HEQC

CHE

Service-Learning in the Disciplines
Lessons from the Field

JET EDUCATION SERVICES

July 2008

CHE

SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE DISCIPLINES
LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Figures

FOREWORD

Education White Paper 3 on the transformation of higher education (Department of Education, 1997: 23) calls for "feasibility studies and pilot programmes which explore the potential of community service in higher education". Taking its cue from the White Paper, what was then the Joint Education Trust (JET, now JET Education Services) launched the Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) project in 1999. The aims of the project were: to support the development of pilot programmes that integrate community engagement as a core function of the academy; to monitor, evaluate and research these pilot programmes; and to use the data generated through this process to inform higher education policy and practice, in terms of community engagement, at a national, institutional and programmatic level.

Since the inception of the CHESP project community engagement and service-learning have become an integral part of the higher education system in South Africa. At a national level the *Founding Document* (2002) of the HEQC includes what was then called "knowledge based community service" along with teaching and research as one of the three areas for the accreditation of academic programmes and the audit of higher education institutions. In 2004 the HEQC included community engagement and service-learning in its *Criteria for Programme Accreditation* (HEQC, 2004) and its *Criteria for Institutional Audits* (HEQC, 2004). At an institutional level, numerous South African universities have: developed and adopted institution-wide policies for community engagement (including service-learning); developed strategies for implementing these policies; established organisational and staffing structures for implementation; allocated the necessary resources to facilitate implementation; and developed numerous accredited academic courses that include the principles and practice of service-learning.

Between 2002 and 2007 JET/ CHESP supported the development and implementation of 256 accredited academic courses across 39 different academic disciplines in 12 South African universities including almost 10 000 students from first year through to Master's level. The monitoring, evaluation and research of many of these courses led to the publication of *A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments for Managing the Quality of Service-Learning* (HEQC/ JET, 2006). As its titles suggests, the Good Practice Guide is intended to provide guidelines to South African universities with regard to the development, implementation and management of service-learning. The above publication was complemented by a further publication entitled *Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Resource for Higher Education Institutions* (HEQC/ JET, 2006). This publication is intended to assist academic staff with the conceptualisation and implementation of academic programmes that include service-learning.

During the development of the above two publications, academics across South Africa requested that the publications be complemented by practical examples of courses that illustrate service-learning. Consequently, a number of academics across several academic disciplines were invited to contribute to this particular publication entitled *Service-Learning in the Disciplines: Lessons from the Field*. The intention of this publication is to illustrate how service-learning has been conceptualised and implemented in different academic disciplines and to record the lessons learnt through this process. While the subject matter of each case study included in this

publication may be discipline-specific, the lessons learnt cut across disciplines and should be informative to any academic interested in the inclusion of service-learning in their academic offerings regardless of their academic discipline.

Jo Lazarus
Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP)
JET Education Services

Josef (Jo) Lazarus has conceptualised and managed the CHESP initiative of JET Education Services. He has extensive experience in the field of higher education and community development and has played a key role in the introduction and development of service-learning in higher education in South Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABCD	Asset-based Community Development
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BBibl	Bachelor of Library and Information Science
BCom	Bachelor of Commerce
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BPsych	Bachelor of Psychology
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CBE	Community-based Education
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CDU	Community Development Unit
CCJ	Centre for Criminal Justice
CFNR	Cape Flats Nature Reserve
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHESP	Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships
CHSO	Community Health Services Organisation
CPP	Centre for Public Participation
CRG	Community Research Group
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CUPS	Community University Partnerships
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
EDL	Essential Drug List
ETD	Education, Training and Development
HCP	Hillbrow Community Partnership
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KPCA	Keep Pietermaritzburg Clean Association
KZNNCS	KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Services
LIASA	Library and Information Association of South Africa
LIS	Library and Information Services
LLB	Bachelor of Laws

MDHS	Metropole District Health Services
MUCPP	Mangaung University–Community Partnership Programme
MSCP	Mangaung Schools Counselling Project
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
OSCE	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
OSDE	Objective Structured Dispensing Examination
OSSAC	Oxford Synagogue Skills for Adults Centre
P-	Personal
PAP	Prosecutors' Assistance Programme
PBL	Problem-based Learning
Penn	Pennsylvania
PGWC	Provincial Government of the Western Cape
SAHSMI	South African Herbal Science and Medicine Institute
SAPC	South African Pharmacy Council
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TB	Tuberculosis
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
Wits	Witwatersrand [University of the Witwatersrand]

INTRODUCTION

TIM STANTON

About Dr Timothy (Tim) K. Stanton...

Senior Fellow at the John Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities in the School of Education at Stanford University, where he is establishing a research programme focused on university-assisted community development initiatives in the US and South Africa.

Prior to joining the Gardner Center Tim founded and directed the Scholarly Concentration in Community Health and Public Service at Stanford's School of Medicine. He was Associate Director and Director of the Haas Center for Public Service from 1985 – 1999. He has taught service-learning courses in American Studies, Medicine, and Public Policy for 20 years, and serves as faculty leader of the Stanford Overseas Studies programme in Cape Town. He also serves as Engaged Scholar for Campus Compact, an American national coalition of nearly 1 000 college and university presidents dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement and service-learning in higher education. He consults extensively with universities and community-based organisations across the US, Southeast Asia and South Africa on community–higher education partnerships and service-learning.

The first years of the 21st century have been tumultuous for higher education in South Africa. University academic and administrative staff have had to contend with change from all directions, including institutional mergers, faculty reorganisations, and major curriculum and qualifications reforms – to name just a few. Yet amidst this tumult of change, a number of colleagues, convened and supported by the JET Education Services CHESP project, have quietly revolutionised their approach to instruction and their institutions' postures towards off-campus communities. Working in partnership with community leaders and service agency staff, they have designed, implemented, assessed, and researched numerous service-learning modules, through which hundreds of South African students address community needs in the context of their academic studies, solving real problems while using these experiences as 'texts' to be 'read' critically and integrated with each module's subject matter focus.

This publication contains the stories of 14 of these service-learning modules representing 13 disciplines at five universities. Each case author describes the process s/he went through designing and implementing the modules with community partners: the challenges faced, outcomes achieved, and lessons learnt along the way. These are tales of courageous, pedagogical innovation, undertaken often in the face of great challenge. They offer honest and occasionally sobering accounts of the problems encountered when one seeks to design and instruct academic modules – normally a highly individualistic activity – in collaboration with non-academic partners. The case studies identify the changes in institutional administrative practice and policies that are needed in order for existing service-learning engagement to be sustained and for additional colleagues to be brought into the fold. For anyone considering offering a service-learning module, these detailed stories will be exceptionally useful, providing almost a 'how-to' manual. For those with broader interest in higher education institutional and curricular reform, the cases illuminate the commitment, dedication, and plain hard work needed to try out and refine a revolutionary pedagogy – what it takes to actually achieve the goals of policy-driven reforms.

Service-Learning

Service-learning joins two complex concepts: community action – the 'service' – and efforts to learn from that action and connect what is learnt to existing knowledge – the 'learning'. The concept of service-learning was first developed and employed in higher education in the US in the 1960s and 1970s by a loosely coupled band of educators, many of whom entered the academy from community-based careers (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999). It was not until the 1990s that service-learning became broadly recognised and accepted as a curricular innovation and as a means for higher education staff and students to partner with communities to address development aims and goals.

At about the same time, of course, South Africa transformed itself, giving birth to a new democracy and immediate demands for change at all levels of society. In this context and specifically in response to calls that South African higher education institutions become engaged with the reconstruction and development of previously disadvantaged communities (*Education White Paper 3*, Department of Education, 1997), service-learning became an attractive, if not well known,

innovation. It offered to educators means for connecting universities and communities with development needs, for engaging academic staff and students in addressing these needs through academic contexts, and for building democratic commitments and competences in all concerned.

The service-learning definition cited most often in South Africa as describing what educators aspire to is:

> …a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995: 112)

These 14 case studies describe efforts to apply this concept to a variety of community development tasks and academic fields, and itemise numerous 'lessons learnt' along the way.

Lessons learnt – pedagogy[1]

Successful, sustained service-learning requires strong pedagogy and partnerships, as well as institutional support. Related to pedagogy the case authors point out many avenues through which service-learning can deepen students' learning of academic content. For example, applied science fields can be tied to community development (Herbal Science and Medicine). The study of Law can be linked to building democratic citizenship skills in prison inmates. Service-learning in Library and Information Science yields a new, more community-focused approach to library service. Service-learning in Psychology (University of KwaZulu-Natal, UKZN) offers the academics involved the opportunity to engage in critical analysis of the social contexts of psychological problems under study. Combining a design-and-build curriculum and service-learning couples theory with social awareness for Architecture students.

Regardless of the field of study that forms the academic context for service-learning, the case authors point out that academic staff must carefully align the proposed service activities with their curriculum objectives and include these activities in student assessment to ensure strong student participation and reward them for time well spent (Family Medicine).

Most students will not have encountered service-learning before entering a service-learning module. Therefore, they must be prepared for a service-learning approach to teaching and learning – with the integration of theory and practice explained – and orientated to the community and service partners, their community and its needs, and their assigned service tasks (Industrial Psychology).

Service-learning lecturers must 'walk the talk' of the pedagogy, exemplifying in their approach to students, to partners, and in their teaching the reciprocal, democratic values inherent in service-learning, trusting students to act professionally and responsibly in the community, allowing them to make decisions and take control of problem-solving (Adult Education). Student–lecturer

---

1   Note that the disciplines/ fields noted refer to case chapters from which the lesson(s) is drawn.

relationships in this particular context call for very different power dynamics from those experienced in a traditional classroom context – less formal, more open, with shared responsibility for collaborative learning (Law). Community members' involvement in service-learning design and implementation, especially their role in determining the context and nature of students' service activities, differentiates service-learning from experiential education and fieldwork (Library and Information Science), and from problem-based learning (Pharmacy).

David Kolb's theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), with its sequenced stages of concrete experience followed by reflective observation, followed by abstract conceptualisation, followed by active experimentation, provides a most effective framework for service-learning curriculum design (Psychology, University of the Free State, UFS). Kolb's theory can guide academic staff in determining what will take place at each cycle stage, where it will take place, and who is responsible. Learning assessment activities can be designed to enable students' integration of theoretical knowledge introduced in the module with their practical service experience (Nursing).

Case authors noted particularly the importance of facilitating students' reflective activity. For example, reflection assignments, such as weekly journal writing, can facilitate students' integration of theory and practice (Nursing), and draw students' attention not only to their service experience, but also to the methodological and conceptual issues they encounter in their service work (Geography).

Lessons learnt – partnerships

A hallmark of service-learning, and one of its major challenges, is the collaboration required among academic staff, community members and service agency staff as they plan and implement students' service and learning strategies and tasks, and carry out assessment and evaluation of the learning and service accomplishments.

An issue that case authors encountered early in this process was establishing what makes a particular community partner and site appropriate for connection with their modules. For example, do service-learning students need to have access to experienced, specialised staff with postgraduate training, as supervisors (Library and Information Science)? In the case of service-learning in health-related fields, do the proposed site and service tasks offer students opportunities to contextualise patients' life experiences and promote empathy and caring, while also learning about the constraints of South Africa's existing primary healthcare system (Pharmacy)?

"Partnerships are particular" notes Oldfield,

> reflecting individuals and a range of contextual factors. Ideally, they need to *build on explicit mutual interests* through which project substance is negotiated, reflecting both the needs of the partner organisation for information or research-type services, and a realistic assessment of what university students are able to produce. In addition, the more involved that the 'community' participants are in project direction, the greater their participation and thus investment in the process, the more chance there is for 'useful', 'service-providing' projects to be completed. (Geography, page 87, emphasis added)

Oldfield continues:

> The identification of individual leaders with capacity and legitimacy, through which to negotiate the project, is important – not only to develop the project but also…to link to people in the…neighbourhood contexts, in which the projects operated. Moreover, critical to the development of the projects was the partners' capacity and, in essence, power to both decide on projects and draw together a team of community-based activists to help run the projects. At the same time…community activists needed to advise other neighbourhood and area organisations about the project, to establish the project's legitimacy and to present the logic of the university's presence (through the course and the student visits) while the project ran. (Geography, pages 87 and 88)

It is necessary to be open to multiple, 'crossing-over' roles among partners. For example, a community or service agency partner can participate in classroom reflection discussions or even lecturing. The academic staff partner may be called upon to consult on problems faced by the community partners in their communities (Community Development).

In all cases, the case authors recommend that academic staff – in their negotiations with community partners – articulate clear objectives for their students' learning, and articulate service objectives that both express their modules' academic goals and align well with community partners' needs and capacities to support student volunteers. For example, the products of the research process, rather than being materially significant themselves, can represent a range of processes that hold value. For both students and community participants, the service-learning projects provide a set of engagements with people with whom they do not normally interact (Geography). Use of a participative paradigm in service-learning research projects ensures the incorporation of community viewpoints, making the results more accessible and valuable for everyone involved (Psychology-UFS).

The Community Development case authors caution, however, that the more different service sites one develops for students in a service-learning module, the more preparation, monitoring, and flexibility will be needed by all participants. Other authors note that if one uses a variety of placements in one module, describing them as projects rather than organisations, this attracts students to the module, facilitates project selection and helps match student expectations with student placements, thus avoiding disappointment (Political Science).

The partnership model one chooses is important as well. CHESP has articulated and encouraged a three-part, triangular partnership model with the academic institution, a service agency or agencies, and community leaders as the three partner poles (the triad). Most cases represented here adhere to this model and organise and describe their partners accordingly. Indeed, the authors of one of the case studies pointed out that this model helped them and their service agency partner to come to view clients as more than recipients of service, but also active contributors to the service-learning enterprise (Herbal Science and Medicine). However, another case author specifically chose a bi-polar model of academic partner/ service agency without community members as partners, because she did not wish to limit her service-learning to a particular community (Political Science). In all cases, cautions a third author, in developing

collaboration between universities and communities one must be sensitive to and work carefully with issues of equality and capacity among all partners (Psychology-UKZN).

Case authors describe learning multiple lessons related to realism, flexibility and trust needed for successful service-learning partnerships. One is that partnerships are not formulaic (Industrial Psychology). Partnerships should thus be designed realistically and openly to reflect the opportunities and constraints that course-based engagement in community-based development issues provides. Relationships are not necessarily replicable; rather, they must fit the individual context of the course, of the department, of the university-based organiser, as well as of the partner organisation(s) (Geography).

There is a need for common ground and transparency in all partnership relations (Community Development). There must be a sense of flexibility and trust among all the role-players, especially so that unexpected challenges, which often arise in service-learning, can be effectively and appropriately addressed (Adult Education, Law).

Community partners need preparation and an orientation to service-learning, to their roles in the partnership, and to students (Family Medicine). Like students, they also need opportunity for reflection on the partnership's progress, students' service outcomes, and so on (Law, Nursing).

Case authors concur that successful partnerships rely on clear, continuing communication among all participants at all stages of service-learning design, implementation and assessment. All partners and the partnership itself require ongoing nurturing (Pharmacy). Structural and organisational barriers must be negotiated on an ongoing basis in order for the service-learning module to run smoothly (Pharmacy).

Lessons learnt – obstacles and institutional challenges and resources

The major obstacles encountered by most case authors were the additional time and financial resources required to implement and instruct service-learning modules. Service-learning, they tended to find, takes more time than traditional lecturing for academic staff and students, and it has hidden costs related to student transportation, project expenses, and so on. Many advocate higher education institutional policy changes related to teaching load, tenure and promotion, and budgets to address these needs. Some case studies, however, report utilising experienced, senior students as mentors to help manage the module (Herbal Science and Medicine, Psychology-UKZN).

Many of the case authors identified their institution's centralised service-learning/ community engagement office and staff on campus as critical resources in their success (Architecture, Family Medicine, Herbal Science and Medicine, Industrial Psychology, Nursing, Psychology-UFS). Staff from these offices helped identify community partners, facilitated partnership development, and in one case co-instructed the module (Architecture). Indeed, the current author found that a strong, centralised service-learning/ community engagement office on campus was a critical variable in faculty members' ability to design and implement service-learning courses in the United States (Stanton, 1994).

Lessons learnt – sustaining and institutionalising service-learning

Case authors comment repeatedly that sustaining a service-learning module over time is the key strategy for improving and ensuring its quality (Adult Education). In other words, involved academic staff must learn from their own experience with the module and apply what they learn to improve it in the next iteration (Library and Information Science). In addition, this experiential learning must be collaborative and partnership-based. As noted by Naudé:

> The fundamental feature of academic culture, namely discourse, must be embraced and extended to include the knowledge base, namely, the epistemology of all the partners involved. (Psychology-UFS, page 256)

Authors concur as well that expanding and sustaining service-learning requires that it be included in the higher education institution's mission statement, policy guidelines and priorities and curricular goals. Only in this way will an institution begin to provide incentives to expand and sustain colleagues' participation. To achieve this level of institutionalisation requires that colleagues advocate for service-learning at every opportunity – and especially for the scholarly nature of service-learning (Psychology-UFS).

It is not possible in a short summary to reveal the breadth and depth of experience and wisdom contained in the cases that follow. Readers are, therefore, encouraged to read on, and read beyond cases written by colleagues representing their disciplines. While there may be no such thing as one, generic approach to service-learning, as noted by Trotter (Political Science), there is much to learn about this challenging and complicated pedagogy from each contributor.

REFERENCES

Bringle R.G. & Hatcher J.A. (1995). A Service Learning Curriculum for Faculty. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* Fall, 112-122.

Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Education White Paper 3. A Programme for Higher Education Transformation.* Government Gazette No. 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria: DoE.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential Learning.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Stanton, T. (1994). The Experience of Faculty Participants in an Instructional Development Seminar on Service-Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Vol. 1, No. 1.

Stanton, T., Giles, D. & Cruz, N (1999). *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on its Origins, Practice, and Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

CASE STUDY 1
SERVICE-LEARNING IN ADULT EDUCATION

JONATHAN VAN NIEKERK

About Mr Jonathan van Niekerk...

Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand (colloquially known as Wits) in the School of Education.

His field of practice is in adult education and training and he is responsible for the development of adult educators and trainers at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He grew up in a small mining community and studied science as his undergraduate degree. However, even while still at school he was involved in adult basic education in a local township. In the early stages of his career, often mining-related, he gravitated towards training, which he enjoyed doing, before enrolling at Wits for a professional qualification in adult education. He also became involved in community projects and was employed at Wits in 1989. His particular research interests lie in adult education policy developments, adult education and development and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Due to his frustration and disappointment at government's lacklustre delivery of ABET, the collapse of the NGOs involved in ABET and the scarce resources available, he started searching for alternative ABET models of delivery and so developed the service-learning course described in the case study. Adopting an experiential teaching method such as service-learning was not difficult, as it was a teaching method already extensively used in adult education circles. He believes that his service-learning model is a sustainable alternative to traditional education delivery models as it can be done on a shoestring budget, university students are generally able to be excellent educators, and all involved experience a rich learning episode invaluable in their journey of lifelong learning.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Jonathan van Niekerk
University:	University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)
Discipline:	Adult Education
Module title:	Service-learning in Adult Education and Training
Level of students:	Second- and third-year respectively
Number of students:	25 per semester since 2003
Number of credits:	15

Community locations of service-learning:

People participating in ABET in:

- Alexandra
- Berea/ Hillbrow
- Boksburg
- Braamfontein
- Leeuwkop Prison
- Rosebank
- Soweto

Service agencies:

- Ed Mafole ABET Centre, Meadowlands, Soweto
- Ikageng Barney Barnarto Adult Centre, Berea/ Hillbrow
- Leeuwkop Prison School for Medium B Juveniles
- Oxford Synagogue Skills for Adults Centre (OSSAC), Rosebank
- Roma Adult Centre, Alexandra
- St Anthony Adult Community Centre, Boksburg
- Wits Staff Training and Development Unit, Braamfontein

SUMMARY

Service-learning in Adult Education and Training, the service-learning module discussed in this case study, has been running since 2003 at Wits, within the School of Education. The module is offered each semester for second- and third-year BA students and was developed to address the widespread problem of illiteracy and the lack of basic education among adults.

The partners in this service-learning module are:

- The higher education institution – in the form of the module convenor and the students;
- The service agencies – in the form of a range of NGOs and church-based service agencies offering ABET, and relying on volunteers for help; and
- The community – in the form of adult learners participating in ABET classes (including some juvenile inmates within a prison context).

Approximately 25 students participate each year in the module, and the module outcomes are in line with a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) registered qualification for

educators working in the area of ABET. Students are required to take responsibility for a group of adult learners at a variety of service agencies. It is expected that, in the course of undertaking the service-learning activities, the students will learn not only facilitation skills but also about taking initiative within a structured, supervised placement; will begin familiarising themselves with the theory and practice of national ABET policy as well as theories, principles and practice of adult learning (including literacy and numeracy); will plan, design and evaluate a learning initiative for adults; and will be prompted to reflect actively on own learning and teaching.

The service outcomes of the module include increasing responsiveness to societal needs and advancing a sense of civic responsibility, broadening students' cultural, recreational, civic and academic interests. The intention is to allow students opportunities to increase their appreciation of both ABET as a discipline and service settings and communities. Students should learn how to work co-operatively, both with service agencies and with communities – in the process gaining understanding of diverse cultures and developing interpersonal skills.

Lessons learnt

In the process of developing and implementing this module, I have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- Probably the most important lesson learnt is the importance of flexibility, and trust in the various role-players: flexibility in terms of changing plans to deal with the unexpected; and trusting undergraduate students to act professionally and responsibly, allowing them to make decisions and take control of problem-solving.

- The allocation of clear responsibilities for different role-players facilitates the coordination of the module and eases the responsibilities and workload of the module coordinator.

- Good relationships, understanding and regular communications with the various service agencies are also essential.

- Students are assessed using a portfolio of evidence measured against the module outcomes. This service-learning module is ideal for replication in any higher education institution and could make a significant contribution to building capacity in ABET.

INITIATION

Nearly 50% of the adult population in South Africa has entered the third millennium under-educated and not equipped to participate meaningfully in economic and social contexts. This is a direct result of the apartheid regime's Bantu Education policy, which excluded many black people from a basic education. With the advent of a new democratic order, ABET was legislated as a basic human right. To date, as in the apartheid era, resources have been extremely limited and limiting – with less than 1% of the education budget earmarked for ABET. Capacity for the delivery of ABET has further decreased due to the redirection of aid monies to the now legitimate government, and this has led to the demise of the NGO sector (which played an

important role in the delivery of ABET). Given the limited resources, innovative ways of increasing the delivery of ABET need to be explored. The ABET sector has always relied heavily on voluntarism (also termed 'volunteerism'), and university students have a long history of participation in adult education activities, although this has waned since 1994 given that ABET is no longer in the vanguard of the struggle against apartheid. These factors led to the initiation of this service-learning module.

CONCEPTUALISATION

During the conceptualisation of this module I was in the process of finalising a dissertation investigating the delivery of ABET in Gauteng. The research indicated a poor and deteriorating capacity to deliver ABET, essentially due to limited resources. The greatest expense involved in the delivery of ABET is the remuneration of the teachers and staff in adult learning centres. There was a need to create regenerative social energy such as social concern and a spirit of voluntarism. The then Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal, was in the process of launching a literacy campaign that relied on voluntarism. Opportunities presented by service-learning allowed for the mobilisation of students, who have demonstrated themselves – in the past and through my personal experience – to be very suitable adult learning facilitators.

Initially I contacted service agencies in the Wits neighbourhood to explore the idea of using students as adult learning facilitators and the possibilities of establishing partnerships. I also had to identify service agencies that were enthusiastic, conveniently located and had the capacity to manage and supervise students. In some cases service agencies contacted me. Being involved in the ABET movement for many years meant that I was also part of the existing network.

As a member of academic staff in an ABET unit within the School of Education, my responsibilities have been primarily to deliver professional qualifications to postgraduate students in Adult Education, Training and Development (ETD) practices. Central to ETD practices is a spirit of collaboration; for the purposes of a service-learning module, the curriculum for ETD practitioners simply needed to be adapted for undergraduate students, in order to prepare them for and support them in their adult learning facilitation roles within service agencies.

Problem-based learning (PBL), learning through praxis and experiential learning are considered good practice in the discipline of ABET and are curriculum approaches equally suitable for service-learning. Being accustomed to working in this paradigm was a promoting factor. Encouragement and support from CHESP, contact with staff members from Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), workshops, funding from JET, a real community need and interest, and being part of a team initiating and pioneering new approaches to teaching and learning were other promoting factors. With the restructuring of the university, particularly the amalgamation of the Faculty of Education with the Faculty of Arts into a Faculty of Humanities, opportunities were created for greater synergy and interdisciplinary curricula. This allowed me to draw students from many disciplines within the new faculty such as Philosophy, Sociology, English, Psychology and Education.

