be facing when you pray, books, etc.”

In another reflective log, the student commented on the intellectual fruitfulness of a dialogue with her partner about the challenge of following traditions in contemporary times:

“We discussed one of my major concerns about Islam and organized religion in general: Is it necessary to follow certain religious traditions especially when they seem so disconnected from this current time and this current place? Although I believe that there are many religious traditions that we cannot relate to because we are in a different society, my partner mentioned that he still believes these laws still should be followed.

In another log, the student discussed how by learning more about her partner’s life, she was able to understand better what it means to claim a Muslim identity:

This week I learned that as teacher, a lot of times your daily agenda may not go as exactly as planned. It is important to have the space for
there to be additions to your schedule, and today I learned that those additions can be great. I was able to speak with my partner with some issues that he is currently facing in his life.

This student’s discourse for her learning is rich and complex. As a teacher, she thinks through the need for flexibility and responsiveness in an education partnership, alert to the relevance of personal knowledge to the broader project of studying Islam. She integrates her roles as teacher and learner and demonstrates the value of communication and trust. Her inquiry into Islam is enriched by her partner’s experience and framing.

In addition to enriching their knowledge of areas already under study, TLI students working with staff develop skills in areas that they might not otherwise explore (such as cooking, woodcarving, crafts, ceramics, aspects of physical education). Pursuing inquiry in such unfamiliar domains allows students to better understand what is entailed in learning. As a student who participated in a group ELP between three students and three staff from the Facilities Department commented in her weekly log, “Really awesome. We learned to re-wire a lamp and talked about what we could teach them. Next week I’ll prepare to speak on China.” Another student, learning from a staff member how to prepare and cook fresh fish, wrote, “I had trouble filleting a whole fish—and my end products were not fit to eat!!” Claiming new realms and re-claiming knowledge of familiar ones generates engagement, excitement, and both new sense of expertise or something to share, in some cases, and humility in others.

Creating educative relationships with staff helps student experience disentangle learning from an exclusive, commonplace focus on achievement. One student explained, “I was more accepting of different appearances of traditional intelligence because I had a better sense of myself and didn’t feel as though I needed constant affirmation. I was calm and reflective, instead of anxious and high-strung” (course paper). As students support others’ learning and critically reflect on their own, they speak of becoming more patient, flexible, persistent, and confident. As a student reflected (in a weekly log), “This week I learned that it’s important to not let frustration get in the way of your teaching/ learning.” The pressured atmosphere of a competitive college can impede such expansive understanding. As the student wrote in the course paper cited earlier in the paragraph, “Perhaps more importantly, it offered me to courage and confidence to begin making these relationships with people I didn’t know…. We are concerned so much with what others will think of us that we fail to engage each other, and remain in our own judgment-free world…. People always have more, as opposed to less, in common.”

Students also gain an opportunity to reevaluate things they already know (e.g., how to use technology) in order to make that knowledge accessible to others. In the words of a student computing mentor:

It is so interesting to be able to teach someone about a part of our lives that is so integral to us, yet foreign to anyone who does not have experience with it. Computers are like a whole other language that we have grown up with, as they have developed we have grown with them, and yet those who don’t have access or grew up before computers were so essential have not acquired this language and therefore are missing out on many opportunities that we take for granted.

As with students learning about realms they do not generally explore, the re-learning of a skill or body of knowledge they take for granted deepens understanding. In the words of a student who was teaching her learning partner to access his College email account, “I learned about speaking slowly and not assuming that the terms I used are universally understandable. Being aware of the learner’s point of entry.” Perceiving and responding to the point of entry of another learner can raise students’ awareness of their own points of entry and how easy or difficult the access is.

At times this challenge is humbling. As one student commented in a section of the reflective log asking if further support is needed: “I am having a hard time thinking of different ways of explaining what a website URL is. I have tried approaching the concept in several different ways as well as just repeating the steps of using different types of websites (like a search engine vs. e-mail). I am in need of some new ideas to convey this concept.” Finding the words to communicate, particularly about a topic for which the student may not have ready discourse, is an intellectual as well as practical challenge. By gaining new experiences of learning, students become better able to own and share their knowledge.
Social and Emotional Growth

Early in the TLI, one of the first student participants said (during a class presentation), “When I was a baby, people took care of me and I didn’t realize it. Now I am no longer a baby. Sometimes people still take care of me—and now I need to think about that—and sometimes I need to take care of myself and others.” This language of development speaks to the social and emotional context of the TLI—the way it encourages students to mature beyond ignorance of the staff who literally take care of their physical needs (for food, hygiene, and physical safety, among other things) and of the social and political structuring of these relationships. Waking, or growing, up to these relationships, so often invisible and unvoiced on college campuses and elsewhere, is an important enactment of the social responsibility and civic engagement Schneider names as vital to the liberal arts of practice. How can students pursue deep civic participation or responsibility without engaging directly and productively with the problems of ordinary hierarchies where they live and study?

In another instance of developing social awareness, this same student, the speaker from this paper’s epigraph, came to question her prior assumptions about where staff members at the college make their homes:

The first thing I noticed—and I must admit this rather sheepishly—is how far away Maria lives from the college. For some reason, I had just assumed that our staff members all lived relatively close to the campus. Of course, upon reflection, I realized how incredibly stupid that assumption was, but it struck me as interesting that I would have thought something like that. Why would I have made such an obviously naive assumption about the staff members? Would I have made that assumption about other types of professions?

(course paper)

Questioning her assumptions, the student engaged in metacognition about the limitations of prior ideas.

Moving beyond naïve conceptions of dependence and independence, students in the TLI express maturing conceptions of interdependence and accompanying growth in their ability to foster the same. As they take unique responsibilities for others’ learning and critically reflecting on their own, they become stronger. In the words of a student mentor in the computing class: “After our one-on-one session [my partner] reported back to the class ‘[the instructor] is a great teacher—she shows me all sorts of different ways to do things—wow.’ And later [the partner] sent me an e-mail thanking me for my patience” (reflective log).

Students also gain experience grappling with the emotional and interpersonal challenges of relationships seldom made available for reflection. The following log entries bear this out:

- I learned that students can tell when you are worried about something or when you are not quite sure how to explain a word/concept. [My partner] asked me to explain a word to him, but I hesitated and started to think, but before I even spoke, he said, “Calm down, spokino” (that means slow down in Bulgarian). I was surprised that he could tell that I was worried about how I was going to approach this particular word explanation.

- Being in a comfortable place with your teaching and learning partner is such a wonderful thing. [My partner] and I can be laid back during our sessions while still learning a lot (I think). I think our friendship provides her with the confidence she needs to succeed.

Through their work with staff, students come to see other people as multifaceted. The pressured atmosphere of a competitive college can challenge such understanding. Partnerships foster more commonplace, human-to-human exchanges in which being together is as important as accomplishment. Students become less rigid about demanding immediate resolutions and more comfortable with complexity.

Increased Awareness of Social Positioning

Closely linked to these affective understandings is increased awareness of social positioning on the part of students. The ability to situate themselves is important to students’ capacity to assume social responsibility and civic engagement, particularly in terms of the meanings of formal educational attainment. Through participation in the staff-student programs, students gain perspective on their assumptions about themselves, staff members, and the College. In the process, some of them
defamiliarize their privileges. During a reflective meeting, one student, herself a first generation college student, pointed out this process as one of “unlearning the attitude of entitlement” that the college atmosphere fosters in students. When students stop taking for granted how College employees serve them, their stance changes from one of unconscious consumption to one of co-participation. With this shift they are positioned as civic participants in the campus community, gaining awareness of the organizational structure and its varying impacts on individuals. Diversity, intercultural communication, social responsibility, and collaboration take on specific, embodied meanings as students become conscious of the relationships in which they are necessarily a part. One example of this shift came about in discussion among students during a reflective meeting about why some staff express concern about occasional rude or dismissive conduct toward them by students. Another concerned students’ excitement about working with staff in public settings of the College in which staff-student collaboration is not commonplace, such as the library and the computing center. Thus, students re-see the culture of the College in ways both inward- and outward-looking.

The significance of choice came into view for another student as she reflected (in a course paper) on the contrast between her own sense of choice and opportunity on campus and that of staff:

As a Bryn Mawr student I am free to engage in the College community on my own terms. I am able to choose the courses I take, I am authorized to participate in clubs and seek out jobs, I am able to build my social network through various means which include all I have already mentioned as well as seek out any opportunity and use any available resource on campus, not to mention all of the opportunities available off campus that are brought here by both staff as well as outside entities.

Freedom of choice and physical freedom to move on campus are givens for students; not so for all staff. In surfacing how “endless possibility” is distributed on campus, this student helps us notice the limits of the College’s democratic philosophy. Recognizing these limits is an important part of thinking about changing them. The ability to think critically about social hierarchies is strengthened in students who participate in the staff-student programs. As one student explains, the meaning of superiority and inferiority is unsettled and made more complex through cross-class, intergenerational collaborations. A reflective log written by a student working as a mentor in Computing I synthesizes many of these gains:

This week I learned just how much we know about computers and basic usage than many people know. I learned how slow this process will be. I also learned in contrast to some of my previous mentoring experience that teaching an adult presents all sorts of new challenges. Whereas with a kid, you are older and more knowledgeable, this is not the case with the maintenance workers. It is difficult to strike a balance between being informative while not being condescending…. (H)e has much more life experience than me, but I am more knowledgeable about computers. I also realize just how fortunate I am to know computers and technology so well. It is a privilege that I have never had to even think about. Today he asked me how long it took me to learn computers and I realize that I have been lucky enough to work with computers since elementary school. I have slowly been able to learn about them all of my life.

Here, the student marks her generational privilege. She also surfaces a tension between her own “luck” in being able to learn computers slowly and her expectations about the speed with which her partner will learn. At the same time, she acknowledges that when she sees the Internet through her staff partner’s eyes, she is changed as “the awe comes back” to her.

Another element of awareness comes for students from the experience of working with people who, while different from them, are like them in ways they didn’t anticipate:

I learn best from repetition; I like to keep doing something or keep reading something until it sticks. I hadn’t ever thought about the different variety of learning methods, such as visual learning, writing things down, or logical learning (mathematical or scientific approach). I am lucky because [my partner] learns in a very similar way as me. (reflective log)

[My partner] also asks me some questions
about myself and while working in the campus center she asked me what I was doing when I started people watching. It was funny because she said that she also liked to do that, and I think that finding little common things that we both can talk about and enjoy allows us to open up more to each other. (reflective log)

Indeed, questions of similarity and difference shift as students engage together with staff in the common roles of teacher and learner, creating a “commons” in which prior differences between people become less significant. In one striking pair of reflections, written several weeks apart, a student shows what such a shift can sound like. In the earlier reflection, the student focuses on a sense of isolation and frustration in relation to her partner’s current struggles in life:

Today, Isaac shared with me pieces of his personal life—some stories about his children, his brother, about growing up—which was really fulfilling, but he also shared some less cheery elements. We discussed his recent divorce and the difficulties that stem from it. I’m always eager to engage in conversations like these…. But it is challenging to be presented with problems to which one does not know the answer. I don’t know how to help make his life better. I wish I could offer some token of insight or an uplifting story, but my register of experience only tangentially relates.

Four weeks later, in writing once again about learning from her partner about his life experience, she expressed a greater sense of openness and less of a sense of separation:

We had been playing a bit with Googlemaps during class, a program which allows you look at 3-D maps of neighborhoods. Isaac showed me where he had grown up, where his school was, his grandmother’s house, his childhood home, and we began to have a discussion about his experiences as a kid…all, again, outside the realm of my experience. It was an interesting conversation, however. I feel that the implications of the cultural gap between us have lessened, at least in the context of our relationship.

A growing relationship seems to be able to encompass differences that the student first saw as capable of undermining the entire framework of the computing program.

**Limitations of the Study**

A layered structure of reflection, combined with my involvement with the program, constitute both strengths and limitations of this study. They strengthen the study through the opportunity they have afforded for analysis of students’ reports of their experiences over time and in several contexts, attentive to recurrent themes and issues. At the same time, as an action researcher, I am part of what I am studying, and while my involvement with the program and participants affords me rare access, it also means that I am not an impartial observer. As a descriptive analysis, this report does not offer points of contrast with students not participating in the programs, and is not designed, or able, to speak to whether students in other contexts find other, equally or more impactful, ways to participate in the “liberal arts of practice.”

**Challenges for Further Research**

As learners, student TLI participants face the challenge of doubling their vision to focus both on individuals and on the organizational setting of their partnerships. Further research on the impact of staff/student partnerships needs to further explore this challenge.

An additional question for further research is how to gain access to the richness of students’ learning through TLI collaborations when their verbal and written expressions of it are limited, or when they are asked to comment on learning experiences about which they are less practiced at speaking. It may be difficult for some students to find language with which to talk about the significance of learning and becoming skilled in craft knowledge, perhaps owing to how relatively little their formal education prepares them for this. Perhaps going forward this may become an explicit goal of the TLI projects that focus on such knowledge.

While this paper marks a beginning, it needs to be extended by case-based and intersubjective studies of the experiences and perspectives of particular individuals with the programs and, through them, with one another over time. Support for collaboratively written research, always a goal of the project, needs to be more centrally pursued. The relationships among and across TLI programs, and the people who participate across them, also call for further attention and understanding.
Conclusion

In the context of teaching and learning with staff, students use inquiry and intellectual judgment. Teaching and learning with staff helps them learn to turn thoughtful, generative attention to another adult’s learning process. Gaining skill and understanding in these roles is not a matter solely of practice or intuition; critical reflection is crucial. Connecting inquiry to engagement with others’ learning is an important source of both integrative learning—the inter-meshing of lived, relational experience with the designs of theory—and of civic engagement and social responsibility, defined as participation in community-building activity. The development of teaching skills, on the part of those preparing for professional work as teachers and those not so oriented, connects inquiry and intellectual judgment to the theme of social responsibility as students learn how to contribute to others’ learning in a range of contexts. Social and emotional growth helps students gain capacity to take on the demands of the liberal arts of practice, helping them engage more patiently, humbly, and confidently with these demands. Finally, increased awareness of social positioning is both a result and a source of students’ inquiries into their own and others’ standpoints. Through the TLI, students consider what it means to be in a dynamic rather than reinforcing relation to the limitations of any single person’s standpoint, and of the need to respect and learn from all of them.

When the liberal arts are divided from practice, we run the risk of ascribing to scholarly knowledge more permanence and relevance than is warranted. When practice is divided from study, we run the risk of yielding to the instrumental ends of the moment without reference to a field broad or deep enough for imagination and growth. Study in the liberal arts of practice, then, must entail the ongoing revision of prior knowledge and its integration with new experience, ever outpacing earlier formulations and limitations.

References


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Study reveals primary dimensions of the relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners in service-learning.

Relational Dimensions of Service-Learning: Common Ground for Faculty, Students, and Community Partners

Richard L. Conville and Ann M. Kinnell

Abstract

Instructors, students, and community partners often live in separate “discourse communities.” The authors conducted a study to investigate the issues at stake in the relationships among those three primary players in service-learning. Analysis of interviews with student-participants in service-learning yielded four primary dimensions of those relationships: Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight. These were advanced as the beginning of a common language for bridging the disconnect among those separate discourse communities. Role theory was used as a context for the results and to frame remedies in terms of role boundary expansion. The authors offered practical suggestions to practitioners as well as directions for future research.

