Pathways of change for integrating Community Service-Learning into the core curriculum

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Abstract

This article is based on a theory of educational change and sets out new pathways for thinking about Curricular Community Engagement with the emphasis on Community Service-Learning. In particular, three different segments in educational change processes are examined – the external, the internal and the personal. A socio-systemic approach is adopted in analysing the importance these three segments have for educational change. It is noted that the external forces of change (national policies and audit criteria) influencing Curricular Community Engagement (CCE) and specifically Community Service-Learning (CSL) are dominant but internal processes at higher education institutions (HEIs) and the personal beliefs and missions of academics do not feature strongly at present. It is argued that increasing attention will need to be paid to the personal mission and purposes of academics, which underpin academic staff members' commitment to change processes for curriculum reform. Without a fully conceptualised notion of how the external, internal and personal interlink, the existing educational change for CCE and specifically CSL, will remain underdeveloped and of progressively less use at HEIs in South Africa.

Keywords: Curricular Community Engagement; Community Service-Learning; Higher Education; Educational Change; Curriculum reform

Introduction

Universities increasingly seek ways to be more relevant, to bring their knowledge base to bear on social and economic problems, and to offer society leadership which is consistent with broader core values of openness, integrity and inclusion. Politicians and educational critics seek evidence for public universities' ability to use their research to inform their teaching missions and to reinforce their historical commitment to helping to meet the needs of society.

Audits and accreditation criteria, national policies and commissions all collectively challenge higher education institutions to refocus the scholarship agenda so that students are placed at the forefront; to elevate the status of teaching and to raise community engagement to a level well above the current one of public service, and to strengthen the commitment between South African higher education and the public.

The aim of this article is to examine and understand the inter-subjective meanings embedded in curriculum-related community engagement at HEIs as the overarching conceptual framework for curriculum change and reform, proposing a model for thinking about and planning CCE and for the process of change in the Community Service-Learning movement in South Africa. This article is based on the theory of educational change as propounded by Fullan (2001). This theory offers guidance as to what to look for on the journey of change, making sure that one keeps on the

selected path. This article sets out such a pathway for curriculum reform, progressing from "community service"; "internships"; "practicals" or "charity work by students" as "add-ons" to a module/course in an academic programme that integrates Community Service-Learning in the core curriculum. CSL is conceptualised as a form of experiential education and as a collaborative teaching and learning strategy designed to promote students' academic enhancement, personal growth and social responsibility. Students render relevant and meaningful service in a community and the community, in return, offers experiences which inform the academic content of a module or course. Through structured reflection, students examine such experiences critically and assess whether they have attained the learning outcomes; thus enhancing the quality of their learning and their service, as well as fostering social responsibility (cf. Ash, Clayton & Atkinson, 2005). Learning is thus given a service dimension.

Curricular Community Engagement: conceptual framework

The concept of curriculum-related community engagement has been central to my professional concerns as social worker, psychologist and higher education teacher, and also to my way of thinking about educational change since the early 1990s. My thinking and personal beliefs about educational change were inspired by my early experiences and dialogues with other colleagues in this field.

Curricular community engagement (CCE) refers to the ways in which the curriculum, teaching, learning, research and scholarship engage academic staff, students and community service agencies/organisations in mutually beneficial collaborations. Their interactions address community-identified needs, deepen students' civic and academic learning and enrich the scholarship of the institution. For many universities the focus is on the integration between community engagement and the curricula of formal academic programmes. This is sometimes referred to as community-engaged teaching and learning with the emphasis on Community Service-Learning (CSL).

I argue that Curricular Community Engagement is scholarly work and contributes to teaching, research and the production of knowledge beyond the service experience itself and that this part of the curriculum is a catalyst for learning what can not be envisaged at the time – due to the systemic role players in a scholarship vie of SL . A scholarship-based model of engagement involves both the act of engaging (bringing universities and communities together) and the product of engagement (the spread of discipline-generated, evidence-based practices in communities). CCE cuts across the mission of teaching/learning, research and service. It is not a separate, add-on activity or charitable work, but a particular approach to university-community collaboration and should be part of mainstream education. CCE is viewed in this framework as mutually beneficial to all the engagement partners. It is characterised by mutual planning, implementation and assessment among the partners. The professional development of staff regarding teaching/learning and community engagement is critical if academics are to become knowledgeable about new educational theories and methods, and if they are to apply them effectively to their teaching. It is the academic staff members who design and offer the modules containing CSL and who are thus responsible for curricular reform. I argue that change will only be embraced if there is a change in academic staff members' beliefs and plans regarding CSL.