Developing the module outline, particularly outcomes, helped provide clarity in conceptualising the module. Firstly, I decided to state upfront outcomes generally associated with service-learning, as follows:

- To increase responsiveness to societal needs and advance a sense of civic responsibility;
- To gain a broader appreciation of the discipline of ABET;
- To develop students' cultural, recreational, civic and academic interests;
- To develop an understanding of service settings and communities;
- To work co-operatively with service organisations and communities;
- To develop interpersonal skills; and
- To work with communities and gain exposure to a diversity of cultures.

Existing qualifications for ABET practitioners were already developed and registered with SAQA. With the intention of aligning the service-learning module with these qualifications, I based the module outcomes on these qualifications, as follows:

- Facilitate a group of adult learners with confidence;
- Take initiative within a structured adult education programme under supervision of a more experienced practitioner;
- Understand the national policy and implications thereof for ABET;
- Examine theories and principles of adult learning and see how they can be applied when facilitating a group of learners;
- Plan, design and evaluate a learning initiative for adults;
- Develop facilitation skills;
- Understand different literacy and numeracy approaches; and
- Reflect on your own learning and teaching as an adult learner and facilitator.

Conceptualisation of the module sometimes felt lonely, in that I had full responsibility and very little buy-in from other faculty or school members. Developing the module was generally regarded as a fringe activity of an individual staff member and not as a mainstream activity. This impacted on administrative support and personal workload. However, there was no open discouragement – more a lack of interest. Often feeling like a pioneer and a maverick, I experienced fears of failure. At times the obstacles seemed enormous, such as recruiting students for a filler or optional module, timetabling, finding venues, placing students, transport, safety, module content and materials. Other factors prohibiting conceptualisation were the bureaucratic procedures involved in establishing a new module, complying with university rules, writing motivations, and gaining approval from various committees.

The benefits of involvement in developing this service-learning module have been a sense of achievement, with the actual materialisation and implementation of a module that started out simply as a concept. With time, the module has been incorporated into the mainstream curriculum for students in a variety of disciplines and has become part of normal academic workloads. The whole process from conceptualisation to implementation has been a constant series of challenges. As is the case in many such projects I, as the module convenor, learnt to be flexible and prepared to reconceptualise things if necessary; also to be co-operative, to collaborate, and to try to infuse enthusiasm in other role-players, while simultaneously assuming firm leadership when necessary. Every project starts with an idea and only materialises if there is a champion to drive it with passion.

The module has met – even exceeded – all expectations and has panned out very much as it was originally conceptualised. Very little has been changed since it was first implemented. From the initial stages of conceptualisation to actual implementation was about two years. Over time the conceptualisation became less obscure and more detailed – through a process of thinking, talking, worrying, reflecting and inquiry, with an occasional flash of insight.

PREPARATION

Given that this was a new module, publicity and recruitment were needed. Prior to the commencement of the module a letter of invitation was sent to approximately 450 second- and third-year BA students, inviting them to participate in the module. The strategy worked well and now I have decided to stop this practice and rely on student word of mouth. Students talk about the module and recommend it to others.

I had already approached a number of service agencies to discuss the project. Some service agencies were enthusiastic and some seemed rather cold. I kept a close eye on my enrolments prior to the actual commencement of the module. As enrolments grew I contacted the more enthusiastic service agencies to find out how many students they would like. There was constant communication with service agencies and they were aware of their responsibilities and generally welcomed the help that students could provide. Service agencies could only use a few students each and it is always difficult matching the number of enrolments with service agency needs. Inevitably, new service agencies need to be found or some service agencies may not get any students. Care needed to be exercised not to create false expectations among service agencies and to keep in touch, regularly updating them regarding developments. Capping student numbers helps to ensure a constant and thus reliable supply of students to service agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the service-learning component started during the very first lecture with the students. While 15 – 20 students were expected to participate, at the first lecture over 30 students arrived. Many had come out of interest and were undecided whether to register or not. As it turned out, 27 later registered for the module. From the start I had to be an adult educator *par excellence* as much of the learning taking place in the lectures was the students observing my praxis, with me becoming a role model. I could not tell the students how to teach adults and not practise these adult education principles and techniques myself. The dynamics at these lectures were that students reflected on themselves as both learners and adult educators.

As a first step, we got to know one another through introductions and ice-breakers to help establish a more relaxed atmosphere conducive to learning and the sharing of ideas. Each student was given a name card and the seating arrangement was in a large circle. Conveniently, at the time Wits was hosting visitors from Penn State involved in service-learning and they agreed to come and talk to the students about service-learning in general. We went on to introduce the module, negotiate parts of the curriculum and arrive at a learning contract. We also collaboratively established group norms and responsibilities. We then reflected on the activities of the session to extract ideas regarding how the students were going to manage their

adult learners, particularly during their first time with them.

Finally, the different service agencies were introduced. In some cases representatives from the service agencies were present to talk about their service centres and answer students' questions. Flipchart sheets for each service agency were stuck on the walls, with information such as contact person and telephone numbers, location and how many students were needed. Students were then invited to choose a service agency by writing their name on the relevant flipchart paper. Students who chose the same service agency became teams and each team was required to contact the relevant service agency and make an appointment with the relevant person within the week ahead, before we met for the second lecture. Teams went to their service agencies, where responsibilities and duties were discussed and they were allocated to their classes and introduced to the adult learners. Over time this process has been repeated as it worked well and has become standard practice when implementing the module each semester.

The responsibilities of the various stakeholders are included in the module outline as follows:

Student Responsibilities
This is an academic course that carries 4 points towards your degree. As in any other course you are required to attend lectures, read course handouts, collect additional readings, complete assignments and attend exams.

Time spent at adult education centres is an integral part of the course and is compulsory. At these centres you are a Wits ambassador and are expected to behave professionally. You will be supervised, helped and encouraged by members of the centre. Adult learning centres can provide a variety of services and require a variety of skills for effective management. It is hoped that you will be given opportunities to teach, facilitate and lead a group of adult learners but you could be required to perform a range of different tasks to assist these centres to provide a better quality service. You are also required to take some initiative of your own with permission from the members of the adult centre. You probably have a variety of skills and talents which could assist in the effective running of the centre...make yourself as useful as possible. For course evaluation purposes you will also be required to complete some evaluation questionnaires. You will also need to keep a diary, which will assist you to complete your portfolio (exam equivalent assignment).

Lecturer Responsibilities
As the lecturer on this course I will be responsible for facilitating the Wednesday sessions, providing course readings and learning materials, setting the exam assignments and marking.

I expect to be quite busy sorting out problems which will inevitably arise in the general organising and coordinating of such a course. I will also act as the mediator between you and the adult centres should this be necessary. I will be your primary support person should you need help, advice or supervision particularly around assignments and exams. Time for this will be made available during the Wednesday sessions together. However, you are welcome to make appointments with me should you feel the need.

Adult Education Centre (Service Provider) Responsibilities
Members of staff at the service providers will allocate duties to students with discussion and negotiation. They will be students' immediate supervisors, mentors and support people. Service providers will ensure that student attendance records are kept and could be asked to make a written or verbal report on student conduct.

Student reflection on the service-learning experience was an integral part of the module. Reflection was built into the Wednesday lectures. Each lecture began with team report-backs and discussions, which essentially provided for reflecting on students' activities during the previous week. At the end of each lecture there was reflection on the actual lesson, in order to extract what had been learnt and how this learning might be applied as an adult educator and learner. Students were assessed by having to submit a portfolio at the end of the module. The compilation of the portfolio required the students to keep a diary, which showed evidence of student reflection. Finally, some of the portfolio assignments required students to reflect on the whole service-learning experience.

As the lecturer of this module it is a regular activity to reflect on my practice. Reflection occurred throughout the module – particularly after Wednesday lectures, visits to agencies and end-of-module meetings and functions with students, service agencies and community members. Having to assess the students' examination equivalent assignments is a two-week period of intense reflection on the service-learning experience.

Evidence that service agencies and community members have reflected on the experience includes letters sent in appreciation, and meetings and functions. As an example, service-learning students with the service agency at Leeukop Prison arrange an end-of-year function/party for the inmates and teachers (i.e. students). At these functions, one hears moving speeches and testimonies from inmates and students alike.

For the most part, service-learning modules do not need to cost any more than an equivalent mainstream university module – and in fact could cost less, when one considers the infrastructure required (e.g. laboratories) in some other disciplines such as Science and Medicine. The community and service agencies become the 'laboratories' in a sense, and provide the learning milieu. *Transport,* however, is an exception, which does add up to additional expense. However, transport costs can be built into the module fees in the same way that field trips are in other modules. From discussion with students, it is evident that they are reluctant to pay an additional fee for travelling costs as they feel that they are already working and providing a service with no remuneration. In cases where I am unable to raise some money for student travel I have made it clear that it is an expense to be borne by the students; in such cases, those who have vehicles usually arrange lift clubs. There have been cases of impoverished students catching as many as three taxis and two hours later arriving at their service agency without ever a word of complaint. Some students get a friend to take them, and in such cases the friend often lands up teaching as well rather than sitting and waiting.

In terms of keeping in touch with the students, cellphones and e-mail were invaluable. Nearly every student has an e-mail address and a cellphone and I would regularly get SMSs from them

such as 'call me'. Through the internet I could access 25 free SMSs a day, which was also a valuable communications medium.

The implementation process will continue to provide challenges and obstacles but with perseverance, being prepared to change plans and sharing the responsibility and challenges with students and service agencies, such challenges and obstacles can normally be overcome. Service-learning is about giving students the opportunity to participate in a real-life situation and problem-solving is part of that real life. Give the students the problem where possible; inevitably they solve it very creatively, which becomes part of their learning experience. Avoid trying to do everything yourself and control too much, as you could be depriving students of learning opportunities and the chance to take on responsibilities. Trust your students and let them surprise you!

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community and for service agencies

To quantify the benefits and value added to the community is in the best of situations difficult and in this instance impossible. No one particular community was targeted, and so impact is spread thinly among individuals across a variety of communities. Students work with many different communities, and teach different things. Following is anecdotal evidence of how communities and service agencies have benefited from this service-learning module.

Example 1: OSSAC

Two of the students worked at the Oxford Synagogue Skills for Adults Centre (OSSAC). This centre, which raises its own funds, is situated in Rosebank and is administered by members of the Jewish community. The centre caters mainly for domestic workers and labourers, offering literacy, numeracy, basic English and education subjects up to Grade 10. Due to a high demand for computer literacy the centre introduced basic computer skills. One student was assigned to a new learner who was completely illiterate. The student spent much of her time teaching the learner the alphabet, to write her name, maybe string a sentence together and improve her English vocabulary. The final result was that the learner possibly wrote a letter home to her family. At times the student was required to help other groups of learners do simple mathematical calculations and write a short account or essay. The other student sat with adult learners in a room with second-hand donated computers and taught them basics such as how to switch on a computer, the difference between software and hardware, typing a letter on a word processor and sending an e-mail. He reported that one learner would constantly tell him he was "opening up my mind to greater learning". The student further reports (unedited) that:

> In the beginning when I first went to OSSAC I didn't think that by me being there that it would in any way make a difference to the community. But after a few weeks of going to classes and seeing the reaction of the students when I walked through the door every Tuesday and Wednesday evening, it made me feel that maybe I'm not making a huge difference in the community as a whole but I was definitely making a difference in the lives of the learners who were coming to OSSAC.

Service agencies benefited primarily from the personpower in the form of able-bodied and enthusiastic students who were able to operate effectively, with little supervision, as adult educators.

Example 2: Leeukop Prison

Many of the students went to Leeukop Prison, Medium B Juveniles. The Department of Correctional Services has introduced ABET into many prisons, including this one. ABET only goes as far as Grade 10, however; all teaching personnel were being employed in ABET and as a result there were no classes for the Grade 12 prison inmates. A group of volunteers initiated Grade 12 classes but could not attract enough volunteer teachers. They were about to close the school when they contacted me (just before the service-learning module started); and over time they proved to be a most suitable community partner. The prison inmates (community) were between the ages of 18 and 22 and because they had become involved in crime (usually due to social circumstances) had not completed their schooling. By the time the students arrived for the service-learning module, the inmates were only three months away from their school-leaving examinations and had had very few, if any, classes. They were trying to learn by themselves. Again, it becomes difficult to measure quantitatively how this community benefited; this case study research process did not track inmates' examination marks or even if they passed. Then again, were we to have this information, how would we measure what was a result of the students' service? However, part of the portfolio assignment required students to grapple with this issue. Student responses were all cautious but all felt that they had made some difference. Following is a representative passage excerpted (unedited) from a portfolio of one of the service-learning students:

> It is difficult to know whether or not the service I provided made any difference at all. I would like to think that education is an uplifting and fulfilling experience to the individual. The community benefits from education in the long run, because 'knowledge is power!'

> I received feedback from my learners quite frequently. It was most encouraging, which motivated me to come back week after week. Every time we completed a section of work it was an accomplishment on both our parts, but more importantly it motivated us to carry on.

> I feel that a difference has been made in that community, because there were some very committed and motivated university students, who went into the course unaware of what to expect and 'stuck with it' to the very end.

> The feeling from the prisoners was that they had not been forgotten. Finally there was someone who they could count on to be there every week, and have their best interests at heart.

Students and inmates were much the same age. All students wrote about their relationships with inmates and the friendships formed. All of them seemed to make time before and after lessons

to chat informally. Many of the students commented on how they were role models for inmates and how they contributed to inmates' resolutions never to do crime again and to pursue their studies further on being released. Subsequently, students have initiated a number of projects such as an arts centre, music lessons, drama, creative writing classes and life skills. The arts centre attracted a R25 000 donation, collections of poetry and stories are being published and end-of-year functions include music, drama and art exhibitions for fellow inmates, parents, wardens and visitors.

Example 3: Wits ABET staff

For the past few years Wits has provided ABET for its workers through its staff development unit. With restructuring at Wits and the adoption of an outsourcing policy, many workers were retrenched. As a result, workers attending the Wits ABET programme were largely those employed by contract organisations responsible for cleaning, gardening and catering. At the beginning of 2004 Wits decided to end the programme as so few of the adult learners were the university's own employees. Service-learning students had been teaching these adults for three years and were reluctant to let go, however. In addition, this programme had been a very convenient service-learning site. Wits students officially took over the programme and responsibility for its day-to-day management and for raising sponsorships, all of which provided learning opportunities not only in teaching ABET but in management and fundraising as well.

Example 4: Hillbrow

A similar situation to that described above arose with a local adult learning centre in Hillbrow, whose sponsorship came to an end a few years ago. Staff were determined to keep the centre running, with teachers prepared to work as volunteers with no remuneration. With much courage and determination the centre has proved itself exemplary, with some help from service-learning students over the past few years. The centre has succeeded in reducing learner–teacher ratios, thus increasing the amount of individual attention devoted to its adult learners and improving the quality of education offered. The centre was also able to offer more lessons to learners, which was important at the time to prepare learners better for examinations.

Example 5: Roma Adult Centre

Opportunities for more and new service learners often arise from service agencies and communities. As an example, the Roma Adult Centre, situated in Alexandra, was in a desperate situation. Possibilities were explored with the Catholic priest and the principal at the centre. Many people attending the centre were drop-outs and push-outs. The centre expressed a need for programmes to support youth who had been abused, raped, fallen pregnant, become involved in crime or simply had not completed schooling due to poverty and unemployment. HIV/AIDS support programmes were also needed. Attached to the centre was an old-age home. Students could help provide counselling, education, life skills and entrepreneurship programmes, among other services. Students could also help paint the building, repair windows and establish a garden at the school; the possibilities were endless.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Benefits for the students

The last lecture with the students spends time evaluating the module using a structured group discussion. Following are some results listed in order of significance as decided by the students, with the first item listed being considered by students as the most important.

What students enjoyed about the service-learning module:
1. Teaching adult learners;
2. Taking individual responsibility and solving problems;
3. Taking own initiative;
4. The challenges;
5. Learning to be practical;
6. Sharing ideas with other educators and students;
7. Independence;
8. Evaluation of learners and of the students themselves;
9. Learning from others; and
10. Feedback from their learners.

Students' most significant things learnt and realisations were as follows:
1. The lack of adult education services and how important adult education is for those who want/ need it;
2. The importance of having patience;
3. The need to move away from preconceived ideas;
4. The importance of being reliable;
5. The fact that teaching adults is harder than teaching children;
6. The fact that lack of adult education can make accomplishing seemingly simple tasks, which most of us take for granted, enormously challenging;
7. The realisation that adults learn differently according to their ages;
8. The understanding that prison inmates are people too; and
9. That there is a thin line between teacher and friend (thus, the need for professional distance).

The following are what students found difficult in the service-learning experience:
1. Not enough time for lesson preparation, teaching, travelling and their own learning demands;
2. Gaining access to adult learners in prison;
3. Coping or feeling overwhelmed;
4. Determining goals for their teaching and trying to find guidelines for the syllabus;
5. Disorganised adult learning centres;
6. Identifying and setting boundaries;
7. Poor facilities and lack of materials at adult learning centres; and
8. Student inexperience as adult educators.

Interestingly, most of the students pass the service-learning module, with more than 25% of them actually achieving distinctions. Each of the students compiles a portfolio, which can be submitted to the relevant Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) for assessment. If successful, the student can be awarded a National Certificate in Education and Training, which adds value to the student's degree and builds capacity in adult education. In addition, each student is given a letter of reference to attach to his/her CV and as an acknowledgement of the student's achievements.

Benefits for the higher education institution generally

Wits as an institution has benefited due to exposure to service agencies and communities. Service-learning helps overcome public perceptions of elitism and the university as an ivory tower.

The module impacts on students' curriculum as it exposes them to a discipline and field of study of which they would otherwise not have been aware – a field of study that would complement whatever major they were taking. I believe the module contributes to a richer education at this university and adds some excitement and variety to a BA curriculum. The confidence and skills required to present ideas to groups of adults and to facilitate other groups of adults to learn are valuable life skills in any discipline. Students often taught subjects that they were themselves studying or had studied; one really learns topics when required to teach them. One student told me that she never dreamed she could give a lecture but now she would have no difficulty doing it (and would probably do better than many university lecturers). Students regularly reflected on their own learning at Wits and one said, "I will never dream of treating my learners the way some university lecturers treat us. We must hold them accountable!"

All students are invited to register for the Honours programme in Adult Education and Training once they have completed their BA degree. Many of the students have become aware of a profession of which they were previously not aware, and this module could become a feeder into Adult Education postgraduate courses in the future. Student enrolments have translated into government subsidies for the School of Education and have offered opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Students talk about the module and their experiences to other lecturers and sometimes include aspects in their assignments. As a result staff members contact me to learn more about the module; and in some cases lecturers from other disciplines encourage their students to do this service-learning module as it complements many of the majors in a BA degree.

To conclude, service-learning enriches a student's total learning experience at a higher education institution and provides opportunities for better and closer public relations.

PARTNERSHIPS

What is apparent in this service-learning module is the number of service agencies and the wide spectrum of agreements – ranging from formal to virtually non-existent – between the different

triads (university, service agency and community). Service agencies have tended to be local NGOs, church-based organisations and in one case a juvenile prison. Some service agencies were consulted extensively, long before the module started, while other partnerships were created just before or after the module had started. In the latter cases I visited one, communicated telephonically with another and only gave a letter of introduction to a student for the third.

I have also realised that the nature of the partnerships differs from the triad model as this was not a triad partnership but rather a partnership between four partners – namely, the university, students, service agencies and a very loose and ill-defined community. The larger than normal student group and number of service agencies demand more time and present organisational challenges, which has compelled me to give more responsibility to students to organise themselves and deal directly with the service agencies. These demands have also limited my time to visit sites and interact more with the community. At times I have had to relinquish control and trust that relationships would be harmonious and professional between role-players.

Early in the module there was a minor misunderstanding between students and a service agency. The service agency was an excellent adult learning centre situated in Berea; I had established a good relationship with the centre and considered it among my anchor partnerships, and it accepted eight service-learning students. The principal demanded reliability and professionalism from all her staff members, including the students, and ruled her centre with a 'no nonsense' approach. Students felt she was too demanding, authoritarian and even unreasonable. The principal in turn was concerned that the students would not take their responsibilities seriously enough and might not meet her exacting standards. I immediately met with the principal and recorded the concerns. The following day was a lecture with the students and I heard the student team's report-back. Essentially I mediated between the two parties and helped promote understanding. At the heart of the problem were probably poor communication and minor misunderstandings of responsibilities. The partnership has proved to be a most productive and satisfactory one, but it does require regular visits and communication. By contrast, some of the other service agencies only require a telephone call every two months or so.

Given the rather chaotic nature of the module, with the large number of students and service agencies, defining responsibilities for each member of the partnership is, I think, a very good strategy. This has helped facilitate smoother organisation, harmonious relationships and well functioning, self-directed teams. This in turn has helped ease my personal workload, contributed to the success of the whole endeavour and promoted learning among all partners.

I have learnt to play the role of a team member and team leader, and to facilitate processes as they unfold rather than try to control them. Being flexible is important, as is preparedness to consider and revise plans and strategies according to the situations that arise. Things do not work out exactly as planned and it is necessary to be prepared to change and compromise.

Adult education involves building relationships between the facilitator and learners. Such a relationship involves trust, honesty, unconditional positive regard and respect. Since students

were expected to approach their learners using these qualities and skills I needed to set the example with them. This was the first time I had worked with young undergraduate students (as opposed to more mature postgraduates). When it became evident how positively the students responded to the teaching approach and how well they transferred this approach to their own learners, I realised that I had underestimated these students. It confirmed my belief that university students can be excellent adult learning facilitators, can take the initiative and solve problems, and are creative, intuitive, courageous, responsible and full of energy and enthusiasm. I am very proud of them.

Over time partnerships have strengthened by developing relationships and capping the number of students registering for this module at 25 (and in so doing ensuring a regular and consistent supply of students to service agencies). This, however, could limit opportunities to establish new and dynamic partnerships with other service agencies and communities. Furthermore, and bearing in mind that the module is not compulsory, that there is an enormous need for adult educators, that there are large numbers of adults in need of education and that the facilities available to them are poor, I do not like turning students away who really want to do the module. The fluidity and dynamics created between students, service agencies and communities are exciting and will evolve in directions unchartered by the organisers; this creates new opportunities and challenges. Essentially, the challenge is to harness the plentiful and regenerative resources of students and channel them creatively into addressing a pressing and important social problem.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Service-learning started small at this institution. It was initiated by national policy developments and international trends encouraging higher education institutions to adopt social engagement practices. With support from top management structures, a champion employed to drive social engagement and some monetary incentives, a few service-learning modules were piloted by academics who felt excited by the teaching and learning approach. The number of programmes increased, with a thrust in advocacy both bottom-up and top-down. Over time, service-learning has become an institutionalised movement and seen by many academics as an innovative and effective teaching and learning methodology. Understandably, not all academics get excited about the approach but those who do need to be identified and supported, particularly by those more experienced. Forming discussion forums, networking opportunities and circles of practice is vital for the growth of the movement. Increasingly and especially in Health Sciences, service-learning becomes an integral part of curricula.

ETHICS

There are many issues pertaining to ethics and service-learning – and in this regard I would like to mention my own dilemma: namely, *swinging the tiger by the tail*. Service-learning can lead to the creation and strengthening of community structures providing vital services. Such service agencies and structures can develop dependence on the university partnership, which has an obligation with regard to continued involvement and support. Can the support be sustained, and what implications does this have for the service-learning module convenor? How can I let go of the tiger's tail?

CONCLUSION

Service-learning provides many opportunities for higher education institutions to become socially responsive and engage with communities, while enhancing the quality and the learning experience for students. Students have the opportunity to learn and experience the vital skills essential for success as future leaders, and to become well rounded, responsible citizens; this cannot be taught within the confines of a lecture room. Each student account is unique and fascinating, often constituting a critical learning incident in the student's university experience and life. It is not unusual for students to attend the lectures and participate in the service not for credits but simply for the experience. Students have brought friends and even family members to join in the service-learning experience, and many students have continued teaching adults long after they completed the module. Students have walked tens of kilometres during the module to their service agencies, usually at night, through some of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in the country. Muslim students during Ramadan, with nothing having passed their lips since sunrise, have delayed their evening meal for three hours to attend to their adult learners' evening classes. One student, teaching evening classes in Soweto, recounted how one night she realised that she was the only person still teaching at the venue, as the other adult learners in other classes were no longer attending due to teacher absence. She reported often feeling lonely and scared, being the only teacher there with a group of adult learners, often in the dark because all the lights had been extinguished by the day school teachers and scholars. And yet many of the students have asked if they could do the module again (and obtain more credits!).

