# INTERNATIONAL
# SERVICE LEARNING

Conceptual Frameworks and Research

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Chapter:

## A SOUTH AFRICAN
## PERSPECTIVE ON NORTH
## AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL
## SERVICE LEARNING

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occurs more and more often that students from abroad, and some from other African countries, take part in service learning, study abroad, or community-based research activities. For me personally, and for our university with its growing emphasis on internationalization, it is thus a most opportune time to engage in a research collaborative that specifically focuses on ISL, in all its variations and myriad implications for a highly diverse set of possible participants and contexts.

Reflecting on North American ISL from a South African perspective is like holding up a mirror. The concept of service learning was fairly recently brought to South Africa from the United States; and thus, our understanding of ISL is influenced by U.S. conceptualizations and practice. In response to the call of the South African government to increase the social responsibility of higher education institutions and their students, there has recently been increasing support for the pedagogy of service learning as a valuable form of community engagement involving the active participation of higher education staff, students, and external stakeholders. The growing support largely came about as a result of the national Community—Higher Education—Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative of the Joint Education Trust (which later became the JET Education Services section of the Trust). The CHESP initiative was launched in 1999 in partnership with the Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Lazarus, 2001). CHESP's strong link to donor organizations and universities of the United States naturally resulted in the introduction into the South African agenda of service learning as a well-established mechanism for integrating service with the learning programs of students, and also as a preferred form of civic engagement in the United States (Thomson, Smith-Tolken, Naidoo, & Bringle, 2008). Among the myriad possibilities relating to how community engagement could be integrated with academic work through teaching and learning, service learning appeared on the South African horizon as a well-defined, well-considered pedagogy with committed advocates from the United States who were flown in regularly with U.S. donor funding through the CHESP initiative. All along, these experts have been able and willing to guide South African colleagues in exploring, investigating, and investing in service learning. Subsequently, the notion of service learning found its way into important national documents such as those produced by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC, 2004a, 2004b) in preparation for the first round of institutional audits.

Misgivings about the wisdom behind importing an educational approach from the United States have increased over the past five years or so. What previously amounted mainly to a frustration with the "McDonaldization" of the world, deepened considerably after the invasion of Iraq. The persistent

holding of people in detention without trial at Guantanamo Bay, and evidence of widespread torture (horrible images from the Abu Ghraib Prison, terms such as *renditions* and *water-boarding*), remind South Africans of the worst days of Apartheid, but in this case these human rights violations are/were executed overtly and on a grand, international scale. When the word "democracy" is used by the present U.S. government, many fear the worst. . . . [1] Will Iran be invaded next?

By the time we realized how unacceptable we found the actions of the United States (especially in view of our own sad and terrible past), many of us who had been participating in the CHESP initiatives had already decided that service learning could add immense value to the training of our students and to the ways in which higher education institutions are engaged with communities. In addition, the trust and appreciation we had developed for the U.S. proponents of service learning and what they stand for could not be eradicated by our apprehension about the current role of the United States in the world. In view of the persistence of the wide gap between what is stipulated by the South African Constitution, on the one hand, and the harsh realities of the lives of the majority of people in the country, on the other, we also realize that we need to work closely with colleagues in the United States and other countries in our efforts to find more effective ways to prepare students for their future roles as responsible citizens and leaders of their countries and the world. What I value, above all, in respect to what we have gained from the example of our U.S. colleagues is their willingness to validate our initiatives, almost in the spirit of Appreciative Inquiry (see Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008), and to listen and share without being judgmental or prescriptive, thus enabling us to believe wholeheartedly in what we can achieve through service learning.

In view of the above, the aim of my contribution to the present project will be to reflect on how I understand North American ISL, and more particularly research on North American ISL, as presented in the chapters in this volume as well as some other sources. The reflective surface (mirror) that I shall hold up will include (mainly service learning) perspectives from the South African context, as an example of a (potential) host country—the only one I know well.

## Conceptualizing ISL—Opportunities for a Constructive Dialogue

According to Plater (chapter 2), ISL finds its context within the notions of internationalization and global awareness, as two of the leading issues that drive the engagement of North American higher education institutions

in international activities. Plater points out that some of the many threads that are woven together in this regard include divergent motivations such as, "global economics and competition," "humanitarian concerns," "global philanthropy," and "the press for democratic societies." With a view to ISL, Plater frames the response of North American higher education to the growing internationalization movement in terms of "a new insight regarding the way in which globally competent citizenship might be defined and developed as a conceptual model" (chapter 2). My contention is that perspectives from host countries of ISL students could and should add to these insights.