To forward the argument, I divide the article into three main sections, each detailing a part in the processes of educational change: the external, the internal and the personal (Goodson, 2001). The first, that of external educational change is mandated in a top-town manner. This is the case with the South African higher education policies relevant to community engagement and national initiatives. The second section deals with internal educational change within higher education institutions that initiates and promotes change within the framework of strategies, support and enabling mechanisms for curricular community engagement. These are discussed by means of a hypothetical model. The third and last section discusses personal change in academics and the way in which Community Service-Learning, as an educational approach and philosophy, can be used as a vehicle for change in curricular community engagement at HEIs in South Africa.

External educational change mandated by South African higher education policies

White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) lays the foundation for making community service an integral and core part of higher education in South Africa. The White Paper refers specifically to the role of community service in the overarching task of transforming the higher education system. It calls on institutions to demonstrate, by making expertise and infrastructure available, their commitment to the common good and to social responsibility. In addition, the White Paper states that one of the goals of higher education is to promote and develop, among students, an awareness of and social responsibility for higher education's role – through community service programmes – in social and economic development. And finally, the White Paper is receptive to the growing interest in community service programmes for students, giving support in principle to feasibility studies and pilot programmes which will explore the potential of community service in higher education.

Since the publication of White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997), perceptions of community service have changed from a view of community service as one of the three silos of higher education – along with learning/teaching and research – to a view of community service as an integral and essential part of learning/teaching and research, infusing and enriching them with a sense of context, relevance and application. Accompanying this change in perception is a shift in the terminology used by stakeholders in national higher education, such as the Department of Education and the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) – from "community service" (Department of Education, White Paper, 1997) and "academically based community service" (HEQC Founding Document, 2001) to "community engagement" including Service-Learning (HEQC Audit Criteria, 2004a; 2004b; 2004c). The changing perception is moving towards the notion of a "scholarship of engagement" (HEQC/JET, 2006a). However, community engagement has many names and little or no research has been done on the scholarship of engagement in South Africa.

The JET annual report for 2006 states that to date, a number of HEIs have developed an understanding of the potential that community engagement holds for transforming higher education in relation to societal needs, and for producing graduates with a sense of civic responsibility and an ability to apply the theory of their disciplines to local development issues. Many volunteer and community outreach programmes are in operation, and some HEIs have recognised that, if the primary function of higher education is to generate and disseminate knowledge, then service-learning in particular provides the context to inform and enrich both (JET, 2006). However the evidence for this is still scarce.

There are many CE policies and documents of CE initiatives (HEQC 2004a; 2004b, 2004c; HEQC/JET 2006a; 2006b; JET, 2006. Lazarus, 2007)). Despite these initiatives at many higher education institutions (the internal and personal segment of educational change) there is still a perception that community engagement and service are merely add-on, nice-to-have, philanthropic activities. Furthermore there is resistance in HEIs to integrating CE as a core function in the academic field (CHE 2004). There is also still confusion and a diversity of understanding about CE, CCE and CSL (Bender, 2007/8).

In 2006 the CHE/HEQC and JET published two books and a DVD. The overarching objective was to give a single, comprehensive resource, which includes "everything you need to know" and more about service-learning, to those persons with an institution-wide responsibility for community engagement and Service-Learning and to academic staff wanting to integrate Service-Learning in their curricula. However, the contents are based mainly on the research by American scholars and are placed in the context of USA higher education. This evokes critical analyses of, and reflective inquiry into, the relevance of this conceptual and theoretical framework for CCE and Community Service-Learning in the South African context. I argue that this could be a reason for the confusion of academic. Collaboration with USA scholars and champions have enhanced the SA academic staff members' scholarship of engagement, critical reflective thinking and the urge to develop grounded theory and a conceptual framework for the South African context of HE. Yet if these models are uncritically assimilated into the SA context, SA scholars are ignoring the highly influential aspects of language, culture and content.