Service-learning also provides opportunities for higher education institutions to enhance their public image and, most importantly, to serve the society that supports and sustains them. For me, service-learning has provided profound insights into my profession, my discipline, myself and others. It has made my career interesting, exciting and energising. It has opened up opportunities for conference presentations, academic publications and to be part of a whole new community of practice. Most of all, it has facilitated engagement with people from all walks of life – such as students, academics, tireless and selfless community workers, the downtrodden, the forgotten and the incarcerated…all very special people.

CASE STUDY 2
SERVICE-LEARNING IN ARCHITECTURE

THORSTEN DECKLER

About Mr Thorsten Deckler...

A qualified architect, and principal and co-founder of 26'10 south Architects, and sharpCITY, an urban research agency – both based in Johannesburg.

Thorsten teaches part-time at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and has lectured at various universities in South Africa, at the University of Cordoba in Argentina and, most recently, at the Architectural Association in London. He graduated in 1997 with a BArch (*cum laude*) from Wits University and has recently been nominated, together with seven other young South African architects, for the DaimlerChrysler Award for South African Architecture. Research interests include informal networks and practices in relation to the city and its architecture; and contemporary urban culture – in Johannesburg, in particular.

In his opinion, the service-learning teaching methodology lends itself to a more wholesome academic teaching and learning experience, in which theory and practice may intertwine to inform each other. Furthermore, service-learning demands an innovative and flexible teaching approach and thus shakes up the academic comfort zone through working with and experiencing economic and social realities first-hand. Design-and-build, carried out within a service-learning framework, combines academic rigour, practice and people-interaction – allowing for the actual development and testing of architectural theory through a process of consultation, research and making.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenors: Thorsten Deckler (lecturer)
                             Dirk Bahmann (lecturer)
                             Diane Arvanitakis (service-learning facilitator)
University: University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)
Discipline: Architecture
Module title: Architectural Representation (Furniture-making)
Level of students: Second-year
Number of students: 29
Number of credits: 10

Community locations of service-learning:
- Informal crèches in the Hillbrow/ Berea area, Johannesburg

Service agencies:
- Hillbrow Community Partnership (HCP)
- Office for Community University Partnerships (CUPS)

Acknowledgements (sponsorship of materials):
Henkel
Dulux
PG Bison
Timber City Edenvale
Global Forest Products

SUMMARY

The module discussed in this case study required of 29 second-year Architecture students that they design and construct furniture for 10 crèches, identified as being in need of such services, in Hillbrow and Berea in the inner city of Johannesburg. This design-and-build module was run only once, during the first semester in 2002 at Wits.

The partners in this service-learning module were:
- The higher education institution – in the form of staff of the School of Architecture and Planning, and students choosing this elective module;
- The service agency – in the form of the Hillbrow Community Partnership (HCP, an NGO) and the University's Office for Community University Partnerships (CUPS); and
- The community – in the form of pre-school children (and arguably also their parents/ guardians) in the inner-city crèches, and the staff of those crèches.

The learning outcomes of the design-and-build module were that the students should be able to draw and construct the designs they had conceptualised. The service aspect of the learning outcomes was that the students should be able to engage not only with actual clients with real needs (as opposed to the usual hypothetical clients and briefs), but also that these clients should

be from inner-city communities with limited resources. An important aim of the module was to engender in students an awareness of a reality different from their own – a world in which resources are limited and needs high. In such a context, students would be required to operate and communicate, and to find appropriate solutions to fulfil identified community needs. Ultimately, students were to be made aware of alternative, socially engaged career opportunities within their discipline.

Students were tasked with the design and implementation of suitable furniture or toys for young children attending pre-schools in Hillbrow and Berea. Students were required to come to grips with the realities of inner-city living and especially the needs of young children attending the numerous informal crèches located in the inner city. In order to find appropriate solutions students needed to engage with the staff who run these crèches. Through dialogue, students embarked on a process of research, design refinement and production focused on the needs of their clients. Students also kept reflection diaries, in which they recorded their impressions and experiences; this was intended to assist them with distilling and clarifying lessons learnt during the module (although in reality involvement in the activities of the service-learning module proved so time-consuming that the students had limited time to engage in diary reflection).

One of the key lessons students learnt in the process of design and making was how to interact with their clients within the poorly resourced, high-need context of the inner city. To most students the inner city – presented in the media and in popular discourse as a dangerous, depraved place – revealed itself as part of a common humanity in which most people are striving to live in a dignified manner. Students discovered that their skills as young architects-in-training were highly valued; and more particularly in such a context. The students found the type of work they were engaged in and the close interaction with their clients and host community rewarding and fulfilling. In addition, many students realised that innovative thinking and design have their roots in the constraints imposed by such situations. Through participating in this module and interacting with people from a different class and background, students were sensitised to the needs of others and started to develop an understanding of an economic reality different from their own.

Lessons learnt

In developing and implementing this service-learning module, we learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- It is helpful to have a dedicated service-learning coordinator, ideally from the same discipline (in this case, Architecture) – in the case of this module, the coordinator among other things helped identify an appropriate design exercise and was a crucial mediator among the various partners.

- It is necessary to define clear outcomes – in terms of both learning outcomes for the students and deliverables to the community.

- There must be a balance between the educational needs of the faculty, the capabilities of

students, the expectations of the community and the anticipated/ required service-learning outcomes.

- Delivering a meaningful and tangible end product focuses students' energy as well as encouraging buy-in from the community (as clients).

- Service-learning makes high demands on time and resources of lecturers and the faculty involved. For service-learning modules to be sustainable in the future, lecturers with a passion for service-learning need to be encouraged and supported. Substantial funds (through sponsorship or other means) need to be made available in order to acquire materials and tools for design-and-build modules, especially if the scope of the service-learning module described here were in future to increase beyond furniture-making.

- Design-and-build is ideally suited to service-learning, given the latter's coupling of theory and practice with social awareness.

INITIATION

Factors leading to the initiation of the module

Hannah le Roux, a full-time lecturer in the School of Architecture and Planning, who had previous experience in running design-and-build modules in the inner city, saw the potential of the furniture-making elective to become a service-learning module. (It could be argued that design-and-build and service-learning are more than usually compatible, both being concerned with learning by doing.) Furthermore, it would be possible to offer clients who were not usually in a position to engage the services of architecture professionals, the benefits of such a service – given that the lecturers involved in the service-learning module would have their salaries covered by the university, and that the students' services would obviously be made available free.

The CUPS office at Wits identified the HCP as a suitable and willing service agency. The HCP, now disbanded, was at the time an NGO based at the premises of the old Hillbrow Hospital, and was primarily concerned with issues of health within the inner city. For the purpose of forming a partnership with the HCP and the inner-city crèches, the CUPS office employed a dedicated service-learning facilitator, architect Diane Arvanitakis, funded by JET Education Services. She was tasked with the coordination of the various disciplines involved in the programme as well as the actual implementation of the furniture elective. This facilitator was a great asset to the module; she played an invaluable mediating role, translating the university's need to educate the students, into appropriate service-learning outcomes – all the while factoring into the relationship the information received regarding the needs and priorities of the community. Based on extensive knowledge of and experience with the community – and specifically the crèches – the HCP identified furniture, play equipment and educational toys for children as the pressing needs.

In order to develop the furniture elective two young, part-time design lecturers (Dirk Bahmann

and I) were appointed. The module was conceptualised in principle by the service-learning facilitator and the university lecturers, towards the end of 2002. A detailed module programme was subsequently drawn up in order to address second-year students' relative lack of experience in furniture-making and lack of knowledge of the inner city. This resulted in an intensive programme of lectures, site visits and workshops, which were to be held over two quarters. The main challenge was to enable students to design and produce a robust, quality product that would satisfy the needs of its end users (staff and children of inner-city crèches).

The HCP identified 10 out of approximately 80 'illegal' crèches within the inner city to act as clients. Almost all crèches in the inner city are run as informal businesses, usually located on the first or second floor of existing high-rise buildings, and most are in a state of disrepair; the Gauteng Health Department has deemed such crèches illegal, since they do not meet required health and safety standards. Although the business of childcare should be lucrative, especially in the overpopulated inner city, operating budgets for the crèches are small, fees being based on the economic reality of inner-city communities. Due to relatively tight operating budgets the investment in furniture, play equipment and toys was considered a minor concern among those who operated the crèches; most of them had rudimentary plastic furniture (chairs and tables), because quality furniture proved too expensive. Furthermore, the cramped, indoor settings in which most of the crèches operate rendered standard-sized play equipment impractical.

The lack of good quality, multifunctional furniture and play equipment created a niche area of need, which the Architectural students could fulfil. Students were thus tasked with developing innovative solutions specific and appropriate to inner-city crèches. For the facilitator and the lecturers involved, the main challenge of the module was to guide students in their interactions with the clients in order to produce furniture that would satisfy the stated need of the crèches while taking into consideration the capability of second-year students. Materials for the production of furniture were to be solicited from sponsors.

We can share the following advice on initiating a service-learning module:

- Involve the lecturers right from the outset. As the teaching staff, we were not directly involved in the process of initiating the module, which was unfortunate because we could have provided constructive input; particularly in terms of assisting in streamlining the module and avoiding taking on too many clients – 10 crèches proved almost too many for staff and students to cope with. The fact that a dedicated service-learning facilitator from the same discipline (i.e. Architecture) was involved in the initiation did, however, prove advantageous to the extent than an appropriate design exercise could be identified.

- Involving staff who have energy and enthusiasm for the project is invaluable. In this case the involvement of (younger) ambitious staff members ensured a commitment and willingness to find the best and most appropriate solutions through challenging students to experiment and explore.

- Both flexibility and academic rigour are crucial. While service-learning and design-and-build modules require disciplined thinking and advance planning, the nature of service-

learning modules also often demands an approach enabling experimentation and out-of-the-box thinking.

- Involve the service agency and community from the outset. The involvement of the HCP – with its extensive knowledge of the community – was crucial in defining which community participants (crèches) were to become partners. In addition the HCP made its younger members available as guides to students and faculty staff. The guides themselves were Hillbrow residents and often proved extremely helpful in facilitating and translating discussions with crèche staff.

CONCEPTUALISATION

The key need that the module attempted to address was for adequate furniture in existing crèches in Hillbrow. This need was identified in discussions with the HCP.

Furniture-making has traditionally formed part of the curriculum employed in training students of Architecture at Wits. In the past furniture-making has been taught as a graphics elective in second year as well as in fourth year as part of the construction and services module. Second-year students would be asked to make a copy of a classic/ renowned furniture piece, given one briefing lecture and left to their own devices. Intermediate critique sessions were not envisaged and it was up to students to seek assistance from inside or outside the university. The fourth-year module demanded a furniture piece of students' own design, which demonstrated an understanding of a structural principle. These modules were generally successful and most students produced innovative designs.

The service-learning module discussed here, however, formed a significant departure, in that each student was required to design and produce an appropriate end product for a real client. Given the time constraints, relative inexperience of second-year students, unfamiliar context and children as end users, the module brief needed to be carefully conceptualised; it had to both ensure a meaningful learning process for the students and result in appropriate solutions. The service-learning component was integrated as part of the module outline and students' performance in terms of interaction with the client; that is to say, communication with clients and analysis of their needs became an integral part of the student assessment criteria.

The need for user-friendly and adaptable furniture pieces was identified in discussions between the HCP, CUPS, the service-learning facilitator and the senior staff from the School of Architecture and Planning. In fact, the HCP's experience with pre-schools in the inner city enabled the service agent to highlight numerous needs; in the end only some of these could be satisfied by the respective disciplines involved in this particular service-learning exercise. Ultimately, the community needs chosen as the focus of the service-learning module had also to match both the ability of students to perform effectively and the faculty's intended learning outcomes for students.

The intended learning outcomes for students of Architecture were identified as:

- Exposure to community dynamics in the inner city, specifically pre-schools;
- Gaining an early understanding of other worlds, through zooming in on one aspect of life in the inner city (particularly in 2002, many of the students considered the inner city a no-go zone);
- Interaction with clients with specific needs, the distillation of a brief and proposals aiming at satisfying such needs;
- Presentation to clients to clearly describe thinking processes and envisaged end results;
- Incorporating client suggestions into the solution;
- The design and implementation of a product satisfying identified needs;
- Working with a limited palette of sponsored materials; and
- Design innovation within economic constraints.

By preparing a rigorous module programme most of the challenges – such as the logistics of shuttling 29 students to 10 different crèches in the inner city – could be met.

PREPARATION

Familiarising with context

Prior to formal engagement with the crèches, Joanne Potterton, child physiotherapist, gave a presentation to the students, in order to explain the special needs of young children in their early development.

An introductory lecture also briefed students on how to conduct themselves in the inner city and especially towards their prospective clients. It was made clear to students that the clients they would meet needed to be engaged with on a professional basis in order to ensure a productive, mutually respectful working relationship. Students displayed surprising maturity in their interactions with the clients.

Introduction workshops for the students were held at the HCP, followed by a tour led by HCP members living in the inner city. The introduction workshop consisted of lectures by both HCP members and students involved in previous service-learning projects held in the inner city. A highlight of the workshop was a talk by the (now late) author Pashwane Mpe, who spoke about life in Hillbrow. This added intellectual and philosophical depth to the introduction session, which focused mainly on the dynamics of the area.

During a half-day tour students were taken through the inner city (mainly Hillbrow and Berea). This proved particularly effective for encouraging students to start familiarising themselves with the context, since students immediately fell into informal conversation with people they met and were able to ask their guides questions. An advantage was that the guides more or less matched the students in age. The students also visited the 10 different crèches, where they were introduced to the staff and their charges (approximately 40 – 60 children in total, ranging from infants to five-year olds).

The initial briefing and preparation process was further augmented by a series of lectures on

the nature of furniture: for example, construction techniques, differences between built-in and freestanding objects, and so on. A lecture on African toys and games was given in order to steer students away from the 'Mickey Mouse' syndrome and guide students towards producing intelligent, functional and cost-effective designs.

Community preparation and participation

The 10 identified crèches were informed by the HCP of the intended module and asked whether they would agree to participate. All 10 crèches agreed. They were briefed on the content and objectives of the module and made aware of their role as clients. The participating crèches identified their specific furniture needs, which were then discussed and prioritised by the crèche staff in workshops with the students.

Groups of two to three students were assigned to each of the identified crèches. A student briefing session was held at the crèches, where crèche staff (briefed by the HCP) spoke to students about their specific furniture needs. During this initial briefing session students and clients agreed on possible design solutions. Initially, language proved a barrier. Furthermore, crèche managers were uncomfortable in making demands for 'charity' from students, while students in turn felt awkward in challenging their clients' preconceptions about what architects do. In this context the contribution of the design lecturers and the HCP representatives present – in effectively assisting and guiding the discussions – was invaluable.

A subsequent studio workshop required the students to explain their understanding of their clients' requirements to their lecturers and fellow students, and present their initial design responses. Having been extensively debated and critiqued, these were subsequently developed in drawing and model format and presented at the respective crèches.

Models of the designs proved to be the most useful tools of communication. Crèche staff were involved in the role of client during presentation sessions. The on-site nature of these sessions proved very effective, since crèche staff and students could make direct reference to the environment and to the use to which the furniture pieces would be put. Comments and criticism from the crèche staff were recorded and incorporated as changes to the designs. The design lecturers and HCP representatives assisted in coordinating and mediating this process. In many cases, students' complicated designs had to be matched to the clients' requirements, resulting in a simplification of both brief and design. On the one hand, students tended to overcomplicate their task – taking on more than they could possibly manage. On the other hand, clients had to be made aware of the limited output that could be expected from the students and that not all of the client requirements could be met.

Striking decorations made out of scraps and recycled materials in the various crèches demonstrated to students how these places operated with a minimum of resources. The crèche staff also displayed remarkable creativity in inventing games. Empty plastic buckets, for instance, were used to drum on during a dance session in which students and children took part. In this sense the crèche staff performed an important role in demonstrating resourcefulness.

To some students the time spent in the crèches seemed excessive, while other students who had formed friendships returned frequently on informal visits. Friends and family members of students and staff were introduced and became involved (my grandfather, for instance, made a series of toys and presented them to children at one of the crèches).

Service agency preparation

The HCP was prepared for the module by both CHESP and the service-learning coordinator. Through discussions the HCP was briefed in terms of the module programme as well as the capabilities of second-year students in servicing the crèches. This was important in order to avoid creating false expectations with the HCP as well as the community.

We can share the following advice on preparing for a service-learning module:

- Preparation needs to happen in discussion with all role-players in order to gain clear and mutual understanding of their respective roles and capabilities. The service-learning coordinator played an invaluable role in this respect.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once students had resolved their designs sufficiently and had them approved by their respective clients, they were asked to produce a 1:1 detail exploring the construction principles and materials of choice. This was an important exercise in that it forced students to come to terms with the reality of how their product would be made. Strict criticism and valuable guidance were given by the design lecturers in order to ensure safety and ease of use. An understanding of the anthropometrics of small children had to be enforced and often students were sent back to their crèches to measure spaces as well as children!

In the meanwhile, the design lecturers identified various suppliers and manufacturers and approached them to donate timber, wood, paint and steel. The design lecturers also had to source transport for materials and ensure speedy delivery to the university workshop.

The lecturers spent a great deal of time in the workshop with students in order to offer assistance with refining their furniture pieces. Of great benefit was the Wits Architecture workshop manager, who offered experience and advice during the process of construction. While actual construction had very little to do with service-learning as such, the knowledge that their products would be used and tested by their clients motivated students to complete the furniture. It also became clear that the initial sessions between crèche staff and students had enforced a form of contract, which students and university staff felt they had to honour.

Finished pieces were transported and installed on site over the course of three days. Lecturers, students and crèche staff then assessed the pieces. It was necessary to adopt a very flexible approach to getting feedback from the various crèches during these assessment sessions; in many cases, crèche staff initially lacked confidence about voicing their opinions, while in some others the staff confidently provided feedback. Whatever the case, having the actual products

as a focus for discussion and being able to assess how the children interacted with them were useful for encouraging discussion. Student marks were awarded for competent design and construction, but also for the students' abilities to interact with their clients and to refine their requirements into meaningful and appropriate objects.

From the outset, students had been asked to keep personal reflection diaries, in which they recorded their impressions of and thoughts on the module. The diaries had to record students' design processes and the discussions with clients. The diary also served to record students' impressions and thoughts about the nature of the module and service-learning. Most students rated the importance of service-learning highly and commented that this experience had been valuable to them in terms of sensitising them to the need of others. The opportunity to operate outside of the classroom, work with real clients, get their hands dirty and ultimately be of service to people in need was taken up by most students with surprising commitment. The fact that students could see a tangible end result in the form of a piece of furniture built by themselves and used by children created a great sense of satisfaction and pride.

We learnt the following in the course of implementation:

- Perhaps the most imposing pressure on the lecturers involved was the amount of organisation and paperwork necessary to elicit the required support from sponsors. For example, letters had to be written, sponsors approached, the goals of the service-learning module explained, materials collected and delivered, and so on.

- The combination of the design-and-build studio with service-learning proved to be exceptionally effective in mobilising students to immerse themselves in the module. A questionnaire formulated by JET-CHESP was filled in with mostly positive responses by students.

- However, the reflection diary proved to be less successful as a means of encouraging learning through reflection. The nature of this type of service-learning module, where students are under pressure to produce finished products, means that students were overtaxed and hence had little time to spend on diary reflection.

- Reflection would need to be more carefully accommodated in future. For example, given that this service-learning elective was part of a graphics module, it would be worthwhile in future considering setting the creation of a reflection diary as a *separate* graphics project, after the furniture-making module was completed. Making the reflection diary a separate deliverable based on notes and sketches gathered during the service-learning, and affording students sufficient time to focus on compiling it, might help to ensure students the necessary opportunities for reflection. Other reflection opportunities – such as making more time for oral reflection during class meetings, or encouraging students to do critical incident writing – would also need to be considered for future modules.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

The direct benefits to the community could be described as follows:
- People had an opportunity to become clients and to employ the services of architects, which they may otherwise not have been able to do.
- Clients received purpose-made products to improve the daily running of the crèches, which benefited not only the children attending the pre-school but also the staff.
- In all, 21 products were made, of which 10 were excellent – they ranged from room dividers, shelves, and tables and chairs, to indoor jungle gyms.
- Indirectly, parents/ guardians benefited from having their children attending a crèche with improved facilities.
- A few of the crèche managers mentioned that the furniture contributed to some extent to the crèches ultimately being given approval by the Department of Health.

There were indirect benefits too. People previously disregarded and marginalised found themselves in the role of client, being able to make demands and suggestions that were treated with seriousness and rigour. This experience helped clients in developing their ability to articulate their needs and to interact with service providers. That students and lecturers found the time to interact with their clients and consider their needs carefully was an unprecedented experience for people who have been marginalised, and it contributed to reconciling different economic and social groups. The relationships formed between students and clients seemed to have bridged a social and class divide, in the process of which both parties were positively enriched.

In many instances, the clients benefited additionally from this partnership: in one instance two students, besides making furniture, also undertook electrical repairs and painted out the crèche in which they worked. They formed a close bond with their clients, who were overjoyed to see them each time they visited.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Design-and-build studios linked with service-learning have been successfully implemented throughout the US and Europe. While, elsewhere, case studies abound, the potential in this particular regard has not been realised in Architectural education in South Africa.

It is against this backdrop that the module derives its value; in the process of running the module in a specific community, the students learn an immense amount about that community – gaining an increased understanding of community needs, which makes it possible to conceptualise further initiatives within that community. For example, the time-consuming process of interviewing clients to understand their needs and designing appropriate products suggest that, in future, prototypes or service packs for informal crèches could be developed, which would assist crèches to provide a better service (and would possibly aid in these crèches being accredited by the Department of

Health). The benefits to the university would be primarily in sensitising students to the needs of and dynamics within economically disadvantaged communities; in the course of participating in such service-learning modules, stereotypes and preconceptions about the inner city and its inhabitants are exposed. In this sense young people might choose to steer their careers towards work within communities rather than buying into a corporate career. In the long term this 'character building' should benefit the university in producing graduates endowed with a more developed ethical mindset guiding their conduct as professionals within a developing country.

Benefits for the department/ faculty

By combining design-and-build with service-learning the School of Architecture and Planning could endow architects with a better understanding of construction as well as the dynamics of client interaction. Within the South African context – in which resources are often limited and levels of need high – Architectural professionals skilled in both construction and client interaction are in great demand; and thus graduates of such programmes would be more eligible for jobs and projects demanding a knowledge of building and making within a developing nation context. In addition students would have a better understanding of the various parties (service providers, sponsors) and processes involved in the implementation of such projects.

Benefits for the students

The response of students who took part in the module was overwhelmingly positive. A few of these respondents pinpointed the value of the module as being precisely that they had to work with real clients and assume real responsibility, an opportunity that other modules do not offer. The satisfaction they gained from completing the module and being of use largely compensated for the additional stress and workload.

As regards short- and long-term benefits for students, the short-term benefits for students include an understanding of the importance of time management, people skills and the complexity of realising a built piece of architecture. The long-term benefit lies in the fact that students were sensitised to the reality of economically disadvantaged communities and the potential to do relevant and creatively stimulating work within such contexts.

Student assessment

The service-learning process was assessed through observation of students' interaction with the community as well as their understanding of the communities' needs. The actual end product – i.e. a furniture piece – naturally demonstrated this understanding.

Students were not only assessed on the strengths of their final design. The assimilation of the design process and client interaction as recorded in their reflection diaries were also taken into consideration. Most successful design projects displayed a complex and rich thought process. Often, initial, simplistic designs were challenged and enriched through the comments made by the crèche staff and the design lecturers. To give an example: one student, after carefully interviewing his client, who listed shelves as well as tables and chairs as needs, produced a simple but sophisticated set of dual-purpose stacking benches and tables, which

could alternatively be used as shelving.

Benefits for the service agency

The HCP was the only participating service agency involved in the module. As the HCP no longer exists, it is difficult to establish in what ways its capacity was developed by this particular module. The direct benefits to the HCP could have been that this service agency's previous involvement and focus on medical issues were expanded to include other disciplines through formal service-learning, thus fulfilling a part of its mandate as a community-based organisation with the health of children as its primary focus.

PARTNERSHIPS

As mentioned, partnerships were formed with the HCP, 10 crèches in the inner city, the CUPS office at Wits and the School of Architecture and Planning.

CUPS acted as the central agent, ensuring that the service-learning component was incorporated and implemented. The service-learning facilitator, Diane Arvanitakis, was directly answerable to CUPS. Her role as part-time lecturer at the School of Architecture and Planning benefited the development and implementation of the furniture elective. The partnership between CUPS, the HCP and the informal crèches was established prior to the implementation of the module. The design lecturers structured the module around the service-learning needs and partnership relationships. The HCP, as service agency, provided the necessary knowledge of the inner city and access to the respective participating crèches.