To me, it seems as if there is still a need to find a more balanced approach (Furco, 1996) to potential ISL outcomes, namely, between (a) learning and development outcomes for students (e.g., globally competent citizenship), and (b) service or other outcomes for host country community participants (not to be referred to as "beneficiaries" or "recipients"). This is underscored by the question posed by Tonkin (chapter 9) as to whether the roots of ISL are more deeply embedded in community service or in study abroad. The key to the search for a more balanced conceptualization lies in the recognition that ISL involves a multiplicity of actors, perspectives, policies, and the like, broadly represented by the service learners themselves and the population with which they interact (Tonkin, chapter 9). The chapters in this publication, and my personal experience with U.S. ISL students, leads me to concur with Tonkin's contention that the North American ISL agenda (my term) is currently determined largely by the U.S. higher education structures, ideologies of service and engagement, and concepts of experiential learning. The following statement also seems valid: "American models of ISL stress [the] impact on [the] student—sometimes to an unsettling degree" (Tonkin, chapter 9). This leaves us with the following question: To what extent does the ISL enterprise exist to serve a North American purpose?

Ironically, or perhaps typically, the above reminds me of our more painful local service learning experiences; that is, those wake-up calls that occur when community partners have the courage to warn the university that the latter is perceived to be mainly serving its own purposes through its service learning agenda. It is therefore from a critical, self-reflective vantage point that I present my South African-based perspectives, as tentative contributions to future dialogue with a (potential) host country. This is also in response to Tonkin's question: "How can service, learning, and service learning be defined and redefined from multiple (non-United States) perspectives?" (chapter 9). This question in itself opens up opportunities for collaborative research, including comparative studies that could be mutually enriching. For example, working

with Julie Hatcher (Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008), we draw comparisons between the U.S. approach to service learning as it relates to John Dewey's theory of the role of education in a democracy, and the South African approach, with reference to an African perspective (i.e., "education for self-definition and self-reliance," as proposed by Nyerere [Assié-Lumumba, 2005, pp. 51–52]). Nyerere's educational philosophy contributed valuable insight in terms of the contention that developing countries should be wary of situations in which they are forced into juxtaposition with external ideas and realities, but should rather be pro-active and strive toward "fusion by choice" (Assié-Lumumba, 2005, pp. 38–53) from a position of self-affirmation when faced by strong external influences. I saw this as a constructive way of looking at how service learning is finding its South African space; it might also be an appropriate way for ISL host countries to deal with this form of U.S. involvement.

Service learning, the primary lens through which I currently view ISL, is brand new in South Africa compared to the United States and, thus, still needs to find its academic space and an authentic, local voice. In South African publications (Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naudé, & Sattar, 2006, p. 24; HEQC/JET, 2006, p. 16), the definition of service learning by Bringle and Hatcher (2004, p. 127) is cited. In addition, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are based on experiential learning (e.g., Dewey, 1916, 1933; Kolb, 1984) and the well-known typology of student engagement put forward by Furco (1996). From the South African experience of working in the field of service learning, however, it has become clear that our circumstances demand that we add indigenous conceptualizations and emphasize aspects that will reflect our context more effectively (Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008; Thomson et al., 2008). The definition of service learning that we work with at the University of the Free State thus includes the following explicit reference to the nature of the partnerships required:

[Service learning] requires a collaborative partnership context that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership (lecturers and students, members of the communities and representatives of the service sector). (University of the Free State, 2006)

It is encouraging to read U.S. problematizations of the conceptualization of service learning, which would naturally also, at least in part, be applicable in the case of ISL. One example is Beilke's (2005) argument that the educational ideas of Boyer (1990, 1994), an important impetus behind civic engagement and service learning in America, are deeply elitist, essentially

contending that the world is to be "acted upon" by academic elites. Another example is Butin's (2006) warning that service learning has taken on the status of a "grand narrative" in the United States. He argues that "there may be a fundamental and unbridgeable gap between the rhetoric and reality of the aspirations of the present-day service learning movement" (Butin, 2006, p. 474). In South Africa, service learning proponents also find themselves grappling with philosophical, paradigmatic, and epistemological issues—owing to the highly politicized environment in which higher education is attempting to reposition itself and redefine its role while being pulled in many directions. This situation is aggravated by a range of "morbid symptoms" (to quote the Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, 1971) resulting from the recent consecutive interregnums—previously between Apartheid and democracy; more recently between the more elitist Mbeki-era and the Zuma or populist era. One such challenge lies in finding a disciplinary home and/or departmental positioning for service learning in the current South African context, including, inter alia, adult education, development centers, and higher education studies. Colleagues (conformably) based in disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and development studies, have challenged service learning proponents about the use of concepts such as "community," "sustainability," and "development," bringing to mind Kahn's (chapter 6) warning about "succumbing to colonialist models of development." During the Community Service policy review process at the University of the Free State, much time and effort went into finding a broadly acceptable response to the questions: Who is the "community" in "community engagement"? Do terms like "service" and "development" denote a paternalistic positioning of the University? U.S. faculty and their ISL students who wish to become involved in an environment where stakeholders are engaged in trying to work out these tricky matters could make valuable contributions, and at the same time learn much about the practical challenges posed by living and working in highly diverse societies.