It can also be argued that the external segment of educational change (top-down approach) has dominated change since 1997. These policies, documents and initiatives are the externally mandated forces of change for the curricular community engagement movement, but external direction and the definition of large-scale reform or transformation do not ensure internally (at HEIs) implemented and sustained improvements. These are complex and call for institutional research to analyse and compare the fluctuating conditions of change at HEIs regarding curricular community engagement.

Internal educational change within higher education institutions to initiate and promote curricular community engagement

The promise of curricular community engagement lies in its potential to rejuvenate academia, redefine scholarship and involve society in a productive conversation about the role of education now and in the future.

To assist and support higher education institutions with the CSL movement (internal educational change), a conference on Community Engagement in Higher Education, hosted by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative of JET Education Services (JET) was held in Cape Town, South Africa from 3 to 5 September 2006. The overarching goal of the conference was to promote an enabling environment for the conceptualisation and implementation of community engagement in South African HEIs. (HEQC/JET, 2007). The conference focused on the implications of community engagement with HEI governance and management; the role and nature of partnerships for community engagement; community engagement through teaching and learning and research. This conference was a milestone in the community engagement movement in South Africa. As community engagement (CE) is a core

function in South African higher education and also the main reason for the proliferation of academic programmes that include CE, it was considered timely and appropriate to host a major conference on the subject. More than 200 delegates attended the conference, including nominated representatives from all public and numerous private HEIs in South Africa. The speakers included the Minster of Education, Vice-Chancellors of universities and community engagement scholars from India, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and South Africa.

Following from this conference, key constructs which support the implementation of curricular community engagement or community engagement through teaching and learning are extracted and summarised. These constructs for CCE are based on the content analysis of the HEQC/JET conference proceedings generated by the concurrent workshops and the participants' responses to the following questions: What conceptual framework is relevant and appropriate for community engagement through teaching and learning in South Africa?, and, What are the key challenges and enabling mechanisms that would facilitate community engagement through teaching and learning and how can the quality be managed?, and What are the key strategies and recommendations for advancing community engagement through teaching and learning? (Fourie & Bender in HEQC/JET, 2007).