The partnership remained intact and kept functioning throughout the implementation of the module (in 2002, with a slightly less intense version of the module being run in 2003). The involvement of the HCP was crucial during the discussions and presentations to clients at the inner-city crèches. Diane Arvanitakis, as service-learning facilitator, attended all design workshops and site visits and hence ensured that the service-learning tasks were incorporated effectively.

The partnership benefited the module tremendously in demanding a well coordinated module structured around community interactions as well as providing ongoing support and criticism during implementation.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

It is the opinion of this author that policy should be introduced to make service-learning a mandatory educational approach throughout South African higher education. It is ironic that many Architectural faculties in overseas institutions have implemented some form of design-and-build studio linked to service-learning, whereas in South Africa – where much more pressing needs for this form of education and these services exist – there are few comparable initiatives in Architectural education. Furthermore, overseas institutions have been successfully running and implementing design-and-build projects *in South Africa* while we look on!

In post-apartheid South Africa, the need for segregated communities to interact and assist one another is very real but does not receive much attention in Architectural education beyond theoretical projects and lip service. While the School of Architecture and Planning has a specific interest in running *hypothetical* projects within poor communities, especially the inner city, it would seem that the academics managing the school are more comfortable navigating the theoretical realm. The lack of service-learning in Architectural institutions may stem partly from the additional expertise, budgets and time they require and the lack of buy-in from academics caught in underpaid management positions. Certainly, the design-and-build module combined with service-learning poses a greater demand on departmental resources than a traditional, theoretical module would. In order for this service-learning module to become an established elective within the School of Architecture and Planning – rather than simply a one-off elective run in 2002 – much would need to be done within the institution in terms of general advocacy for a service-learning approach, combined with serious logistical planning, increased allocation of resources, and strategies for addressing challenges such as transport of students, risk and liability issues, and so on.

Given existing obstacles within higher education institutions and faculties of Architecture, it would seem that there is a need to approach the problem differently; the need for corporate social investment (CSI) in the institution, for instance, may be satisfied by offering service-learning modules, which would act as a CSI vehicle through which tangible results could be achieved. In the context of Architecture specifically, service-learning coordinated with various other university disciplines could offer clients a far more comprehensive service than is offered by standard Architectural appointment.

It is further argued that, in addition to the benefits discussed above, service-learning if implemented successfully could serve and promote the process of reconciliation within a democratic South Africa.

ETHICS

The most important ethical consideration seems to be preventing exploitation – of students, of communities, of service agencies – by achieving a balance between educational requirements, needs within the community and service agency involvement.

To effect positive change the results of service-learning need to be tangible; i.e. a building, design, business plan, policy framework, workshops, capacity building etc., which can be used by the community or service agency. That is to say, it is important to have clearly defined deliverables, and then to ensure these are in fact delivered to the satisfaction of all partners.

By the same token, the institutional staff should not be the sole beneficiaries of research relating to resource-poor communities; the students involved must also be acknowledged and credited for the research they undertake. Furthermore, such research should not be driven by mere academic curiosity, but must relate to meeting the real needs of the communities involved.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

An enabling factor in the running of the module was the support given by JET-CHESP in funding the post of a service-learning facilitator. This made possible the formation of a meaningful partnership with the HCP, who assisted considerably in identifying the informal crèches and provided guides who accompanied students and staff through the inner city.

All partners in the service-learning modules need to agree explicitly on the benefits they wish to achieve. Since these modules take up much time and money, funding becomes an important means to motivate and enable dedicated staff, both from the academic institution and from service agencies.

As a result of developing and implementing this service-learning module, we can share the following advice:

- Management needs to demonstrate commitment to and understanding of the importance of service-learning modules. Buy-in from staff can be achieved by reassuring them that envisaged learning outcomes fit within the discipline's needs for student learning.

- Potential partnerships need to be thoroughly investigated, and it is important that the service-learning outcomes/ goals for all partners are clearly defined and agreed upon.

- Offering a range of service-learning modules as electives rather than mandatory modules is a way of ensuring that more motivated students with a specific interest will apply.

CONCLUSION

The furniture-making elective discussed in this article – despite being offered only once (2002) in the form described – can be said to have proved one of the more successful Architecture electives offered by the School of Architecture and Planning. The success can be ascribed by and large to the commitment and enthusiasm displayed by students who participated in the module. The involvement of a service-learning facilitator and the partnership with CUPS and HCP enabled the design lecturers to draw up a comprehensive (if intensive) programme around the envisaged outcomes defined by the partnership. The module programme enabled students to be guided in their design approaches and interactions with their community clients in a focused manner.

It is my view that Architectural education has much to gain from service-learning and vice versa; the design-and-build approach lends itself ideally to the service-learning approach, since it produces tangible results. The success of design-and-build in a service-learning module could be increased through dovetailing the Architectural project with modules in other disciplines; in this way the design process could be guided and informed by factors and research outside of the Architectural discipline. It has been proven that Architecture (i.e. infrastructure) alone cannot be employed in the upliftment of communities. Well coordinated service-learning programmes

employing various faculties on 'one project' could offer significant benefits in 'servicing' a community but also help to make students engaged in these modules aware of the complexity of social issues.

As one of the lecturers on this service-learning module, I was challenged to run it successfully. The positive feedback received – both from the community and from students – made it a rewarding experience. The working methodology as well as experience gained through interacting with students and clients provided important lessons that I can implement in my private practice and projects concerned with community upliftment. In this sense, service-learning is as educational for staff as it is for students.

CASE STUDY 3
SERVICE-LEARNING IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FRANCES O'BRIEN & GUY CAWS

About Mrs Frances O'Brien...

Lecturer in the Education Faculty of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

After working in the non-governmental, welfare field for many years, Frances joined the university to organise and facilitate field education for Social Work students. Service-learning offered the opportunity to pursue social justice principles via education, and she assumed responsibility for service-learning in the Crime Reduction in Schools project. In 1999, she became an academic coordinator in the CHESP project, in which capacity she promoted partnerships among university academics, service agencies and communities through the development of academic modules incorporating service-learning. Having moved from teaching in the field of Community Development, Frances is now primarily involved in the academic development of educators in higher education and offers a dedicated module on experiential learning. Her current research interest is in developing theory grounded in the local practice of service-learning.

About Mr Guy Caws...

Education officer with Durban Solid Waste (DSW).

Guy first became involved in waste education as a teacher. After 20 years as a volunteer, he joined the staff of Durban Solid Waste in 2001. He was first introduced to service-learning at a workshop in 2001, and since then has been a service partner for a number of University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and Durban University of Technology courses. He qualified as a teacher at Edgewood College of Education and later obtained a BA (UNISA) and a BEd (UKZN). In his spare time he is extensively involved with the scout movement.

AT A GLANCE...

SUMMARY

For three years (2002 – 2004, inclusive), the Community Development undergraduate programme at UKZN and the Education and Waste Minimisation section of eThekwini Municipality's Durban Solid Waste (DSW) department co-operated on various modules. The 'flagship' of this collaboration was a third-year capstone module, Community Development for Sustainability, designed, implemented and evaluated by both academic and service partners.

The partners in this service-learning module were:
- The higher education institution – in the form of the academics involved and the students;
- The service agency – in the form of eThekwini Municipality's DSW department; and
- The community – in the form of youth, and their educators, caregivers and families.

On average, 26 third-year students each year undertook this one-semester, 32-credit service-learning module. They were required to show their achievement of prescribed theoretical, practical and cognitive learning outcomes through working with young people and their educators and/or caregivers in 15 communities in and around Durban. The focus of their joint undertakings was waste education. Conceptualised as a strategy that young people could use to contribute to their personal growth and to their communities' development, waste education was in line with the service agency's mandate and the communities' desire for clean

environments. The students' community involvement was complemented by classroom-based reflection groups, skills training, reading and written work.

Lessons learnt

This case study is the composite record of the conceptualisation, planning, implementation and outcomes of three offerings of the module, from which the following key lessons have been learnt about service-learning:

- In the conceptualisation phase of the module, it is essential that all partners – i.e. the community, the academic partner and the service agency – perceive that they will be able to make a worthwhile contribution to the joint initiative and that they will further their own aspirations through their participation. Thus, the establishing of common ground among all partners and transparency in their individual goals are important at this stage.

- When students in one module undertake diverse service activities at a large number of sites spread over a wide geographical area, the potential for poor learning opportunities and/or poor student performance increases. In addition, responsibility for learning and serving has to be devolved to, and shared among, the students themselves, the various community and organisation mentors and the university academic staff. Hence, all need to be as thoroughly prepared as possible in advance.

- Good communication, minimised bureaucratic procedures, and the availability of practical, emotional, academic and financial support characterise the successful implementation of service-learning. Flexibility is always required and is aided by the close monitoring of students' progress by involved academic and service staff.

- Improvement of modules using service-learning is facilitated if at least some of the same participants continue to be involved and if the outcomes of each module – for all participants – are established, shared and seriously considered.

- In addition to the mechanics of curriculum design and implementation, the larger community, higher education and service provision contexts in which service-learning modules exist require our ongoing attention.

INITIATION

Prior to the initiation of the module, the convenors had interacted professionally around their mutual interest in service-learning and in community development. The CHESP initiative and the obvious suitability of service-learning as a pedagogy in an academic programme for future community development practitioners provided the opportunity to pursue these common interests.

The module took advantage of the existence of a formally approved module in the undergraduate Community Development programme. Akin to the American 'capstone' module,

the module aimed to give students the opportunity to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the Community Development programme. The non-specific nature of the original module template allowed us to choose the academic content and the teaching methods that were coherent with the focus of the service agency and some of the concerns of the primarily urban communities.

We learnt the following about initiating a service-learning module:

- Existing 'space' needs to be identified in the programmes of those responsible for any aspect of service-learning; this applies equally to formal service agencies, community organisations and academic departments.

- Sound justification for adopting service-learning is necessary and must be expressed in the relevant discourses of each partner, identifying how service-learning can address issues of real concern to each.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Discussions about the module initially included a community convenor, Thembinkosi Shezi, responsible for youth development in the KwaZulu-Natal Community Based Network. Clear priorities, informed by the structures to which each module convenor was affiliated, were laid on the table from the first meeting:
- For the academic partner: the preparation of students to work as critical thinking, competent, experienced and ethical Community Development practitioners;
- For the service partner: the expansion of education around waste management; and
- For the community partner: the development of youth.

For the purposes of this module, 'youth' was conceptualised as young people in and out of formal schools, and 'community' as youth and their educators, caregivers and families.

Crucial in conceptualising this module was the identification of a synergy between community development, youth development and solid waste management. Waste management had been shown, by the service partner's organisation, to be an appropriate strategy that youth could use in their own development and to improve others' perception of them. Waste management requires collaborative work, can be done in young people's immediate environments and allows for relatively quick and visible results. In addition, the increasing prominence of environmental issues on local and international agendas gives youth's waste minimisation efforts substantial credibility. There are also local precedents for waste management initiatives being the forerunner of positive changes in community attitudes to themselves, and of such activities leading to a number of other community development initiatives. Underpinned, then, by an asset-based approach to community development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and the sustainable livelihoods framework (de Gruchy, 2002) familiar to Community Development students, waste management was conceptualised as a livelihood strategy to draw on and increase household/ school and community assets.

By the end of the module, it was anticipated that the students would be able to:

1. Demonstrate their knowledge of the discourse and debates around, and synergy among:
- Sustainable livelihoods;
- Asset-based community development (ABCD);
- The process of people-centred, participatory development;
- Youth development;
- Solid waste management; and
- Learning.

2. Demonstrate skills in:
- Project management;
- Facilitation and participatory techniques;
- Team work;
- Waste management practices; and
- Written and oral presentation of work.

3. Show an appreciation of the value of youth and of waste management for sustainable community development.

The outcomes desired by the youth involved with the students in the module were negotiated with them during implementation of the module and were thus specific to each 'site'. The overarching goal of promoting youth as assets in the development of their particular communities had been identified in ABCD workshops held with community groups prior to conceptualisation of this module. The concern for youth expressed by these groups was reflected, too, in various government policies and the implementation of state-sponsored initiatives such as the Umsobomvu Youth Fund.

The service agency, in contributing to the city's waste management plan, was motivated to expand its educational services in respect of integrated waste management, particularly waste minimisation.

The convenors explored potential community learning sites, debated how decisions should be made regarding placement of students at specific sites, and considered the learning outcomes, the possible nature of service activities and ways in which students' learning and service activities could be supported.

Potential students were asked to complete a short questionnaire so that we would have a better profile of them and they could participate in locating their sites for service if they so wished.

After the initial conceptualisation described above, the community convenor withdrew, due to other commitments, and the academic and service module convenors organised the student placements. The academic convenor also organised on-campus venues for classes; prepared the necessary documentation (e.g. module outline, letters of introduction for students, confirmation letters for service sites); located relevant literature; and compiled a module reader for students.

We learnt the following lessons about conceptualising a service-learning module:

- All module convenors need to be conversant with the pedagogy of service-learning. In addition, they need to reach broad consensus on the value of a partnership approach and have some understanding of the principal service to be rendered. If they are in employment, their involvement should be sanctioned by their employer and their daily schedules should be sufficiently flexible to allow the necessary time to be devoted to planning the module.

- Knowledge of students likely to register for the module is advantageous. Factors such as language proficiency, special skills and interests, place of residence, academic timetables and existing employment or other community-based involvement influence placement decisions.

- Early registration of students for the module means that during the planning process student numbers are known.

- A keen awareness among the module convenors of existing networks, knowledge and facilities is helpful in planning, and in locating placements and information.

- Efforts should be made to get to know the individual community service sites that are willing to have students. The priorities of each community can then be taken into consideration in planning the module content, in allocation of students and in their continuing support during the module.

PREPARATION

Student

Students were prepared initially for the projects in two class sessions on campus. In the first, they were introduced, by the academic partner, to the project as a whole, with particular emphasis on its purpose, requirements, process and theoretical base. A three-hour workshop was subsequently facilitated by the service partner to orientate the students to the issue of waste management, the service agency, waste management strategies, and project management. This was followed by the allocation of waste management sites (allocations were amended as and when necessary). During the course of the subsequent two weeks, students were orientated to their service sites.

Community

Preparation of communities started during the conceptualisation process. A feedback and planning meeting was held with those involved in a previous module. Issues such as strategies to integrate students into the schools/ communities, the skills they were expected to possess and additional services required from the module coordinators' institution were discussed. In keeping with an overarching vision of community reconstruction and development, discussion was initiated as to how students' activities at specific service sites could be linked with the surrounding communities. Preparation of communities also included personal communication by telephone, visits, and letters

to request and confirm placements.

Service agency

The primary role-player in the service organisation, DSW (one of the module convenors), enlisted the assistance of two further education officers and a community development worker from that unit. An orientation meeting was held with these new stakeholders, at which the module aims and structure were outlined and possible community-based sites identified.

We learnt the following lessons about preparing for a service-learning module:

- The importance of adequate preparation of all involved in service-learning modules cannot be overstated. Preparation of students should be integrated in the module structure and consultation with the students should be regular and ongoing. Preparation of community and service partners is more challenging, as their needs are more idiosyncratic and their time schedules more demanding that those of students.

- Experience and student feedback have shown that the primary community mentor – that person at the service site who takes responsibility for guiding and monitoring the students – should have a fair understanding of the service activity and of the expectations of students. The issuing of module guides to the community mentor is necessary but seldom sufficient, and should be supplemented by personal communication.

- Often, planning with 'the community' (and service agencies) involves those in authority in that community. While engagement with authorities is essential, efforts should be made to identify and engage also with those members of the community who will be directly responsible for the student(s) placed with them. Failure to do so often results in misunderstandings and resistance from or lack of interest on the part of community members, which hinders the students' progress, at least in the early stages of the placement.

- Mentors from the service agency are experienced in the service activities of their organisation and usually have established relationships with the communities in which students are placed. Preparation of these mentors should emphasise the needs of students, with thorough negotiation with the community mentor regarding the nature of the students' activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Module structure

The 13-week module comprised on- and off-campus work, supplemented by reading and written assignments. It was a concurrent module, meaning that students were registered simultaneously for other modules and thus their placements were not full-time (block). The module structure comprised three phases: orientation, implementation and evaluation.

The orientation activities of the first four weeks, described above, culminated in class presentations by students of their plans for undertaking waste minimisation activities with their community groups. These plans were implemented, with adjustments as necessary, over the following seven weeks. During this period, students also attended one 90-minute 'skills session' and one 90-minute small group 'reflection' session in class each week. They compiled summaries of prescribed literature and maintained a journal, which was submitted twice and returned to them with written feedback. During the final two weeks, each student presented an oral account of his/her activities and learning to a small panel comprising the module convenors, and the relevant community and service agency mentors. (In the past, other students, staff and foreign service-learning students and their lecturer attended some of the presentations.) During this period, students also completed their portfolios.

The value of critical reflection by students was emphasised in the module. Opportunities for structured reflection were provided via the journals, which comprised individual written reflections, ideally according to a given outline, and the small group, weekly reflection sessions in class. In these sessions, efforts were made to allow for the different ways in which students learnt and reflected, and for the different issues that arose in their community-based work. In some sessions, for example, the students described their experiences in terms of the five senses (smell, sight etc.), or their understanding of their work in graphic form. In another, they expressed themselves via rap, poetry or letter-writing, while in other sessions they reflected on their experience in relation to selected theoretical frameworks. An online chat room was set up for weekly group reflection by students who preferred to use this in place of class attendance. It did not prove to have wide appeal, however, and had to be abandoned owing to technical and access difficulties.

Ad hoc discussions among students and community and service mentors allowed for joint reflection around the on-site experiences. The module convenors reflected regularly via telephone and e-mail. Joint reflection among all parties was limited to the occasion on which the students made their oral presentations. In instances where community mentors did not attend these presentations, however, this opportunity was forgone.

Community-based learning and service activities

The sites at which students worked included primary and high schools, a creative arts project for physically and mentally challenged youth, community groups focusing on the environment and income generation, and organisations dealing with homeless youth and permaculture. Small groups within these communities and organisations worked with the student(s) placed with them to implement a wide variety of waste minimisation activities, including composting, vegetable gardens, arts and crafts and waste collection. The emphasis, however, was on the establishment or strengthening of the groups around these activities and on fostering connections with resources outside the sites – that is, on the enhancement of social capital. The following vignettes provide examples of a few of the joint initiatives undertaken by students and community members.

Vignette 1: Creation of a park

Julius and Toka worked with a few members of the development committee of a new housing estate on the outskirts of Durban. That committee wished to create a park on a small, undeveloped site, which had become an eyesore owing to illegal dumping of waste. The students and a committee member first met with a local government department to solicit the necessary tools to clear this site. Once the clearing started, many hitherto uninterested community members became enthused, participating in weekend bush-clearing parties. The discovery of stolen goods in the bush led Julius to reflect on the light they brought, literally and figuratively, to "the bush that is the nest of darkness…" (Simbine, 2004). In response to their progress, a second local government department undertook to employ some of the volunteers to maintain the area.

Vignette 2: Working with a school environmental club

Zibuyile worked in a high school in a suburb of Durban. The school's learners came from many different areas in and around Durban, making the school relatively unconnected with its immediate geographical community. The student worked with the school's environmental club, which had become a little rundown because the supervising teachers had changed twice in a very short period. There was, however, strong support from the school management and the student was given a warm welcome by the learners. Two broad issues were addressed: littering and environmental awareness. The service agency module convenor was invited to give a training session to the environmental club on project planning. Various exercises were held, culminating in an 'environmental concert' to celebrate Arbor Day. This was quite a vibrant show, where the learners performed self-penned songs, poems and sketches along an environmental theme. One highlight was a fashion show, where the learners modelled clothing made from recycled materials such as plastic bags. The guest speaker was the chair of a local conservation group; his presence increased the links between the school and the local community. The student's time at the school proved most worthwhile. The learners were definitely exposed to environmental issues, while the student gained valuable insight into the planning and execution of community projects.

Vignette 3: Working in a peri-urban residential facility for youth

Zimele and Prishanthi worked in a peri-urban residential facility for youth who had previously lived on the streets and had come into conflict with the law. The NGO running the facility was committed to providing opportunities for the youth to acquire skills and experience that would enable them to be self-supporting after their departure from the facility. Taking advantage of the availability of material donations received by the organisation, and the business skills that one young resident was acquiring, the students assisted in planning, opening and running a shop on the organisation's premises. These activities brought the students face-to-face with the challenges of acquiring donated materials for the structure of the shop, conversion of a container into a shop and beautification of the shop's immediate surrounds, as well as power issues between the staff and youth in relation to decision-making around the business.

Assessment of students' learning

Table 3.1 (below) indicates the means by which students were assessed, the weighting allocated to the various requirements, the criteria by which learning was judged, and the assessors. This information was outlined in the module guide given to students at the beginning of the module.

Table 3.1: Assessment of students' learning

Assessment form	% Weighting	Criteria	Assessor(s)
Journals	10	• Evidence of ability to describe, interpret in relation to own professional and personal development and use experience for future planning.	Academic module convenor
Plans	10	• Presentation clear. Uses at least one of the following: - Overhead transparencies; - Video or audio tapes; - Posters; - Samples of work or material from site; - Community voices (live, recorded or written). • Content: - Contains information according to outline; and - Evokes interest from audience.	Module convenors
Interaction on site	10	• Preparation. • Behaviours showing respect. • Participation. • Value added.	Community mentor
Oral presentations	10	• Gives a clear, concise overview of the placement; and • Critically considers the issues encountered.	Panel (see the earlier information about module structure).
Portfolios	60	• Account of practical work, discussion of learning, and the journal: - Are clear and coherent; and - Demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. (45) • Appendices include appropriate materials to aid clarity and supply evidence relating to the 'Account of practical work' and 'Discussion of learning'. (10) • The portfolio is a securely fastened, neatly presented and coherent submission. It contains the required content. Pages are numbered. (5)	• Module convenors; and • External examiner.

On assessment of their portfolios, the students who received higher marks were generally those who, in addition to meeting other specified assessment criteria:

- Showed evidence of 'meta-learning' – that is, awareness of how the student him/herself had learnt, from where that learning evolved and indicators of own learning;
- Integrated appropriate theory;
- Demonstrated critical thinking through, for example, questioning, critiquing their own assumptions, actions and conclusions, and generalising particular experiences to other knowledge, activities or ideas; and
- Recorded the process of their practice coherently and clearly.

Costs

The costs incurred in a module incorporating service-learning *may* include:

- The module convenors' time;
- Administrative expenses, e.g. photocopying, stationery and telephone;
- Transport for students, convenors, service mentors and community participants;
- 'Project' expenses, i.e. purchases by students of requirements for their activities, such as photographs, publicity, refreshments, tools etc.;
- Capacity building for academic, service or community mentors; and
- The purchase and/or production of materials pertaining to the module, such as literature or videos/ multimedia.

If the convenors' responsibilities in the module are part of their professional duties, their time is likely to be compensated by their employer(s). The same may apply to the administrative costs and purchase of literature and so on for the module. In our experience these three items accounted for 83% of the total cost of the module. The average cost of transport for students, most of whom used public transport to complete their community-based activities, worked out at R126 per student. Each required an average of R81 to purchase project requirements. The expenses were incurred in the planning, implementing and monitoring/ evaluation phases of the module. These, respectively, accounted for 15%, 58% and 27% of the total costs.

We learnt the following lessons about implementation of a service-learning module:

- In semesterised, concurrent modules, students' activities in communities are necessarily narrowly focused and of short duration. Advantage should be taken of any relevant opportunities outside of students' service sites (e.g. conferences, films or focused workshops) that can offer students a 'bigger picture' of the issues they are addressing and the activities they are undertaking.

- Muller and Subotsky (2001: 178) warn against assuming "that the interface between different forms of knowledge is unproblematically achievable". We found this to be true, with many students failing to recognise learning opportunities at their service sites and being challenged in identifying evidence of their theoretical knowledge from their service activities. Thus, while artefacts such as journals and portfolios ideally should reflect the creativity and uniqueness of their creators, we have found it more productive to offer report outlines and other such

guides to help students move from instinctive practice to thoughtful action; from regurgitating knowledge to creating wisdom.

- It goes without saying that good communication between communities and student(s) significantly helps the progress of their joint activities. Changes in the plans or time schedules of either the community participants or the student(s) are one instance of when timely communication by one to the other can prevent considerable frustration.

- As a pedagogy in an academically-accredited module, 'learning' is more heavily weighted in assessment of students than is their 'service'. With outcomes of students' activities being heavily dependent on factors outside a student's control, it is not believed equitable to rely on the outcomes of the service activities as the primary determinants of a student failing or passing the module. The choice of assessment criteria remains, however, a sensitive and ethical dilemma. While students may learn from their mistakes in the community, the latter will bear the cost of such errors.