Practitioners and administrators of community service-learning often sense that the three essential participants—faculty, students, and community partners—are not on the same page. Faculty members and community partners may have different objectives in mind for the students. Students’ expectations of their service may differ from that of the personnel at the service site or their instructors. Ferrari and Worrall (2000, citing Noley, 1977) have voiced an oft-heard complaint, that community partners “feel that students come ill-prepared to perform service by not having appropriate skills or [having] unrealistic expectations about their duties” (p. 36). Ill-prepared students who bring unrealistic expectations of their service to the work site create an immediate problem for the community partner. Ill-prepared students cannot adequately serve the clients of the community based organization, and students may resist work assignments they did not expect. Such negative working relationships minimize the likelihood of creating the long-term partnerships necessary for substantive contributions to the community.

In an essay valuable for its historical significance as well as its prescience, Tice (1994) articulated the kinds of challenges encountered when the then-new National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 brought together in students, community service agencies, and all levels of educators in new working relationships. She said, “Integrating highly motivated but inexperienced community servers into existing programs will require an investment of time and energy, an openness to change, and a dedication to making it work. Realistically, there are few ‘magic mixes’ where people begin on the same wavelength and continue...
over time sharing the same expectations and working styles” (p. 106). Now 15 years later, the service-learning community still faces the challenge of getting those three main players on the “same wavelength.” The disconnect lingers. Tice even noted several perennial issues faced by practitioners, e.g.: How can already understaffed agencies provide adequate training and supervision of those community service students? How shall the community agency’s role in student learning be regarded and appreciated? Both of these challenges require the kind of close collaboration often missing from the faculty-students-community partners equation. In this study our objectives are to begin to develop (1) a language for talking about those key relationships; (2) an understanding of the disconnect from the student perspective; and (3) some practical suggestions for practitioners and researchers.

Rationale for the Study

One way to frame the oft-encountered disconnect between universities and community partners is to note the different views they bring to service-learning, their inherently different agendas and priorities. Bacon (2002) has characterized community partners and universities as two different “discourse communities,” each with its language for talking about knowing and learning. For example, faculty members in her focus groups tended to frame learning as expertise garnered from study, whereas community partners tended to frame learning as a continual activity acquired through experience. Faculty members sought evidence of successful learning in students’ ability to articulate that learning in words, and community partners sought evidence of successful learning in students’ ability to take effective action. Representatives of both groups spoke of learning as both individual and collaborative, but community partners gave priority to group collaborative learning, and faculty members gave priority to learning as a solitary activity.

A number of studies reporting program assessments have revealed the same kinds of perspectival differences. Gelmon et al. (1998) found that the students’, community partners’, and faculty members’ reflections all noted “the importance of student preparation and orientation to the social milieu of the partner organization prior to involvement in service-learning activities” (p. 102). Community partners in particular called for “better advance communication and orientation to service-learning between the university and the partner” (p. 103). The implication is that each of the three major players in service-learning brings a deficit of information (and perhaps appreciation) for the place, perspectives, and practices of the other.

Bushouse (2005) has reported on a graduate course in nonprofit management. One major finding from the course evaluations was the students’ appreciation of having a memorandum of understanding to guide their service-learning work. “This clarity in expectations prevented time-consuming negotiations between students and community nonprofit organizations to define projects and renegotiate projects throughout the semester, and decreased the potential for mismatched expectations when the project was finished” (p. 38). The memorandum clearly lessened the original disparity in information and expectations among the three players.

The perspective of the community partner was the specific focus of the study by Vernon and Ward (1999). The researchers cited several examples that readers may recognize. One agency director reported not knowing what her responsibilities were regarding the students who came to her adult learning program. Others reported not knowing which students (among all those doing community service at their sites) were doing a service-learning project as opposed to simply volunteering. One especially conscientious agency director indicated that knowing whether students were there as part of a class would make a difference in the kind of tasks assigned to them.

The service site is a nexus of relationships that must work together harmoniously if the community service-learning is to be successful. Like Bingle and Hatcher (2002), Cooks and Scharrer (2006) affirm the wisdom of investigating the interactive relationship among the essential players in the service-learning enterprise—faculty, students, and community partners. Such studies as that of Schaffer’s et al. (2003) that document perspectival differences among faculty members, students, and community partners on ethical problems encountered in
service-learning demonstrate the intertwined relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners and point up how essential it is for those relationships to run smoothly for the maximum quality of service-learning. Based on the above studies, as well as our experience as practitioners of service-learning, we noted the usefulness of developing a language for understanding these relationships on a conceptual level. Thus, we posed the single research question: What are the primary dimensions of the relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners in service-learning?

**Methods**

In order to answer this question, we conducted a qualitative case study of our institution's service-learning enterprise by interviewing 12 students, nine faculty members, and eight representatives of community partners, all of whom were involved in service-learning classes during calendar year 2004.

Of the 12 students in the study, 11 were Caucasian and one was African-American. Eleven were female and one was male. Ten were between 20 and 22 years of age, while one was 28 and another was 38. Their majors were social work, political science, speech pathology (2), nutrition, international studies, biology (2), ecology, elementary education, sociology, and recreation. The faculty members were those available and willing to participate, as were the community partners.

Students invited to participate were chosen randomly from all students participating in service-learning courses using a table of random numbers. Interviews of students were conducted during 2005-2006; interviews of faculty members were conducted during 2005-2007; and interviews of community partners were conducted 2006-2008. The student data are the focus of this study. Typically, students are the conduit for communication between instructors and community partners and are therefore in a unique and pivotal position to observe the roles of both instructors and community partners.

**Instrument Development**

Based on research in the service-learning community, of which the review above is indicative, we then constructed a questionnaire to address the research question: What are the primary dimensions of the relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners in service-learning? Questions focused on the three following areas:

1. Expectations of and for service-learning students, i.e. how do students, agencies, and instructors define the role of the student? Will students fit into a preexisting role within the agency, or will they establish their own role based on interests or course objectives?

2. Preparation of students for service-learning, i.e., what do agencies do to prepare students for service-learning? How effective is it? What do instructors do to prepare students for service-learning? How effective is it?

3. Management of students, i.e., will students be supervised and monitored by the community partner or is the instructor expected to provide oversight? How effective is the oversight that is rendered?

Separate versions of the questionnaire were created for the three service-learning constituencies interviewed (faculty members, students, and community partners). Versions differed only in language to make them appropriate to the particular group. Members of all three constituent groups were interviewed, each with the appropriate version of the questionnaire. The Appendix contains a copy of the interview schedule for student-participants.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

After receiving IRB approval for the research, tape recorded interviews were conducted by the authors and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Trained and monitored by the authors, our research assistant conducted a thematic analysis of the transcripts. Using the method of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; see also Owen, 1984, and Pitts et al., 2009), the research assistant read approximately one-third of the transcripts multiple times, noting recurring themes and revising them as
warranted by subsequent readings. The second stage of data reduction involved creating a brief summary of participants’ answers to each question. This step was useful in consolidating the choice of themes noted in the interviews. Thus, an initial array of themes was established. At this point, we conferred with our research assistant multiple times, discussed and reached consensus on anomalies and ambiguities, and jointly established a final framework of themes. He then employed these themes to code the remaining transcripts.

Results
The analysis described above was designed to address the research question: What are the primary dimensions of the relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners in service-learning? The analysis resulted in these four themes:

1. Control: degree to which the faculty, student or agency set the parameters for the service-learning project
2. Involvement: degree of participation in class-based or site-based activities
3. Preparation: degree of training provided to students to effectively carry out the project; degree of collaboration between faculty and agency prior to the course
4. Oversight: degree of guidance or monitoring provided to the student during the project

The results suggest that the student-participants saw the relationships among instructors, themselves, and community partners in terms of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight.

Discussion
Regarding the research question—what are the primary dimensions of the relationships among faculty members, students, and community partners in service-learning?—our student-participants suggested that their relationships with faculty members and community partners functioned in terms of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight. On this basis, we are suggesting that these results are not peculiar to this group of service-learning students and their instructors and community partners, “suggesting” in the sense that we are inviting others to explore these results and assess their usefulness. However, at this point, we believe that practitioners’ own experience of service-learning, as well as their reading of the literature, will confirm these findings and support the claim that, when the three major players in the service-learning enterprise talk about how they relate to each other, their concerns revolve around the four basic relational dimensions of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight.

In addition, a recent study by Stoecker and Tryon (2009) substantially supports these findings. The goal of their project was to “find out what community organizations really thought about service-learning” (p. 11). Their research team interviewed 67 staff members representing 64 organizations in the Madison, Wisconsin, area. Seven themes emerged from the interviews, and they comprised the concerns, the key issues, those community partners entertained about service-learning. The seven themes that emerged from Stoecker and Tryon’s (2009, p. 14) research were

1. Goals and motivations of community organizations for service-learning
2. Finding and selecting service learners
3. Structuring service-learning
4. Managing service learners and service-learning projects
5. Diversity and service-learning
6. Relationships and communication with the higher education institution
7. Indicators of success

Their study duplicated three of the four themes (or relational dimensions) that emerged in the present study: 2. Finding and selecting service learners—Preparation; 3. Structuring service-learning—Control; and 4. Managing service learners and service-learning projects—Oversight.

It is reasonable that Involvement was not included in their findings since that is a dimension more likely to be noticed by students in the service sites than by agency
representatives who are often in administrative positions or even off-site. Stoecker and Tryon’s (2009) project advanced the agency perspective, and it was shown to duplicate three of the four themes advancing the student perspective in the present study. We contend that such findings add credibility to the present findings and bolster the view that the discourse of service-learning, when it is about the relationships among the three primary actors, is shaped by issues of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight.

Moreover, a study by McLean and Behringer (2008) helps further contextualize the present study. Drawing on the work of King et al. (2004), the researchers enumerated nine best practices for managing K-12-university partnerships. Six of the best practices are explicitly about relationships, but the focus of the study is on institutional relationships (partnerships), instead of one-on-one relationships. Examples include “flow of information…needs to become bidirectional,” “full participation by both partners…is crucial,” and “the relationship must be strong to deal with…unintended consequences.” (p. 69). While these are certainly appropriate practices for successful partnerships at any level, McLean and Behringer (2008) focused on the institutional level, whereas the present study focused on the level of the individual instructor who is using a service-learning model in a course. Both studies affirm the centrality of nurturing good working relationships. They differ only in the level of their focus.

Three additional points of discussion seem to be in order. First, we will present a sample of student responses to demonstrate the usefulness of the language of the four relational dimensions. We are advancing this language as one means of bridging the gaps among the “discourse communities” (Bacon, 2002) of students, faculty, and community partners. Second, we will demonstrate the usefulness of one aspect of Turner’s (1990) role theory to better understand the roles of classroom instructors and community partners in preparing students for service-learning, specifically the concepts of role boundaries and role boundary expansion. Third, we will reflect on our findings by suggesting directions for future research and applications useful for instructional practice.

**Relational Dimensions in Practice**

In this section we demonstrate the discourse of service-learning that we are advancing. Note the ease with which our student-participants were able to use the relational dimensions to discuss their service-learning experience.

**Control.** Students reported a wide range of control they were given over their roles at their service sites. For example, Danielle worked as a hospice visitor but had the freedom to define what she did with the client. She noted that “[the agency] gave you pretty much open rein on when you can go visit, for how long you can visit, and, you know…what you were able to do for them.” Gena’s service-learning experience was with a Girl Scout event. In this case the faculty member laid out the parameters of the day-long event: “She told us what [our roles] would be,” but then, “we planned a whole day of activities…we decided what the event was going to be, and they told us how many people to plan for, but everything else we did on our own.”

**Involvement.** Student involvement in their work varied widely, too. Lucy, working at a school for language disorders, enjoyed heavy involvement in designing her service-learning experience. “The teacher saw that I could do more than others…that I could enjoy working with the kids…and so I kind of took a bigger role than [the others].” Quite the opposite occurred with Hillary, working at a Headstart Center. “All I really remember…was…sitting there and watching the kids…. I had to do reports on it that the teacher [assigned].”

**Preparation.** Preparation and Oversight belong mainly to community partners and faculty members. One of the students who stated that she enjoyed a high level of control over her service-learning role, Solitah, indicated that she appreciated that the agency let her “explore” and gave her the “freedom” to do what she wanted at the site, but at the same time she wished the agency had provided more structure or guidelines. The agency did not seem to have a good understanding of why she was there. She surmised that if her classroom instructor and the instructor at the site had had more contact, they would have “been able to discuss…what we were doing, and have some things set up for us in particular with the teachers.” By contrast Becky, working with disabled children, was very satisfied...
with the agency preparation she received: “[the site teacher] would tell us about...an activity that would be coming up that we would be able to participate in..... She would give us information on the activity.... And she’d [tell]...us a little bit about each child with each disorder that we were working with.”

**Oversight.** Most of the instructor oversight was through tracking hours and requiring written reports or papers. Isabel expressed disappointment that her instructor hardly ever visited the service site. “No one followed through...I wonder if they had written goals to accomplish..... It was like our instructors were scared to come see what was going on...we could’ve told them anything we wanted to tell them.” Leanne, however, was very satisfied with the oversight provided by the agency. Working in a pre-student teaching capacity in an elementary school, she reported, “I was able to see, you know, what areas I needed to improve..... [After] delivering a lesson, I realized that I needed some improvement...and...the teacher told me what I needed to do to improve.”

The ease with which the student-participants responded to the interview protocol and the richness of their observations suggest that those relational dimensions of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight were providing the beginnings of a language of service-learning.

**Student Views of Faculty and Community Partner Roles**

If we are anywhere near the mark that those four relational dimensions provide a language of service-learning, the next reasonable question to pursue would be: “How can that language help bridge the disconnect between those ‘discourse communities’ of students, instructors, and agencies?”

In order to explore that question we will focus on one of those relational dimensions, Preparation. It is an appropriate test case because Preparation involves all three of the principal actors in service-learning. Students are the ones prepared (or not), and both faculty and agencies may (and often do) prepare students for service-learning.

But first, we turn briefly to Turner’s (1990) role theory. In light of their segregation into different “discourse communities” (Bacon, 2002), we contend that effective service-learning requires that the participants experience both a quantitative and a qualitative change in their conventional roles as faculty members, students, and community partners. Drawing on Turner’s (1990) discussion of role change, we propose a framework for understanding the complex but critical relationships among students, faculty members, and community partners.

To collaborate in service-learning partnerships, the roles of the instructor, student, and community partner must change quantitatively. That is, the number of duties and rights associated with each role must increase. This increase results in the expansion of boundaries for each role. For example, under a service-learning regime, the faculty members and community partners are now responsible for working together to assure students’ experiences at the service sites complement the courses’ learning goals, and students are responsible for taking initiatives in both the classroom and at the service site as learners and as workers.

Thus, a unique aspect of service-learning is that boundary expansion for one role (e.g. faculty member) does not necessarily result in a boundary contraction for the alter roles (student and community partner).

Instead, the necessarily collaborative relationships among the three players in service-learning result in overlapping role boundaries where each role in the system at times takes on behaviors that might normally be reserved for other roles. Indeed, we posit that the more complete this overlap of roles, the more successful the service-learning partnership will be, and the more likely that each partner will benefit in reciprocal and equal ways (Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999). Expanding role boundaries is a way to bridge the disconnect among the separate discourse communities of student, faculty, and community partner. Facilitating that role boundary expansion is a common language of Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight.

The following representative sampling of student responses focuses on Preparation. Students describe and assess the preparation provided by both their classroom instructors and agency representatives. Preparation is a window into faculty and agency roles, a window through
which to observe role boundaries in various stages of expansion and contraction, as well as their effects on service-learning.

Lucy was dissatisfied with her instructor’s preparation for entering the service site, a language disorders school, “because I didn’t know exactly…what I would be doing [at the site] until I walked in.” Her instructor gave the requirements for the assignment and a list of service sites to choose from but no indication of what she would be doing at the various sites. “So I just picked the [Language] School because it was on campus.” The site teacher, however, filled that gap: “She pushed me and kind of showed me that I could really do what I had to do.” She took extra time with Lucy and told her what she was doing wrong and what would work better. Lucy was very satisfied with the preparation for service-learning she received at the service site. [instructor: expected; agency: expanded.]