In South Africa, the overworked notion of higher education "transformation" has almost become devoid of meaning by now. The fact remains, however, that higher education institutions all over the world are bound to become irrelevant if they forget that serving the public interest (or the public good), in a knowledge-based way, is their raison d'être. The rapid pace of change everywhere thus forces higher education to place itself at the forefront of transformative thinking, and engaging deeply with the world at a local, national, international, and global level is a prerequisite for this (Plater, chapter 2; Tonkin, chapter 9). In the Preamble of the Community Service Policy

of the University of the Free State, the challenge of transformation is explicitly linked to the repositioning of the University within the African context:

> The Policy acknowledges the concurrent challenge of operating in a truly African reality and reflecting an African consciousness and identity, and undertakes to champion the contextualisation of the University of the Free State as a university of excellence in, and for, Africa. The Community Service Policy thus envisions community engagement in the form of a pioneering approach that is increasingly integrated with teaching, learning and research. (University of the Free State, 2006)

Spurred on by U.S. colleagues (Bringle & Hatcher, 2005) to advance the scholarly agenda of service learning through theory-based research, I have utilized a theoretical framework for thinking about service learning's potential role in preparing students to engage with our highly complex world in the spirit of "Mode 2" knowledge production (Erasmus, 2007), which seems relevant to ISL as well. Gibbons' (2006) notion of engagement as a core value in a Mode 2 society currently serves as a metaphor by which to live and work, as I strive to balance the exciting possibilities with the potential disasters inherent in service learning.

During the past decade, the South African higher education arena was influenced by, or rather exposed to, the Mode 2 knowledge debate initiated by Gibbons and several others. Kraak (2000, pp. 2, 10) succinctly distinguishes the new Mode 2 from traditional Mode 1 knowledge production by describing the former as open, intrinsically transdisciplinary, trans-institutional, and heterogeneous, and adds: "In short, Mode 2 is problem-solving knowledge" (Kraak, 2000, p. 2). Some hoped that this debate would cause a stir in the comfort zones of academics with an elitist orientation. Higher education's community engagement and even service learning were also featured in that debate (Subotzky, 2000). During the past three years, Gibbons has taken the Mode 2 argument to a subsequent level, inter alia in a presentation in Queensland, Australia, where he contended that a new social contract between science and society was required, which would radically change the way in which higher education institutions go about their business (Gibbons, 2005). More recently (and locally), he was a keynote speaker at the broadly representative national Community Engagement conference that was held in Cape Town in September 2006—a source of irritation to some; but for others, including myself, his persuasive argumentation serves as an extended metaphor that can, inter alia, add to our understanding of service learning, and

potentially also of ISL. In short, Gibbons (2006) argues that higher education institutions all over the world should face the fact that they live and work in a Mode 2 society, both locally and globally. According to him, the emergence of a Mode 2 world is a response to the growing complexity of problems and issues that need to be addressed, as well as to the increasing uncertainty in respect thereof. This collective Mode 2 response contributes, in its turn, to the blurring, infringement, and permeability of traditional boundaries between the various institutions of society—the state, market, industry, culture, and science. Both higher education staff and students are thus forced out into the *agora* or marketplace where knowledge-related issues are negotiated, within myriad transaction spaces, for the production of socially robust knowledge.

In an article about the role of service learning in preparing a new generation of scientists for a Mode 2 society and world (Erasmus, 2007), I have argued that both higher education staff and students are afforded an opportunity to develop skills that are required for such a world through the more open, participatory knowledge-generation ethos of service learning. To my mind, it may be useful to conceptualize ISL within the Mode 2 paradigm as well. How can this theoretical framework be employed for research into service learning and ISL? Perhaps it could be useful in deliberations about critical aspects of partnerships, participation, reciprocity, and mutuality that are inherent in both these forms of engagement. Chapters by Kahn (chapter 6), Sutton (chapter 7), Kiely and Hartman (chapter 13), Whitney and Clayton (chapter 8), and Longo and Saltmarsh (chapter 4) illustrate how collaborative, participatory, and community-focused ISL can reflect some of the thinking contained in Gibbon's Mode 2 approach.

## Partnerships, Participation, and Reciprocity—An Evidence-Based Approach

In my opinion, the three most noteworthy contributions that the North American conceptualization of service learning has made to South African higher education are the following:

1. An understanding of how the academic curriculum can be utilized to foster a sense of responsible citizenship in students;
2. An appreciation of the value of thoughtfully structured critical reflection during the community-based (service) learning experience; and
3. Renewed interest in and commitment to the cultivation of reciprocal relationships within partnership formations.

It is especially in respect of the third point that much interest has arisen among those in South Africa who regard service learning with a good measure of skepticism. Moreover, it seems that service learning and ISL colleagues in the United States are currently also paying special attention to this matter, as evidenced, for example, by the fact that the theme of the Eighth International Research Conference on Service Learning and Community Engagement, held in New Orleans in 2008, was: *The Scholarship of Engagement: Dimensions of Reciprocal Partnerships*. Longo and Saltmarsh (chapter 4) point out that many questions about reciprocity in an international context still remain unanswered and are in need of investigation. They also point out that ISL students should be prepared "not to assume the onus of contributing to community change," but should be willing and ready to participate in reflective inquiry into matters concerning the local context that need critical interrogation. I suggest that ISL students should specifically be prepared for, and guided in, reflecting with others in the host environment, in order to allow for non-judgmental "connecting" (Kiely, 2005, p. 8; see also Whitney & Clayton, chapter 8) and mutuality through the joint construction and reciprocal flow of knowledge.