- Non-attendance by students in class or at the service site is particularly challenging in service-learning modules, in which learning relies heavily on experience and joint reflection, neither of which can be 'caught up' through self-study. A high percentage of attendance of community and class sessions should thus be mandatory and monitored.

- There is a tendency among *all* involved in modules using service-learning to overestimate the scope and quality of students' work in communities. The challenges many students face include the time limits imposed by semesterisation of modules; timetable constraints – particularly in the case of those students 'carrying' extra subjects; transport difficulties; lack of experience; and, occasionally, a lack of self-confidence. Lest they set up or perpetuate unrealistic expectations, students' plans for their community-based work should thus be critically interrogated to ensure that they are realistic.

- Costs incurred by students and staff that are in excess of costs normally incurred for campus-based modules should be compensated, particularly when the module is compulsory. In this module, funding by an outside organisation (JET Education Services), was particularly helpful. In addition, the fact that the service convenor's department did not require compensation for its expenses allowed the module to be sustained within the academic programme for longer than would otherwise have been possible. Ideally, however, anticipated expenses should be incorporated into the budget for the university department.

- Many of the costs incurred in service-learning are 'hidden', in the sense that they are not eligible for reimbursement and hence are not recorded. One student, working with a group of school learners on various waste minimisation strategies, reported that R717-25 was spent, of which only 29% was eligible for reimbursement from the external funds allocated to the module. This latter amount was thus the recorded cost of the service-learning activities. In reality, the community and the student herself bore the remaining costs, 9% of which came from school funds, 42% from learners and 20% from the student herself. If service-learning is to be seen as a genuine collaboration between off- and on-campus stakeholders, and if

the state and funders are to have a realistic picture of the total financial costs of service-learning, the financial contributions of all should be recorded and recognised.

- It is useful to have access to petty cash during the implementation stage of the module. Many students do not have the necessary cash reserves to finance additional travel or other expenses while they wait for reimbursement.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

Evidence of changes in community members and/or their environment was sought from them by the students – both during and at the end of their interaction with them – via observation, written questionnaires and verbal discussions. The primary value added through the module comprised human and social capital (de Gruchy, 2002), supplemented by instances of physical and natural capital.

The human capital comprised increased awareness, more information and refined or new skills in relation to waste minimisation. These gains may well be of long-term duration as they are more likely to remain with, and be utilised by, the individual community members in different situations in the future, than are the items produced (recycled goods) or immediate outcomes (e.g. clean surroundings) of activities.

The social capital evident in the communities by the end of the module comprised groups and networks that better fulfilled people's psychosocial needs for belonging, recognition and meaningful participation. Although it is difficult to provide evidence of the somewhat abstract notion that is social capital, a substantial number of evaluations cited indicators such as willing participation, the sharing of information and experiences, the seeking of new club members, planning for future joint activities, and organisational development. There were reports of groups developing a 'we feeling', of different activity groups coming together to establish a single committee, and of new and potentially sustainable external networks for community groups. A few community members gained employment with a government department as a consequence of their voluntary waste minimisation activities with students.

Benefits for the higher education institution

The benefits to students were in relation to academic development, skills development and attitudinal change. All but one or two of the students in each offering of the module were able to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes stated in the Implementation section of this case study. In one post-test questionnaire, 93% of the students reported that the module helped them integrate theory and practice.

It may be worthwhile paying specific attention to the benefits that accrued to students as a direct result of the community-based component of the module – positive changes that might not have occurred without it:

- The ability to think critically, moving from 'reflection on' their off-campus module experiences (often facilitated in class) to 'reflection in' action, a higher-order cognitive skill so necessary in professional practice (Schön, 1987);

- Dealing with the 'messy swamps' of relationship-building and project implementation, which invariably appear far removed from the ordered progression implied in academic frameworks;

- Recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge: to quote from a student journal (unedited):

  The decomposing of vegetable waste confirmed what I already knew. The only problem is the practising of it as one did not take it seriously. The problem with us as people, we believed in what has been done for us and forget about our indigenous knowledge;

- Embracing difference: While students recognise diversity, they may be more adept at avoiding or minimising differences than embracing them, and more quickly able to identify the deficits than the strengths in people different from themselves. The exposure of students, via theory, to an ABCD approach alerted them to the strengths possessed by their future 'clients'. First-hand exposure to people they had regarded as different and inferior brought a sense of excitement and respect that augured well for future professional and civic work by the current students. To quote from another student journal (unedited):

  …now I can work in collaboration with the mentally handicapped people and understand their situation…I can tell other people and encourage them to involve these people in any type of work. They are people and they can be creative and capable of doing things themselves;

- Accountability to multiple constituencies, the interdependence of people on one another and the reality of mutual learning were some of the other quite profound and unexpected insights on the part of the participating students.

Benefits for the service agency

The module served the aims of the DSW Education and Waste Minimisation section well. Apart from fulfilling its mandate of reaching out to students in terms of waste education, the section was also able to extend its projects by using the extra capacity supplied by the students. In the long term:

- Capacity was created for these Community Development students to participate in waste management education projects once they have qualified.

- DSW increased its visibility and status, both within the larger eThekwini Municipality via publication of the project in a 'Best Practice' in-house periodical, and further afield through conference presentations (O'Brien & Caws, 2003).

- The concept of an asset-based approach to work was popularised, as evidenced by inclusion of this approach in the in-service training programme of the DSW Education and Waste Minimisation section.

- Conscientisation around service-learning and intersectoral collaboration among school educators was furthered via inclusion of this module's experiences in the educational programme of a national educator association.

We learnt the following lessons regarding possible outcomes of a service-learning module:

- The primary lesson learnt is that outcomes need, firstly, to be identified, and secondly, to be shared. Identification of outcomes is helped considerably if the outcomes anticipated by each participating sector are formulated clearly and precisely, with specification of indicators of achievement of these outcomes. We believe, however, that important outcomes can be overlooked if the module evaluators consider only the predetermined outcomes. Service-learning is essentially about diversity and surprise. In a single service initiative, many different people are involved, bringing with them diverse ways of knowing (Bawden, 1999), different learning styles (Kolb, 1984) and numerous priorities. We face multiple challenges in relation to outcomes:
  - To be open to the unexpected;
  - To recognise that the outcomes of any single activity will be multiple – for example, cognitive, affective, attitudinal, social, physical, economic or environmental changes – and may be positive or negative;
  - To be cognisant of the different meanings that any single outcome may have for the various participants; and
  - To find creative yet rigorous ways of bringing to light these changes and meanings.

- Outcomes need to be recognised and, if positive, celebrated. Our students were encouraged to do this at their community-based service sites. In addition, a recognition ceremony was arranged on campus for our students, their communities and service agencies and their counterparts from service-learning initiatives in other disciplines. Prestigious guests were present, certificates of participation were handed out, and participants in each module spoke briefly of their experiences. This event bestowed greater visibility and status on the initiatives and allowed sharing of knowledge and outcomes across disciplines and sectors.

- Print and electronic media also play an important role in making outcomes more widely known.

PARTNERSHIPS

The partnerships involved in this module were at two levels: there was the 'founding partnership' between the university academic department and the education arm of the local municipality; and there were the 'implementation' partnerships, which were individual collaborations among the founding partnership, students and community members/ structures at each service site. Having widely different and numerous service sites, we found that this dual-

level model of partnership maximised participation of the many participants – for most of whom involvement in every stage of the module (planning, implementation and evaluation) would not have been feasible.

There was no formal contract between the two founding partners (the module convenors). However, each was highly committed to the module in all its stages, as evidenced by the large amounts of time and resources each contributed, their regular discussions, and the integration of their module experiences with other aspects of their work. Their commitment was buoyed by the fact that their involvement was integral to their respective work responsibilities; namely, the education of students and the provision of waste education and minimisation services. The different priorities of the other community members (school and service agency staff, learners and other community groups) meant that their commitment was restricted to issues of direct consequence to their particular situations, such as the planning and monitoring of activities for students placed in their schools. Memoranda of understanding were used to specify the responsibilities of the module convenors, students and community and service partners at each site. The level of participation within the various partnerships was generally high. There were, however, occasional instances of low participation, usually when other commitments conflicted with those of the project.

During the planning stage, the academic convenor carried primary responsibility for module planning and production of supporting documentation. The service partner and mentors played a larger role in arranging student placements. Once the module got underway:

- The academic convenor was responsible for the campus-based skills and reflection sessions for students, marking written submissions, final evaluations and the associated administrative tasks.
- The service convenor and mentors, together with the community mentors, assisted and monitored the students' work at their sites.
- The contribution of the learners/ youth comprised mainly the collection of waste materials and tools or implements for work on their projects.

There were, however, many instances of 'crossing over' traditional boundaries of responsibility. The service convenor, for example, made significant contributions in developing students' skills in practical class sessions, while the academic convenor organised and monitored placements with organisations that did not have a pre-existing relationship with the primary service partner. During this period, service, community and academic module convenors and mentors undertook a variety of tasks to facilitate students' and community members' progress. Such tasks included ad hoc consultations, referral to resources, assistance with desktop publishing, the writing of letters to support fundraising appeals, organisation of university transport, collection of waste materials and the overseeing of students' transport claims.

We learnt the following lessons about partnerships:

- Generally, partnerships are more effective when based on relationships built up prior to the module. These partnerships benefit from the trust, respect and deeper mutual understanding

among those involved, and contrast with the newly established relationships, in which insufficient time and commitment have been expended (usually owing to time constraints and conflicting job demands or internal dynamics).

• Module convenors need to identify indicators of 'quality partnerships' (see, for example, Nuttall, Bruzas & Msomi, 2000) and regularly review the nature of their relationships. There is a tendency for attention to tasks to overtake attention to processes and relationships – to the ultimate detriment of partnerships, which are the cornerstone of quality service-learning.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Service-learning has a number of implications for both the policies and practices of higher education institutions. At the academic programme level, allocation of workloads among staff is affected; service-learning (and the necessary partnership-building) require more time and flexibility for planning and implementation than conventional modules, and thus the academic staff member(s) involved would ideally take on fewer modules in the programme than may be the norm. This was possible in the module under discussion as the module carried double the number of academic credits of a normal semester-long module and, hence, was counted as two modules in terms of staff workload. At the departmental and/or institutional level, allocation of resources has to be considered, because transport expenses and, possibly, additional administrative support are required to handle additional communications and financial transactions.

Our module brought to the fore the need for interdisciplinary co-operation within the academic institution, particularly in instances where students have simultaneous service-learning requirements in more than one module. We attempted to circumvent students' timetable problems and disjointed experiences by placing them in the same communities in which they were placed for other modules.

At an institutional level, attention needs to be paid to the timetable, so that sufficient consecutive time periods are allocated to modules using service-learning. Only in this way do students have sufficient time to leave campus for their service sites. Also at this level, higher education institutions could do more to validate service-learning as a teaching and learning tool. While the institution does acknowledge, in public statements, the strengths of both partnerships and service-learning as a pedagogy, more direct communication with staff members and overt support and recognition of community and service partners as co-educators would be more effective strategies.

ETHICS

It is beyond the scope of this case study to discuss ethical considerations adequately. Instead, we share some of the questions that have arisen for us and trust that increased dialogue around these issues will further the ethical debate concerning service-learning. Many of the questions are around equity and self-determination issues in relation to:

- **Choice of community sites:** Do urban-based academic and service convenors use logistical and financial constraints as excuses for the continued neglect of more rural communities, which are already disadvantaged in relation to their urban counterparts?

- **Allocation of students:** Should service placement opportunities be identified for students, or should they be encouraged to find their own service sites? There are pros and cons to each option. Pre-selection of service sites, coupled with some flexibility in allocation of students among the chosen sites, may go some way to relieving the ethical dilemma between students' rights of self-determination and providing suitable, partnership-based off-campus learning opportunities.

- **Accessibility of service-learning modules to students:** Do modules using service-learning disadvantage students in financial terms when compared with other modules in the academic programme? Can the university's procedures to ensure financial accountability prejudice students?

- **Choice of participation by community members:** Do those in subordinate positions in their community have freedom of choice as to whether or not they participate? This question is particularly pertinent when the community comprises young people.

- **Informed consent and confidentiality:** Is the consent of community members and students always obtained for the research and publicity that often accompany service-learning initiatives?

- **Students' interaction with community members:** To what extent are module convenors responsible when students encounter unresponsive community members/ staff at their service sites? Could we reduce this phenomenon by building better relationships with community-based mentors?

- **Preparation of students:** Are students adequately prepared for their service activities and, if not, who is affected by their inexperience?

- **Evaluation of outcomes:** Do our methods and timing of evaluation give a true reflection of the outcomes of the module, particularly with regard to the involved communities?

- **Placement variability and student assessment:** Do the differences in learning opportunities afforded to the students at their service sites discriminate against some in terms of their ability to pass the module in their allocated communities?

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Three sources of support stood out in relation to the module. As with any university offering, consultation of a wide variety of print and electronic resources on the discipline, the service focus and service-learning itself was invaluable. Also very helpful was the occasional use of external facilitators, who assisted the module convenors in reflecting on the process and outcomes of the

module. And, finally, the material support, interest and motivation of the service convenor's organisation, of the university department, of the community members who participated in the implementation phase and of the funder were essential enabling factors.

Further capacity building was indicated to enhance the ability of our community mentors, including professionals in the education sector, in structuring, supervising and evaluating the students placed with them. The students, too, could have been better prepared, particularly in relation to effective strategies for working democratically with large groups of youth. Skills such as effective reflection, oral and visual presentations and written communication are not easily acquired within a one-semester module; their development should be given attention in every module within an academic programme.

Academic module facilitators need to continually increase their repertoire of reflection strategies – including the use of art, music, literature and other media – to help students understand theoretical concepts and gain self-awareness.

The establishment of a register of academic module convenors using service-learning in different disciplines would be helpful in locating external examiners for such modules. External moderators experienced in service-learning can ensure and enhance the quality of the module and the fairness of the assessment.

CONCLUSION

Having run this module three times in as many consecutive years, we saw its potential for offering a 'win-win' situation for all involved. It confirmed our belief in service-learning as a powerful pedagogy while, simultaneously, making us acutely aware of the challenges in creating the right balance and content in a single module. For the academic convenor, designing a curriculum in partnership with others from outside higher education was a new experience, resulting in increased respect for the personal and professional attributes of her co-convenor and of the community-based mentors.

We have recognised, too, that single service-learning initiatives can only have limited impacts on the communities involved. More holistic strategies are required to provide the enabling environment in which the benefits of a single service-learning module can be enhanced. In our case, for example, the waste education strategies that were promoted in schools through service-learning would have had far greater potential for sustainment had there also been attention to 'whole school' and community-wide waste management policies and practices. Academic convenors and their partners, then, should be alert to the need for ongoing, active collaboration outside of single-module initiatives, and should take responsibility for identifying opportunities for such collaboration.

REFERENCES

Bawden, R. (1999). *Contextualisation*. Paper presented at a service-learning seminar, 19 April 1999, University of Natal, Durban.

de Gruchy, S. (2002). *The Contribution of Universities to Sustainable Livelihoods.* www.hs.unp.ac.za/theology/development/univ&slf.doc, accessed 30 June 2005.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* Chicago: ACTA Publications.

Muller, J. & Subotsky, G. (2001). What Knowledge is Needed in the New Millennium? *Organization,* 8 (2), 163-182.

Nuttall, T, Bruzas, C. & Msomi, P. (2000). *Cape Town Memorandum on Sites for Community–Higher Education–Service Partnerships.* Unpublished paper developed at the Leadership Capacity Building Programme, July 2002, Noordhoek.

O'Brien, F. & Caws, G. (2003). *Waste Management: Engaging Youth for Healthy Communities.* Paper presented at the Valley Trust conference: Primary Health Care in South Africa: Learning from the Past and Looking to the Future, 21 – 24 July 2003, Durban.

Schön, D.A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Simbine, J. (2004). *The Light of the Distance Star.* Unpublished poem, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban.

CASE STUDY 4
SERVICE-LEARNING IN FAMILY MEDICINE

ADRI PRINSLOO, BRENDA DE KLERK & ADRI BEYLEFELD

About Prof. Adri Prinsloo...

Head of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of the Free State (UFS).

The department is responsible for clinical services in primary healthcare in the district hospital and community health centres in Mangaung, and education and training in Family Medicine at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Prior to the appointment, Adri was the coordinator of community-based education (CBE) and programme development in the School of Medicine of the UFS. She has completed a Master of Health Professions Education, with her dissertation focusing on CBE. Putting theory into practice and teaching students both a team and patient-centred approach are the main reason for the focus on service-learning. Ensuring that her students get early contact with real-life situations and guiding them on the way to an accountable approach are her passions.

About Dr Brenda de Klerk...

Works in the Department of Community Health at the University of the Free State (UFS) and appointed as chairperson of the community service-learning committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Brenda was born in Boksburg and spent most of her school-going years in Randfontein. After her qualification as a medical doctor in 1979 at the University of Pretoria, she continued with her medical career at various hospitals, until joining Youth with a Mission and working on the Anastasis ship for a year. Prior to joining the UFS, she worked as Clinical Medical Officer in the Bloemfontein Municipality. Her research interests lie in the field of medical education; she has completed her Master of Health Professions Education and is busy with her Doctorate in the field of medical education. With the changes in this field, the UFS Medical School put more emphasis on community service-learning, which aspect was introduced more intensively into the curriculum for Medical students.

About Dr Adri Beylefeld...

Works in the Division of Health Sciences Education, University of the Free State (UFS). Prior to this, and at the time of the case study writing, Adri was Head of the Faculty of Health Sciences' Division of Student Learning and Development, which played a leading role in developing lifelong learning skills and providing support to students at risk of academic failure.

Before joining the UFS, Adri was a secondary school teacher. Her career in the faculty started in 1995 as a lecturer in educational development. Currently, she is passionately interested in the generation of useful knowledge through action research. Other interests over the past 15 years include gender issues, service-learning and experimentation with novel educational strategies for promoting active student involvement. She acts as leader of a module on general skills in the first year of the Learning Programme for Professional Medicine; the contribution of this module to the intended critical cross-field outcomes of the institution's Curriculum 2000 is dependent on exposing students to real-world, workplace-related circumstances. Collaboration with modules that focus on the doctor in a primary healthcare dispensation through service-learning initiatives provides such opportunities; requiring students to reflect on authentic learning experiences they have had in the community, for example, allows her to establish whether these experiences touch the hearts of the doctors of the future.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenors:	Adri Prinsloo
	Brenda de Klerk
	Adri Beylefeld
University:	University of the Free State (UFS)
Discipline:	Family Medicine
Module titles:	Integrated service-learning programme:

- General skills (MEA 112) (First year undergraduate 2000)
- The doctor and the environment (MEC 113) (First year undergraduate 2000)
- Concepts of health and disease (MED 113) (First year undergraduate 2000)
- Health and disease in populations (MEX 314) (Third year undergraduate 2002)

Level of students: First- and third-year respectively

Number of students:
- Students enrolled 2001: 120 (MEA 112, MEC 113 and MED 113)
- Students enrolled 2002: 72 (MEX 314)

Number of credits:
- General skills (MEA 112): 8 credits
- The doctor and the environment (MEC 113): 12 credits
- Concepts of health and disease (MED 113): 12 credits
- Health and disease in populations (MEX 314): 16 credits

Community location of service-learning:
- Mangaung/ Bloemfontein

Service agencies:
Bloemfontein/ Mangaung NGOs including:
- Aurora
- Eden Home for Psychiatric Patients
- Free State Aftercare Centre
- Hospice
- Lebone Home for AIDS Children
- Lettie Fouche School
- Martie du Plessis School for Disabled Children
- National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders
- Society for the Disabled
- Tshepo Foundation

SUMMARY

Curriculum 2000, the revised Medical programme of the School of Medicine of the UFS, offers an integrated service-learning programme. Integration implies that the programme is offered in more than one module and spirals through all five years of study. This case study focuses particularly on the years 2000 – 2002 (inclusive), although the module continues to run.

The curriculum has three phases. Phase one (duration one year) addresses two major themes: the cell and the body, and the doctor and the community. Phase two (duration two years) has a systems-based approach and is offered in modular mode. Phases one and two constitute the pre-clinical period. Phase three is the clinical phase, offered in a discipline-based mode over a two-year period.

The university has a parallel medium language policy, which means that Afrikaans- and English-speaking students receive tuition separately in their language of choice. During the service-leaning teaching, however, these language groups are purposely mixed. The benefit is that students from different cultural backgrounds have the opportunity to participate in teams. Family Medicine, Sociology, Community Health and the Division of Student Learning and Development were the departments responsible for the service-learning teaching in the pre-clinical phases of the case study period. (The Division of Student Learning and Development has since merged with the Division for Staff Development to form the new Division of Health Sciences Education.)

The service-learning component spirals from year one to year three, with students in year one participating in modules MEC 113 and MED 113 and the same students participating in year three in module MEX 314. These three modules have a major service-learning component. Although students are exposed to the same NGOs in years one and three, the objectives differ; the spiral enforces the idea of continuity and builds on prior knowledge and skills, with the senior, more competent students building on the experience of their first year.

In year one the intended learning outcomes include putting theory into practice, focusing on communication skills, leadership skills, identification of health needs, participation in health promotion and prevention, cultural sensitivity, and learning about the concepts of health and disease. The key development issue that the modules attempt to address is empowering community members to take responsibility for their own health by helping them identify the risk factors at stake in the community and educating them on these aspects. Activities include lectures, small group discussions, workshops, interviews, needs analysis and health promotion and education expos.

In year three the main learning objectives for students are to be able to understand the concept of equity and accessibility of services to all sectors of society and explore the range of services available for populations with special needs; to understand the policy background of community-based care and its practical and financial implications; and to identify the roles of different categories of healthcare professionals and workers in the service agencies and organisations. Students have to simultaneously learn how to share and use information in multidisciplinary settings.

The partners in these service-learning modules are:

- The higher education institution – in the form of the students, and the academics involved from the Departments of Family Medicine, Sociology and Community Health and from the Division of Student Learning and Development (since the case study writing, restructured to form part of the Division of Health Sciences Education);
- Service agencies – in the form of a range of Bloemfontein/ Mangaung NGOs and the Department of Health; and
- The community – in the form of individual community members in schools (including Comtech Secondary and Navalsig High Schools), and clinics, existing community forums and community healthcare worker networks.

The Mangaung University–Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP), which has included the university, the Mangaung community and the Department of Health, has played an important role in these service-learning partnerships.

The intended service outcomes are to help identify and inform community members about issues that are hazardous to their health; and to undertake health promotion, while simultaneously exposing community members to peers involved in higher education, thereby stimulating interest in, and motivating community members to pursue their aspirations to, higher education. Participation of service agencies and NGOs improves exposure of the agencies and services, and creates opportunities to promote the services and to access and obtain resources on behalf of communities.

Lessons learnt

In the process of planning and implementing the programme, key lessons have been learnt about service-learning, including:

- All stakeholders must participate at the various stages of development and implementation of service-learning activities.
- The needs of all involved have to be addressed and attention has to be paid to detailed logistical planning.
- Linking service-learning activities to specific curriculum objectives and formally crediting these activities in the overall student assessment are important, as this ensures student participation and rewards them for time well spent.

Finally, components of the service-learning programme have been researched and documented in various research projects using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and the findings have been published. Based on these research findings, specific changes to the service-learning modules have been implemented.

INITIATION

In line with both global and national trends, the UFS School of Medicine has, since 1996, embarked on revising the undergraduate medical programme. One of the objectives of the revised programme implemented in 2000 was to move from a classroom-dominated to a community-oriented

programme, with early exposure of students to the communities in which they would later work as graduated professionals. When the service-learning programme was conceptualised in 1997, the UFS and the School of Medicine had not yet formulated a policy on service-learning and the curriculum was based on the CBE taxonomy of Magzoub and Schmidt (2000).

The rationale for the service-learning programme is to prepare future doctors who are able to render a professional service; that is, who have the necessary knowledge, skills, professional thinking, behaviour and attitudes to pursue their profession as doctors and, when applicable, as healthcare managers (School of Medicine, 2000). Module HAN 516, taught in Curriculum 2000, includes practice management and management principles. In Phase three (clinical phase) of the curriculum, this module revisits principles taught in previous service-learning modules.