In Danielle’s case, her instructor laid out the students’ roles for the day-long Girl Scout event. “She gave us the information we needed as far as how many people to prepare for…and any questions we had, [and] she was very available to help us do whatever we needed.” The agency was equally helpful. Their personnel told the students how many people to expect, what they needed to provide, the time frame, and the activities to plan. Consequently, Danielle was very satisfied with the preparation for service-learning she received at the service site. [instructor: expected; agency: expanded.]

Gena was very satisfied with both her instructor’s and the community partner’s preparation for work as a hospice visitor. The instructor had several hospice supervisors come to her class and give a “thorough explanation of pretty much exactly what you’re going to be going through, what to expect and how to get through it.” The orientation included a discussion of the kind of relationships the students would have with the clients, what they should do in case of an emergency, and how to access counseling services should they be needed. She added, regarding the community partner specifically, that they brought with them to the classroom orientation all the paperwork needed to begin work and informed them of the free TB tests required to work there. [instructor: expanded; agency: expanded]

For Hillary, at a Headstart Center, the instructor supplied students with “a huge packet that explained everything and that was basically it.” She was moderately satisfied with this kind of instructor preparation in part because, “it was easy to follow and understand.” However, she wished the time on site had been longer than the required three hours (the basis of a written report): “I think there should’ve been more time spent because three hours, I mean I don’t remember anything. I just went there and got nothing from it.” As for agency preparation, Hillary reported they did nothing. She explained: “the kids were, you know, less fortunate kids; [it] was a free place for them to go and eat, and … the teachers seemed not to care or that we were there.” She reflected, “I wish we would’ve gotten to do more with the kids.” [instructor: expected; agency: 0]

Isabell’s service-learning site was an after-school program run by a local Methodist church. She answered “indifferent” to the question about instructor preparation for the service-learning experience because, as she added, “There was nothing to be satisfied or dissatisfied with…. I mean there wasn’t really much of anything.” The agency preparation was quite different, however. It provided a civics program for the service-learning students to teach and gave an orientation to its content as well as a description of the physical arrangement of the site and the educational achievement of the students they would be working with. [instructor: 0; agency: expected]

Another student was also at a Headstart Center. Isabell was very satisfied with her instructor’s preparation for the service-learning experience. “She told us about the school, about the students, what she wanted us to have overall when we came out of…the project itself…she basically just set up the guidelines for it, what she wanted us to know, how we could go about it, and then after it was over what we…learned there.” However, the agency was another story. Isabell was indifferent toward her agency preparation, “because there wasn’t anything necessarily set up for us to do each day.” She wished for “a little

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1 The inserted descriptors indicate students’ perceptions of the role played by their instructor and the agency in preparing them for service-learning. 0 = no role reported; expected role = conventional role, within expected boundaries; expanded role = practices that go beyond conventional boundaries.
more structure as far as when we came in, maybe this is what we’re going to have y’all do today. And it wasn’t like that because of communication,” meaning, the classroom instructor needed to talk with the site instructors about plans for her students.

Latrice worked in a combination soup kitchen and thrift store, and she was moderately satisfied with her instructor’s preparation for the experience. “She provided us a list of places that we could choose and she explained what we would be doing…at each place, and so kind of getting an idea of the duties that I would be performing at [the agency] helped prepare me for what I was going to experience.” At the site, however, things did not go so well. She was moderately dissatisfied with the preparation there for lack of organization. Not knowing who is to do what, being told, along with 15 or 20 other volunteers, to help prepare meals can be frustrating, she reflected. “You don’t know who is in charge, so maybe having a little bit more order and breaking it down more like, you’re going to put the potatoes on the tray, you’re going to pour the drinks—breaking it down into smaller steps would’ve been easier.”

Becky was very satisfied with the preparation she received for working with autistic children. She said that in her class they had had lessons about, “interaction with the kids and [that she had] attend[ed] the support group [for parents of autistic children].” She added, “Once I was out and was getting to experience that, I felt like I was learning what had already been taught to me in class. I was getting hands-on experience.” The agency’s work was much more specific. Her site supervisor, she said, “was able to work with me in all my classes and she was able to set up a schedule for me that would be cooperative with my school schedule.” As indicated above, she also briefed Becky thoroughly on upcoming activities with the children and on the children she would be working with.

In Cheryl’s case, she was on her own regarding preparation for service-learning at a school for language disorders. As she put it, “she [the instructor] didn’t really prepare us much, she just told us…we had to do twenty hours…and just to come to her and get it approved.” Cheryl was moderately satisfied with her instructor preparation. “I guess…it kind of pushes you to go find your own brain, you know what I mean.” But she did wish for more information on each agency to help her make a good choice. The agency was no different. Regarding the on-site teacher, “she didn’t explain…why [the children] were there, so I didn’t understand…where their troubles lie…so I…didn’t know really how to help them or just to communicate with them.”

Emma’s experience at a counseling center was very different. Her preparation for service-learning was a part of her curriculum. In class, several panels of community partners discussed their agencies and the services they provided the community. She was very satisfied with her preparation by her classroom instructor. However, at the site, she was indifferent about the agency’s preparation for service-learning. Lack of time was the main problem. Emma wanted more time with the site supervisor to discuss her service. “What little time that we did have, she gave me a real thorough [briefing], I guess as thorough as she could in four to five minutes, about he kids.” In addition, there were counselors and teachers at the site…, and Emma would have liked to get their perspectives on the young clients also.

Rob chose to do his service-learning project at a Habitat for Humanity site. He was very satisfied with the way his instructor prepared him for the work. She invited a representative from the University’s service-learning office to the class, and he introduced them to several possible service sites to choose from. Regarding Habitat, Rob reported, “[my instructor] did a good job of telling us exactly what…to expect” and what to bring. (“Make sure you bring your own bottled water and just shorts and a T-shirt.”) At the site, there were several houses going up, so there were many jobs available to pick from. “It wasn’t forced, like you have to go and get on this roof…you had a little bit of an option of what you wanted to do.” Rob was moderately satisfied with the preparation at the site, wishing only for a list of jobs at the beginning of the day, so he didn’t have to wait around for the foreman to give the next assignment after he completed his first job.

Leanne had an indifferent assessment of her
preparation for pre-student teaching classroom observation. “[My instructor] told us what she expected of us, that she wanted us to observe the teacher and some of the methods of teaching math … that’s basically, I think, just about all she did.” On further reflection, she recalled her instructor providing “hands-on instruction to sort of get us ready to instruct students. We did a lot of hands-on activities.” Thus armed, she was on her own at the school service site, which accounted for her indifferent assessment of preparation there. When asked what the school did to prepare her for the service-learning experience, she replied, “Nothing.” Elaborating, she reported: “There was a lack of communication between me, as the student, and the [on-site] teacher … . I think there should be more communication between the student and the teacher before we go into the classroom, so we’re more like on …the same sheet of music.” [instructor: expected; agency: 0]

As the boundaries among instructor, student, and community partner expand and overlap, so do the meanings attached to each role. Given sufficient quantitative role change in the form of role boundary expansion and overlapping roles, quantitative change evolves into qualitative role change. The student experiences presented above provide a glimpse into various stages of instructor and agency role expansion and contraction. Ideally, over time faculty members and community partners collaborate to prepare students for a quality learning experience and provide substantive assistance to the community. Beyond preparation, over time the faculty member ideally is no longer the only educator in the service-learning process, and the student is no longer the only learner. Community partners become instructors when they prepare students for work at their site, and faculty members become learners as they become involved on the ground along with their students. The triad of roles expands and evolves into a system of reciprocal educators and learners collaborating on the common vision of the project.

Applications to Teaching and Research

The primary findings of our study are the four relational dimensions of service-learning: Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight. These four dimensions are the major themes we found in the student-participant responses.

On the basis of our findings, we offer these suggestions for practitioners:

Instructors. We have three recommendations for instructors. (1) Use the terms as you talk with community partners and students about your collaboration at a service-learning site. Make them a normal part of your vocabulary as you sort out relationships among yourselves, students, and community partners. Make them your home base when you address challenges at your service sites. Test them for their utility. (2) Use the four relational dimensions as a rubric when you develop a memorandum of understanding among yourself, your students, and your community partners. So in addition to talking about and with these key terms, institutionalize them in your documents. (3) Consider the four key terms to be a unit, omitting none of them in their use. Oversight is follow up to Preparation. One without the other is dysfunctional. Omitting Control only raises questions and causes frustration over who is in charge. Involvement is instructors’ opportunity to model the habits of service and learning we want our students to acquire. Treat the four relational dimensions of service-learning as a symbiotic whole.

Picking Each Other Up. This term is common in sports. If I fail, I ask my teammate to “pick me up.” Our study reminds us that lack of preparation on the part of either instructor or agency can be compensated for by the other, as in the cases of Emma and Lucy. An instructor alone can arm his or her students with enough information and guidelines that they can succeed. It’s always preferable that both partners do their job well, but an alert and caring agency representative can notice a student who seems lost and step in to provide much of the orienting information omitted by an instructor, and vice versa. When that occurs, it is often a case of expanding role boundaries. Rather than saying, “That’s not my job,” the alert instructor or community partner will step beyond his or her conventional role boundary to assure quality service-learning.

And we offer these suggestions for researchers:

Our study underscored the usefulness of Turner’s (1990) concepts of role boundaries.
and role boundary expansion. The roles of community partners and faculty members were clearly depicted in their reported preparation of students for service-learning. Several observations seem to follow from those findings. The case showed the range of possible roles community partners and faculty members may perform, from no role (Hillary, agency; Isabell, instructor) to the normally expected role within the parameters “instructor” and “agency” (Latrice, instructor; Becky, agency) to expanded roles on the part of both faculty members and community partners (Emma, instructor; Lucy, agency). Student reports were very clear that some instructors and agencies collaborated on preparation of students for service-learning; that some community partners simply stayed on-site and did the minimum to get the work out of the students and some faculty members stayed in the classroom and did the minimum required to get the assignment done; and that some did nothing toward preparing students for service-learning. Students faced with no preparation from either instructor or agency noticed and responded negatively, as you would expect. We can reasonably surmise that the quality of both learning and service was diminished as a result. Therefore, a direction for future research would be to raise the question: What needs to happen for a community partner to become a full partner in preparing students for service-learning? The same goes for instructors: What needs to happen for them to expand their role boundaries beyond their habitual ones?

**Future Research.** It is important that future research develop a role expansion metric. Such an instrument would be useful for assessing the effectiveness of training faculty members and community partners to development expanded service-learning roles.

But of course there are certain inherent limitations to these findings that would serve to moderate their whole-hearted adoption. First, only twelve students were interviewed. A different set of student-participants with different majors or with more diversity of age and ethnicity may have yielded different results. Second, student-participants were interviewed one to two years after they had taken the courses in question, so accuracy of recall may have been an issue. Third, the service-learning program in 2004 at our university had been underway in earnest only four years. A more mature program examined in this same manner may have yielded different results. In any case, each of these limitations is also a challenge to researchers to pursue the questions they raise.

There remain now some more general reflections on the students’ reports that are based on ancillary information gleaned from students’ elaborations of their initial answers. First, these service-learning students wanted structure in the form of guidance and advice about the service site and about the people they would be serving. Second, they wanted to know what to expect at the service site, what exactly they would be doing, and who they would be working with. Third, they wanted to engage with the site. They didn’t want just to go to a site and rack up hours. However, ancillary or not, all these concerns can be addressed with a robust collaboration among faculty, students, and community partners to prepare students for useful hands-on learning and community service.

In closing, here are some specific examples of course design and management that are consistent with the study’s results and easily implemented by instructors. First, instructors can invite agency personnel to class to explain what the agency provides the community and what students can do to help them provide that service. Second, instructors can provide students with detailed directions to the service site and safety tips if they are in order. Third, instructors can explain service-learning and how community service may be used by students to achieve the learning objectives of the class. Fourth, instructors can lead their students in role-playing situations they may encounter at the site, e.g., mediating between two fourth graders who want to use the same computer; or talking with a nursing home resident who seems uncommunicative. Finally, instructors can give specific instructions for writing a reflection paper along with examples and practice (e.g., have students do several days of journaling, then do a practice reflection paper following the instructions you provide).

Similarly, what can community partners do to prepare students for service-learning? First, the community partner can offer to attend the class to talk about their agency, what it does in the community and who it serves (bring a brochure
that includes directions to the site and contact information). Second, the community partner can provide an on-site orientation session for new service-learning students. Third, a part of that orientation can include the agency staff as well as representatives of the agency’s clients. Fourth, the agency can provide students with several options as to what they would be doing at the site. Fifth, the agency can create “slots,” preset jobs into which students can easily fit (e.g., at an after school program, working with outdoor activities, doing homework with the students or creating art projects). As shown by our results, students notice and respond to the quality of preparation they receive and express clearly their ideas about what that preparation should include.

All of these conclusions, suggestions and implications address, in various ways, the inherent disconnect that exists among instructors, students, and community partners, whose separate “discourse communities” Bacon (2002) often isolate them from each other. Stanton (2000) has recommended, in very general terms, a solution. Practitioners need to become more research-oriented, and researchers need to become more practice-oriented. In the case of the former, that would entail more informed self-awareness on the part of practitioners; and in the latter, that would entail researchers listening to and collaborating with those who are working “in the trenches.” We quite agree. Each seeing the world somewhat as the other sees it puts them more nearly on the same page and makes further collaboration possible. For each, practitioner and researcher, that amounts to an expansion of role boundaries.

We believe that the basic relational dimensions of service-learning, Control, Involvement, Preparation, and Oversight, that emerged from this study provide a robust vehicle for dialogue among faculty members, students, and community partners as they collaborate in service-learning. When their role boundaries expand to share in the enactment of those relational dimensions, true collaboration is in sight and service-learning quality increases.

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Appendix

Interview Schedule for Students
(questions varied slightly for instructors and community partners)

Think of a recent course you took that used service-learning. Use that experience to respond to these questions.

1. Prior to beginning your service, what did you expect your role(s) in the agency would be?
   1a. Was your role set for you by the agency, or did you create your own role?

2. During your service, what role(s) did you actually perform?
   2a. Were these role(s) set for you by the agency, or did they create their own role(s)?
   2b. How satisfied were you with these roles?
      Very Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Indifferent Moderately Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
   2c. What worked?
   2d. What didn’t work?
   2e. What more was needed for you to perform your role(s)?

3. What did your instructor do to prepare you for the role(s) you actually performed?
   3a. How satisfied were you with this preparation?
      Very Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Indifferent Moderately Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
   3b. What was good about this preparation?
   3c. What about this preparation didn’t work or was not useful?
   3d. What more was needed for the preparation to be useful?

4. What did the agency do to prepare you for the role(s) you actually performed?
   4a. How satisfied were you with this preparation?
      Very Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Indifferent Moderately Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
   4b. What was good about this preparation?
   4c. What about this preparation didn’t work or was not useful?
   4d. What more was needed for the preparation to be useful?

5. Who oversaw your work as you performed your roles?
   Agency Instructor Both
   5a. How satisfied were you with this oversight?
      Very Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Indifferent Moderately Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
   5b. What was good about this oversight?
   5c. What about this oversight didn’t work or was not useful?
   5d. What more was needed for this oversight to be useful?
Ingredients for an equitable partnership are examined, and while trust is key, building positive, long-term relationships is not a straightforward process.