In South Africa, misgivings about the possibility of achieving reciprocity in service learning partnerships were expressed as early as 2000, at the very inception of the CHESP initiative. In a publication that introduced the Gibbons debate on "new knowledge production and its implications for higher education in South Africa," under the title *Changing Modes* (Kraak, 2000), Subotzky (2000, p. 114) refers to the "politics of partnerships" and points out that service learning is prone to unequal power relations as a result of the fact that the interests of one partner (especially the academy) easily become dominant. According to him, the ideal is "to recognize and mediate the partners' differences in identities, roles, capacities and interests through relations of mutuality and reciprocity" (Subotzky, 2000, p. 114), which implies building capacity toward the joint ownership, design, control, and evaluation of community engagement endeavors. In accordance with Gibbons' notion of a Mode 2 society, Subotzky (2000, p. 103) points out that transdisciplinary, multisectoral, and inter-institutional approaches are required when complex challenges are addressed; and in the developing country context, this reality can be expressed by a slogan such as: "partnerships or perish." Higher education institutions in South Africa increasingly have to account for the quality and depth of their engagement with communities in negotiating a sound balance between the higher education's agenda and the developmental and other goals of these communities. It is not always possible to hold service agencies responsible for facilitating such engagements. Owing to a shortage of

financially strong service agencies (nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations) who can speak on behalf of local communities in the Free State province, faculty involved in service learning at the University of the Free State strive toward the formation of triad partnerships (including the voices and participation of service agencies, the service sector, and community residents) that would/could/should be more conducive to reciprocity and mutuality.

It can be assumed that partnership formation in the *agora*, as Gibbons (2006) suggests, will bring about a profound change in the rules of engagement between higher education and society. In such an environment, where boundaries have become blurred, knowledge is contextualized as a result of the "reverse communication" that takes place when society "speaks back" to science (Gibbons, 2006, p. 22). In the South African development context this would mean that local communities become increasingly emancipated and that they therefore insist on participating in knowledge-production on their own terms. This implies that their voices must be heard when agendas and rules are set for engaging in joint projects and programs. For both service learning and ISL, this entails increased possibilities for achieving the rather elusive ideals of reciprocity and mutuality (Bringle, Hatcher, & Williams, chapter 12; Longo & Saltmarsh, chapter 4; Whitney & Clayton, chapter 8).

In the Preamble of the University of the Free State Community Service Policy (University of the Free State, 2006), the university undertakes to become "a model of a truly robust and responsive university that uses its teaching, research and community service capacities to make a significant contribution to the development of its province and also that of its wider region, South Africa and Africa." Providing evidence of such a significant contribution poses a considerable challenge for those engaged in community engagement and service learning. Where ISL students are involved, U.S. faculty could assist in shouldering this burden of proof through international collaboration and participatory research projects in the field. In addition, involvement of international participants could play a significant role in facilitating partnership relations across various divides and in dissipating some of the tensions that exist in local transaction spaces.

For example, Robert Bringle has been present in South Africa and has mediated in instances where community constituencies felt compelled to speak back to managers, administrators, and faculty at the University of the Free State about the purpose and outcomes of service learning and other forms of community engagement. Questions such as the following were asked at various stages: "Where is the sustainability in service learning?" and "Who will do the development [i.e., after the students have left and obtained their

degrees]?" In instances where training was provided as part of a service learning initiative, the following was pointed out by a spokesperson, "Community members say they cannot eat books." After having attended several service learning partnership meetings (during the early days of CHESP), community members informed us that they could not return home after a day's deliberations without food to put on the table for their family. Another response to service learning involvement at a specific site was: "Your students get their degrees, but we are still 'volunteers' without jobs." Incidentally, these "volunteer" youths were called upon several times to "entertain" ISL and study abroad students from the United States. The fact of the matter is that the sheer physical distance from some ISL sites, coupled with the perceptions of the United States as an exceptionally privileged society, inevitably limits the possibilities for hearing the voices of community members. My contention is that sustained collaboration with community sites where higher education institutions of host countries are involved in long-term partnerships is bound to create spaces that are more conducive to dialogue and the two-way flow of various forms of knowledge.

In my view, such a flow of knowledge(s) facilitates reciprocity in the form of mutual learning and collaborative knowledge construction. Thus, an evidence-based approach to reciprocity in service learning and ISL could entail, inter alia, the obligation to provide evidence of curriculum development (for both service learning and ISL courses) through contextualization and enrichment of course content and through capturing and including relevant forms of local knowledge, experiential understanding, skills, and constructive, hopeful attitudes.