The SPICES model of Harden and Dunn (quoted in Hamad, 2000) is one of the concepts on which this curriculum was based. Harden and Dunn view six educational strategies – namely, student-centred, problem-based, integrated, community-based, elective and systematic learning – as a continuum, where each medical school finds its own position along the spectrum. CBE is one method that can be adopted as an educational tool in an innovative curriculum. Putting theory into practice in real-life situations enhances the learning process. Specific objectives were set for the CBE activities in Curriculum 2000. They focus on key concepts such as learning (knowledge), training (skills) and moulding (attitudes and behaviour) (School of Medicine, 2000).[2] This supports the view of the UK's General Medical Council:

> ...attitudes of mind and of behaviour that befit a doctor should be inculcated, and should imbue the new graduate with attributes appropriate to his/her future responsibilities to patients, colleagues and society in general. (General Medical Council, 1993: 23)

In South Africa – with its socio-economic and cultural diversity – such responsibilities are even more important than elsewhere.

Lessons learnt

Important lessons have been learnt about initiating the inclusion of service-learning in a module: *sustainability* and *affordability* are two of the most important aspects to be considered.

The academic disciplines accountable for sustaining the programme must be clearly identified. The responsibility for development of the service-learning component of Curriculum 2000 was assigned to faculty members residing in the departments of Family Medicine, Community Health and the Division of Student Learning and Development. In the previous curriculum, these departments were involved in training that had a community-oriented or CBE component, and in supporting students in terms of personal and learning skills. Other specialist disciplines had a more hospital-based approach to training. Getting buy-in from the other departments and convincing them of the importance and benefits of service-learning were time-consuming

---

2   Refer to Table 4.1 for specific objectives of each module.

processes. The major resistance was due to lack of time and human resources to develop a service-learning component and to provide the necessary supervision of students during service-learning activities. Paediatrics and obstetrics were involved in service-learning in the old curriculum but eventually terminated their CBE involvement in Curriculum 2000. Fortunately, however, in 2005 these service-learning activities were resumed during clinical teaching, where students are again exposed to community paediatrics and obstetrics.

We realised that buy-in and support from management are essential; the programmes could not be built on the enthusiasm of individuals alone. Quality, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability are the management principles in the School of Medicine and thus proper planning with regard to resources, logistics and the academic value of the service-learning was high on our priority list. To ensure sustainability and obtain academic support for the programme, the aims, objectives and assessment criteria were very clear and were formally built into and accredited with the programme. The service-learning component of the curriculum is credit bearing and the clear objectives and outcomes, which form part of the whole programme, ensure that the service-learning component will not be removed or reduced in magnitude should the champions change. Community visits and activities were structured, planned and pre-arranged to avoid frustration for communities, students and staff involved. This also avoided the problems of communication gaps among the various stakeholders and negative attitudes towards service-learning activities.

The budgets for transport, human resources, accommodation and other operational costs have proved a major issue. We found that relying on donor funding for sustainability could be a recipe for disaster and soon realised that the programme would have to be planned within the means and resources allocated to the School of Medicine. Budgetary concerns prompted us to initiate negotiations between faculty and university management. This eventually led to a more formalised agreement with the different faculties with regard to funding of service-learning activities. The Faculty of Health Sciences was one of the first involved with service-learning; unfortunately, though, it would seem that the wider perception in the institution is that those more experienced in service-learning should provide support for those just starting out. While this might seem to make sense, it tends to put us at a disadvantage, given the other major challenges we face in being involved as a medical school in teaching and formal service rendering. Members of staff of the School of Medicine are on a joint staff establishment with a strain on our personnel and budget.

Another important lesson learnt from our service-learning experience is that it is better to explore and implement new ideas than to try to fit an existing programme into a new mould; this was time-consuming and did not pay off. When the authors tried to plan and develop a multidisciplinary learning experience it became obvious that it was not practical to attempt this if the different disciplines did not have more or less the same objectives and if human resources could not be shared.

Having set clear aims and objectives for the service-learning programme in line with the overall objectives of Curriculum 2000, we involved service-providing stakeholders from the outset to help identify needs of service agencies and communities, which could be addressed as part of the learning experiences of the students. We were of the opinion that, in order to ensure sustainability of the service-learning activity, some form of infrastructure in the community should be identified and built on and we thus included schools, clinics, NGOs, existing community forums and community healthcare worker networks in this process.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Relating to the previously mentioned rationale for Curriculum 2000, the key community development issues were identified. As previously stated the key development issue that the service-learning modules attempt to address is empowering community members to take responsibility for their own health by helping them identify the risk factors at stake in the community and educating them on these aspects. Another development issue, also in line with the 'primary healthcare definition', was to urge community members to utilise health service resources with responsibility. Primary healthcare is essential healthcare based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technologies, made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their participation, and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. Primary healthcare is the first level of contact of individuals, the family and community with the national health system, bringing healthcare as close as possible to where people live and work; and it constitutes the first element of a continuing healthcare process.

During the establishment of the MUCPP, a needs assessment was conducted; the information obtained was available during the conceptualisation of the service-learning modules. From the needs analysis it became evident that accessing healthcare was not the main need of the community. Issues like housing, sanitation, and employment were identified as being perceived by community members to be more important needs. The service-learning modules were informed by, but not based on, this assessment because the needs of all role-players – that is, not only community needs – had to be addressed. The needs assessment was also not done with the aim of developing the service-learning programme for Curriculum 2000 but rather to form a basis for the establishment of the MUCPP. To a large extent, it was *student* learning objectives that drove the process of determining the service-learning activities.

As illustrated in Table 4.I (below), modules MEC 113, MED 113 and MEX 314 have different specific learning objectives, although all three modules aim to put theory into practice. As part of the service-learning process students (future doctors), by means of experiential learning, are exposed to real-life situations in the environment and the community, and thereby sensitised to the specific needs of populations with disabilities, substance abuse and other problems. The assumption being made is that, in the service-learning process, students will learn to respect all people irrespective of social class, religion, gender and race.

Table 4.1: Learning objectives of the different community service-learning modules

Module	Learning objectives of the module regarding community service-learning
MEA 112	**By the end of this module, students should be able to:** • Use learning resources in the Faculty of Health Sciences and on campus on an individual and a group basis; • Use the computer as a learning resource; • Seek, interpret and critically evaluate information; • Work with and meet obligations to others; • Apply knowledge to address the needs of the community; • Communicate effectively in context, both orally and in writing; • Apply specific techniques to manage their personal, social and academic life. **Skills and attitudes needed for modules MEC 113, MED 113 and MEX 314 are identified and addressed in this module.**
	General skills (MEA 112): • Compile and implement questionnaires for structured interviewing; • Objectively and accurately compile information in the form of a report; • Reason and arrange their thoughts logically; • Find and critically evaluate information on the internet.
MEC 113	**By the end of this module, students should be able to:** • Participate/ enter into group work, listen attentively, communicate effectively, conduct interviews, debate/ negotiate, gather information, problem-solve and make decisions, facilitate, and demonstrate bedside manner; • Demonstrate willingness to learn from others, and to work across language and cultural barriers; • Accept the worth and dignity of all patients and treat them with respect; • Demonstrate unconditional positive regard for patients and caregivers; • Demonstrate accountability.
MED 113	**By the end of this module, students should be able to gain the following knowledge:** • Understand the concepts of health and disease; • Give contemporary explanations of health and disease; • Describe the multi-causality of disease; • Debate the notion of communities, community participation and community demographics; • Explain concepts surrounding health promotion and health education; • Discuss the issues of importance in environmental health; • Understand statistical and epidemiological concepts of normality and disease; • Apply the levels of care and levels of prevention to health; • Debate the aspects surrounding accident prevention; • Describe the concepts of community nutrition.
	By the end of this module, students should be able to acquire the following skills: • Practically apply theoretical content, based on paper case studies; • Make core summaries; • Express themselves clearly and systematically; • Interpret numerical data; • Find and critically evaluate information (internet); • Creatively systematise information in the form of a brochure; • Use a computer for word processing, database searches and communication; • Visually communicate information in the form of a poster; • Orally present information to an audience of peers and academic staff; • Identify and appropriately respond to the different action words used in tests and examinations.

Table 4.1: Learning objectives of the different community service-learning modules (continued)

Module	Learning objectives of the module regarding community service-learning
MEX 314	**After the community rotation, students will be able to:** • Describe the health profile of a defined population (e.g. developmentally disabled children); • Understand the concept of equity and accessibility of services to all sectors of society; • Understand how to share and utilise information in multidisciplinary settings; • Describe service needs and provision for people with special educational or physical needs; • Identify and discuss the role of the different categories of healthcare professionals and workers in the service or organisation you were attached to; • Discuss the impact of the condition of the clients utilising the service that students were attached to on the family, client and community; • Understand the policy background of community-based care and its financial and practical implications; • Explore the range of services available for the population with special needs with input from relevant experts from health, education and social service professions; • As future doctor be able to utilise and access all relevant services available for their patients with special/ specific health needs; • Describe the different facilities, organisations, health and other professional services available for patients with specific needs; • Recognise the integrated nature of care for the geriatric client in the community; • Form a realistic picture of health problems, human conditions and professional role models in various environments – both medical and non-medical – as supplement to hospital training in clinical years; • Discuss the gaps between health needs and existing services, and priorities for future development.

These key issues and student learning outcomes were decided on *jointly* by the participating service agencies (i.e. the management of the various NGOs), and academics involved with the development of Curriculum 2000. During 1999, lecturers involved with the development of Curriculum 2000 telephonically contacted and wrote to the management of different NGOs, explaining the rationale for Curriculum 2000. NGOs were invited to provide input relating to possible service-learning opportunities. Meetings were held with the management and staff of those NGOs that were willing to participate in service-learning activities.

The first- and third-year students on the service-learning modules were also involved in conceptualising the module content, in the sense that they assessed the needs of the community, and those findings were fed back into decisions on what content to include in the modules:

• In the MED 113 module, the students held a workshop with the Grade 9 learners, the teachers and community health workers. Focus group discussions between students, learners and community health workers were used to establish topics representing their healthcare needs. Students explored these topics and had an opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills and implement the theory of health promotion. They prepared 'health stalls' with posters, brochures and other health promotion information and presented their products of learning at a health expo. The learners, community healthcare workers and peers visited these stalls, to the benefit of the students, service agencies and community.

Using a tick sheet with predetermined criteria, those visiting the stalls also undertook an assessment of the posters and brochures, and the marks awarded were used as a form of formative assessment of the students.

- During module MEC 113 students visited community healthcare centres and clinics, where they completed questionnaires with patients in order to determine the socio-demographic profile of the patients, the health status of the patients and their families, health service utilisation patterns and levels of satisfaction with the health services.[3]

- Prior to the MED 113 workshops and clinic visits students had lectures on community entry, communication skills and negotiation skills. The cultural background, race and mother tongue of students differ from those of the learners, community healthcare workers and patients at the clinics in about 70% of the class. Usually, a large number of the students selected into the medical programme are from affluent schools and sections of society and have not been directly exposed to previously disadvantaged communities as represented by the learners, healthcare workers and patients. Students have the opportunity to practise their communication and negotiation skills and learn to work across cultural and language barriers. Community members get the opportunity to express their needs and concerns to members of society who network and link at different levels and who could be their advocates in society.

- During module MEX 314, prior to starting their projects, third-year students conducted a needs analysis by interviewing the service agencies (the NGOs) and the community members who make use of the NGO services. The students then participated in activities of the NGOs and finally submitted a report on the available services and the specific population served by the NGO to which they were assigned. These projects were presented as part of the formal assessment of MEX 314 and contributed to the year mark.

In MEC 113 the service objective is to inform service agencies of the healthcare services utilisation of the community and levels of satisfaction with the services. The relevant information was gathered by means of a questionnaire completed by patients waiting to be seen at clinics and community health centres. Students helped patients to complete the questionnaires. Although participants have to be selected through a numbering system, students in the past did not adhere to the protocol, and patients who were reluctant to participate or looked more eager to participate were excluded or included inconsistent with the numbering system. For this reason, even though the questionnaires were coded and analysed, the data could not be seen as being statistically sound and thus could not be published. However, the information was shared with the service agencies as being a rough estimate. The lesson learnt was that when one tries to use a research questionnaire as a tool for improving communication it may lead to incorrect methods being applied due to students' lack of research experience and the fact that the original objective of the questionnaire was not research. In difficult situations the human

---

3   The questionnaire was developed according to research principles and submitted to the research committee of the School of Medicine as part of a student protocol.

factor of communicating with friendly, willing people seems to override the principles of random research selection.

In MED 113 the service objective is to do health promotion and educate teenagers and healthcare workers on topics identified as health risks in the community. This was achieved through the workshops and health expo previously described.

As stated, the lecturers in the departments of Family Medicine, Community Health, Sociology and the Division of Student Learning and Development participated in service-learning activities and were involved in identifying the outcomes and objectives of Curriculum 2000 that had to be achieved and enhanced by service-learning modules. Keeping in mind sustainability and availability of resources to maintain the modules, they also identified communities and NGOs that could be approached to negotiate the service placements and visits.

Community members involved during conceptualisation were the health desk coordinator and the coordinator of the education and training desk at MUCPP. Their roles were to help identify and establish contact with the resource people within the health centre and Comtech Secondary School. They also participated in the negotiation process. During the negotiation phase the school staff decided which learners would benefit the most from participation in the service-learning activities; the rationale for identifying learners enrolled for mathematics and sciences was that such learners could qualify to be selected into a health-related field of study at university, should they meet the other selection criteria. Healthcare workers were also involved in the conceptualisation/ planning phase and they suggested that both learners and healthcare workers should be involved in the workshops to ensure that, at the subsequent workshops, both youth and adult opinion would inform the identification of community needs. The fact that the university sought advice from healthcare workers on the needs of the community helped to convince the service agencies that the community really would benefit from the service-learning process – rather than being used simply as a learning laboratory for university students. The actual benefit to the community was that the learners and healthcare workers attended the health expo, where health promotion was done and information on various problems was jointly identified and shared. They were thus empowered with knowledge to return to the community.

In terms of the *initial* conceptualisation of service-learning module content, formal student involvement was limited. (Only in subsequent years has student research fed back into refining the modules.) In the initial stages, however, informal discussions were held with final-year students in the old curriculum doing their clinical block in Family Medicine, to determine their attitude towards early community exposure.

The management of the participating NGOs identified key persons within their organisations to participate in the discussions on the format and content of the service-learning modules that could be implemented in their organisations. These people acted as coordinators within the NGOs and were the formal link between lecturers and the NGOs. They ensured that student placements were done according to agreement and also took responsibility for the overall supervision during student visits.

A number of promoting and prohibiting factors can be identified in terms of conceptualising a service-learning module.

- An important promoting factor was that the lecturers involved were known to the service agencies and organisations and had previously worked with or in the community and service agencies involved.

In terms of prohibiting factors, the following are significant:

- The service agencies and NGOs initially had the expectation that students would render sustainable services of sizeable magnitude. Occupational Therapy, Nursing and Physiotherapy students have been involved in service-learning activities at NGO sites for several years; these were usually senior students who could to some extent also participate in the rendering of services. The placement of Medical students in their pre-clinical years, however, naturally prohibited them from rendering clinical services. The fact that the students involved in these modules were still in the pre-clinical phases was explained to the NGOs and service agencies to prevent unrealistic expectations.

- Time constraints and lack of human resources within the service agencies proved challenging.

- For the university, one of the biggest challenges was to secure enough time in a busy curriculum for the service-learning module.

- The availability of resources to implement the module was another challenge for the university. The unexpected benefit of limited resources, though, was that the departments of Family Medicine and Community Health were literally forced to work together and a very good relationship developed. The Division of Student Learning and Development assisted the other two departments in equipping the students with skills to enable them to enter the community with confidence. Conflict management, group work, problem identification and reflective writing were among these vital skills.

- The development of the service-learning modules required the lecturers to improve their knowledge and attitudes about service-learning. For some of the lecturers it was their first exposure to the service-learning concept. Two of the lecturers obtained Master's degrees in Health Professions Education in the process.

During the conceptualisation process, a number of important lessons were learnt:

- The most important lesson learnt was that developing a service-learning module is a team effort, and patience, persistence and perseverance are essential virtues for the process. Numerous meetings and discussions preceded the final service-learning programme and activities. The lecturers had to negotiate service placements and service-learning opportunities with the healthcare workers, schools and service agencies.

- It is important not to be overambitious, but to be realistic as far as resources and allocated time are concerned.

- Time is better spent working with people who are already positive towards the concept of service-learning. It was found to be counter-productive to spend too much time trying to win over people not essential to the success of the module.

- By identifying the end product that had to be achieved and working towards that goal, proper planning could be done with proof of the intended objectives and outcomes for the modules. This approach ensured support from management, which was essential for the successful implementation of the modules.

PREPARATION

In terms of placement in the community or visits to the community, students were prepared mainly by means of formal lectures and structured module documentation. The objectives were clearly spelt out (again, see Table 4.I, above) for all three modules. With regard to MEC 113 the objective was to expose community members and students to each other (for the very first time). As previously described, students helped patients to complete a questionnaire. Prior to these visits students were lectured on communication, completion of research questionnaires and ethics in general.

Preparation of students for the MED 113 module is discussed earlier in this case study. Part of the preparation included negotiation of the assessment criteria for the health expo. In a classroom situation the learning stimuli are constant for all students. By contrast, in service-learning the variability in learning placements leads to less certainty and less homogeneity in learning outcomes. In the first year of implementation students were not part of the negotiation process of the assessment tool, objectives and evaluation of the projects. In a research project undertaken by Prinsloo, Joubert and du Toit (2004), 46% of students reported the assessment to be unfair, even though only 28.7% preferred to write a test rather than do an assignment. In the open responses, the lack of clear assessment criteria and the fact that all students did not participate in the same activities and thus did not have the same topic for the assignment were perceived to be unfair. Tutors realised that the students did not understand that the assessment criteria were not simply to give a mark for the brochure or poster but to determine whether or not learning had taken place and students had understood the needs of the services and communities to which they were exposed. These findings prompted staff to involve students in the development of the assessment criteria.

In terms of patient/ community preparation for the service-learning placements, due to the fact that different patients visit clinics on different days, the community members were not prepared prior to the visits; only on the days of placement were the community members who were queuing at the clinics briefed on the reason for the completion of the questionnaires. Patients were informed about the reason for the request to complete the questionnaires and also the fact that they were required to sign consent forms. They knew that they could decline the request

to complete the questionnaires and some did so. This caused discomfort for some of the students. The different languages and varying linguistic capabilities of students and patients caused distress for both sets of participants. This gave students the opportunity to use peers as interpreters and also demonstrated what was taught in the lectures – namely, that it is not always easy to communicate across language and cultural barriers.

The service agencies were prepared for the student placements by virtue of the fact that they were part of the module conceptualisation process. As previously mentioned, numerous telephone calls, brainstorming sessions and discussions preceded the student visits and placements. Inputs for the questionnaires were also obtained from the service agencies. On a yearly basis, suitable dates for the visits are negotiated and arranged, and facilitators for the placements identified and provided by the service agencies.

The community healthcare workers were prepared for the workshop with students during a meeting held a few weeks prior to the visit. The school learners were not formally briefed on the format of the workshop prior to the visit; they were only informed that they would be visited by students from the Medical School. Students did not have formal lectures on conducting small group discussions or identifying needs. Although they had basic lectures on communication skills they were required to improvise during these discussions with learners. The principal of Comtech Secondary School was visited twice before the workshop to negotiate which learners would participate, to identify suitable times and also to discuss the preferred outcomes for the learners. Although teachers were involved in the negotiation process, it could be argued that it would have been better if they had also been involved as facilitators during the focus group discussions. Conversely, though, this could have had the negative effect of inhibiting the learners during discussions. The focus group discussions themselves were very open, due to the fact that students and learners are of a similar age.

In terms of preparation, students visiting NGOs in MED 113 and MEX 314 received logbooks and guidelines with regard to the outcomes of the modules. Community members served by these NGOs were informed in advance by the NGO management that students would visit. No preparation other than negotiating the learning outcomes and objectives with management of the NGOs and arranging the logistics of the visits and placements of students was undertaken from the university's side prior to the initial placements in these modules. This proved to be quite sufficient. All problems identified were addressed in subsequent years of implementing the module.

The following practical lessons have been learnt in terms of preparing to implement a service-learning module:

- Pay meticulous attention to the logistics of the visits especially if large numbers of students are involved.

- Although telephone contact is helpful, do not rely on telephone discussions alone.

- Personal contact, follow-up and final confirmation are important.

- Establish specific contact persons; continuity regarding the stakeholder contacts is also important. Further, lists of telephone numbers and contact addresses are essential.

- Each stakeholder should involve more than one person in the service-learning module to ensure continuity.

- It is necessary to be flexible and have an alternative plan in the event that the original plan fails or arrangements go awry.

- Should any change of dates or times occur, check that the new arrangements suit all role-players – changed dates could clash with examination rosters, or other activities or visits planned by the community.

- Tasks must be delegated to specific members of staff. Teamwork is important but a specific person should take final responsibility.

- Avoid running a 'one-person show', and ensure that all stakeholders are prepared, by not leaving logistical arrangements to chance. A teamwork approach is important for all stakeholders to be able to take ownership of the programme.

- All stakeholders must understand and agree on the learning and service outcomes and objectives of the module. The needs of all role-players must be accommodated and addressed.

IMPLEMENTATION

During the implementation phase, three research projects evaluated the programme. Other issues that were assessed although not researched were the costs and the success of the operational process.

Prinsloo, Joubert and du Toit (2004) aimed to determine whether CBE activities in the MED 113 expo could help students to integrate theory (knowledge) and practice (skills) and whether their attitudes and behaviour (moulding) were influenced. Their study also aimed to determine whether community exposure motivated students and stimulated their enthusiasm for CBE. Student opinion on the learning process, experience and assessment in the MED 113 expo was ascertained. The research study also aimed to determine if there were any benefits for the community and service agencies. Questionnaires were distributed to students, community members and NGO representatives to give feedback on the service-learning activities in the MED 113 module. The following is a sample of the students' comments (unedited) taken from their completed questionnaires:

> It is far easier to learn theoretical aspects in a more practical, hands-on environment. It should be incorporated into every course field as through this, we can not only build the

community through learning, but can create individuals who are more dynamic in approach to their fields of work.

I feel it is of great importance to be exposed so early to situations we will be faced with later in our lives. I love interacting with people and find it particularly useful in acquiring genuine respect and understanding for other people.

I get to know the community better if we interact with them.

I really enjoyed working in the community. I think it is good to do community service as long as community members are kept satisfied.

The course was very informative. It taught me that teamwork is part of everyday life.

Beylefeld et al. (2003) also published an article on lecturers, students and community members sharing responsibility for assessing project-based poster presentations. Reflective writing is used on the service-learning modules as a tool for promoting deep learning among the students.

In a different article Beylefeld, Nena and Prinsloo (2005) reported on the influence of community experiences on first-year Medical students' reflective writing in the MEC 113 module. In the article, the influence of the service-learning activities on students' attitudes was evaluated via students' reflective writing activities.

In terms of implementation, the total costs include money spent during the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases. Costs include the following:
• Administration;
• Human resources (which include lecturers, academic support staff and community facilitators);
• Capacity building of stakeholders (which includes attendance of workshops and conferences, formal training, and acquiring resource material for tutors); and
• Transporting the students.

The average total cost for each of the modules has worked out to be between R60 000 and R85 000. The costs entailed in these modules are higher than in modules where lecture-based classroom teaching is performed. Cost drivers include transport and facilitators.

Availability of seed money and training workshops arranged through CHESP promoted the modules. The commitment of the partners of MUCPP (which has included the UFS, the Mangaung community and the Department of Health) has been an essential promoting factor. The Department of Health has funded the salaries of health workers in the clinics and contributed to the salaries of the lecturers. The healthcare facilities are also funded by the Department of Health.

When assessing operational issues we realised that communities have different time frames than the tight schedules in academic settings. It is important not to plan other activities for the days set aside for the service-learning module practical, because transport may be late, community

workshops may start later than planned and students may even oversleep. We also found that it paid to have more than one contact person in the communities and organisations with which we worked.

Organisation and administration of the visits need to be well coordinated. A specific coordinator needs to take responsibility at each NGO to coordinate student visits. Unfortunately, due to a severe staff shortage, we have not been able to place lecturers at all these points, but people from the NGOs and service agencies, who are well acquainted with the module goals, have been appointed at each visiting point and this approach has worked well.

The size of the class forced us to sub-divide into groups, with the result that all students were not involved in the same activities with the community. Initially, the students and community members did not communicate effectively, which can be attributed to language and cultural barriers. Attitudes and behaviour were problematic initially, but improved as the students became more relaxed and familiar with the community. This was a natural process and a very positive observation. It is in line with the research done on reflective writing during MEC 113 clinic visits, which found that 71% of students initially revealed negative emotional states, and that in 67% of students positive emotional states replaced the negative as the visits continued.