All of the textual data were analysed by means of interpretative content analysis in a mostly inductive fashion (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I developed a hypothetical institutional model of CCE, which scrutinised the internal affairs of change (what should change at the institution) to provide pathways or strategies for educational changes. The developed research model is focused on the key strategies, challenges, enabling mechanisms and quality management required to implement CCE at higher education institutions in South Africa. The CCE model that illustrated in Figure 1 was designed to capture the main argument of this paper. The model is divided into four levels: institutional leadership and management, quality management, faculty/school/department and programme/module and CCE practices. The fundamental purpose of the model is to provide management support to establish the necessary conditions for exercising leadership and creating the internal educational change required to encourage academic staff members' involvement in curricular community engagement and, more specifically, in Community Service-Learning.
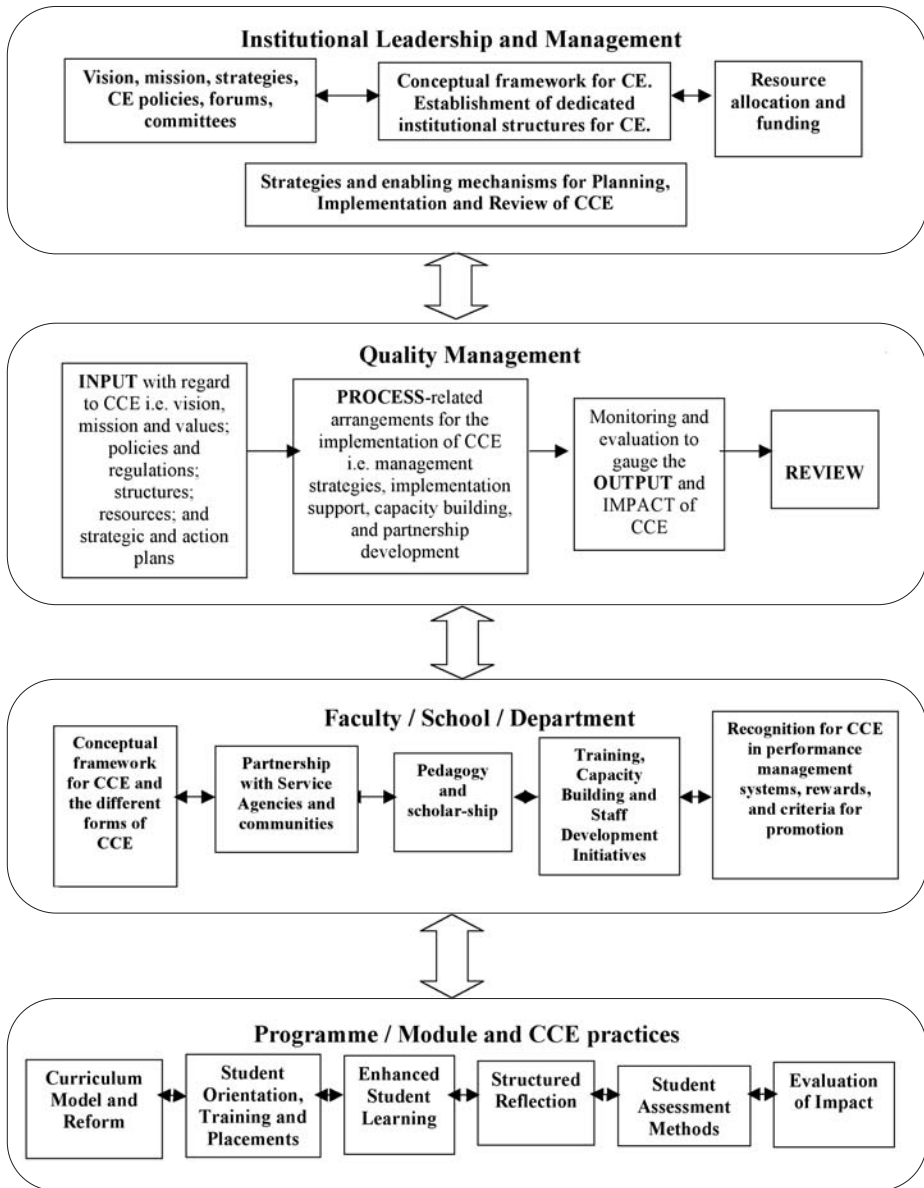
Institutional Leadership and Management

Vision, mission, strategies, CE policies, forums, committees ⟷ Conceptual framework for CE. Establishment of dedicated institutional structures for CE. ⟷ Resource allocation and funding

Strategies and enabling mechanisms for Planning, Implementation and Review of CCE

Quality Management

INPUT with regard to CCE i.e. vision, mission and values; policies and regulations; structures; resources; and strategic and action plans → PROCESS-related arrangements for the implementation of CCE i.e. management strategies, implementation support, capacity building, and partnership development → Monitoring and evaluation to gauge the OUTPUT and IMPACT of CCE → REVIEW

Faculty / School / Department

Conceptual framework for CCE and the different forms of CCE ⟷ Partnership with Service Agencies and communities ⟷ Pedagogy and scholar-ship ⟷ Training, Capacity Building and Staff Development Initiatives ⟷ Recognition for CCE in performance management systems, rewards, and criteria for promotion

Programme / Module and CCE practices

Curriculum Model and Reform ⟷ Student Orientation, Training and Placements ⟷ Enhanced Student Learning ⟷ Structured Reflection ⟷ Student Assessment Methods ⟷ Evaluation of Impact

Figure 1: A Curricular Community Engagement model

Institutional leadership and management

The members of HEI leadership and management in my view need to persuade themselves and others of the values and benefits of CE and CCE, by engaging with all constituencies and providing leadership and strategic direction. CCE can be viewed as a catalyst for the ongoing development and transformation of teaching and learning, and research programmes in relation to societal needs. Engaging with communities and their development priorities will require reflection on the existing teaching and learning, and research programmes. The vision and mission statements of HEIs should include and acknowledge CE as a core function of the institution (*Inclusion of CE)*. CCE has to be embedded in HEI policies and strategies, and include the desired outcomes and strategic objectives for CE and CCE (*Institution-wide policies and strategies*). This would allow HEIs to express the CE component of their vision and mission and give the necessary direction for implementation. In recent years, numerous South African HEIs have adopted institution-wide policies and strategies for CE and CCE, which may serve as examples to other institutions. The legitimacy and status of CE and CCE depend upon institutional leadership and management's commitment (*Institutional Management Commitment).*