In an effort to create transaction spaces for knowledge flows, the University of the Free State focuses its collaboration with the communities that it serves on several "flagship" sites, referred to as "key sites for multidisciplinary engagement" in the 2006 Community Service Policy (University of the Free State, 2006). The first urban partnership site that was developed, the Mangaung-University of the Free State Community Partnership Program (MUCPP), was initially funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The rural partnership site (Khula Xhariep Partnership, 2009) is situated in the sparsely populated, resource-scarce, and totally under-serviced southern part of the Free State province; and, situated in a former "homeland" or "Bantustan," the QwaQwa campus of the university has also been identified as a key engagement site. The QwaQwa region has been identified as a Presidential nodal point for development initiatives and thus holds the promise of the availability of national and international funding earmarked for development projects. In these and many other transaction spaces various sectors of society need to

find ways to work together in addressing the many challenges that they face. According to the Gibbons metaphor that I have referred to above, one could consider service learning and ISL faculty and students as "boundary objects" (Gibbons, 2006, pp. 25–26), or rather boundary subjects/agents/actors, who will increase the permeability of boundaries by moving across these boundaries many times. Ideally, in the process, they will assist the various local actors in finding a common language for action that should eventually be reflected in the contextualization of curricula.

By facilitating collaborative knowledge (re)construction across boundaries, service learning and ISL agents promote what Fourie (2003, p. 37) refers to as utilization of local epistemologies and cosmologies. A systematic inquiry into this matter needs to be undertaken, building on the seminal work done by McMillan (2002), who focuses on "knowledge reproduction processes in a service learning curriculum" (p. 55), and O'Brien (2005), who argues for the specific grounding of service learning in the South African context. Such an investigation should build on the conviction that the "knowledge society" is currently infused with "possibilities to explore alternative, innovative knowledge flows in order to enable the political empowerment of communities to foster their entry into the knowledge era on their own terms, as knowledge producers and users," as Bawa (2003, p. 50) so eloquently puts it. This obviously opens up exciting possibilities for collaborative research (e.g., El Ansari, Phillips, & Zwi, 2002).

The foregoing resonates with the argument of Longo and Saltmarsh (chapter 4), who advocate the development of long-term partnerships and the selection of sites on the basis of academic learning objectives that would enable community members to fulfill a meaningful role as coeducators (see also Whitney & Clayton, chapter 8). The authors point out that it seems easier to make the epistemological argument about the value of knowledge being created outside the confines of the classroom in respect of international experiences, than in respect to education on the home campus, and add: "Yet, it is essential that as with any service learning experience, the service is set up in a way that really does value the contributions of the local community" (Longo & Saltmarsh, Chapter.4). In my view, the following research question arises from this statement: What forms of evidence of local community contributions have been valued and how can they be collected and presented?

The University of the Free State's strategies for advancing faculty involvement in endeavors of joint knowledge construction in the *agora* through service learning might be relevant for ISL as well. These have included the following: (a) linking service learning with personal scholarship agendas of faculty; and (b) including engaged scholarship in performance (promotion

and tenure) incentives for faculty. As far as the second strategy is concerned, the implication is that faculty should endeavor to connect their own "scholarly service to the community," as it is referred to in the performance management document of the University of the Free State, directly to the service learning placement sites where their students are placed. The fact is that service learning activities of students are not always as meaningful for communities as might be hoped; and thus, by connecting faculty as subject specialists to these communities, a second level of more sustained intervention can be created that also promotes understanding and mutual learning, with the ultimate aim of increasingly grounding course content in the communities. In a similar vein, promoting direct engagement of ISL administrators and faculty with host-country faculty members and their local partners should further strengthen research collaboration and ensure that ISL initiatives are relevant and contextualized.

## Impressions of and Reflections on ISL Research

The deliberate increase in emphasis on service learning research in the United States would also influence scholarly approaches to and research on ISL. In her contribution regarding what ISL can learn from research on service learning, Eyler outlines what now constitutes a cumulative body of research and evaluation studies that has yielded, in her words, "a fairly consistent pattern of small but significant impact on adolescents' and college students' personal, social/citizenship and academic outcomes" (chapter 10). Over recent years, U.S. research on the various types of student outcomes associated with service learning has grown in sophistication and rigor to the point that ISL proponents, as well as practitioners and researchers in other countries embarking on service learning initiatives, can learn from the wealth of experience in the field. Through my work with faculty who are engaged in service learning at the University of the Free State, I know and appreciate that the first, almost instinctive urge of faculty is to establish whether all the extra effort is worthwhile in terms of what their students gain. Subsequent questions that arise are: Why? or Why not? and How can it be improved? Quantitative research approaches followed by U.S. scholars (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Bringle, Phillips, & Hudson, 2004; Bringle et al., chapter 12) thus provide a benchmark—we need not try to reinvent the wheel in this regard. A key service learning faculty member and colleague (Naudé, 2008) at the University of the Free State recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation, with Professor Bringle as her main supervisor, in which she investigated the role of reflection in service learning for psychology students. Her study helped to place us in a position

of considerable strength regarding the use of quantitative methodologies in service learning research.