The positive attitude of the NGOs and schools and their willingness to accommodate students has proved encouraging. Prinsloo, Joubert and du Toit (2004) reported that 100% of community healthcare workers, learners and NGOs found the service-learning activities of benefit and would be willing to participate again in future.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

Short-term benefits include:
- School learners were informed about issues that present potential health hazards.
- Learners had the opportunity to interact with students, and were informed about health promotion and prevention of disease.
- NGOs identified specific needs. The students were facilitators in getting different private partners from the business sector involved and major improvements in facilities took place.
- Students of their own accord became involved and painted and generally improved the premises of the NGOs.

Long-term benefits include:
- School learners have begun realising that they can access the university to further their education.
- There has been an increased awareness among community members and learners of health hazards such as HIV/AIDS, alcohol abuse, smoking etc.
- There has been an increase in long-term involvement of other university organisations – such as KOVSGEM (*Kovsie Gemeenskap*) and Rag – as well as donations of various sorts by industries, as a result of linking them to these NGOs.

The workshop with the school learners, and exposure to the expo at the university, benefited the learners due to the fact that they were exposed to peers who excelled and had been selected into university modules. Learners also had the opportunity of participating in academic activities, which stimulated their interest and enhanced their knowledge of health problems identified in their community. Although this was a short-term benefit, it might lead to some of the learners realising their dreams of or potential for entry into higher education and participating in health promotion. The benefit to the school was that the learners improved their life skills. This is supported by research done by Prinsloo, Joubert and du Toit (2004).

Benefits for the higher education institution

Students are equipped with competences they would not otherwise gain, such as:
- Leadership skills;
- Communication skills; and
- The ability to work in a team.

Student opinion on achievement of the competences was obtained; that is to say, the competences themselves were not actually assessed. This was a deficit identified in the study done by Prinsloo, Joubert and du Toit (2004).

Short-term benefits for the students include:
- Early exposure to the community and services they will work in as students and healthcare professionals;
- Integration of theory and practice;
- Exposure to different cultures;
- Opportunities to practise effective communication;
- Opportunities to practise problem-solving skills and identification of health needs; and
- The chance to foster a more critical attitude towards community needs.

Long-term benefits for the students include:
- Increased sensitivity to the needs of the communities they serve;
- Ability to work across cultural barriers;
- Acceptance of the worth of all people irrespective of class, race or culture; and
- Increased leadership skills that enable them to negotiate and network.

A family physician has been appointed at MUCPP and tasked with responsibility for service-learning activities at MUCPP. She has visited other projects and sites to benchmark and share ideas on service-learning. The post is funded by the Department of Health and has an honorary lectureship attached to it. A research assistant has also been appointed and this contract appointment is partially due to involvement in service-learning activities; the research assistant is responsible for coding and analysing the patient questionnaires of MEC 113 and also acts as facilitator during clinic visits in MEC 113.

Service-learning and CBE were discussed extensively at two workshops involving top management and Heads of Department of the School of Medicine. A policy for service-learning

at faculty and school levels has been finalised and accepted. The most important aspect of this policy is that service-learning is now mentioned in line with education, research and services, as important pillars of the vision and mission of the UFS, and a Directorate of Service-Learning has been established. Service-learning is no longer seen as an add-on but rather as part of mainstream education. A process to access the budget for service-learning activities has been established; proposed costs and activities are submitted to the faculty's finance committee, which now has a protected budget for service-learning activities.

Benefits for the service agencies

The Mangaung University Community Health Care Centre has benefited in various ways. Due to the fact that student training is included in the job descriptions of members of staff, the quality and standard of services at MUCPP are high. The School of Medicine funded the data projector and computer in the lecture hall at MUCPP. This is used not only for academic purposes but also for workshops held by the Department of Health and the community. The appointment of the family physician will have long-term benefits for the service agencies. Communication between the community healthcare workers, doctors and hospitals was previously lacking. With this appointment and support to the home-based care workers the referral chain will be strengthened and services to the clients (community) improved. Patients discharged from hospital can in future be assigned to a community health worker, whose activities will be monitored by the family physician. This will benefit the Mangaung community due to improved quality and continuity of care. Feedback from patient questionnaires has also provided information on patient satisfaction and service utilisation to help improve and plan services.

The NGOs have benefited from the fact that students helped identify needs and also helped with fundraising activities in the organisations. Students renovated and furnished a consulting room in one of the organisations and sought support from private doctors to render services at the NGOs. Students facilitated this partnership between NGOs and private doctors. Exposing students to the NGOs and communities with special needs at undergraduate level both sensitises them to the needs and informs them about the support services available in the communities. The results of this can be seen in final-year students in Family Medicine, who are familiar with the resources and support structures in the local community. During case presentations students include support from local NGOs in the discharge plans of their patients. Professionals such as social workers, occupational therapists and nurses participate in the facilitation of students in the NGOs. Multidisciplinary teams discuss and strategise management plans; and this enhances in the students an appreciation of the value of multidisciplinary teamwork.

PARTNERSHIPS

Involvement of the different partners has been discussed throughout this case study; clearly, participation of all stakeholders at every stage has been crucial to the successful development and implementation of the service-learning modules and will continue to be necessary. Partnerships that already existed among the university, the service agencies and the Mangaung community were strengthened, in order to make the service-learning programme a reality. Negotiations and the resulting partnership with Comtech Secondary

School and Navalsig High School were beneficial to both university and schools. Since the introduction of the service-learning modules, NGOs have contacted the university, requesting more involvement in future; some NGOs heard from others about the students' involvement and have requested future involvement by the students in their NGOs. Including more NGOs and schools in the project increases the learning opportunities but also increases the role-players involved – with additional logistical demands.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

The concerted drive of higher education policy to reward universities for participation in service-learning activities increased the urgency and provided an additional drive to develop and implement service-learning as part of Curriculum 2000. The Health Professions Council of South Africa accreditation process for medical training programmes also assesses the service-learning components of the programme and this gave further impetus to the institution's efforts to establish service-learning modules.

ETHICS

Values of the School of Medicine are included in the vision and mission of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the UFS. Specific emphasis is placed on internationally accepted ethical standards, integrity, effectiveness and efficiency, institutional autonomy and public accountability – many of which are addressed in the aims and objectives of the service-learning component of Curriculum 2000. Accountability and integrity are important aspects of ethical behaviour and are particularly important ethical emphases of the service-learning modules.

We have learnt the following important lessons relating to ethics and service-learning:

- Community members are very concerned that the university and its students might regard them as some kind of community training laboratory. Honesty and transparency during the negotiation phase are important to avoid such perceptions.

- It is also important to avoid an 'us and them' situation, by collaboratively identifying service-learning activities that will address the needs of *all* stakeholders.

- Should any research be part of your service-learning programme, the community must agree to the project and the protocol must be submitted to the relevant ethical and research committees for approval. This protects participants and ensures that human rights are respected and confidentiality is maintained.

- It is important to avoid promising or initiating services that are not sustainable, or raising expectations that cannot be met.

- Lectures on informed consent and confidentiality are important before students engage in any service-learning activities.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The major enabling factor in developing and implementing successful service-learning modules was that CBE was a given in Curriculum 2000. Commitment of the dean and management to the inclusion of the service-learning module in the curriculum was valuable. At that early stage we felt that we did not have adequate financial support and availability of resources for what we had in mind. The formula for the funding of higher education and the contribution to the budget of medical schools from the Department of Health led to the decline in the total budget of medical schools. We can, with hindsight, argue that the caution of management ensured that our modules are now sustainable and can be built on for the future, rather than being abolished, which is the situation with some other programmes threatened by the tough financial climate.

Service-learning modules are time-consuming and costly. Students must be formally credited for time spent on service-learning modules. If not, these modules will always be seen as add-on modules and will not be taken seriously. Junior students do not have their own transport and this should be provided and funded. Senior students should be urged to at least obtain their own driver's licences. The problem of qualified professionals who cannot take responsibility for their own transport is now a new and costly one in the health service sector; young doctors graduate and are appointed as interns without having achieved the life skill of being able to drive a vehicle. The fact that universities provide transport for students actually contributes to this situation of dependency.

Academic staff involved with the conceptualisation and implementation of service-learning modules need support staff and access to a service-learning budget to take responsibility for administrative functions and help with facilitation of large groups. Specific members of staff should be assigned the task of implementing a service-learning module and it should be part of their job descriptions. Human resources should be made available for these modules according to the same resource allocation guidelines applied to other modules in the programme, but taking into account the additional costs incurred due to transport and logistical factors. As with any module with practical rotations the number of students involved can be problematic. With large student numbers all students cannot be accommodated in the same setting at once and this leads to variation in the exposure, which needs to be accommodated with clear objectives and outcomes for the placement. The large student numbers also lead to duplication of work for tutors, facilitators and community members, because the same activities may have to be repeated on different days for different students. This is not necessarily the case if there are dedicated and well prepared staff who can ensure that large numbers can be accommodated in multiple settings with consistent evaluation expectations and well prepared community sites.

With regard to the service agencies involved with service-learning programmes, there may be a need for capacity building of staff. The major need is training of trainers on aspects such as community entry and development, outcomes-based education and PBL, to mention a few.

Academic staff members who have to conceptualise and implement a service-learning module need to familiarise themselves with the community resources and community needs. They must identify entry points and key contact people within the institutions and community. They should be clear on both the short- and long-term aims of the module. Advice would be to attend workshops on service-learning, to do as much reading on the topic as possible and to visit and learn from other institutions that have already successfully implemented service-learning programmes.

CONCLUSION

The service-learning modules discussed here have served as evidence of the fact that theory and practice can be integrated by means of community service-learning. All these modules are integrated in a 'spiralling' approach – in the sense that NGOs that were merely visited in the first year are subsequently used as a basis for projects in the third year, and so on.

In developing and implementing the service-learning modules, it has become evident that close supervision of students participating in community service-learning activities is important. To ensure that students learn from their service-learning experiences, reflection as soon as possible after the placement is crucial. Supervision and facilitation of service-learning is labour-intensive, and service-learning activities call for careful planning and consideration of logistics. In particular, the responsibility of transport costs of students is an issue that will need to be clarified for future planning.

In spite of such challenges, the benefits for the students outweigh the inhibiting factors; confident students with the ability to communicate across cultural and language barriers, seeking solutions to problems not always described in handbooks, is a key outcome.

It is hoped that on completion of undergraduate training, students will have developed into doctors trained to work in Africa – able to meet the needs of the communities they serve but also with competences and standards relevant to international norms and requirements.

REFERENCES

Beylefeld, A.A., Joubert, G., Jama, M.P. & de Klerk, B. (2003). Lecturers, Students and Community Members Sharing the Responsibility of Assessing Project-based Poster Presentations. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 17 (2), 1-12.

Beylefeld, A.A., Nena, K.D. & Prinsloo, E.A.M. (2005). Influence of Community Experiences on First-year Medical Students' Reflective Writing. *Medical Teacher* 27 (2), 150-154.

General Medical Council (Education Committee). (1993). *Tomorrow's Doctors: Recommendations on Undergraduate Medical Education.* London: General Medical Council.

Hamad, B. (2000). What is Community-based Education? Evolution, Definition and Rationale. In Schmidt, H., Magzoub, M., Feletti, G., Nooman, Z. & Vluggen, P. (eds.). *Handbook of Community-based Education: Theory and Practice.* Maastricht: Network Publications, 11-26.

Harden, R.M., Sowden, S. & Dunn, W.R. (1984). Educational Strategies in Curriculum Development: The SPICES model. *Medical Education* 18, 284-297.

Magzoub, M. & Schmidt, H. (2000). A Taxonomy of Community-based Education Programs. In Schmidt, H., Magzoub, M., Feletti, G., Nooman, Z. & Vluggen, P. (eds.). *Handbook of Community-based Education: Theory and Practice.* Maastricht: Network Publications, 11-26.

Prinsloo, E.A.M. (2003). *Community-based Education Guideline: Curriculum 2000.* School of Medicine, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Prinsloo, E.A.M., Joubert, G. & du Toit G.F. (2004). *Community-based Education (CBE) – The MED 113 Expo as a Case Study.* Bloemfontein: University Publishers.

School of Medicine, University of the Free State. (2000). *Phase I Guide Curriculum 2000.* Bloemfontein: University Publishers.

CASE STUDY 5
SERVICE-LEARNING IN GEOGRAPHY

SOPHIE OLDFIELD

About Dr Sophie Oldfield...

Senior lecturer in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science at the University of Cape Town (UCT), teaching Urban and Development Geography and conducting research on urban development and social change.

Sophie moved to South Africa from the US in 1994; in the US she completed her postgraduate studies with a brief period of work in the Geography Education Program at the National Geographic Society, and initially in South Africa she taught high-school Geography and History. Her research focuses on neighbourhood-scale organising and urban politics. Her engagement with service-learning projects developed from her research on housing issues with community-based organisations in townships in Cape Town. In these contexts, service-learning projects facilitated the completion of research for community organisations and, at the same time, provided an excellent context for teaching Urban Geography.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Sophie Oldfield
University:	University of Cape Town (UCT)
Discipline:	Geography
Module details:	Cities of the South (Second-year: 40 students)
	Urban Geography (Third-year: 30 students)
Number of credits:	36 (per module)

Community locations of service-learning:
* New Crossroads
* Valhalla Park

Service agencies:
* Mandlovu Development Institute
* Valhalla Park United Front Civic

SUMMARY

The service-learning projects I assess in this case study were part of two classes on urban development taught in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science at UCT between 2000 and 2005 – one called 'Cities of the South' at a second-year level (2000 – 2001, 2003), and another entitled 'Urban Geography' at a third-year level (2004 – 2005). The average class size was between 30 and 40 students. Rather than running laboratories and practical sessions on campus, I negotiated research projects in 2000 – 2003 with an NGO working in New Crossroads, and in 2004 – 2005 with a community-based civic in Valhalla Park.

The partners in these service-learning modules were:
* The higher education institution – in the form of the academics involved and the students;
* The service agencies – in the form of an NGO and a CBO – Mandlovu Development Institute and Valhalla Park United Front Civic, respectively; and
* The community – in the form of residents of New Crossroads and Valhalla Park, respectively.

In the case of both service-learning modules discussed here, classroom debates and discussions were combined with service-learning projects in neighbourhood contexts in Cape Town: one in New Crossroads, a township formerly classified as 'African' in Nyanga; and the other in Valhalla Park, a former 'coloured' area of state-built rental housing.

New Crossroads and Valhalla Park are typical of many areas of South African cities where houses are overcrowded, social amenities are poor and poverty undermines day-to-day livelihoods. They are also communities with extensive histories of organising. In New Crossroads families fought the apartheid state to win the legal right to live permanently in the city and later to access state-built housing in the early 1980s (see Cole, 1987). In various organisational forms, in Valhalla Park Civic activists have organised for over 20 years to improve their housing conditions

and to fight evictions and cut-offs of their water and electricity (see Oldfield & Stokke, 2006).

Working with organisations in these contexts has provided opportunities for students to grapple in experiential and analytical ways with issues of poverty and urbanisation, as well as individual and community historical and contemporary agency, while experimenting with qualitative research methodologies. The service-learning projects also meet a departmental requirement at third-year level that students participate in primary fieldwork to begin to process the relationship between theory and case and to reflect on the messy relationship between theorising and empirical research in the production of knowledge. The engagement with community-based partners provides an excellent context and motivation for student engagement with these complex issues. Students welcome these responsibilities and the chance to engage beyond the classroom. This type of project thus acts as a holistic approach to learning, through which students develop theoretical and experiential, socially and politically informed understanding of the city.

At the same time, the projects provide research products such as maps, processed survey data, and interpretative narratives – the 'service' – that partner organisations may use in their daily work and activism. The projects thus also reflect a broader commitment in the South African context to service-learning projects that engage beyond university boundaries (see Higher Education Quality Committee/ JET Education Services, 2006); as well as a resurgence within the Geography discipline of commitment to bridging theory, research and teaching through different forms of engagement outside of 'normal' or 'traditional' university practice. These imperatives frame my engagement with service-learning.

Lessons learnt

In the process of developing and implementing the modules, I have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- The development of partnerships has been critical to the success of my service-learning projects. Partnerships are particular, reflecting individuals and a range of contextual factors. Ideally, they need to build on explicit mutual interests through which project substance is negotiated, reflecting both the needs of the partner organisation for information or research-type services, and a realistic assessment of what university students are able to produce. In addition, the more involved that the 'community' participants are in project direction, the greater their participation and thus investment in the process, the more chance there is for 'useful', 'service-providing' projects to be completed.

- The identification of individual leaders with capacity and legitimacy, through which to negotiate the project, is important – not only to develop the project but also (in the case of these particular projects) to link to people in the two neighbourhood contexts, in which the projects operated. Moreover, critical to the development of the projects was the partners' capacity and, in essence, power to both decide on projects and draw together a team of community-based activists to help run the projects. At the same time, in the case of each project, community activists needed to advise other neighbourhood and area organisations

about the project, to establish the project's legitimacy and to present the logic of the university's presence (through the course and the student visits) while the project ran.

- Student reflection provides the most important set of learning opportunities in service-learning projects. Students are thus asked to reflect on a variety of experiential, methodological and conceptual issues through writing weekly journals.

- Even in the best-case scenario, any 'service' in the research products produced in my class contexts is restricted to the ways in which non-university residents participate and invest in the materials produced. Nonetheless, a range of small and sometimes intangible benefits are built through, and experienced in, the process of engagement between students and project participants. The products of the research process, rather than being materially significant themselves, represent a range of processes that hold value. For both students and community participants, the service-learning projects provide a set of engagements with people with whom they do not normally interact.

- In the contexts in which I work, service-learning projects need to shift places and, in consequence, partners change because there is a limit to the useful research – and thus service – that can be produced by students. The services produced are constrained therefore to simple maps and basic data collection and analysis. Partnerships thus need to be designed realistically and openly to reflect the opportunities and constraints that course-based engagement in community-based development issues provides. Relationships are not necessarily replicable; rather, they must fit the individual context of the course, of the department, of the university-based organiser, and of the partner organisation(s).

INITIATION

The development of partnerships has been critical to the success of the service-learning projects discussed here. Partnerships are particular, reflecting individuals and a range of contextual factors. In the New Crossroads case, for instance, I met the NGO director, with whom the partnership has operated, at Urban Futures, a conference in Johannesburg in 2000, in a session where she commented on the possibilities but difficulties in working with universities on interesting research questions. In an immediate follow-up conversation, I expressed an interest in trying to put together a project with one of my courses. We then negotiated and developed the projects between 2000 and 2003.

In the Valhalla Park case, I worked with activists in Valhalla Park through my own research on the Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign, most extensively through the Campaign's Community Research Group (CRG). The Civic participated in a CRG project, in which I was involved, that encouraged and supported activists to do research to support their activism. In Valhalla Park the Civic prepared a survey of backyard shacks in the neighbourhood to supplement its fight with the city over housing needs of the neighbourhood. With 1 700 households in the area, the survey was time-consuming and large-scale. Participation of students from my course on the survey thus seemed an excellent way to meet the Civic's need for hard data to supplement members' activism and my need for an interesting, applied and real context in which to situate a service-learning project.

In the case of both service-learning modules, the partnership formed because of explicit mutual interests.

CONCEPTUALISATION

In each case, the identification of individual leaders with capacity and legitimacy, through which to negotiate the project, was important – not only to develop the project but also to link to people in the two neighbourhood contexts in which the projects were situated. Critical to the development of the project in each case was the partners' capacity and, in essence, power to decide on projects and to draw together a team of community-based activists to help run the project. At the same time, community activists needed to advise other neighbourhood and area organisations about the project to establish the project's legitimacy and to present the logic of the university's presence for the project duration.

In New Crossroads our class projects have been embedded within the NGO's work and interest in the area. In all senses, our collaboration with the NGO facilitated any research in the area. The connection made the projects possible; it ensured acceptance and the commitment of a range of important New Crossroads leaders. This relationship also developed the focus for each student project, providing the context in which the issues were framed, and dictated the shape of the research products produced. The collaboration with the NGO also facilitated bringing young New Crossroads community activists from the organisation into our 2003 service-learning project – an important innovation in the development of our service-learning experience.

Although the projects in New Crossroads were negotiated with the director of the NGO with whom we worked, she facilitated our links with two older women community activists, who were the key links into New Crossroads itself. Relationships between the NGO director and these women were based on decades of collaboration and friendship. With their leadership, I ran the course projects in New Crossroads with demonstrators from my department and initially student translators (hired through a UCT student employment office) and in 2003 community activists from the youth-orientated CBO linked to our partner NGO. The older activists facilitated the process through their leadership, informing the South African National Civic Organisation, as well as the Community Policing Forum, and in the initial year, schools and police stations in the area; in the New Crossroads project, the older activists also provided direction for the younger first-time activist participants. The process of informing the broader community was important, and at times almost comical. In 2000 a police Caspir was sent to New Crossroads to ensure that the UCT students were safe; its massive presence on residential streets raised all sorts of eyebrows. In the following year, collaboration with the Community Policing Forum, particularly their commitment to supporting the project, was evident in their placing of a Forum member on each street after a group of students was mugged.

Similarly, in the case of the Valhalla Park service-learning project, 11 teams of UCT students and Valhalla Park activists worked together in 2004 and 2005 to complete the survey of backyard households in Valhalla Park.

The Civic activists were chosen and coordinated by the Civic chairperson. All meetings were at

her house in Valhalla Park, the centre for broader Civic activities as well, with a container in the yard that serves as the Civic help office and, on Thursdays, the soup kitchen for the neighbourhood. Her credibility and ability to inspire in the community activists commitment and enthusiasm to work on the project were critical. The Civic's broader legitimacy in the neighbourhood was also the foundation on which the student research in the area functioned.

A critical component of all service-learning modules discussed here has been the negotiation of the project substance with the partner organisation. The negotiation reflects both the needs of the partner organisation for information or research-type services, and a realistic assessment of what second- and third-year level students – without field experience and extensive skills – are able to produce.

While I, as project convenor, play the role of establishing the partnership and negotiating the projects, postgraduate students hired as demonstrators in my department also facilitate the student research experience. By our presence in the field, and through accompanying different groups in their research, we engage with students on the methodological and substantive issues in the course and service-learning context, while also ensuring that the standard of research is sufficient to produce the research products – the end service – for the partner organisation.

PREPARATION

In my department we have a requirement that students participate in primary research through their undergraduate coursework (normally in their third year). Service-learning-type projects fulfil this requirement, while providing a stimulating and reflective context in which to engage with the massive challenges of urban development facing South African cities, the centrality of methodologies in research, and students' own worldviews and self-reflection. Projects are introduced in their conceptual context, which situates the role they play in relation to the substantive themes of the module, as well as in relation to experimentation with different methodologies, policy contexts such as housing or unemployment and informal sector development, and in relation to the partner organisation's goals and broader activism.

The service-learning projects have been organised over eight practical sessions – three-hour afternoon teaching blocks scheduled once a week for each module in my department. The first session is on campus and complements a week of lectures, which situate the substantive issues as well as the project and its field methodologies. Five sessions[4] take place in the neighbourhood context, including an orientation, where through a walking tour the organisation introduces itself, the issues it organises around, the logic of the project and the neighbourhood. This session grounds the work, explicitly focusing on the partner organisation's expectations. This component is critical, to ensure not only that students take the project seriously but also that they do not raise unrealistic expectations in the neighbourhood in the research process – for instance, about material benefits from our research. Four research sessions follow, once-

---

4   UCT has an internal bus system, which we contract to transport students to and from the neighbourhood where we are working. It is also used to bring partner participants to campus for the final presentation sessions. Logistically it is easy to use this system because payments then are internally transferred from my departmental fieldwork budget to the bus company. Communication is also straightforward as we have a long-term relationship and are physically in close proximity (for instance, if a bus doesn't arrive on time, it is relatively quick to sort out problems).

Table 5.1: Key players, roles and links in service-learning projects

Key people	Roles	Critical links/ functions
Module-based coordinator/ lecturer (author)	• Establish and build relationship with potential partner organisations. • Capacity and rights to negotiate project that fits curriculum needs and that students can realistically produce. • Access to departmental resources (in these cases, a fieldwork budget) to fund project. • Facilitate student research experience and engagement with methodological and substantive issues in module in field context.	• To link to partners operating in neighbourhood-based contexts facing substantive issues discussed in module; • To link to appropriate module and student body.
Organisational leader	• Negotiate project with university-based partner. • Develop team of community-based people to make project run. • Status in organisation (senior enough and capacitated enough to situate project and to engage others in neighbourhood context).	• To provide link to community workers/ activists; • To help link up with other important organisations in neighbourhood to garner buy-in, and to establish legitimacy and logic of university module presence in neighbourhood context while project runs.
Community-based activists/ workers	• Facilitate student engagement with residents (through interviews and survey work). • Legitimate process in neighbourhood (explain purpose and provide security).	• To link to residents.
University-based postgraduate student demonstrators/ tutors	• Facilitate student work on methodological and substantive issues in module.	• To link with students and with community activists.

weekly, in which students work in small groups with the participating community activists. On-campus sessions are then held to develop the analytical elements of the report and presentation. Students present their work in a final session to one another as well as to the partner organisation and all the participating community activists, who are invited to our department for this session.