Conceptual framework for CE – The Infusion or cross-cutting model

During the above-mentioned conference, three models of community engagement were proposed, namely the silo, intersecting and cross-cutting models. According to the Infusion (cross-cutting) model of CE, the HEI has two fundamental roles – teaching and learning, and research – and defines CE as a fundamental idea and perspective infused in and integrated with teaching and learning, and research. In this model, CE is informed by and conversely informs teaching and learning, and research. Teaching and learning, and research, are enriched in the context of CE; and CE in turn is enriched through the knowledge base of teaching and learning, and research (scholarship of engagement) (HEQC/JET 2007). This approach views community engagement as the central overriding goal of higher education, arguing that it should be embedded in all teaching, learning and research functions. This vision of community engagement requires complete infusion across all structures, policies, priorities, and so on. Advocates thereof argue that community service and engagement should be embraced and promoted as the means of improving the quality and relevance of teaching and learning, and research.

Establishment of dedicated institutional structures

A centre or an office dedicated to supporting the allocation of human and financial resources to such a structure is key to the promotion of CCE. The primary functions of such an office could be: to facilitate the implementation of the institution's CE and CCE policy and strategy; to act as an interface between the HEI and external partners (i.e. the community, local authority, service agencies, the private sector, etc.); to be a resource for academic staff and students; to encourage ethical engagement by students, academics and researchers; and to facilitate the cross-pollination of knowledge and transfer of skills between the HEI and its external partners. The CE office of an HEI should be strategically positioned to give ample effect to the scholarly contribution of CE to teaching and learning, and research. The strategic positioning of an office for CE inside the HEI is critical to shaping perceptions (of academic staff, students and external partners) of CE and to determining the nature of the CE programmes that are developed. Ideally this office/centre/unit should be accountable to an appropriate senior executive (e.g. Deputy Vice-Chancellor or equivalent)

and be located in a neutral space so that it is not perceived as being aligned with any particular faculty (*Strategic positioning)*.

It is essential for HEIs to make available sufficient and sustainable resources (human, financial and infrastructure) for CCE, since CCE is more resource-intensive than other forms of teaching and learning (*Resource allocation and funding)*. Such resources should be made available not only at institutional level, but also at national level where the provision of earmarked funding for CCE from the Department of Education would go a long way to promoting the establishment and development CCE, with the emphasis on Community Service-Learning (cf. Fourie & Bender in HEQC/JET, 2007).

Training, capacity building and staff development initiatives

Academic staff members' involvement and support are two of the strongest indicators for the successful institutionalisation of community-engaged strategies. Community-engaged teaching and learning strategies, such as Community Service-Learning, have only recently been given attention in staff development activities. Such strategies challenge academics to go beyond traditional practices – to incorporate new strategies of teaching and assessment. For most academics this goes far beyond their prior experience. Appropriate capacity-building programmes should be developed and implemented for all CE partners, including the HEI (i.e. management, academic staff members and students), the participating community leaders, representatives of government and non-governmental agencies and the private sector.

Recognition for CCE in performance management systems, rewards and criteria for promotion

Community engagement must be among the institution's priorities in order to realign its reward systems and provide incentives for greater academic participation. This would ensure long-term involvement by academics in community engagement initiatives. Academics involved in CCE and community-engaged teaching and learning dedicate considerable time and effort to these activities. If these activities are not part of the performance management process for recognition and promotion, community engagement may not become part of the culture and day-to-day functioning of a university. These measures will provide evidence of an institution's genuine commitment to community engagement (Fourie & Bender in HEQC/JET, 2007).