The Crabby Creek Initiative: Building and Sustaining An Interdisciplinary Community Partnership

Melissa Terlecki and David Dunbar, Caroline Nielsen, Cynthia McGauley, Lisa Ratmansky, Nancy L. Watterson, Jon Hannum, Kallyn Seidler, Emily Bongiorno, Owen Owens, Pete Goodman, Chuck Marshall, Susan Gill, Kristen Travers, and John Jackson

Abstract
In this article, we identify the steps and strategies that emerged through an interdisciplinary, community-based participatory research (CBPR) project—the Crabby Creek Initiative. The Initiative was undertaken jointly by Cabrini College faculty in biology and psychology, the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership (VCRP), the Stroud Water Research Center, (SWRC) and local residents of this eastern Pennsylvania region. The paper examines the phases the partners have gone through and the strategies used as the building blocks of partnerships in the process of collaboration: trust, mutual design, shared implementation, joint ownership, and dissemination of knowledge, the building blocks of sustainable partnerships. Ultimately, the lessons learned have the potential to galvanize practitioners to engage not only in citizen science, but also more broadly in the practice of applied and engaged democracy.

Introduction
What do vanishing brook trout (Pennsylvania’s state fish) and the possible flooding of George Washington’s headquarters in Valley Forge National Park have to do with Cabrini College students learning about stream chemistry and macroinvertebrates, or with local Pennsylvania residents learning to conduct their own stream water monitoring? These experiences stand at the heart of the Crabby Creek Initiative, an interdisciplinary CBPR project. Undertaken jointly by Cabrini College faculty in biology and psychology, the Valley Creek Restoration Partnership (VCRP), the SWRC, and local residents of this small region of southeastern Pennsylvania—the Initiative serves as more than a template of an effective local watershed management program; it also demonstrates the creation and maintenance of mutual, sustainable partnerships—the very roots of applied and engaged democracy that inform citizen science.

In terms of cultivating the potential for applied democracy and, ideally, systemic social change—the underpinnings of social justice—the
Crabby Creek Initiative offers a compelling story. The steps involved in creating sustainable partnerships are still rarely studied or widely shared with nascent practitioners (Adams, Miller-Korth, & Brown, 2004). This gap remains despite that building strong partnerships depends on a mutual understanding of growth through a series of progressive stages that not only enhances the success of such undertakings, but also hones the skills needed to ensure collaborative, mutual democratic interactions—in short, to sustain such partnerships that strive to include multiple voices at every stage with the aim to move toward public education, behavioral change, advocacy, and, eventually, policy change. To address such a gap, this work uses case study to magnify the processes through which complex partnerships unfold and develop. In so doing, we illuminate several core principles that characterize interdisciplinary partnerships. The foundational steps we outline add to existing scholarship in CBPR in and across such disciplines as biology, psychology, and ecology (Amuwo & Jenkins, 2001). By reflecting on our processes of engagement, we strive to achieve our long-term goals: increasing community access to scientific knowledge while sharing technical expertise and empowering people to engage civically—thereby enhancing environmental stewardship, giving community members both the confidence to take charge of watershed studies themselves and to understand the relationship between people’s choices, the effects those choices have on our environment, and, more specifically, the ability to analyze their own scientific results critically. We underscore the importance of trust, mutual design and implementation, and creativity for effective, long-term community partnerships.

Other conceptual frameworks for creating and maintaining such productive relationships hail from a variety of fields. Health practitioners, for example, have amassed an impressive range of orienting documents through the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, on such topics including community-institutional partnerships and understanding trust among partners (see http://www.ccph.info/). Here, practitioners grounded both in community development and community organizing provide specific nuts-and-bolt worksheets titled “Developing and Sustaining Community-based Participatory Research” and “Partnerships: A Skill-building Curriculum,” as one comprehensive toolkit. These studies provide an experiential backdrop as well as theoretical framework that echoes and underscores the pragmatic emphases in our Crabby Creek Initiative.

Participants
The project involved the combined efforts of Cabrini College faculty and students, the SWRC, the VCRP, key local stakeholders from the community including the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Green Valleys Association, Open Lands Conservancy, West Chester Fish, Game and Wildlife Association, and the the League of Women Voters of Tredyfrrin Township in West Chester County.

Procedures
Building positive, long-term, mutually committed relationships is a hallmark for highly effective CBPR projects; moreover, collaborative, community-based research is a process: one best done in “baby steps”—while keeping an eye toward the full participation of community partners (Stoecker & Schmidt, 2008). Such insights held true for the Crabby Creek Initiative, as community members and academic partners proceeded in precisely this sort of iterative, adaptive process, a process best characterized by three steps or phases.

The initial phase of the collaboration began when Cabrini College received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This grant was for water-quality monitoring in Crabby Creek. To implement the project, Cabrini faculty identified the local watershed association, the VCRP to ask for guidance on what could be done.

The collaboration that resulted from this initial contact quickly evolved to include people who brought diverse expertise to the table. The middle phase established preliminary operating structures, thus connecting organizations with shared interests. Conversations among the partners—Cabrini College faculty, the VCRP, and the SWRC—began a longer-term relationship that would eventually tackle an array of inter-related environmental issues and methods for addressing them. The third—and currently emerging—phase demonstrates how the Crabby Creek Initiative is
moving toward greater sustainability among and across all partners. Initially, Cabrini faculty began collaborating with the VCRP. Later the SWRC joined the effort to assist with water quality monitoring efforts. Based on the results from our initial collaboration, we now have a firm base on which to build. We are now moving more toward citizen science by raising community awareness at the grassroots level through educational initiatives. Our goal is to bring about behavioral change in both students and community members that will result in better water quality in the Crabby Creek watershed.

To be more specific, the Crabby Creek Initiative began with one faculty member stumbling onto a local issue through the back door. In 2005, having inherited an EPA grant from a fellow Cabrini College faculty member, Dr. David Dunbar, an avid fisherman, was in search of a local environmental issue that would fit the grant’s parameters. Through his Trout Unlimited contacts, he was put in touch with Dr. Owen Owens, chair of VCRP, a local coalition bound together by its commitment to the restoration of Valley Creek, and the dialogue began.

The VCRP formed in 2001 to address industrial PCB contamination in the Valley Creek watershed. The Valley Creek watershed is a 23.4 square mile system of streams and tributaries within the Philadelphia Metropolitan area, including Cabrini College, located in Radnor Township. The stream flows through Valley Forge National Historic Park and provides an important habitat for many species of fish, birds, mammals, and amphibians. The watershed is also designated as a Class A wild trout stream by the Pennsylvania Boat and Fish Commission. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania awarded its highest protection level of Exceptional Value to the watershed. Nonetheless, it has undergone dramatic change from rapid suburban development. Specifically, the increase of impervious surface and inadequate stormwater management have resulted in bank erosion, flooding, and siltation, all of which have a negative impact on the physical habitat and biological community of the creek. In fact, as a direct result of stormwater runoff issues arising from Valley Creek tributaries, several historic buildings in Valley Forge National Historical Park, including Washington’s and Lafayette’s headquarters, are in danger of being flooded within a decade (National Park Service, 2005).

The VCRP has been working for a number of years to maintain, improve, and enhance the Valley Creek watershed. Furthermore, Crabby Creek, a smaller, yet critical tributary of Valley Creek, has sustained ongoing stormwater runoff problems because of poorly designed and implemented housing built over the last two decades. Additionally, erosion has exposed a wastewater sewer pipe that crosses Crabby Creek. It is now in danger of cracking and releasing raw sewage into the creek. To address the above issues, VCRP applied for and was awarded funding to restore Crabby Creek. The intent of restoration was twofold: to increase the creek’s capacity to deal with the added runoff and to rechannel the creek to bypass the sewer line. Ultimately, the VCRP hoped the restoration work would increase the health of the creek as well. Dunbar’s conversations with VCRP began at this point. After attending an academic conference on interdisciplinary, undergraduate, community based research, Dunbar was looking for a way to use the EPA grant to promote collaboration with community partners and enlisted the assistance of Terlecki.

Results

Crabby Creek Macroinvertebrate Studies
Once the VCRP had completed their restoration activities, they needed to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts. They approached Cabrini College for assistance in developing a five-year restoration monitoring plan. The restoration monitoring proved a catalyst to unite the partners while accomplishing different goals. For Cabrini, the monitoring provided the opportunity to engage biology students directly in environmental research. Dunbar and several undergraduate students arranged summer internships with SWRC whereby Cabrini students learned macroinvertebrate monitoring techniques. Cabrini students earned undergraduate research credit for their work. Macroinvertebrates are a proven indicator species in determining stream health and are an integral component to long-term stream monitoring (Cairns & Pratt, 1993; Hellawell, 1986; Jackson & Fureder, 2006; Rosenberg &
Resh, 1993). Equipped with new knowledge and skills, these student partners conducted two years of pre-restoration studies of the aquatic macroinvertebrate community (Figure 1). Community interest in the stream monitoring grew when Dunbar and his research students presented their macroinvertebrate monitoring results and analysis at the VCRP and Trout Unlimited meetings during the summers of 2008 and 2009. As a result of these presentations, the VCRP has become interested in expanding the study to target the sources of stream impairment through additional stream chemistry monitoring.

Ultimately, the process of active collaboration between SWRC and Cabrini College students allowed the monitoring work to be completed at lower cost, while providing a valuable learning opportunity for the Cabrini students. It also provided VCRP with the important baseline data necessary to assess the degree of stream impairment and the effectiveness of their planned restoration. One successful outcome of this first phase of interdisciplinary, collaborative research is that the students’ data, despite being preliminary, prompted the partnership members, especially the VCRP, to seek the sources of the degradation and the effectiveness of state and federal oversight. The results also served to clarify the partnership goals of educating the local community about how to monitor Crabby Creek.

Since the students’ presentations of their data to VCRP and the community, some dedicated citizens have taken it upon themselves to do stream chemistry monitoring themselves—a clear example of citizen scientists at work. These citizens are “adding their input,” creating “new knowledge,” and thus “taking an active role in environmental conservation or restoration” (Rosales, Montan, & Flavin, 2008). To capitalize on the community enthusiasm of the stream chemistry monitoring workshops conducted by Cabrini and SWRC, a volunteer water quality monitoring training was held following our second Earth Day event. One example of active citizen scientists thus revolves around residents like Sean Moir and Sarah Kligahm. Moir, Kligahm, and other residents created a Crabby Creek Measurement website (http://www.savevalleycreek.org/restorationplan.asp) that features blog postings of monitoring updates conducted by residents on pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and nitrates. From this website the public can track the group’s monthly monitoring results. Because of the activities described above, community members know that they can rely on both Cabrini College faculty and SWRC staff for guidance in their stream monitoring volunteerism.

Additionally, at the request of community members sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), Cabrini College faculty and SWRC staff are coordinating a bacteria monitoring program on Crabby Creek. Community residents often smell a strong sewer odor coming from the township sewer line that runs along the creek. This has led to community concern that sewer leaks or overflows could lead to E. coli contamination of the creek. Therefore, when PADEP announced a program during the summer of 2009 to help community volunteers assess bacterial contamination in a limited number of...
streams in Pennsylvania, SWRC, and Cabrini College immediately contacted community volunteers. Trout Unlimited members had long expressed concerns about potential bacterial contamination of the creek and volunteered at once to collect stream samples using PADEP protocols and transport them to a certified environmental laboratory that processed the samples over a 60-day period. The study did find elevated bacterial levels in the stream. Volunteers hope to repeat the study. Analysis for E. coli typically requires a laboratory with incubators to culture the samples—equipment not readily available to volunteers. To assist the community in continuing the study, Cabrini students and faculty are evaluating inexpensive, qualitative test kits, such as the ColiQuant MF method, that would enable community volunteers to repeat the study as well as to provide a way for Cabrini students who are not science majors to engage in bacterial stream monitoring.

Crabby Creek Community Environmental Attitude Survey

At the same time Dunbar and his students were working on the scientific research, the VCRP, in consultation with Terlecki, undertook research to explore the wider psychological dimensions that may be influencing the Crabby Creek environment and the actions of those who live in or around it. Terlecki’s approach was to design an environmental attitude survey exploring educational, attitudinal, and behavioral aspects of environmental conservation. The survey aimed to discover how much the local Crabby Creek community knows about the current degradation and planned restoration of Crabby Creek, as well as to gain insight into whether community members would like to volunteer their time in conducting studies on Crabby Creek and assisting VCRP in preventing problems related to stormwater runoff. Understanding where and how community members obtain information about their local and global environments, as well as what conservation behaviors they practice, was also of interest. These are elemental components for helping communities build sustainable initiatives and healthy ecologies (Bott, Cantrill, & Myers, 2003; Schultz & Zelezny, 2003). As advocated in CBPR principles and protocol for equitable partnerships, it was critical for both Cabrini College faculty and members of the VCRP to work collaboratively in preparing questions for the survey. VCRP members suggested that having students hand-deliver surveys would facilitate a greater connection among community members and students (Monroe, 2003). During the spring 2006 semester, and again in the fall 2009 semester, over 30 Cabrini College psychology and biology undergraduates, along with Terlecki and Dunbar, hand-delivered the community assessment surveys to over 400 homes (with another 200+ mailed, for a total of approximately 600 surveys distributed) (see Figure 1). Over 250 surveys were returned to Terlecki (approximately a 46% response rate).

Terlecki and undergraduate psychology majors analyzed survey results and made the following conclusions: They found that 25% of residents visit Crabby Creek seasonally and over half (55%) of residents were “somewhat” concerned about local environmental issues and “very” concerned about global environmental issues. It was also found that most residents engaged in some form of environmental conservation practice (94% recycle, 87% conserve electricity, 67% clean air filters, 65% reuse paper products, 55% use energy-efficient light bulbs, 47% reduce trash, 28% use public transportation). Interestingly, only 20% of residents had ever received information regarding local environmental issues from the Pennsylvania State Government or local businesses/industry. Unfortunately, 27% of respondents have had their property damaged by water/flooding, yet 61% of residents who returned surveys were unaware of current stormwater runoff problems in general, and an overwhelming 74% of residents were unaware that Crabby Creek has sustained environmental degradation. What was most promising, however, was that 41% of respondents stated they were interested in getting involved in the Crabby Creek Restoration Project. These individuals have been contacted post-survey to encourage their future involvement in volunteer projects sponsored by the VCRP in the Crabby Creek restoration project.

Environmental Psychology Course

The involvement of volunteer students in the project spurred the idea to create a course
that could address the Crabby Creek Initiative. An honors levels Environmental Psychology course was developed and co-taught by Terlecki and Dunbar. The course focused on watershed issues in Crabby Creek, but also more global environmental issues faced all over the world. Students were of varying levels (freshmen through seniors) and academic majors. The course involved community speakers and off-campus trips to the Crabby Creek site. Students, as part of their final project, created trifold brochures (covering a wide variety of water-related environmental topics) to be distributed and displayed around the Crabby Creek community. Also as part of the course, students helped organize an environmental celebration for community members to attend—the Crabby Creek Earth Day.

**Crabby Creek Earth Day**

As we developed the environmental psychology course, the VCRP expressed interest in organizing an inaugural Crabby Creek Earth Day built around our course, an event involving both community members and students in celebrating the local environment. This idea was a direct outcome of the Crabby Creek Environmental Attitude Survey, which had indicated that many Crabby Creek residents would be interested in participating in such activities. Through its integration with the course, the inaugural Earth Day also would represent a cumulative experience for students. Dunbar and Owens, the VCRP chair, agreed to co-chair the inaugural Crabby Creek Earth Day Committee—a prime example of how our initial forays into interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaboration had borne fruit. The committee itself embraced key personnel, including Terlecki, students from environmental psychology, the VCRP, SWRC, the Tredyfrrin League of Women Voters, and Trout Unlimited. Together, we convened several Crabby Creek Earth Day committee meetings at Cabrini to discuss and plan the events and activities that would be sponsored at this inaugural event. A recent addition to the Crabby Creek Initiative and the Earth Day committee is a new faculty member at Cabrini College, Dr. Caroline Nielsen, assistant professor of biology. Nielsen is engaging her students in research on Crabby Creek as well as other local watersheds.