More light is shed on aspects of ISL student outcomes in the contribution by Kiely (chapter 11), in which he provides a brief history of various forms of international learning, as well as an informative literature review on various theories of intercultural and transformative learning that would also be of great value in studying local service learning experiences in South Africa. From a host-country perspective, one would wish to investigate the other side of the coin as well; that is, the effects that the presence of ISL students have on individuals and communities at the placement site. This effect could include some measure of "culture shock" and various "disorienting dilemmas" brought about by these encounters with strangers. Since transformative intercultural learning involves tacit, visceral elements inherent in the personal, emotional, and spiritual impact of ISL experiences, it seems evident that qualitative (Kiely & Hartman, chapter 13) and mixed-method approaches, as well as the triangulation of results, would be required in order to allow for the emergence of clearer patterns of outcomes and responses.

A possible gap that I have discerned, in terms of the impact of ISL on students, is that investigations do not reflect awareness, on the part of faculty, of the fact that ISL student development provides an ideal opportunity to foster critical awareness of the contentious position of the United States in the world. U.S. perspectives regarding what global citizenship entails are bound to be intrinsically linked with critical reflections on the role that the United States plays on the world stage; for ISL students, their interactions with host-country people provide unique opportunities to gain broader, more nuanced perspectives on developing a new generation of American citizens with a view to ensuring the future of democracy (Levine, 2007).

In alignment with the special attention to student outcomes, the responsibility toward students needs to be counterbalanced by accountability to other participants, as Whitney and Clayton point out (chapter 8). In a developing country it might be more important to convince our local community partners of the validity and value of the research than our academic peers, some of whom might never be convinced anyway. Garlick (2003) points out the importance of first benchmarking higher education engagement endeavors with regard to legitimate expectations of regional partners and then with other higher education institutions. Such a refocus of attention on local constituencies (which would be situated in the host country in the case of ISL) would require that monitoring, evaluation, and research should be undertaken in collaboration with participants directly involved in the experiences. To an increasing degree, such participants insist on being given a full say in higher education's engagement activities to ensure that such involvement will be responsive and relevant to both local and global issues. We are directly accountable and have to go on living and working with the "victims" of our service learning (and your ISL) endeavors. A colleague from the University of KwaZulu-Natal is of the opinion that higher education institutions in actual fact "inflict" their students on communities if good service learning practices are not followed.

In the following statement, Tonkin emphasizes the broad accountability that is required, and posits ISL (and service learning) research as an ethical imperative:

... we need to know whether present [ISL] practices are achieving their objectives, or indeed achieving any objectives at all. Not only are we accountable to our funders, our institutions, and our students; we are also accountable to our hosts and the public good. Thus research is more than an academic exercise: it is an ethical imperative. (chapter 9)

Providing scholarship-based evidence of accountability, good practices, and quality management (Erasmus, 2009) is especially important in developing countries (typically "targeted" as host countries for ISL) where higher education funding and other resources are very scarce. In view thereof, any higher education intervention always needs to be carefully scrutinized. It is crucial to structure ISL partnerships in such a way that transaction spaces are created for addressing mutual challenges in participatory ways. This will also require rethinking research topics and strategies for ISL, and refocusing attention to achieve a more equitable, balanced research agenda that is aimed at benefiting all the main stakeholders.

One of the main gaps that currently exists in ISL research, as identified by several U.S. scholars and chapters in this volume (Kiely & Hartman, chapter 13; Longo & Saltmarsh, chapter 4; Tonkin, chapter 9; Whitney & Clayton, chapter 8), is that there is a need to focus more attention on host community impact studies. Some questions arise in this regard: To what extent are community voices heeded by sending institutions? Do these institutions rely heavily on community agency intervention and representation? Is this philanthropic? Is it good service learning and ISL? As emphasized by Kiely (chapter 11) and Whitney and Clayton (chapter 8), deeper exploration of these issues through intentional reflection and participatory, collaborative research paradigms is required; and data should be collected from various sources of information, leading to joint interpretation of results to inform action. The challenge is that all of these activities are essentially time-consuming undertakings, including ongoing negotiations to build trust; getting a representative group of stakeholders on board; managing unequal power-relations; and

coping with disappointment. In our context we sometimes have to accept that we can only hope to "fail forward," nonetheless remaining committed to the journey—even if we are not always focused on a specific destination.

A mutual challenge that both sending- and host-country faculty have to tackle head-on relates to the need to provide convincing evidence of outcomes of service learning and ISL initiatives. This would entail negotiating the question as to what will be regarded as indicators of progress and of the achievement of goals that have been jointly determined. We need to find ways to make what we have achieved and built together through joint ISL courses and programs to be visible. I would therefore argue in favor of having written agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding, between universities and community partners that include stated goals, specify procedures for joint governance, and outline some form of visible, measurable evidence of outcomes, whether for project-based or more process-oriented ISL and service learning (for an example of such measurable service learning outcomes, see Krause, 2007). A Memorandum of Understanding fits in the South African context for supporting the arrangements for community engagement and the following is an example of what could be included, based on the template, Guidelines for Service Learning Collaboration (University of the Free State, n.d.) of the University of the Free State: The pre-implementation agreement will include, inter alia, joint formulation of "a collective vision and goals," "expectations and anticipated benefits for each partner," and "the partnership's anticipated products and any copyright or ownership issues." Evaluative, impact-related questions in a post-implementation interview with partners would then include the following:

- *How do you understand the purpose of this service learning project?*
- *How did you/your organization benefit from being involved in it?*
- *Were the benefits different from those you expected at the beginning of the service learning project? Please explain.*
- *In what ways do you believe that you influenced the University as a result of your connection with one of its courses/projects?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving the service learning project in the future?*
(Evaluation Instruments available at UFS, online)

Reflective questions in a South African publication containing a self-evaluation instrument for faculty are, however, intended to probe deeper for examples of evidence than the above questions (HEQC/JET, 2006, pp. 67–79). One such question is: "To what degree were the explicit goals of the partnership attained?" (HEQC/JET, 2006, p. 79). In my opinion it remains for the participants to decide collaboratively on what would constitute success for the service learning or ISL partnership, and for each constituency involved. And, it is in negotiating, monitoring, and evaluating such explicit indicators of success that the challenge of and opportunities for reciprocity, mutuality, and balancing of benefits (and risks) become evident.

In addition to making outcomes measurable, even visible, the real challenge is to do more than merely paying lip service to reciprocity, as pointed out before. I believe that innovative research will be required to prove that service learning and ISL actually do involve reciprocal teaching and learning—that is, that they facilitate a two-way flow of knowledge, understanding, wisdom, skills, and constructive dispositions. A key strategy might be to involve local researchers, community agencies, and organizations—who may be assumed to have gained "experiential understanding"—in endeavors of joint knowledge construction. What, then, will constitute proof of the inclusion of and recognition of local knowledge(s)? As mentioned above, evidence could be provided by including such knowledge in course content through curriculum development. How can such a process be facilitated? At the University of the Free State we have included data collection questions for faculty and students, through which we hope to stimulate, activate, and capture the knowledge that is reproduced, created, and constructed jointly. The questions incorporated into our web-based course portfolio for faculty, include the following, "What did you and the students learn from partners?" and "How will the knowledge mentioned above be utilized to enrich and contextualize the curriculum content?" (University of the Free State, 2008, pp. 23–25).

In addition to the above, we have recently added a new assignment to our faculty service learning training program that involves several hours of observation (listening and learning) at the intended placement sites for students; faculty members have to produce a site report in which they specifically reflect on the question as to what knowledge, wisdom, and skills can potentially be contributed by the community and other external partners. The post-implementation course evaluation instrument for students (UFS, online) also contains questions aimed at collecting evidence of knowledge gained from external partners and fellow students. Under the heading, learning from others (reciprocity), the following questions are asked:

- What did you learn from community members?
- What did you learn from the service sector staff?
- What did you learn from your fellow students?

Another gap in research seems to exist in both the service learning and ISL fields in the area of program evaluation studies. Again, one should take into consideration that interactions are highly complex, necessitating the utilization of a variety of research methodologies, as well as the inclusion of various stakeholders and interested parties in the evaluation research teams. In South Africa, the program evaluation research linked to the CHESP initiative (see Mouton & Wildschut, 2005) was structured in a way that included various sets of instruments (e.g., questionnaires, interview schedules, focus-group protocols) for the different constituencies. U.S. experts involved in developing the instruments included Sherrill Gelmon, Robert Bringle, Tim Stanton, and others. In cases where ISL student placements are linked with host-country service learning, such longitudinal program evaluation studies will have the added benefit of also including research expertise from the United States. This will involve closer collaboration with host-country faculty and other participants in recording, analyzing, and representing data about the impact and outcomes of service learning and ISL engagements for stakeholders, including funders of community agencies; the latter often request such assistance owing to the fact that they themselves are almost invariably understaffed and lack the necessary funding to pay external consultants to conduct the impact studies required by sponsors. As part of a more inclusive approach of this type, students (both service learning and ISL) and community members should be involved as coresearchers. I am convinced that there are considerable benefits involved in equipping students and community members with skills to conduct baseline studies, as well as project evaluation, which will, of necessity, include an understanding of participatory, community-based research methodologies.

In addition to the above focus on program evaluation studies, there is considerable value to be added to service learning and ISL by establishing a link with community-based research. Even though the book by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue (2003) seems to present community-based research as "a blueprint for life after service learning" (Phil Nyden's statement on the jacket of the book, thus not the position of the authors), the two types of community engagement are more likely to be complementary to each other. Including community-based research in service learning and ISL where relevant could strengthen both, while service learning and ISL could also be embedded in larger community-based research projects in the host country, where possible and appropriate. The following are three examples of such multidisciplinary, inter-sectoral, intercommunity research projects involving University of the Free State faculty, researchers, students, and the occasional ISL student; local service sector and private sector partners; international

scholars and donor organizations; and local community people with firsthand experience:

- The "Agricultural Research for Development" initiative, with funding and expertise provided from the Netherlands.
- The "Hand-in-Hand" program focusing on the development of small businesses and entrepreneurship—an initiative based in India and currently partly funded by a German donor organization.
- The "Assuring Health for All" (AHA) rural community-based project that is largely funded by the South African government.