Programme / Module and CCE practices

I argue that HEIs should promote and support an integrated curriculum model for community-engaged teaching and learning. This is achievable when community engagement is embedded into the teaching/learning function of the institution. Integration requires a significant investment in planning, time and finances to reshape and restructure the existing and new modules/courses and, ultimately, to test and revise these new forms of teaching and learning. At both national and institutional levels there is a need for flexible and agile processes of programme approval (new programmes and programme amendments responsive to communities' needs). The ideas of higher education are put into action through curricula because the values, beliefs and principles relating to learning, understanding, knowledge, disciplines, the individual and society are realised through curricula.

Enhancement of student learning

In order to enhance student learning, CCE should include a significant component of relevant and meaningful service and purposeful civic learning; yet be carefully planned and constructed to ensure deep learning by the students involved. Activities could be structured for different groups of students (e.g. basic or introductory service-learning for first-year students, problem-based service-learning for senior students, etc.) in order to achieve these different forms of CCE teaching and learning.

Student orientation, training and placements

HEIs must ensure that their students are well prepared for and oriented to community placements. They could achieve this through presenting orientation sessions and workshops for students, academic staff and communities. Proper orientation and training imply that staff and students are adequately prepared for the tasks they will perform. Student orientation may occur in lecture venues and/or on site by the lecturer or service and/or the community agency site supervisor. Students also require a manual on the form of CCE (for example Community Service-Learning) to introduce the concept; orient them to general logistical considerations; introduce broader issues relating to the course/module and orient them to expectations and responsibilities. Students who are ill-prepared may find CE a negative experience and do more harm than good in their community placements.

Structured reflection

Opportunities for structured reflection by students are essential in CCE. Structured reflection includes a thoughtfully constructed process that challenges and guides students in examining the critical issues related to their CE teaching and learning projects; connecting the service experience to module/course content; enhancing the development of social responsibility and ethical skills and values; and assisting students with finding personal relevance in the work.

Academic staff play a key role in structuring the reflection process, and make design decisions about the following key aspects of the reflection process: learning outcomes; frequency and timing of reflection; the form of reflection; the reflection model and feedback/ assessment. Reflection activities may involve reading, writing, doing and telling.

Assessment methods

The assessment of CCE and community-engaged teaching and learning should satisfy the criteria for effective formative and summative assessment with linkage between learning outcomes, structured reflection and assessment. Provision for assessing the outcomes of the service component of the teaching/learning activities is also important. The course/module design and its implementation should ensure that the module content, its teaching and learning, methods and materials, and student support give students a fair chance of attaining the learning and service outcomes specified for the module.

Models of educational change reinstate the balance between internal affairs, the external framework and the personal perspectives of change. Internal agents have a considerable capacity to resist externally mandated change and, if academic staff morale is low and there is little personal investment by academic staff, change may remain more symbolic than substantive (Goodson,

2001). If educational change is to move from the realm of symbolic action into the realm of substantive changes, a new balance will have to be negotiated between personal, internal and external change. Only then will there be full engagement with the issues of sustainability and generalisability so that the forces of change can really move forward. Instead of forced changes, the forces of change will then, as the new conditions of change, engage collaboratively with the existing contexts of university life (Goodson, 2001).

Personal change in academics about Community Service-Learning (CSL) as a vehicle for change in Curricular Community Engagement at HEIs in South Africa

The importance of inner or personal concerns has been repeatedly proven in studies of institutional life. Change most often begins with a transformation of people's personal perceptions and the curricula for modules of academic programmes, and then ripples outward into the social and institutional domain (Goodson, 2001). Hence it is appropriate to give personal change the primary place in the analysis of educational change for curriculum reform and the integration of CSL in the core curriculum. This overturns the more institutionally-driven theories of educational change. These theories look at how to get people to change in institutions, whereas I agree that the focus should be on how people change internally and on how that personal change then plays out (Fullan, 1999; 2001; Hargreaves, 2000; Goodson, 2001). The academic's role in HEIs is so central that change theories and projects, which ignore the personal domain, are bound to miss their strategic objective by a wide margin.