The collaborating partners wanted environmental psychology students to work hand-in-hand with community members and learn about the local issues these residents face. Workshops at the Crabby Creek Earth Day included a station on water-quality monitoring using macroinvertebrates; a station on aquatic turtles geared toward children; a station on key stream chemistry parameters; a station on rain barrels and rain gardens (to give guidance to community members with interest in implementing any of these stormwater management practices); and several booths and tables providing informational handouts and displays. Interested groups also had the opportunity to participate in an in-stream bank stabilization project guided by the Trout Unlimited chapter. This community action offers a further example of the ripple-effect of strong partnerships. Such stream bank stabilization work was needed as part of an initiative by Trout Unlimited to bring back native brook trout to the upper section of Crabby Creek (Potential Restoration Site area 2, in Figure 1). Lastly, the day included a tour of the section of the creek scheduled to undergo restoration work, a step which showcased the VCRP’s next major initiative with Crabby Creek. Our first Crabby Creek Earth Day, held Saturday, April 19, 2008, was centered at Crabby Creek Park. Over 70 Crabby Creek community members, as well as a local Girl Scout troop, took part in this inaugural event (see Figure 2).

After the success of Earth Day, several questions arose; namely how can Cabrini College, the VCRP, SWRC, and the Crabby Creek residents sustain their important work around this watershed? The VCRP is enthusiastic in its desire to have Cabrini faculty and students continue working with this coalition of organizations alongside the Crabby Creek community: teaching and learning together about best practices for stormwater runoff management. A significant concern is that even if the restoration succeeds, if additional housing development occurs in the upper stretches of Crabby Creek, and/or people don’t practice sound backyard ecology, then the same stormwater issues the restoration fixes will return.

To sustain the impact of our Crabby Creek Earth Day, the committee decided to make
it an annual event. Dunbar and Nielsen agreed to co-chair the second Earth Day. As surfaced in the committee meetings, the VCRP thought it highly desirable not only to alert community members to ongoing efforts with the stream, but also to educate Crabby Creek community members in best stormwater management practices. During the 2009 Crabby Creek Earth Day, residents of the watershed thus had the opportunity to sign up to participate in a backyard ecology program to reduce stormwater flows into Crabby Creek. This program represents a partnership of VCRP, Cabrini College, and Tredyffrin Township. Throughout the program, homeowners were offered free, one-hour property consultations with an arborist and a landscaper. These professionals suggested how the homeowners could use plantings, rain barrels, rain gardens, grasses, and invasive plant removal to beautify their property while reducing stormwater discharges into the environment. Nine families signed up for the free consultations and agreed to implement at least some of the experts’ stormwater management suggestions. As this program grows, it should have a substantial impact on stormwater runoff from residential areas throughout the Crabby Creek watershed. Tours of the creek’s newly restored stretch, as well as water quality and stream life stations, were also popular activities at the event. As an added feature, a representative of Valley Forge National Historic Park provided information about the park and how the efforts of the VCRP, Cabrini College, and the SWRC on Crabby Creek can improve Valley Creek, which flows directly through Valley Forge Park.

The Crabby Creek Initiative’s goals in these Earth Day events could be viewed as promoting a more participatory, democratic kind of knowledge building, the kind of learning context in which “citizens and expert professionals treat each other as equals in initiating and generating knowledge,” as Rosales, Montan, and Flavinc (2008) explain, helping people understand that “scientific knowledge and training are a means to an end, not an end in itself” (p.4). Indeed, the entire Crabby Creek Initiative has grown noticeably through the collaborative relationships described above.

One recent student-driven action to emerge from our second Earth Day event is a YouTube video documentary created by Delta Benoit, a student of Dr. Janice Xu. (http://www.savevid.com/video/crabby-creek-earth-day.html) Xu, a communications professor at Cabrini College, joined the Crabby Creek Earth Day committee this year, and she recruited several of her students to participate in Crabby Creek Earth Day. The video documentary speaks to the potential for the Crabby Creek Initiative to develop even further across disciplines and fields.

**Backyard Ecology Program**

To sustain community interest in stormwater management, members of the Initiative have taken further steps. The backyard ecology workshops, for example, have evolved into plans for an entire Backyard Ecology Program, which will include developing and enhancing the collaboration among everyday citizens, scientists, and environmental professionals. Professionals work with interested homeowners, literally walking alongside them on their...
property to assess the environment and provide the homeowners with a list of suggested actions for improved stormwater management. The homeowner is asked to commit to implementing up to three of the action options recommended by the landscape designer or arborist over the next year. The owner also receives a free rain barrel for signing up for the program and lists of plants that are free through TreeVitalize, a partnership program to restore tree cover in Pennsylvania. Additional trees and shrubs can be purchased by the homeowner. For owners who choose to install a rain garden, there are funds available to support the design and installation of the rain garden. Lists of rain garden designers are similarly provided, or the owner can receive do-it-yourself rain garden design instructions. The VCRP has received funding for this program and trees and shrubs from the TreeVitalize organization (www.treevitalize.net). The goal in 2009 was to complete 30 homeowner consultations, with additional homeowner outreach conducted by the VCRP, the SWRC, Tredyffrin Township, and Cabrini College.

The VCRP members have now conducted 12 consultations for the backyard program and have given a list of recommended actions to each property owner. The VCRP have also prioritized five sites for further gratis work for the owner. In all five cases, one or more rain gardens will be designed. In two cases, swales and other stormwater control features will be designed. One property is being modeled in a very precise manner, including calculations of runoff from the roofs, driveweays, and sidewalks. The runoff entering the property from offsite will also be calculated. The rain gardens and driveway trough will be designed to control a rain of one inch. What is learned from this approach could be adapted by other watershed organizations. Data are not available yet on whether this goal has been met.

As we look to the future, Cabrini College, the SWRC, and the VCRP are planning to hold annual Crabby Creek Earth Day events. Doing so would help sustain several worthy initiatives already in place such as the Backyard Ecology program discussed above. We have also been successful in establishing a citizen’s stream monitoring program through our inaugural Crabby Creek Earth Day event. In order to sustain this endeavor, we are working to recruit a Crabby Creek community member to co-chair an upcoming Crabby Creek Earth Day event. The hope is that this co-chair will assume planning duties for next year’s Earth Day event, so that the event will become self-sustaining through community involvement in all phases and dimensions of the collaborative process. Although we expect that the event will be community-run in the future, we plan to continue to have Cabrini College involvement. Starting this year, we will be advertising Crabby Creek Earth Day as part of Cabrini’s Earth Week festivities, bringing it to the attention of the entire campus community. In addition, we hope to have students from our new EARTH Living and Learning Community, along with students from the Watershed Citizenship Learning Community, participate in the event.

Discussion

The importance of working together as equal partners in interdisciplinary research may seem patently obvious: Would not all parties involved wish to develop new knowledge, capabilities, and opportunities for ongoing, shared learning? However, implementing meaningful community-based collaboration is not as straightforward as it may seem, especially when those involved are cross-sector and interdisciplinary partners new to campus-community partnerships. Two recent studies further knowledge of the iterative, relational aspects of community partnerships essential to understand, particularly during the first year or developmental phase. Power, Cumbie, and Weinert (2006) offer an apt touchstone for our work, for the evolutionary process that their article describes closely parallels the gradually unfolding and recursive process that has characterized the Crabby Creek Initiative. As in their example, the Crabby Creek partners did not know at the outset the extent to which the Initiative would become an inter-organizational, collaborative arrangement. Articles such as “Staying at the Table: Building Sustainable Community-Research Partnerships” (Rappaport, Alegria, Mulvaney-Day, & Boyle, 2008), discuss symbiotic, interdependent roles, similar to those that evolved among the Crabby Creek partners. Central among the important ingredients for equitable partnerships, the
partners say, is practicing cultural humility: an attitude and approach they recommend professional researchers adopt when entering communities. This stance requires that we demonstrate openness to others’ worldviews and local wisdom; be willing to share mistakes and growth; maintain empathic interactions among collaborators; be honest about motives; and be willing to address conflict and potentially uncomfortable moments of disagreement—all with the eye toward developing trust and, ultimately, keeping people “at the table” (p. 694-695).

Other well-known challenges to building sustainable partnerships are keeping open lines of communication and maintaining coherence between members of a partnership. The Crabby Creek Initiative has worked diligently to create a strong relationship among Cabrini College, the VCRP, SWRC, and local Crabby Creek residents. As we enter our fourth year, we are continuing to build on the creative, productive structures we have put in place. These include collaboration, participatory action, and citizen science, all of which revolve around and are informed by interdisciplinary civic engagement and democratic, community-determined practices.

The ultimate objective is to restore the tributaries to Valley Creek by using Crabby Creek as a model stream, a very important target, for if the tributaries are not restored, the Valley Creek cannot improve. But to do so, it is important that post-restoration stream assessment be carried out. While there is considerable funding available for stream restoration work, there is much less money to do stream assessment studies to evaluate whether the restoration actually worked. Volunteer partnerships, such as the one described here, are clearly necessary for long-term assessment of water quality and the protection of watershed resources.

In their white paper on citizen science as an organizing principle, Rosales, Montan, & Flavinc (2008) explain that the significance of citizen science emerges in the very way it “taps into traditions and impulses related to working for the public good, to care for the commons, and building the commonwealth—governance for the common good” (p. 3). The authors’ explanations offer a clarion call, one that the Crabby Creek Initiative echoes wholeheartedly: “citizen science fuels intellectual public life, builds the public domain through useful work, and acknowledges that all people have the ability to generate knowledge. Citizen science is often framed as a form of environmental management, but it is also a political model of the role citizens can play in their society. Citizen science can determine the kind of democracy we have” (p.3). Saving a quality stream so close to a large, urban area is especially important, as Owens states, because doing so suggests that other waterways and watersheds can also be saved. From our experience, we believe that following the example of the Crabby Creek Initiative is one way to achieve this goal.

Democracy aims to include all in the participatory practices that improve the quality of life: social, political, economic, and environmental. Our Crabby Creek Initiative continues to develop and evolve at Cabrini College, but we continue to make space for more wide-ranging, collaborative endeavors that take us well beyond the confines of a small, Catholic (liberal arts) campus. The main lessons learned revolve around the importance of developing trust over time; this trust emerges from open and frequent conversations, shared implementation in all phases of a project, mutuality in design, joint ownership of knowledge, and an understanding of what it may take to remain flexible to the needs, views, and voices of multiple constituencies in order to build capacity collaboratively. Like other institutes of higher education we are striving to embed inclusive processes for problem-solving into our classrooms, into our conversations with community-partners, and into our concerted efforts to take our deliberations to the next level of democratic involvement: policy-making at local, regional, national, and, ideally, global levels.

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In this essay, a leading public scholar examines the current state of public and engaged scholarship and predicts a major role for new media.

The Engaged Humanities: Principles and Practices for Public Scholarship and Teaching

Gregory Jay

Abstract
Will public scholarship and community engagement become central to revitalizing the humanities in the 21st century? Efforts to connect humanities research and teaching with projects to advance democracy, social justice, and the public good might take advantage of the latest episode of crisis, and even argue that they represent a strong new direction for revival. After a brief review of how definitions of the humanities have changed since the 1960s, the essay contends that the future of the humanities depends upon two interrelated innovations: the organized implementation of project-based engaged learning and scholarship, on the one hand, and the continued advancement of digital and new media learning and scholarship, on the other hand. A number of examples of engaged humanities practice are examined, their institutional obstacles analyzed, and the principles common to them enumerated. The conclusion focuses on how new media are changing the nature of “the public” once more, offering opportunities for different kinds of scholarship, teaching, and engagement.

Introduction: A Short History of Change
Will public scholarship and community engagement become central to revitalizing the humanities in the 21st century? Since the early 1990s, an increasing number of courses, projects, centers, and institutes have arisen around this notion, and there is now even an entire national organization (Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life [http://www.imaginingamerica.org/]) dedicated to advancing the cause. Its Curriculum Project Report provides an in-depth study of arts-based projects that link campuses and communities in common efforts to advance social justice (Goldbard, 2008). In the academic humanities, developments carrying such monikers as the “scholarship of engagement” or “public scholarship” have begun to share aims and methods with such arts-oriented initiatives. George Sanchez, for example, has documented powerful models for combining humanities scholarship and community engagement (2002; 2004). But it may be difficult to see how humanities scholarship can advance community cultural development in quite the concrete ways demonstrated by projects in art, theater, and music. Moreover, the term “humanities” is itself a disputed one, ranging from the classical liberal arts to today’s interdisciplinary scholarship in cultural studies, which often critiques traditional humanities work for its ivory-tower separation from real life and its various exclusionary biases of race, nation, class, and gender. Within
higher education, debates over critical methods (deconstruction, feminism, postmodernism, et al.) have coincided with a steady decline in institutional support and prestige for the liberal arts, as curricula find themselves marginalized by the burgeoning of the professional schools and patent-producing sciences (see Cohen, 2009). One index is indicative: the Modern Language Association’s job list, whose declines over the last two years are the steepest on record (June, 2009). Yet as Gale and Carton (2005) note, “the contemporary crisis of the humanities in America is … centuries old” (p. 38), and reports of its death greatly exaggerated. Efforts to connect humanities research and teaching with projects to advance democracy, social justice, and the public good might take advantage of the latest episode of crisis, and even argue that they represent a strong new direction for revival. Given the drastic budget cutbacks, grim hiring forecasts, mounting student debt, and challenges presented by the digital revolution, such arguments face a stiff wind. This essay will contend that the future of the humanities depends upon two interrelated innovations: the organized implementation of project-based engaged learning and scholarship, on the one hand, and the continued advancement of digital and new media learning and scholarship, on the other hand.

One thing these two innovations have in common is their attention to, and redefinition of, the “public,” especially in relation to the purpose and practice of higher education. In the wake of the critique of traditional humanities work for its racial, gender, class, and nationalist or imperialist biases, we must take seriously the continued importance of expanding who we mean when we say “the public,” and to whom our work is accountable. The issue of accountability in turn intersects with the need to assess the outcomes of our practices, both in terms of student learning and public good (which is traditionally a mission mandate for publicly-funded institutions). Humanities faculty have found the institutional pressure to increase assessment difficult to manage, beyond pointing toward such artifacts as the quiz, test, or student paper. Assessments of public good or community benefit may be just as perfunctory, as in post-event surveys and reports of attendance. The kinds of projects made possible by community engagement, service learning, participatory action research, and multimedia production can enhance the possibilities for demonstrating achievements in learning and community development, bringing along other skills such as collaboration, intercultural communication, and digital literacy.

To understand the current debates over public scholarship and evaluate its new practices, however, we need to look back (in admittedly reductive fashion) at the last few decades of controversy in the humanities. Such a backwards look is necessary because it would be misleading to think that simply undertaking structural innovations on campus to connect “the humanities” to the community or to public scholarship would suffice to make our future clear. We do not have a consensus about what “the humanities” include or stand for; thus just as we need “critical reflection” on how we engage the community, we need to join with the community in critical reflection on what we mean by “the humanities” and what we want from them. Edward Ayers (2009) reminds us that the phrase “the humanities” is only about a hundred years old, and was invented as an academic bureaucratic device or “secular glue” to “hold together the disparate components of a higher education system assembled from elements of German research universities, Oxbridge tutelage, and French training for civil service” (p. 25). The phrase took root when adopted in the 1930s “in the curricula of elite institutions from the Ivy League to Chicago to Berkeley” and was adopted as the anchor for most “general education” programs (Ayers, 2009, p. 25).