In South Africa, those working in the field of service learning have many fine ideas about research that should be undertaken; but we have only started focusing serious scholarly attention on some of the myriad aspects that need investigation. A recent impact assessment of the CHESP initiative by a research evaluation agency, presented in the form of high-level findings, delivered the verdict that "[c]urrent scholarship in the country is on average (still) weak and thin," adding that "[t]his may change in the future as the field matures and more (established) scholars enter the domain" (Mouton & Wildschut, 2007, p. 11). At this stage, there is certainly no lack of enthusiasm and innovative ideas among service learning faculty, friends—and even former foes who have recently entered the field or intend to do so. Aspects that are relevant to such scholarship-based activities include the following:

- Studies of constructs relating to student outcomes that include investigations into emotional intelligence (EQ) and (from the fields of salutogenesis and psychofortology) resiliency, wisdom, hope, and a sense of coherence. The notion of "nothing about us without us" bears relevance in these cases as well, since students have to be openly and deliberately involved in, and informed about, the investigations into these personal outcomes that are to be achieved.
- Theory-based approaches (as advocated by Bringle & Hatcher, 2005) that include invoking, for example, grounded theory (O'Brien, 2005), critical theory, and social justice approaches (e.g., a Ph.D. study in which Petersen, 2007, applied critical discourse analysis within a social justice framework).
- Participatory, constructivist approaches for more holistic, inclusive studies based on participatory action research where long-term involvement is required; and action research approaches that have developed

as a result of Australian and British influences (e.g., the *Living Theory* approach of Whitehead and McNiff, 2006).

• Philosophical and paradigmatic shifts, as exemplified by a phenomenological inquiry into the role of the service sector in service learning by Bruzas (2004).

• Evidence of an epistemological shift (i.e., toward more open systems of knowledge generation) including contextualization of curricula and course content (Erasmus, 2007).

• Ethical aspects related to service learning: In response to the excellent ethical guidelines for service learning research provided by Chapdelaine, Ruiz, Warchal, and Wells (2005) and Wells, Warchal, Ruiz, & Chapdelaine (chapter 14), some colleagues suggested that direct inclusion of external partners in the process of ethical decision making would more often than not be required in our context.

To me, it seems clear that there is almost unlimited scope for research in these fields, and that it is, in fact, an ethical imperative to conduct such research, since good service learning and ISL practice would invariably be based on information acquired through systematic inquiry, especially in collaboration with host-country faculty, service agencies, and community members.

## Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Action

From a host-country perspective, the typology of ISL possibilities provided by Jones and Steinberg (chapter 5) is particularly useful in terms of understanding and taking into account the broad range of varieties and variables that these possibilities create. From personal experience, I know that the obligation to set up special service learning experiences for international students causes much additional work for all involved from the host country. I therefore tend to agree with my colleague from the University of Stellenbosch[3] that it is preferable to link ISL students with service learning in the host country, where possible. In addition, reciprocity in the form of exchanges of faculty, students, and community agency staff will prevent these engagements from amounting to one-way traffic. Through mutual internationalization and exchange programs, global citizenship should be extended to include those who are traditionally regarded as potential recipients of service.

As I understand the current U.S. situation regarding ISL, it seems evident that U.S. ISL faculty are concerned with issues similar to those that

service learning faculty are struggling with in South Africa, which could imply that these issues would be relevant for other countries as well. Entering into dialogue and setting up research collaboration would be a constructive way to address our mutual interests and challenges. Owing to the fact that service learning has now taken root in South Africa, it could increasingly become a valuable ISL destination and partner. I believe that it would be mutually rewarding for faculty and partners to enter into an ongoing, long-term dialogue and collaboration, both face-to-face and online, about options regarding the nature, purposes, challenges, and value of service learning and ISL.

In South Africa, with its high unemployment rate, devastating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis figures, shocking crime statistics, and poor service delivery, we do not have time to reinvent the service learning wheel. We urgently need to facilitate the kind of learning for our students that will help them become productive, resilient, involved, and optimistic citizens and professionals in their future work environments. To achieve this, we will need all the assistance we can get. I see an important role for both service learning and ISL in this regard. Most of our challenges will be with us for a very long time, and our best community engagement efforts might not make as big a difference as we would hope, but through your involvement we shall know that we are not alone in striving for a better life for all. Together, we will achieve better quality training for students, in the spirit of "Yes, we can!" U.S. faculty have and can continue to help us appreciate our service learning strengths and build on them; and hopefully you, in turn, will gain a new understanding of how your ISL initiatives could be enhanced. Through collaborative research endeavors, all of us will be able to demonstrate how serious we are about the work.

## Notes

1. It was reported in January 2008 that an estimated total of 200,000 Iraqis had been killed in the name of democracy; many more have been maimed and/or disabled, and several thousands have been displaced.

2. Intellectual property rights might come into play where indigenous knowledge is involved.

3. An excellent South African example of an ISL opportunity is the well-structured course offered at the University of Stellenbosch as part of a certificate program in Community Development; see A. Smith-Tolken, mail to: asmt@sun.ac.za.

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