My practice typically focuses on the facilitation of a training course for academic staff in the theory and practice of curriculum-related community engagement, with the emphasis on Service-Learning. In this section I share some of my observations and reflections gained from my experience of training 50 academic staff members in a module of the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (2004-2007) and in a Service-Learning Capacity Building Programme funded by JET/CHESP in 2005. These are my current personal beliefs, accumulated during my ongoing learning journey about CCE and SL and, as such, are part of a particular evolving mindset. They are offered here to prompt and contribute to the readers' own exploration of this complex topic.

I work in an interpretative paradigm and have integrated my observations and reflections with the textual data obtained from dialogues during contact sessions and workshops, and also with the structured reflective journals of all the academic staff members involved in CCE and SL training since 2004 at the University of Pretoria. These academics are at various levels (lecturer to full professor and directors) in a number of faculties and disciplines. Academic staff members express that they bring their personal beliefs, perceptions, experiences and knowledge into the modules that they teach.

Based on the dialogue during regular contact sessions, workshops ("team learning and thinking together") and content analysis of the reflective journals of academic staff members (2004-2007) at the University of Pretoria, I derived the following statements, constructs and criteria for the effectiveness of SL in the curriculum of academic programmes. The findings are based on how academic staff changed internally in their beliefs and perceptions of SL, from the start of the training module until the implementation of their modules with service-learning activities, and thus changed their perceptions of CSL.

The participating academics concurred that identifying a common definition of service-learning at a research university would help to create consistency across service-learning modules, encourage academics/lecturers to provide a quality service-learning experience for students, and enable academic staff to compare the impact of their service-learning experiences with other academic staff members who are also adopting service-learning as a pedagogic approach. SL is one way for a university to meet its obligations to prepare future citizens for the responsibilities of citizenship.

Service-Learning as a teaching strategy differs vastly from traditional classroom teaching, which is why academic staff articulated the need for training and support in service-learning design and implementation at a national level (Bender, 2005). It is the academic staff who design and offer the service-learning modules, and who are ultimately responsible for curricular reform. Therefore, academic staff involvement and development are crucial to the long-term success and institutionalisation of service-learning worldwide (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Stacey & Bender, 2005).

The academic staff who have designed and implemented SL in modules of academic programmes stated that they believe that the research university was moving more towards a scholarship of engagement (Service-Learning described in this way by Boyer, 1996) and that SL could be regarded as a vehicle for change which included greater institutional engagement and curriculum responsiveness to the needs of communities and society. It is, however, unlikely that a leading research university will give up its space to become a service-focused university/

We based our discussions and findings on our experiences with the implementation of SL in the curriculum and on the readings of Benson and Harkavy (2002), which describe service-learning as one of "a handful of creative, active pedagogies … that enhance a student's capacity to think critically, problem solve, and function as a citizen in a democratic society" (Benson & Harkavy, 2002:362). Engaged-learning pedagogies share the assumption that knowledge is actively co-constructed by educators, learners and also members of the community with whom we are working, and is labelled as "strands of reform" in higher education. These "strands" include service-learning, community-based research, integrative learning, collaborative learning and problem-based learning (cf. Swaner, 2007). Engaged pedagogies move from being exceptions to being the building blocks for a fundamental transformation in the way academics "teach" and students "learn" in higher education. By shifting engaged pedagogy and its philosophical base from the periphery to the centre of educational practice, institutions will move toward establishing larger cultures of engagement which can harness the full promise of engaged learning (Swaner, 2007).

Civic and social responsibility

Students develop the ethics of care and a sense of efficacy and ithe evidence can be found in their structured reflective journals. The life skills they learn outside the lecture hall are integrated into classroom learning. Students are challenged to pay deliberate attention to cultural differences and commonalties; and to consider the issues of power, privilege, prejudice and/or oppression. Civic engagement holds that students are engaged with communities beyond the campus. This concept of engagement, which is widely employed in service-learning literature, reflects two philosophies which are relevant and applicable to the South African context: firstly, the civic model that focuses on enabling students to become active, informed and empowered citizens of a participatory democracy (Hoppe, 2004), and secondly the communitarian model that emphasises the responsibilities that individuals have to the larger communities of which they are a part (Etzioni, 1995).