Since the 1960s, a critique of the humanities has grown along two fronts. First, the socio-political movements on behalf of oppressed or exploited identity groups challenged the presumptive universalism of the academic humanities curricula, exposing the degree to which previous dominant views of what it meant to be human restricted that image to whites and males and the rich and powerful. As classically defined, the “liberal arts” had been so-called because of its intended effect of liberating the mind from superstition and bias (and, in class terms, as appropriate to free men but not slaves); in practice the institutionalization of the
humanities in American colleges and universities too often became a matter of credentializing the ruling class or assimilating new members to the ideological club of the elite. Beginning in the 1960s, expansion of what and whom we studied in the humanities coincided with an expansion of who was allowed to study the humanities, as college education was opened more broadly to women and people of color (though for the latter, this opening remains narrow and perhaps once more is closing). In terms of scholarly interest, curriculum development, and student enrollment, this opening of the canon and the classroom shifted the future of the humanities decisively, though the preponderance of humanities enrollments remains tilted toward women and whites, while students of color, often being first generation college students, look to majors with more sure vocational and financial benefits.

Second, the importation and elaboration of Continental critical theory from the 1960s through the 1990s brought paradoxical changes in the relation of humanities work to the public. On the one hand, structuralist and post-structuralist analysis injected socio-political concerns into humanities scholarship and challenged the dominant models of aesthetic formalism and historical objectivity. Though often accused of creating a brand of abstruse philosophizing that alienated the intellectual reading public, the European-influenced academics were actually trying to offer a rejuvenated and reengineered school of ideological critique grounded in the traditions of Marxism and existentialism. This theory revolution was concentrated in departments of English and comparative literature, but also had an impact among historians, religious studies scholars, students of art and music, and even some philosophers. Although branded as a kind of “theoretical antihumanism,” with its antipathy to “bourgeois individualism” and its focus on “the subject” rather than “the person,” postmodern theory continued the tradition of critical thinking, interdisciplinarity, debate over values, and the posing of profound philosophical questions typical of humanities scholarship (Jeyifo, 2006). When post-structuralism in turn gave way to the rise of what called itself “cultural studies,” the turn both underscored critical theory’s inherent socio-political concerns and revamped the movement in ways that spoke more clearly to public issues.

But the publics spoken to by poststructuralists such as Paul de Man or Michel Foucault or Helene Cixous differed radically from those at the base of the cultural studies paradigm advocated by Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton (and in the educational field by Paolo Freire, in theatre by Augusto Boal, and in feminism by Adrienne Rich). For cultural studies people, scholarship should not only address the concerns of the public, the marginalized and the working class, it should also emerge in some way out of collaboration with them (hence the resonance with “critical pedagogy”). Though often in contentious debate with other wings of the theory movement, cultural studies scholars joined them in advocating approaches that departed radically from the aesthetic formalism of previous modernist critics, and they extended these approaches across a broad spectrum of mass and popular culture. But neither the post-structuralists nor the cultural studies scholars wrote in ways accessible to a large common reading public, nor did they spend much time in active collaboration with schools, museums, social agencies, or community organizations, despite the claim of their scholarship to be working on behalf of a liberatory politics. In retrospect it appears that the scholarship of theory and cultural studies was easily accommodated by the institutional regimes of publication, tenure, and a new “star system” of celebrity thinkers who appealed to an exclusively academic audience in contrast to an earlier generation of “public intellectuals.” The public for the humanities may actually have shrunk in part because of this esotericism, which also did not succeed in building any kind of funding base in the form of government grants or foundation dollars, leaving it vulnerable when the downturn came. An exceptional bright spot is the current wave of interest in, and funding for, the “digital humanities,” which is partly owing to its power to connect humanities work to a larger public.

**Academics Going Public**

These major trends in the humanities since the 1960s have dwarfed simultaneous efforts to enlarge the practices of community engagement
and public scholarship at institutions of higher education. Granted, appreciation for what we call “public humanities” has always been fairly strong—as in support for museums, symphonies, libraries, film series, music performances, and literary readings. Many campuses have a humanities center that showcases research, sponsors lectures, and otherwise does public programming, though without connecting these to an engaged curriculum or community development projects. For example, such a vision of public humanities can be found on the website of the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University (http://www.brown.edu/Research/JNBC/about_phach.php). The Center’s thoughtful mission statement does not include the kinds of collaborative cultural development work with a social justice orientation that this essay and Imagining America focus upon. In contrast, Stanton (2008) writes that “Engaged research must have an intentional public purpose and direct or indirect benefit to a community …a public purpose beyond developing new knowledge for its own sake” (p. 24). “Public scholarship” and engaged curriculums differ from the public humanities, then, as they require projects of collaborative knowledge-creation involving teams of individuals and organizations from on and off-campus in quite complex partnerships that sometimes take years to create (see Gibson, n.d.)

The Imagining America Curriculum Project documents many fine examples of such projects, but these stand out precisely because they are exceptions to normative campus goals, structures, and reward systems. For decades the triumvirate of “teaching, research, and service” has ruled, with “service” a distinctly less-rewarded and less-respected afterthought in the typical academic’s workload. Usually projects in community engagement or public arts and humanities are misleadingly categorized as “service” rather than knowledge production, and so downgraded. Some debate about this value system is recurrent, as in the reception of Ernest Boyer’s Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate. Boyer attempted to replace the triumvirate with a quadruped: the scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1990). This proposal had the advantage of trying to separate engagement from service. Though often discussed, Boyer’s reform never took hold widely. Insofar as the “application” category was intended to subsume engagement, it perpetuated a “missionary” model in which knowledge was first created on campus and then “applied” to “problems” off-campus, effectively pathologizing the community and future campus partners.

In reflecting on the move from public humanities to public scholarship and engagement, the arts provide useful comparisons. As the Curriculum Project Report shows, arts faculty and practitioners have successfully created hundreds of outstanding projects that go beyond public performance to public engagement: they advance community cultural development, enrich democratic dialogue, create exciting aesthetic advances, and fashion meaningful collaborations among diverse partners (see the Community Arts Network website [Home, 1999-2010] as well as Animating Democracy’s Project Profile Database). The arts have historically been more comfortable with collaborative production and community engagement than the humanities, though many art schools and departments do not support community engagement because of their concentration on studio teaching of future artists. The humanities have tended toward solitary work whose results may be presented publicly but are not designed to be, and which often make the transition awkwardly or in static, almost ceremonial presentations. While a large body of collaborative art projects testifies to how students, faculty, and community can join together on the creation and execution of work that advances the public good, there is less precedent when it comes to collaborative knowledge-making in the humanities. Humanities research has tended toward solitary work whose results are asymmetrical in terms of university-community relations. Again, the kinds of
collaboration that new media make possible could have a powerful impact in making the production of humanities knowledge “public” in highly visible ways.

Despite the obstacles, service learning and engaged curriculum projects in the humanities have become a major avenue for public scholarship in the last ten years, helping to create collaborations in which university and community partners share in the design, execution, and analysis of intellectual projects that have real-life impact. Though initially more oriented toward “doing for” the community than collaborating with it, service learning practices have recently begun to move toward the kind of collaborative ethic espoused by community engagement models. The emphasis, however, has been more on student learning than on getting the university’s research mission in synch with a commitment to engagement, though Campus Compact has begun to alter this focus by initiating the Research University Civic Engagement Initiative. (Civic Engagement at Research Universities, 1999-2010; see also Stanton, [2008]).

Many faculty and students have testified to the excitement of such collaborative projects and the prospect they offer for rejuvenating humanities education and salvaging the reputation of the humanities with the public. In promising moves, some humanities institutes have leveraged their resources and readjusted their missions to create successful, innovative programs of community-university collaboration, such as those at the University of Texas and the University of Washington. Founded in 2001, the Institute at UT Austin consciously aims to augment the traditional activities of such organizations “by actively fostering public access to and involvement in humanistic inquiry” (Gale & Carton, 2005, p. 39). Moreover, as founding (now former) Director Evan Carton explains, the Institute struggled to get beyond “outreach” models of engagement that always privileged the campus over the community: “the outreach model reinforces conventional academic and public conceptions about the legitimate production and ownership of knowledge. A vital practice of the humanities, we believe, depends upon the breakdown of this hierarchy and this conception” in which all expertise rests with the academic experts (Gale & Carton, 2005, p. 40). Instead, as the Curriculum Project Report found, partnerships need to be “reciprocal and collaborative,” producing knowledge through jointly designed activities and “ensuring that community engagement projects serve communities as well as they do students” (Goldbard, 2008, p. 56). Through a long-term process of dialogues, Texas eventually devised the “Writing Austin’s Lives” project, which “would elicit and collect family histories, personal experiences, and diverse visions of life,” and hundreds of citizen-writers responded. The project “overturned the top-down dissemination from the university to the community” that other Institute programs “continued to reinforce” (Gale & Carton, 2005, p. 41). Gale and Carton’s (2005) thoughtful essay on their work embodies the kind of “self-critical awareness” that is a key ingredient in successful engagement.

A parallel transformation occurred at the University of Washington’s Simpson Center for the Humanities, led by Kathleen Woodward. The Center helped sponsor the exemplary Seattle Labor History and Civil Rights Project (About the Project, 2004-2010) and in 2009 received a large NEH challenge grant for innovation in the digital humanities, including “the public circulation of our scholarship” (Simpson Center Receives Major NEH Grant, 2010). While the Simpson Center continues to fund faculty fellowships, interdisciplinary scholarship, and public lecture programs, it has expanded its scope with such initiatives as its “Public Humanities Institute for Doctoral Students,” and is advancing plans for a Graduate Certificate in Public Scholarship. The Institute’s purpose is “to put public scholarship in the portfolios carried by our doctoral students” and is advancing plans for a Graduate Certificate in Public Scholarship. The Institute’s purpose is “to put public scholarship in the portfolios carried by our doctoral students into their future and thus to help bring about the structural change in higher education” that sustainable engagement requires (Woodward, 2009, p. 113). These and similar efforts at other campuses discussed by Woodward demonstrate how strategic reorientation of traditional humanities programs—following the principles of reciprocity and collaboration and guided by concerns for social justice and community cultural development—can produce concrete, replicable results.

Instead of reorienting their humanities center, other campuses have founded offices
with an original mission-focus on engagement. Stanford University’s Haas Center for Public Service (begun in 1984 and named in 1989) has grown in two decades into a model for fostering the connection of academic study with community and public service. It coordinates a rich array of opportunities for students, faculty, and community organizations, with a focus on leadership training and careers in public service. Humanities departments are scarcely represented in its course list, however, except for some sections of Writing and Rhetoric. At the University of Michigan, the Arts of Citizenship (AOC) program was founded in 1998 under the directorship of David Scobey (now director of the Harward Center for Community Partnerships at Bates College). AOC stood out early on for the collaborative process it followed with community organizations in the Detroit and Ann Arbor areas, partnering to create projects, for example, on the Underground Railroad and with youth theater for minorities, that helped bridge the chasm between Detroit communities and the ivory towers of the University of Michigan.

At the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee we studied the AOC model and fashioned the Cultures and Communities Program quite differently from a humanities or arts institute. We adapted the AOC mini-grant model, and have now awarded more than 30 grants over nine years to fund an array of collaborations. These have included a city-wide commemoration of the 40th anniversary of Milwaukee’s Open Housing marches (soon to be a teaching-resource website); a Holocaust education partnership with the Milwaukee Jewish Council; an oral and video documentation initiative focused on black men in Milwaukee; a collaboration with the Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Society on “Combating Islamophobia”; two community-based day-long conferences on finding “common ground” against racism, sponsored by the Interfaith Council of Milwaukee; and a Hmong Arts preservation initiative (Her-Xiong & Youyee Vang, 2009). Reciprocity begins with the application, which must be a collaborative project proposed together by a community partner and a university entity. The CC staff mentors applicants, nurtures new relationships among partners, and oversees the receipt of the reports from grantees that become the basis for assessing outcomes. The requirement of public partnership puts the community at the table from the start as an equal member of the team designing the research, learning, and product.

For example, an oral history project (led by Associate Director Dr. Cheryl Ajikritutu) in the African-American community began with meetings between the professor and a community board to review the idea, refine the syllabus, choose interviewees, and outline protocols. Students went into the community not only to gather the narratives, but also to work in the neighborhood, at the community garden, in youth tutoring, and in other development initiatives. The students researched, wrote, edited, and then presented their oral history projects to their interviewees, in public forums on campus and in the neighborhood that were eventually broadcast by the university’s television station. To prepare, the class also studied the problematic of cross-cultural interviewing in select films and literary works as well as in anthropology (this model has now been extended to courses sited in post-Katrina New Orleans). Meanwhile, students enrolled in our Peck School of the Arts “Multicultural America” sections have been using photography, digital video, blogs and web authoring in their collaborations with local Milwaukee non-profit organizations. Led by Dr. Vicki Callahan and Dr. Shelleen Greene, these classes have promoted skills in multimedia authorship and critical visual studies through service-learning projects designed in collaborations with these partners, who otherwise lack the technical staff or facilities to complete such projects. Students are producing public scholarship in internet-based formats that serve to document the history, mission, current activities, and planned events of our partners.

Another CC wing sponsors an undergraduate minor in multicultural studies, which includes a service-learning requirement. That requirement is in turn administered by CC’s Institute for Service Learning, which is thus tied directly to the curriculum and which works closely with the grants office in expanding opportunities for new community partners to come aboard. Campus participants have come from the College of Letters and Science as well as the schools of Education, Arts, Information Science, and Architecture and Urban Planning. We differ from
a humanities institute in that we administer a
degree curriculum emphasizing multiculturalism
and community engagement, and thus in the
way we integrate courses, advising, service
learning, grants, and public programming.
UWM’s Center for 21st Century Studies remains
the campus’s premier humanities/social science
institute in the traditional mold; however,
spurred by UWM’s membership in Imagining
America, the two offices are now working
together on a planned series of events focused on
exploring the meaning and methods of “public
scholarship.” The kind of multidimensional
institutional profile we have built can be found on
other campuses, such as at the Ginsburg
Center at the University of Michigan and the
Public Humanities Collaborative at Michigan
State University.

I am not going to prophesy that education
through public scholarship represents the
(immediate) future of the humanities, at least
in the practical sense. It’s too expensive and
time-consuming, and too peripheral in the eyes
of those administering the university’s primary
commitments to undergraduate education
and advanced research. Undergraduates can
be more efficiently processed and credentialed
through huge lecture courses largely managed
by teaching assistants, whereas engaged classes
typically require small cohorts working closely
with a faculty member. Public scholarship may
also not be the future of the humanities because
many scholars come to their careers with
solitary temperaments and a tendency to see the
attachment of scholarship to public purposes as
either cruelly instrumental or simply a “service"
dimension of their labor that cannot be counted
like a publication. It is probably also the case that
public-minded scholars are pushed out of the
profession early on by its biases. As the work of
the Simpson Center shows, graduate education
in the humanities would have to be substantially
reengineered if we were to produce future faculty
adept at public scholarship and new media,
knowledgeable in its methods, educated in its
history, able to critique its examples, and ready
to use it to further their research agenda. Despite
these challenges, opportunities abound, but we
need to reflect carefully on a few key points that
summarize lessons learned so far.

TEN KEY POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. Community Engagement versus
the Political Economy of Higher
Education

As general support revenues fall, campuses
rely more on outside grants and tuition revenue.
Activities that do not bring in outside revenue
are marginalized and defunded. Activities not
integrated with curriculum and enrollments are
de-prioritized, since they do not produce
tuition dollars. Engagement, service projects,
and public arts or humanities are seen as “loss
leaders” at best, and among the first targets for
budget cuts. The public support for a campus
generated by such engagement is impossible to
capitalize on immediately as increased revenue;
if directed at less economically prosperous parts
of the community, such engagement also does
not create an alumni capable of giving back
in the form of foundation donations. Service
or project-based learning usually limits class
size and is thus expensive. How do we “go to
scale” with engagement given these constraints?
For academic and financial reasons, then,
engagement should be structured into the
university’s core curriculum and adoption of
new media, so that engagement, technology, and
tuition dollars reinforce engagement rather than
conflict with it.

2. “That Doesn’t Count”: Institutional
Barriers to Engagement and Public
Scholarship

Academic structures, policies, and reward
systems work against community engagement
practices in multiple, often intentional, ways.
While there are differences specific to disciplines,
the general resistance takes the same form (“that
doesn’t count,” “that isn’t valued,” “that’s
amateurish,” “that’s service, not scholarship,”
etc). Advocates should take a page from the
Imagining America Tenure Team Initiative
Report (http://www.imaginingamerica.org/TTI/
TTI.html) and argue that engagement resides on
a continuum of scholarship, not separate from it.
Engagement and publicly-oriented humanities
work are forms of research and of the production
of new knowledge. Project participants need
to design this claim and its outcomes into the plan from the start and produce objects that can document the achievement of them and so substantiate assessment. Do not cede the ground of “research” or “scholarship” to others. Do not argue that engagement should be valued equally with research and scholarship: Show that engagement IS research and scholarship, though it is also so much more. For one example, see the Research Service Learning: Scholarship with a Civic Mission program at Duke University (Hart Leadership Program, http://hart.sanford.duke.edu/index.php/rlrsrl.htm).

Most campuses have one or more offices supporting various kinds of engagement or public scholarship, but these are rarely affiliated with an academic department, which is the unit that holds the real power on campus. Engagement gets outsourced and marginalized, and is not seen as part of the essential or required work done by the core institutional players. Bringing engagement into the structures sponsored by departments (requirements for courses and the major, scholarships, tenure and promotion criteria, etc.) is thus vital. In lieu of that, work to connect all the units sponsoring engagement to form a campus office or network that can advocate on behalf of public scholarship, new media, and the engaged arts.

3. What Comes First, the Discipline or the Community?

Going local is not always respected or valued by our disciplinary structures of assessment. Faculty are trained to have a primary affiliation with and loyalty to their discipline: They see themselves as belonging to a “profession” first— as philosophers, historians, literary critics, etc. They do not limit their focus to a locale, which would be seen as “provincial.” Merit is largely determined nationally, even internationally, through peer-reviewed publication or performance and job mobility. Faculty are encouraged to move among jobs and not to become “tied down.” Academic humanities research typically overlooks local subjects and local audiences. Thus connections between campuses and communities weaken, and financial support declines. As government support for higher education withers, campuses can strengthen their support base by infusing engagement into the humanities curricula, rather than restricting themselves to ivory-tower practices that disconnect campus and community. They can also use new media to structure that engagement and disseminate it to a wider, even global, public.

Projects can be “glocal,” then, at once embedded in local conditions and still examining forces, ideas, and trends that are global in origin and effect. The Colorado Center for Public Humanities (2008), for example, offers itself “as a think-tank” that “will investigate the public value of the humanities disciplines in relation to historical change by sponsoring programs that help to clarify the roles that humanities-based scholarship can play within the region, the nation, and the world more generally” and promises that it will “encourage interaction between the scholar and the wider public by matching scholars with particular communities, funding appropriate research activities, and supporting the production of books, film, and web-based conversation that are aimed at extra-academic groups.”

4. Educating the Students and Practitioners

Whatever their disciplinary home, students and practitioners (including staff and faculty) will need a common core of education in issues related to community engagement: race, class, and gender studies; white privilege; principles of organization based in mutuality; cultural identity theory; local history; techniques for reflection, etc. This may not be the kind of knowledge emphasized in, or even covered by, the usual training or normative scholarship in the discipline. Students from a wealthy university need to reflect upon their own class position and cultural identity before going to work as tutors in local schools or assistants at a food pantry or as English as a second language instructors (Jay, 2008). Successful community engagement requires critical reflection on gender, sexuality, diversity, and multiculturalism. Engagement almost always involves asymmetries of power and resources in relationships among individuals from distinctly different places and backgrounds who have had little or no previous
contact. Reflection activities (journals, essays, performance, online discussion, social networking technologies, etc.) about these issues should be threaded throughout the project. Assessment of outcomes should include measuring the impact of engagement on the attitudes and knowledge of students and faculty in the area of diversity; specific projects might also be assessed for their contribution to addressing community conflicts around race or gender or nationality or religion. For a valuable set of essays on this topic, see Carolyn O’Grady (2000), ed., *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education in Colleges and Universities*.

5. The Necessity for Asset Mapping of Community and Participants

The community is a set of assets, not an amalgam of deficits. Humanities expertise resides in the community as well as on campus. Preparation for engagement should include a collaborative mapping of community assets beneficial to the project. All the participants bring a variety of skills and knowledge to the collaboration. These need to be mapped early on and the project in part shaped by what people bring to it, with recognition that not all authority need be academic. Participants should feel empowered to use their skills and to experiment in order to grow. Preparation of faculty and students should thus include an explicit critique of the “missionary” role taken formerly by campuses toward communities, and a recognition that community partners stand in the position of educators in relation to faculty as well as students. This may be particularly true when it comes to local knowledge of art and culture in the communities around campus. Students should assess the skills and talents they bring to the partnership and offer ways that these can be put to use. Partners and faculty should likewise see students as bringing resources, not empty heads or bleeding hearts.

6. Turning Projects into Partnerships

Examples abound of outstanding one-time projects linking campus and community. These take an enormous amount of energy and result in a high level of knowledge for all participants; unfortunately, unless the project turns into a partnership, the return on the investment of time, resources, and passion is limited. Moreover, a community partner can be left standing at the altar after one or two semesters, abandoned (yet again) by a campus that then seems to be practicing “drive by” engagement. While we should not abandon limited-term projects, programs should strive to engage communities in ways that create long-term partnerships. Ideally, projects should be such that different cohorts of students from different classes over multiple years can “plug in” to them. Such sustained programmatic engagement is also more likely to find outside funding but will require commitment of initial seed money by campus. If there is a service-learning program, then sustainability may be achieved by planning for multiple classes to work with the same partner over the years.

7. Reexamining Course Goals, Learning Outcomes, and Assessment

Specific goals of engaged humanities projects and classes may differ from those of traditional courses and programs, though they must remain academic in focus. Traditional curriculums emphasize the production of an object (a work of art, a performance, an essay or monograph) whose quality is measured irrespective of any value to a community or a larger social purpose. Engaged practice also includes the goal of linking the production of knowledge to community cultural, social, and/or economic development and the advancement of social justice. Success is measured by such rubrics as extent and diversity of participants, impact on an identified community need, effective communication, innovation or dissemination of successful techniques for collaboration, expansion of the information base beyond traditional academic materials, transformations in self-understanding of participants, etc. Engaged curriculums will need to specify these additional goals and outcomes on the syllabus at the outset, and make clear how their achievement will be measured and how it is integrated into the academic content of the course.

8. Institutionalizing Engaged Courses
Most engaged class offerings are the product of the initiative of one or two faculty and a group of students, who use a regularly listed course as the platform for their project. Much work goes into redesigning the syllabus for the course, creating reflection assignments for students, meeting with community partners, and building assessment instruments. When that particular faculty member moves on and someone else is assigned to teach the class, the engaged component may be dropped, and all that work lost. Sustainability requires having engagement written into the prescribed course description in the campus catalogue and securing commitment from the department to support that component whenever the class is offered. Even better, making an engagement experience or service-learning class a requirement for the major, for a minor or a certificate program, or for the college’s general education requirements will enormously strengthen sustainability. Sustainability also depends on assessment and the “feed-back loop.” Projects and syllabi should have clearly stated humanities-oriented objectives for outcomes and be able to assess whether these have been met, and what further initiatives initial successes suggest. If outcomes fall short, campus and community partners can identify weak spots, misunderstandings, resource limits, and devise a mutually agreed-upon set of action steps.

9. Balancing Work Loads for Faculty, Students, and Community Partners

Engagement courses and projects often add substantially to everybody’s workload, at least initially. For faculty there may be months of preparation, including research, meetings, fund raising, syllabus design, learning new software, and the training of students or staff. Campus resources are rarely allocated to support this work, though they ought to be. This is where a center or institute can play a crucial role in providing information on best practices, bibliographies, community contacts, and active networking with experienced faculty who have already done this kind of work. Students, too, will at first complain when their own load now includes going off-campus to work at times not on the course schedule. Faculty should be realistic in recognizing the additional burdens being placed on student time and thus make reductions in other parts of the syllabus. When planning a project with a community partner, faculty and students should be aware of the danger of adding to the workload of already overburdened non-profits with small staffs and limited resources. The more we ask of partners (help teach, write evaluations, review syllabi, come to conferences, etc.) the less time they have for the work they are trying to do, so that the partnership becomes a negative rather than a positive. Campus resources are not often available to compensate partners for their time, so every effort should be made to husband extra-mural resources to channel back to community agencies in compensation.

10. Diversity and Engagement

The disconnection between campus and community often appears dramatically when we look at the diversity, or lack thereof, among students, faculty, and staff. Recruitment and retention of students and faculty of color is a major priority at many campuses. Public humanities scholarship and engaged arts practices can be positioned to address this issue on multiple fronts, and it should be a priority of our collaborations. Engagement projects can be a bridge that brings underrepresented youth onto campus and into relationships with college students and faculty who can encourage their ambitions and mentor their journey to higher education. In turn, a disproportionate number of engaged scholars and artists are women and faculty and staff of color, who hope to give back to their communities and strengthen their cultural and economic development. These faculty and staff are also thus the most vulnerable when tenure and promotion decisions become embroiled in debates over “research versus service.” Campuses should use the Imagining America Tenure Team Initiative report as a platform for debating how research norms often oppress women and faculty and staff of color by marginalizing knowledge or artistic production done through local collaborations or addressing local or minority concerns.
New Publics, New Media — Assessing the Future

These ten talking points do not exhaust the subject of public scholarship, engagement, and the future of the humanities. In closing, however, I think it essential to return to one last issue that cuts across the others: the advent of new media and the impact that the Internet, social networking, and digital technology are having on higher education, our relation to public communities, and assessment of our work. The analysis can begin with this simple question: How is the challenge of doing “public scholarship” different for the humanities? Work in the arts and in design or architecture has an inherent public component, produced with some consideration of public display, or public installation, or public performance, and thereby as part of public conversation on various issues. Academics working in the humanities, in contrast, typically produce written texts, often as commentaries on other written texts. The production of such work is largely a solitary endeavor, and its consumption takes place individually, in private rather than public. Humanities work can certainly aim to intervene in public conversations on important issues, but the road to such influence usually lies through a cross-platform marketing of scholarship into more public venues – newspapers, magazines, trade press books, symposia, public lectures – that cannot themselves be the primary listed achievements in tenure and promotion deliberations. The rules for those deliberations forcefully limit the public reach of humanities scholarship. While this has been the situation for decades, the advent of the Internet and digital culture may provide some breakthrough.

Even in textual form, humanities work can now circulate much more broadly than in the day when it languished in the compact-shelving archive of the library, and social networking means that scholarly collaboration knows no geographical limits. Once introduced into web formats, such scholarship also moves, often unintentionally, in the direction of multimedia, if only through the addition of graphics, illustration, YouTube links, or connections to other related work. Academics now build home pages and subject web sites that serve as resource pages in the public sphere of the Internet. Multimedia scholarly e-journals like *Vectors* (http://www.vectorsjournal.org/) represent cutting-edge multimedia humanities scholarship, though the technological resources to produce such work remain in the hands of a very few and the knowledge to create them rare. Most humanities faculty are not trained to do so (though this is starting to change), and it can be argued that such multimedia authorship represents a different genre altogether from the normative academic paper or monograph. Yet the precipitous decline of the academic publishing apparatus, both in book and journal outlets, suggests that the digital alternatives will eventually supersede their hard-copy forerunners.

Whereas the new publics after the 1960s formed around categories of identity politics, the new publics of the 21st century are forming in and through networking, which connects people not only on the basis of avowed affiliation but also through media of interaction that cut across group barriers and spatial boundaries and create alliances of unexpected kinds. So as we debate the merits and character of “public scholarship,” we need to sustain the critique of the notion of the “public” that exploded forty or more years ago, when the narrow definition of who, or what, counted as the “public” was challenged by so many who had been excluded from it. New media mean new opportunities for creating public humanities events of an interactive kind, in which the presentation of knowledge and the production of knowledge happen interdependently and simultaneously.

New media are changing the very nature of the “public,” and thus what we might conceive of as public scholarship. Across our society and culture we have witnessed enormous transformations in our way of life with the advent of these media, leading to unexpected changes in how we work, eat, play, love, and of course in how we represent these activities to one another. Indeed, the post-structuralists got at least this right—that the line between the practice of life and the representation of life was dissolving in the post-modern era. What new media have done, in part, is to accelerate this process to dizzying speeds and to extend its reach across virtually all dimensions of human interaction, with the added meta-benefit that we can watch ourselves and reflect on ourselves.
at the same time. No one should imagine that humanities scholarship will be immune from the viral speedup of new media or their capacity for embroiling the representation of knowledge in the generally ungovernable network of information and sensation exchange. New media will dramatically alter the future of the humanities, though it’s far too early to predict exactly how. Will text messages and Twitter replace the analytical seminar discussion? Or as David Marshall (2005) asks, “Is this a reconstitution of a public sphere in which the humanities can participate, or is it the final fragmentation of the public into blogs?”

What we can say, however, is that new media are providing a platform for the process, content, and dissemination of public scholarship. Students are learning new expressive and documentation techniques using photography and video and combining these with words and argumentation. Community partners are getting access to technology they would otherwise not be able to afford or know how to use. The outcomes of projects are being disseminated globally rather than only locally, and the projects themselves are becoming “glocal” as they involve participants from far-flung quarters. Questions about inequalities of access and resources, of course, remain substantial, and not every project lends itself to digital interaction and multimedia. The use of such tools, however, can go a long way toward demonstrating how student skills and community benefits are being advanced through engagement projects, and their documentation through multimedia creates products that can then be the subject of assessment and evaluation in determining the research value, scholastic merit, and public good of the project.

Assessing the outcomes of public scholarship in the humanities presents challenges, whether that scholarship is done through old or new media. Traditional assessment of scholarship is by peer review. Who are the peers in publicly engaged scholarship? Can community partners participate in tenure and promotion documentation and review? Are distinguished scholars who have never done publicly engaged work really “peers” when it comes to reviewing such work by their colleagues? Such review will require a set of criteria, benchmarks, and methods of assessment not yet in place. Peer review is well-designed to establish whether a scholarly article or monograph offers new knowledge or substantially alters previous concepts or data. This may be possible in the case of some public scholarship produced through community collaboration or new media. Yet how do we (faculty, students, staff, community partners, funders) assess the benefits to the community, which are after all an essential aim of publicly engaged scholarship? Are we looking for a change of consciousness? Implementation of new programs? An increase in the number of participants in a given initiative? A tangible improvement in the lives of certain community members? A digital presence and interactive community? Short-term gains? Long-term?