Integrative learning

This encompasses practices as thematic experiences or study unit experiences, interdisciplinary studies, final or fourth-year capstone experiences and other initiatives to foster students' ability to integrate concepts of community life and experiences across modules, over time and between campuses (Huber & Hutchings, 2004). The SL component of a module in an academic programme is directly linked to the learning outcomes of the module; each informs and transforms the other. They are integrated into the curriculum so that service goals and learning outcomes blend together and enrich one another. The goals of the SL component are clearly articulated in terms of the learning outcomes of the broader programme and foster students' ability to integrate concepts across modules and disciplines.

Structured reflection

Students undertake formal (structured) and informal reflection before, during and after their community service. Social, psychological, political and ethical factors are considered while reflecting on their service experience.

Quality service

The service component responds to the needs of the community as defined by the community. Goals are developed in the context of community needs, but with a focus on the assets/capacities of all partners (students, community partners, service providers, agencies/organisations, academic staff members, etc.).

Partnerships and collaboration with communities

Partners in the process develop a shared vision and formulate joint strategies with academics. Partners learn from and teach one another on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation

All partners, including the higher education institutions (academic staff and students), service agencies and communities, are involved in evaluating the process of the integration of SL in the curriculum and its impact on the community, service providers, students and academic staff members. Evaluation seeks to measure the progress made with achieving the learning and service outcomes of the module with SL activities.

Discussion: Interlinking personal, internal and external sectors of educational change to create pathways for Community Service-Learning in the core curriculum

The pathways to educational change, such as curriculum reform and change from community service or "add-ons" to the scholarship of Community Service-Leaning at HEIs in South Africa and hence integration into the core curriculum, require the systematic integration of external, internal and personal sectors in the change processes. The institutionalisation of CSL depends on an accepted internal and personal mission, characterised by passion, purpose, investment and ownership. Change should be embedded in new institutionalised practices and in the wider community. To change education is to change academics' work and their relationship with communities.

Educational change is most successful when curriculum reform sees academics' personal beliefs, internal missions and commitments as an inspiration for reform (which works best when carried out by academic staff members as part of their personal and professional tasks and functions) and also a necessary object of reform (the need to provide support for academic staff members to the point where they wish to take "ownership" of the reform).

In researching the paradigm shift from community service to Service-Leaning in HEIs in South Africa, it is acknowledged that curricular community engagement requires new methods and strategies, which in turn require training and skill building for the university staff and the community members with whom the university builds a partnership. It is proposed that creating and developing an "academy of community-engaged scholars" to deepen knowledge, share methods and improve practices becomes a priority for the professional development of academic staff. Curricular community engagement – and therefore the scholarship of engagement – is difficult work. In my view, it lies at the heart of what higher education is about and as such, it requires institution-wide effort, deep commitment at all levels and leadership from both the university and the community.

Conclusion

The research into the SL movement and the educational change at HEIs in South Africa is significant because change, such as CSL, promotes academic excellence and also because CSL is becoming more central to institutional change at universities in South Africa. It has an added significance, because academic staff members are pivotal to higher education, and their involvement is essential if SL is to be embedded in academic programmes. As a vehicle for change, SL includes greater institutional engagement and responsiveness to the needs of communities and society. The research university addresses these needs by institutionalising SL and making the curriculum responsive to them.

South African academics interested in curricular community engagement with the emphasis on Community Service-Learning have a golden opportunity to develop significant programmes of teaching/learning and research, entailing many and rich consequences for higher education and communities. CSL provides an opportunity to conduct serious and scholarly work (Bringle & Hatcher, 2005). CSL will be most significant when it results in scholarship, namely the scholarship of engagement, which integrates the scholarships of teaching, discovery, application and integration. I challenge all academic staff at HEIs in South Africa to take seriously the opportunities for research and community-engaged scholarship, to rejuvenate academia, to make our curriculum more responsive to regional and national needs, and to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness among students about the role that higher education can play in social and economic development through Community Service-Learning. I also appeal for theory and research on the one hand, and practice on the other, to be realigned in curricular community engagement.

Researchers and practitioners look forward to the future dissemination of publications on the Community Service-Learning movement in South Africa. They see vast opportunities and huge challenges. The growth in the movement in the past three to five years has provided a foundation for sustained expansion. We need new models, theoretical foundations and good practices for the multiple forms of curricular community engagement.

Acknowledgements

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