These questions intersect with the abiding debate over whether scholarship should be instrumental at all, or remain the production of knowledge for its own sake. Engaged practitioners will need to use all the media they can muster to navigate these questions, especially since documenting the outcomes of public scholarship may be crucial to their survival as campuses cut budgets. What I think we can assert with some confidence, however, is that the project-basis of most public scholarship means that there will be products, often using new media, that can help substantiate assessment, be they performative, textual, or digital. We will need to intentionally design assessment into the original planning and execution of future projects, however, if we are to produce persuasive documentation. This will mean knowing what kinds of outcomes we are hoping for, and how we intend to measure them. If we can begin to lay these out in principle, then the specifics of their articulation within concrete projects will start to take shape organically. And that itself will need to be a collaborative enterprise, with an emphasis on demonstrating outcomes for both community and campus. If one outcome turns out to be the fashioning of a reality in which the campus is a member of the community instead of a stranger surveying it from distant shores, then we will know we’re doing something right.

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About the Author

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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 6th 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. Authors are especially encouraged to submit candid photographs, along with explanatory captions, that contribute to the research narrative.
Service-learning involves applying knowledge gained from the classroom to assist others in response to community needs (Robinson, 2009). From national crises relief efforts to local community initiatives, service-learning opportunities were well integrated with the Elon University curriculum.

Located in Elon, North Carolina, Elon University is a small liberal arts college known for its extensive study abroad programs and numerous service-learning opportunities. An astounding 87% of undergraduate students participate in volunteer service at Elon, which has been proclaimed as one of the top three universities in the nation for community service by the Corporation for National and Community Service (Elon University, 2010). During my Human Services studies at Elon, three of my courses each required that I complete 20 or more service hours to receive course credit. These varied service opportunities allowed me to explore learning beyond the classroom setting, expand knowledge of social systems, and address social issues.

I completed my first service experience with E. Bynum Education Center in Burlington, North Carolina. My role was to provide mentorship and leadership for disadvantaged youth, grades K-8 in an after school setting. Though I was nervous and unsure of what to expect, I quickly established rapport with the students. It was empowering to interact with different students, and witness their excitement for having a mentor with whom to communicate. I particularly remember one student who was struggling with his math assignments. For several weeks I devoted additional one-on-one time to this student. I grew extremely proud as he progressed, and his enthusiasm brought a new joy that I had not previously experienced. Unfortunately, a couple weeks after he began making progress, the student’s mother suddenly pulled him from the program. I was devastated because he was beginning to realize his potential, but the director explained that these students often come and go depending on their situation. It was difficult realizing that beyond academic struggles these children often had multiple challenges in their lives. At this point I made a commitment to focus on helping others empower themselves to reach their full potential.

My second service experience offered an alternative macro level approach; I collaborated with a student peer group to generate a successful fundraiser proposal for a local community agency. Our group selected Girls Inc., of Greensboro, N.C., an agency that empowers young girls to achieve their goals by providing after school activities and summer camps that promote academia, social interactions, and career and financial planning. We coordinated with the director of Girls Inc. to determine agency funding needs, established a fashion show fundraiser involving Girls Inc. members, determined appropriate grants that could be attained, and created a video public service announcement (PSA). The PSA captured client and staff testimony regarding the benefits of the program, and was given to the agency to use for promotional activities. As a Human Services major and Communications minor, it was interesting to bridge the two fields. This opportunity helped me to understand the systems perspective, and I was able to explore linkages between individuals, communities, and organizations as well as connections between disciplines.

A third service-learning opportunity involved using the Mentoring Violence Prevention (MVP) program to communicate with high school freshmen about relationship violence. This was an interesting experience because instead of simply presenting content information about domestic violence my team and I used role-plays and vignettes to facilitate discussions concerning verbal, physical, and sexual abuse. Many students were deeply
engaged in the conversation, asking questions and sharing stories about personal experiences. I remember feeling moments of shock that several young students, 14-15 years old, had witnessed or been victims to partner violence. The students completed a pre- and post-test questionnaire to evaluate their knowledge of partner violence, and it was rewarding to review written evidence from the post instrument that students were learning from the program. The data collected was used to evaluate the effectiveness of MVP in comparison to other available violence prevention programs, which gave me an opportunity to compose an evaluative intervention research piece as part of my course work. Through this experience I was able to practice clinical skills of rapport building and empathic listening while also gaining macro-level skills surrounding program evaluation. Although a valuable learning experience, it may have been more beneficial if the project adopted more of an engaged scholarship approach and the data had been used to publish a scholarly paper concerning the MVP program.

Through service-learning opportunities at Elon University I established a strong foundation in human services work. These hands-on experiences fostered my appreciation for helping others and have driven me to become a beneficial contributor to society. I always knew that I learned better from experience, and service-learning afforded the opportunity to practice integrating classroom knowledge with real world application.

These experiences prepared me for graduate school field internships, illuminated the necessity of helping others, and motivated me to become a civically engaged member of society.

References

About the Author
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CALL FOR STUDENT MANUSCRIPTS

The graduate student editorial board of the Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship (JCES) invites the submission of original student manuscripts for the summer 2010 issue. JCES is a refereed journal, published three times a year, providing a mechanism through which faculty, staff, and students of academic institutions and their community partners may disseminate scholarly works from all academic disciplines. A goal of the publication is to integrate teaching, research, and community engagement. All forms of writing, analysis, creative approaches, and methodologies are acceptable for the journal. Student research not only bridges the gap between knowledge and experience, but also has the benefit of laying the groundwork for career exploration and development. The opportunity for students to publish in a national journal becomes an added value to their overall educational experience.

Manuscripts that demonstrate central involvement of students and community partners and that advance community engagement scholarship will be given favorable consideration. Manuscripts should be free of racial, religious, gender, ethnic, or any other form of bias. Manuscripts submitted are for exclusive publication in JCES. Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish in this journal. Authors submitting manuscripts to the journal should not simultaneously submit them to another journal. 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 Jessica Averitt Taylor, assistant to the editor, at jces.ua.edu. At this time, hardcopy submissions are not accepted.

Reviewed by April Heiselt, assistant professor, counseling and educational psychology and service-learning coordinator at Mississippi State University

When an author writes a journal article, there is often not enough space to discuss a program or event in full detail. The author’s perspective may be shared, and perhaps that of the participants, but not much else, as only highlights or lowlights can be discussed before proceeding to a discussion of the methodology and research results. Unlike a journal article, a book gives the author, and reader, the opportunity to examine a program from multiple perspectives and from varying levels, both within and outside of the university. This is precisely what Behringer et al. accomplish in *Pursuing Opportunities Through Partnerships*.

Building upon their successful “Community Partnerships for Health Professions Education” program, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 1991, East Tennessee State University (ETSU), the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), West Virginia University (WVU), and Northeastern University (NU) reunited a second time to “boldly take on an even greater challenge—changing the entire university structure” (n.p.).

In 1996, Kellogg commissioned a study that involved the university presidents from all four institutions. The “underlying charge for the study was to consider if the concept of community-university partnerships that had been previously tested in the health sciences could be expanded and embedded within other units of the general university” (p. 23).

These four institutions formed the Community Partnerships in Higher Education Consortium and were awarded $1.25 million over four years from Kellogg “to form partnerships with cooperating communities using models similar to those established in the health sciences to reach deeper and broader into the expertise of academe with educational approaches based in community issues” (p. 26). The Expanding Community Partnerships Program (ECP) became the way in which these universities built upon their former success and took their grant beyond their universities and into the community.

The book begins with an introduction written by Dr. Gail McClure, Kellogg Foundation vice president for programs. McClure illustrates the importance of the ECP as perceived by the Kellogg Foundation. This is buoyed by the preface written by Dr. Ronald Richards, University of Illinois-Chicago professor and former program director at Kellogg. Their comments about relationships, university-community partnerships, and the learning outcomes obtained through this experience provide...
the reader with an informal backdrop as to what will unfold in the chapters to come.

Part one is written by three of the editors of the book: Bruce Behringer, assistant vice president and executive director of ETSU; Gerald Lang, provost and vice president for Academic Affairs and Research at WVU, and Jill Kriesky, former director of the Office of Service-Learning Programs (OSLP) at WVU. Behringer, Lang, and Kriesky provide details as to how the presidents of the four institutions worked together to formulate the four program principles: student socialization, faculty reward systems, structured partnership with communities, and interdisciplinary collaboration, that would guide the ECPP community-university partnerships and “promote deep and lasting transformative change to the benefit of both the universities and the communities they serve” (p. 25). Although the four program principles were the same among the institutions, the ways in which they were implemented differed. This is illustrated in the way the rest of the book unfolds.

Just as the ECPP is a partnership, the writing of this book is as well. Parts two through four of the book are written by the faculty, staff, students, and community partners who participated at each of the four institutions. Each part is separated into five chapters. The first chapter is written by the person responsible for the daily operations of the program, and as such it provides the reader with insight into how the ECPP philosophy was perceived and implemented at each institution. Chapters two through four are written by faculty, students, and community partners who provide their perspectives from a programmatic level. The fifth chapter, written by the principal investigator, sheds light on the institutional impact of the ECPP.

While each part of the book is written by individuals from within the same units within an institution (i.e. faculty, students) or even from outside the university (community partners), the experiences are vastly different. This is illustrated by the unique perspectives found in each section of the book. For instance, in part two, chapter one, Dr. Donald R. Johnson, professor of English and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at ETSU, shares his concerns about getting his faculty motivated to work on projects involving rural counties. However, after working with the other members of the institutions of the ECPP, he changes his philosophy, acknowledging that “I was still thinking of the University as the area’s reservoir of knowledge and talent, not as a fountainhead charged by the numerous springs, creeks, and rivers that nurtured our region” (p. 41). Later, Johnson shares some of the benefits the ECPP gave to him personally as an administrator, but also in how these partnerships strengthened the local community and the university. The detailing of this kind of reflection and action is a strength of the book, as the stories these individuals share encourage others to make an effort to think outside the box to create successful partnerships in their own neighborhoods.

The WVU perspective is illustrated in part three of the book. Highlights from this section include the way in which students were included as full partners in the ECPP. In chapter one, Kriesky, former OSLP director at WVU, discusses how her institution expanded its office to better facilitate the ECPP partnership. By employing three different strategies the OSLP became the office through which grant resources were distributed. One unique strategy used by the OSLP was to involve the University’s extension department to better reach community partners. This provided opportunities for students to work in service-learning projects with community members who functioned as “real world” instructors. Students were able to act as “legitimate contributors to community projects” and were transformed from ‘knowledge consumers’ to ‘knowledge producers’ through the service-learning experience” (p. 102). This is explored in more detail in chapter three, written by Goss and Prettyman, two undergraduate students, who share information about four
service-learning projects and their impact on WVU students.

Part four of the book includes information from Northeastern University. In chapter four, Sandras Barnes shared her experience as a community partner: “As we interacted with the University people over time, we saw that they really listened to us and did not try to impose their ideas on us” (p. 211). As part of the ECPP, all four institutions met at an annual conference. Each year the conference was conducted by a different institution. Barnes reflected on how the university introduced the conference idea to the community partners and how the partners quickly got involved and started working with the university partners to make the conference a reality. Barnes said, “The ease with which we worked together reflected the deep level of trust we had established and the sense of ownership we felt” (p. 211). The inclusion of community partner experiences offers an important perspective that is not always shared at the culmination of a project.

The University of Texas at El Paso’s part five highlights the way in which the community-university partnerships created by the ECPP influenced not only a campus, but also a community at large. One of the book editors, Howard Daudistel, professor of sociology and dean of the College of Liberal Arts at UTEP, shared his perspective on the community of El Paso. His reflections discuss the realities of making change happen within a university campus. Daudistel credited University President Dr. Diana Natalicio with the vision to see how these three elements—“having a vision and articulating it simply, linking change to an institution’s history, and breaking down barriers to collaboration” (p. 258)—could impact the university and the local community in order to make change. Daudistel reminds the reader that “success flows from the commitment and efforts of people—faculty, students, and community members” (p. 262). His comments remind the reader of the importance of the depth of the commitment that is made when creating community-university partnerships.

The final part of the book discusses what occurred when the five-year effort to develop the ECPP came to an end in 2003. In that year, principal investigators from each institution met to share their experiences. These meetings culminated in the production of eight shared “lessons learned” that emphasized the impact of community partnerships within multiple levels of a university, how to sustain these vital partnerships, and the learning outcomes that can be obtained by providing the members of a university with avenues to work within the community. Overall, this book provides the reader with unique perspectives on the realities of a true community-university partnership as experienced by administrators, faculty, students, and community partners. Each part of the book gives first-hand accounts of “aha” experiences, skepticism, challenges, and success stories of the ECPP. The reader will find the book easy to read and will most likely identify with the authors while learning about the efforts made in building and maintaining sustainable community-university partnerships.
INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

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 may 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 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 (sixth edition). See guidelines at http://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/instructions.aspx. All manuscripts must be submitted electronically to jces.ua.edu.

The sixth edition of the APA manual 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.

All identifying information or references to the author(s) must be removed from the manuscript. Manuscripts that include identifying information will not be reviewed prior to correction. Each manuscript must also include an abstract of 150 words or less that summarizes the major themes of the manuscript. Manuscripts not meeting these criteria will be returned to the author before being sent out for review.

Authors are required to submit written permission from the original publisher for any quoted material of 300 words or more from a single source; any quoted material from a newspaper, a poem, or a song (even a phrase); and any table, figure, or image reproduced from another work. 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.

Authors will be notified of a decision in a timely manner consistent with thorough scholarly review.
**Manuscript Receipt**
- scan for style standards; request revisions if necessary
- assign manuscript number
- send primary author; acknowledged via e-mail
- select appropriate reviewers

**First Review**
- send to reviewers: review request, blind manuscript, review form
- reassign manuscript if reviewers unable to complete review
- send to reviewers: reminder e-mail one week after requested due date if reviews not yet returned
- send to editor: combined reviewer comments/rating form

**Editor Decision**
- accept (if accepted, proceed to step 8)
- recommend revisions; resubmit
- reject (end of process)

**Revise and Resubmit Request**
- notify primary author of decision
- send to author: letter from editor, document with reviewer comments, manuscript with edits, and tracked changes
- request resubmission within four weeks

**Resubmission and Second Review**
- scan for standards (esp. blind copy); if necessary, send author a request for revision
- reassign manuscript to original reviewers
- send to reviewers: blind manuscript, copy of blind letter from editor to primary author, blind document with original reviewer comments, review form, and blind manuscript with track changes/comments from editor
- request return of re-review within two weeks
- send to reviewers: reminder e-mail one week after requested due date if reviews not yet returned
- send to editor: combined reviewer comments/rating form

**Editor Decision**
- accept (if accepted, proceed to step 8)
- accept with minor revision

**Accept with Minor Revision**
- send to primary author: notification of decision, requested revisions to be returned within two weeks
- once revisions received, read thoroughly to ensure completion of all requests
- reject (end of process)

**Edit for Publication**
- final editing by JCES staff
- negotiate edited manuscript with author
- send official copyright forms for primary author’s signature

**Publication**
Now there’s another way to put your thoughts on engagement scholarship before large audiences.

JCES has updated its website, www.jces.ua.edu. Along with a variety of new presentations, photos, and reports on research from conferences, the website will begin to reach out to the public via multimedia through photo and video galleries and blogs.

Andrea Mabry, JCES website coordinator and journalist in residence, explains: “A key goal of the redesigned website is to open up engagement research to the public, providing auxiliary arts that will help us assemble an audience not only of hardcopy and e-book subscribers, but also a broader audience that may be less well versed in formal research. That makes our online component extremely important, since most nonprofessionals are not likely to have a subscription.”

Keeping that in mind, our approach is different from much web development work because we are constantly trying to come up with ways to get crossover readers and, through submitted blogs, contributions to fuel an ongoing discussion of engagement scholarship. To that end, we encourage members of our audience to submit ideas to jces@ua.edu. If you are interesting in blogging for JCES online, e-mail us or call us at the number below.
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