The module assessment includes writing individual journals, which reflect on various elements of

the above and facilitate student reflection as well as help develop the argument and substance that constitutes the final group report and presentation (see Table 5.2, below, for the structure of the service-learning coursework assessment).

In the four research sessions in the neighbourhood, students are guided through implementation of the research collection for the partner organisation (such as the survey of backyards in Valhalla Park) as well as through qualitative interviews (semi-structured interviews and life histories, for instance), through which they focus their report.

Table 5.2: Service-learning project assessment

Assessment form	Role in service-learning project
Individual journals (20%)	• Identification of reflection, but also any potential problems or experiences with which students need assistance in processing the fieldwork experience.
Group report (60%)	• Using primary data collected through the service-learning project to analyse a topic, such as (in 2005) 'Negotiating Backyard Living in Valhalla Park'. • Immediate feedback to partner participants at the end of the module component of the project.
Group oral presentation (20%)	• Oral presentation skills – extrapolating key arguments and illustrations from the report into an informative presentation. • Immediate feedback to partner participants on research, and an opportunity for them to assess/ provide feedback to the student participants.

In the final project sessions back on campus, we develop analysis skills, particularly how to extrapolate from the primary research findings, and how to do this in a way that speaks to and respects the complexities of people's lives in the neighbourhood context in which the research has taken place. With assistance from postgraduate demonstrators with research experience (in these cases my own Master's-level thesis students), I work with groups to focus their reports and to help them concisely articulate an argument for their reports. Lastly, oral presentations conclude the project, drawing back in the partner organisations and community activists, who attend and comment on the presentations on campus. In addition to providing an opportunity to share the research findings collectively, this final session provides the opportunity for students – in the course of their presentation sessions – to formally acknowledge the community activists' central role in the research, and also to show the community activist with whom they have worked the UCT campus in order to share some of their daily lives as students.

IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to playing a key role in conceptualising the service-learning modules, community activists have been essential to the successful implementation of the projects. Groups of two to three students (depending on the class size) work consistently with one neighbourhood-based activist in the research work. The neighbourhood activists facilitate the student engagement with

residents in the interview processes and legitimate the very visible presence of students in the neighbourhood. At the same time, because they are known in the area and have knowledge of how the area operates, the community activists provide security.

The research collaborations and partnerships reflect the needs and direction of each organisation and the particularities of the neighbourhoods in which they operate, as well as the elements I require for students to engage conceptually and experientially with the issues that structure the module. The particularities of the projects (outlined below) therefore reflect the places and people with whom we have worked as well as our own development of the projects over a period of more than five years.

Service-learning module implementation in New Crossroads

In the New Crossroads case, all the projects worked towards a broader goal of building community knowledge on local assets and resources, so that the community potentially could link with emerging economic, social, cultural and broader developmental opportunities. Class-based projects therefore have gathered information on: public and vacant space; informal traders; and skills and work experiences. The gathering of information has been rooted in a community development process run by an NGO that aims to build local skills and knowledge in New Crossroads. The collaboration began in 2000 with research on land uses in New Crossroads. Divided into groups, students mapped vacant plots (in which community organisations could consider developments such as shops), community assets or amenities such as churches (formal and informal) and halls, and homes in which economic activities took place.

The end product was a wall-sized map, which highlighted that although there were few vacant spaces, residents of New Crossroads were engaged actively in a vast range of home-based businesses. Although a complementary analysis of New Crossroads census data (1996) portrayed a community with very high unemployment rates and low education levels, with youth in particular facing really limited opportunities, the map visually demonstrated that New Crossroads residents were constructing and negotiating their own livelihoods through the development of home-based businesses. Despite being rudimentary in nature and quality, the map has proved a powerful tool for community organising.

The significance of home-based businesses (illustrated on the map produced in 2000 by means of shaded-in erven) led us to the second project in 2001: a systematic analysis of the informal sector active in New Crossroads. In four field sessions in August and September 2001, groups gathered information on home-based enterprises – the type, quantity and quality of goods sold and services offered, the relative success of each enterprise, and the role of the enterprise in sustaining households.

The research revealed that there were 119 enterprises active in New Crossroads undertaking a vast array of activities, from small-scale vendors to large spaza shops, shebeens, vehicle repairs, sewing enterprises, day-care centres, doctors, funeral services, hairdressers, a caterer, a photographer and video maker, engineers, electricians, and a wholesaler, for instance (Lewins, 2001). The fieldwork helped students reflect critically on theoretical and applied literature on the informal sector.

A third project, researching skills and work experiences, was completed in October 2003. Groups of UCT students linked with members of a youth-orientated CBO with whom our partner NGO worked, and analysed the ways in which age and gender differentiate the New Crossroads residents' skills, work and aspirations. Focusing on specific groups such as older women, younger single mothers, and young unemployed men, student teams used a range of qualitative research methodologies to analyse gender and age and their influence in shaping skills bases and work experiences. These materials were used by the partner NGO to consider the feasibility and design of a broader structured skills and employment survey.

Service-learning module implementation in Valhalla Park

In Valhalla Park, the service-learning partnership in 2004 and 2005 focused on facilitating research to help the Civic's struggle for housing, for residents living in informal structures in a small informal settlement and in backyards of housing in the neighbourhood.

In 2004 – 2005, students in the Urban Geography module worked in collaboration with the Valhalla Park United Front Civic Organisation on a survey of backyarders in Valhalla Park. The students and Civic activists mapped the location of houses with backyards and collected survey data on the densities of families living in these contexts, both in backyards and connected formal houses. A map and a table of backyarders were produced, complementing a booklet on the experience of families negotiating backyard living. The Civic intended using these materials in its struggles with the City of Cape Town over housing developments in the neighbourhood.

Learning implementation and outcomes: Student engagement in reflection

Student reflection provides the most important set of learning opportunities in the projects. Students are asked to reflect on a variety of issues through writing weekly journals (see Table 5.3, below, for journal topics in the 2005 project). The first journal requires students to write about the orientation and students' first experience in the neighbourhood context. For some students this session represents a first experience in a poverty-stricken township; for others it is familiar, the type of place in which they might have grown up. One student wrote:

> My first impression of New Crossroads was a strange mixture of interest, inquisition, and absolute alienation. It was like entering into a new world, one that had existed on my doorstep since before I was born – long before I was born – yet I had never encountered its like before. I was part of the same city organism as they were, but felt as different from them as if I were a visitor from the moon. (JD, 2003, unedited)

In the Valhalla Park context a student reflected as follows:

> My first impression of it [Valhalla Park] was in the form of a happy realisation; which was that this settlement looked very much like home, where I grew up. The township I grew up in is named Katlehong…It is very similar to Valhalla Park which is characterised by homes which have been extended and backyard shacks erected, plus of course the characteristics of any township really…I even found similarity in some undesirable aspects such as the repugnant smells that grace townships across South Africa. (TN, 2005, unedited)

Table 5.3: Journal topics for five sessions in the neighbourhood service-learning context

Week of project	Journal focus (for 2004 and 2005 in Valhalla Park at third-year level)
Week one	The assignment for this practical session is a short individual journal entry (max. 1 000 words). In this week's journal, describe, record and analyse your impressions of Valhalla Park. The focus of your journal is your choice; but, read the following guidelines on taking and thinking through field notes.
Week two	Write an individual journal (max. 1 000 words) that reflects on the research process – you could possibly reflect on the survey itself, the process of accessing and talking to people…but also draw on your observations (see the Bennett reading on participant observation on the syllabus), which hopefully will be more specific than last week as you will be engaging with people in the context of their homes, backyards etc… Reading: Katy Bennett (2002). Participant Observation. In Pamela Shurmer-Smith, *Doing Cultural Geography.* London: Sage Publications, 139-149.
Week three	Evaluate Garth Myers' (2001) point that "field researchers need to constantly revisit and re-evaluate the balance between selfishness and selflessness and between expression of situatedness and respect for subjects or audiences, throughout the field experience". How have you negotiated your own identity (positionality and privacy), your Valhalla Park community worker/ activist's, and your interviewee's identities (positionality and privacy)? Illustrate your reflection on these issues in the contexts of actual interviews. Reading: Garth Myers (2001). Protecting Privacy in Foreign Fields. *Geographical Review*, 91 (1-2), 192-200.
Week four	For this week's journal, read and respond from your own fieldwork experiences to either of the following questions: Use Eric Perramond's (2001) discussion of his field experiences in 'Oral Histories and Partial Truths in Mexico' to reflect on the ways in which interviewees' responses to your questions are bound up in other events. Use one interview that you have done in Valhalla Park to illustrate the ways in which context and issues that might not (and might) directly relate to our focus on backyard living and overcrowding in formal houses shape the research process. Or Hester Parr grapples with issues of embodiment and public space in 'Feeling, Reading, and Making Bodies in Space' (2001). Although we have been working in a totally different context in terms of interviewees and interview issues, write a journal issue that reflects on public spaces, images, and identities in Valhalla Park and your own bodily ('corporeal') negotiation of different spaces. In relation to issues raised in her article, have you been conscious of yourself, your walk, your look and the ways in which they might help you assimilate with or be different from Valhalla Park residents? Reading: Hester Parr (2001). Feeling, Reading, and Making Bodies in Space. *Geographical Review, 91* (1-2), 158-167. Eric Perramond (2001). Oral Histories and Partial Truths in Mexico. *Geographical Review,* 91 (1-2), 151-157.
Week five	Write a journal on the experience of working with the Valhalla Park Civic Front on the backyard project. Please use this journal entry to reflect on the process of working directly with a community worker/ activist, on working in a place like Valhalla Park, and on working on a project that (in part) goes back to the community where the research has taken place. What did these aspects of the project help you learn, experience and reflect on? What did this sort of research context limit?

As the students gain experience, journal topics are designed to facilitate reflection on methodology and the fieldwork process, particularly on the consequences of different interviewing styles and contexts. At the same time, all the journals push students to reflect on themselves, their positionality and the multiple ways in which individuals shape (positively and negatively) fieldwork and research findings.

Lastly, journals are drawn on to help students think through the ways in which fieldwork is used to generate knowledge. Students, for instance, compare their own research findings on backyarders in Valhalla Park with other authors' published work on backyarders in other cities (for instance Morange, 2001, in Port Elizabeth; or Crankshaw, Gilbert & Morris, 2000, in Soweto). In parallel, in the research in New Crossroads on home-based businesses, students' projects provided a chance for students to assess – in the context of their own first-hand knowledge – the work of others; for instance, Rogerson's sharp distinction between survivalist and growth-orientated enterprises (1997) and the ways in which these reflected gendered household dynamics and livelihood strategies. Interrogating theory with their own knowledge and conceptualisation of problems and dynamics in either Valhalla Park or New Crossroads has proved an empowering entry into reading theory for second- and third-year level students.

OUTCOMES

Research products have been produced with an explicit intent that they be 'useful' for 'community' (non-university) project participants. Some, the New Crossroads map (already discussed), seem to have been successful; others (the directory and the pilot survey of skills and work) less so. The following discussion briefly points to what was and was not useful in these products for community participants, and why.

From my experiences in New Crossroads and Valhalla Park, the closer that decisions are made to 'community' members/ activists and the greater their participation and thus investment in the process, the more chance there is for 'useful', 'service-providing' projects to be completed.[5] Although it is difficult to assess the ways in which the research products or service that the projects produce contribute towards community development in the long term, I am able to demonstrate instead a range of small and sometimes intangible benefits that are built through, and experienced in, the engagement between students and project participants in the process.

Compiled from students' area maps required in each project, the New Crossroads map – 1 metre x 2 metres in size – has been used for a number of years in a variety of community meetings in New Crossroads. Although simple in construction,[6] the map acted as an important visual tool to help residents and activists objectify and relate the New Crossroads area internally and externally to other parts of the city. At the NGO's launch in the neighbourhood in 2001, for instance, at the end of an emotional, celebratory, and nostalgic meeting that had focused on the area's anti-apartheid activist history, the map was posted up on the wall. The NGO used it to help bridge discussion between memories of the past and contemporary neighbourhood

---

5   For a detailed analysis of these issues, see Oldfield (2008).
6   Three activists, the NGO director, her young son, and I coloured in the erven, replicating and consolidating the information the students reported in their projects. One of the activists, a woman in her early 50s, commented that she was not in primary school; she didn't want to waste her time colouring. The technique is almost insultingly simple.

challenges. Community residents gathered around the map, locating their homes and noting their streets and the types of businesses around the area (community meeting, winter 2001).

Below, the NGO director explains why the map was useful in a variety of community meetings:

> In areas [like New Crossroads], which are disconnected, there's no sense of or ability to objectify one's own space. A simple map of their own area, of New Crossroads, allowed people to connect with their own place in a different kind of way…The map helped people to locate themselves, to ground themselves within their areas especially because most people's lives are filled with chaos, with a lack of order. The map provided a way to order, to visualise that was very powerful. The map is still used [three years later]. The map starts with people's homes [the erven are marked so that people can locate their plots], captures your interest, helps you make visual connections with elsewhere. In a project which is about making connections and linking with resources the map has proved an integral part of this process. (JC, 08 December 2003)

It is less clear, however, the degree to which the map was meaningfully representative or useful to residents outside of the NGO's initiative.

In comparison, the directory of home-based businesses – a mini Yellow Pages-type address book – of New Crossroads, produced from student reports, seemed to offer significant potential for 'service', for recognising and facilitating informal business within New Crossroads on a much broader scale than the map discussed above. Although all the data were produced by students and formatted in a rudimentary phonebook style, the directory was not produced (despite repeated attempts to update the research and kickstart the production process). There were practical reasons for the fact that the directory did not reach production, but primarily it got caught up in the NGO's agenda, standards and requirements (for a professional-looking and thus expensive product). In the process, the product lost its intended community-based functionality.

In the New Crossroads context, student work has contributed towards the NGO's initiatives. For instance, in the case of the directory the NGO has drawn on it to identify New Crossroads residents to provide services for the organisation for a variety of events. However, neither community activists nor residents have been drawn into the process directly. In a recent interview, two community activists spoke about the tensions they felt in relation broadly to the lack of visibility of delivery on the NGO's work in their area. Our service-learning projects are part of this package because the partnership and the services negotiated are understood as part of the NGO's broader engagement. It is important to acknowledge the absolute limitations of research produced through these processes, because a lack of feedback or unrealistic expectations carry large consequences for community-based participants – who, of course, long after the projects have finished continue to live in the neighbourhoods where the projects were executed.

Collaboration in the Valhalla Park context has been different. The student research process and anything produced from it are part of a range of many initiatives undertaken by the Civic within the neighbourhood itself. The Civic meets weekly and a wide range of actions has happened in the community, through which the Civic has established its credibility and capacity and generated trust among residents; for instance, dramatic events such as land invasions, fighting interdicts by the council, attempts by the police and the army to remove people, a successful win in High Court that legalised the informal settlement produced through the land invasion, and fighting for access to water (see Oldfield & Stokke, 2006, for further details).

Any sort of delivery (on a class research project or otherwise) is not only shaped by the Civic, and determined by it; there is also a regular and regularised process through which the Civic engages with residents. This context does not mean that Civic activities are uniformly accepted or apolitical, but Civic activists have worked in the area for long and sustained periods. Perhaps, most significantly – and in contrast with the New Crossroads project, where our engagement was with an externally located NGO – the Civic activists live in Valhalla Park and face the same challenges, threats and needs as the majority of residents. A very different identity, context and set of relationships between Civic and residents framed our projects, so that the context within which student work and any forthcoming product must operate is smaller, carrying a lighter weight, its success not resting on the value or significance in the research product or process alone.

At the same time, however, although by definition limited, research products are not unimportant. They provide a process through which the partnership is built. They also help focus the relationships that underpin the research process and the learning that takes place for students and neighbourhood-based participants. In the process, students learn about the city, about poor peoples' problems, and about themselves and their positions and identities. Community participants' skills and knowledge are acknowledged, in particular; for instance, that they speak English well enough,[7] and have extensive local knowledge, and a range of skills (such as translation or map reading) that might have been previously unrecognised.

Honoraria are paid to community-based participants. All partner participants are paid at the UCT rate for undergraduate students (individuals without a completed tertiary degree). The coordinators – the Civic leader in Valhalla Park and an older woman activist who coordinated the work in New Crossroads – were paid double the amount of a normal participant to reflect their leadership roles. In the later projects, the partner organisation chose a neighbourhood-based participant to document the hours that all the partner participants contributed to the project. This process worked better than in past projects where I or a demonstrator kept track of hours – not only because the community is better able to keep account of these details but also because the process of payment was more transparent and the responsibility rested in the neighbourhood context. Payment is made in cash at the end of the project through drawing an advance from my departmental fieldwork budget.

---

7   Personal communication, Valhalla Park, 20 June 2005.

The products of the research process, rather than being materially significant in and of themselves, represent a range of processes that hold value. For both students and community participants, the service-learning projects provide a set of engagements out of the norm – with people with whom they do not normally interact.

The Civic leader in Valhalla Park commented, for instance:

> Ja, it was quite exciting for me to see them [the groups of students and activists] coming back and talking such a lot; because even my one daughter, [laughter] we were just laughing at her here when she talks English, ooh *jena*! [laughter]. But then I stand there and I see there she comes with the [students] she did work with and I just see her talking and talking and talking…It was like a funeral, the day when the research was done [laughter]. (Valhalla Park, 20 June 2005)

But even in the best-case scenario, any 'service' in the research products produced in my class contexts is restricted to the ways in which non-university residents participate and invest in the materials produced. Despite their limited material benefits, however, the projects and the process of collaboration produce intangibles that are residuals of the experience and the student–community activist engagement. Projects present the opportunity for both groups to step outside their context and immediate environment, in essence each others' comfort zones; the projects also offer opportunities to develop friendships that, however short-term, cross class, race, place and institutional boundaries. These are important steps, and important 'products' in themselves that grow from partnerships and from the processes of engagement in service-learning projects.

PARTNERSHIPS

While pre-project engagement is critical, it is also important to ensure in the process that the partnership is working, particularly that community activists working with students are confident and comfortable with the research process. In our projects, we ensure these elements through an initial field research session with community activists where we go through the research process before the work with students begins. Weekly telephone calls before the research session and plenty of one-on-one contact among myself, the postgraduate demonstrators and community participants also help. Where students are struggling with the process or issues of identity[8] we discuss the issues with the participating community activist so that s/he can also facilitate the process and better understand any tensions within groups. A post-project evaluation session not only provides a debriefing opportunity, but also identifies ways to improve project logistics in future and an opportunity to discuss research findings.[9]

After the evaluation, we allocate time and money to turn the student projects into a consolidated set of resources – in the Valhalla Park case, we worked with the Civic on the map of

---

8   A range of issues has arisen: for instance, a woman Muslim student's cultural discomfort in working with two men – another student and a community activist; or, in another instance, the need for some debriefing with students who, in a previous research session, had a difficult encounter in a shebeen.

9   For instance, in the 2005 project, Civic participants were upset with the depiction of problems of gangsterism in their neighbourhood. They felt that the research was inaccurate and were concerned about the activist who had accompanied the student group.

backyards and the booklet of stories of how different families and individuals cope with the stresses of living in such marginal conditions.

Lastly, we host a party to celebrate our partnership and to be together in a context outside of the project and module agenda. These opportunities consolidate our relationship through facilitating a range of ways to process and better develop the project materials as well as future research engagement – in or outside of the service-learning project context.

In all the processes and partnerships, trust built through my relationship with key leaders in the partner organisations has been critical. The depth of these relationships has helped develop my understanding of the partner organisation's goals and its way of working, and thus a realistic assessment of what we can contribute to it through the service-learning projects. There are consequences to a naïve or superficial engagement, or partnership with an ill-suited organisation – lessons learnt through the development of projects. In my experience the consequences have surfaced in critical reflection on the impact of the service-learning projects beyond the module engagement itself. Nonetheless, all projects have unequivocally provided excellent contexts for teaching and for meeting the academic goals of the modules in which they are situated.

In the contexts in which I work, service-learning projects need to shift places and, in consequence, partners change because there is a limit to the useful research – and thus service – that can be produced by students with little research experience and few hard skills at a second- and third-year level. The services produced are constrained therefore to simple maps and basic data collection and analysis. In New Crossroads, the decision to end the collaboration through module-based service-learning projects was mutual. In this context, our engagement continued but through postgraduate research by two Master's-level thesis students supervised by me, and through hosting a joint seminar on our common concern about issues of tenure insecurity in the Western Cape. My own research continues in Valhalla Park, but I am unsure of the future of class-based projects. We will discuss whether or not there are possible topics, on which students can work, that complement existing Civic activism on housing or other issues. Resolving these issues requires communication that builds on the nature of the relationship between university- and community-based participants.

In my experiences, a multi-layered relationship ensures that my engagement is not an 'in-out' extractive one. Instead, we explicitly aim for the engagement to be mutual and reciprocal. Because running service-learning projects is demanding of time, I have found that projects work better and are more sustainable when they are layered on my own existing research (in my case on community development and urban reconstruction in South African cities). My engagement then in service-learning in a neighbourhood and with a partner organisation is enhanced through increased knowledge or through richer, more mutual relationships. The same sort of mutuality is necessary for Civic leaders and participants.

Designing partnerships in this manner is not always easy, particularly because of the nature and scheduling of module-based service-learning projects; in the cases discussed here, they occur once a year in the second semester within a specified eight-week period. By contrast, Civic activism and research imperatives continue day after day, year in and year out. Service-learning projects alone cannot provide the context for a sustained, long-term partnership. At the same time, however, there are benefits to the limited and scheduled nature of projects; they happen and they produce material within a relatively short period of time (relative to the schedules and rhythms of community activism).

CONCLUSION

Partnerships need to be designed realistically and openly to reflect the opportunities and constraints that module-based engagement in community-based development issues provides. The types of relationships I have described in this case study are not necessarily replicable; rather, they must fit the individual context – of the module, of the department, of the university-based organiser as well as of the partner organisation – as well as the broader and complex contexts in which we work and through which we negotiate service-learning projects.

REFERENCES

Bennett, K. (2002). Participant Observation. In Shurmer-Smith, P. (ed.). *Doing Cultural Geography*. London: Sage Publications.

Cole, J. (1987). Crossroads – *The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976 – 1986*. Braamfontein: Ravan Press.

Crankshaw, O., Gilbert, A. & Morris, A. (2000). Backyard Soweto. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 24 (4), 841-857.

EGS 3015S class report (2005). *Negotiating Backyard Living in Valhalla Park*. Urban Geography third-year course, Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town.

Higher Education Quality Committee/ JET Education Services. (2006). *A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments for Managing the Quality of Service-Learning*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Lewins, K. (2001). *A Report on Home-based Economic Activities in New Crossroads*. Consolidated report on Cities of the South module project research for the Mandlovu Development Institute, Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town.

Morange, M. (2002). Backyard Shacks: The Relative Success of this Housing Option in Port Elizabeth. *Urban Forum,* 13 (2), 3-25.

Myers, G. (2001). Protecting Privacy in Foreign Fields. *Geographical Review,* 91 (1-2), 192-200.

Oldfield, S. (2008). Who's Serving Whom? Partners, Processes, and Products in Service Learning Projects in South Africa. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 32* (2), 269-285.

Oldfield, S. & Stokke, K. (2006). Building Unity in Diversity: Social Movement Activism in the Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign. In Habib, A., Valodia, I. & Ballard, R. (eds.). *Globalisation, Marginalisation and New Social Movements.* Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Parr, H. (2001). Feeling, Reading, and Making Bodies in Space. *Geographical Review*, 91 (1-2), 158-167.

Perramond, E. (2001). Oral Histories and Partial Truths in Mexico. *Geographical Review,* 91 (1-2), 151-157.

Rogerson, C. (1997). Globalization or Informalization? African Urban Economies in the 1990s. In Rakodi, C. (ed.). *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities.* New York: United Nations Press.

CASE STUDY 6
SERVICE-LEARNING IN HERBAL SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

JOANITA ADAMS & QUINTON JOHNSON

Collaborators: Jeremy Klaasen, Olivia Case & André Braaf

About Dr Joanita Adams...

Joined the University of the Western Cape (UWC) after completing her Doctorate in Immunology focusing on TB patients attending several clinics for healthcare.

Thereafter, Joanita secured a Postdoctoral position in the South African Herbal Science and Medicine Institute (SAHSMI), based at UWC. She was awarded a prestigious National Research Foundation and Department of Science and Technology Postdoctoral Innovation Scholarship, to continue her research in the area of Herbal Medicine, traditionally used to combat TB. This service-learning programme has allowed university researchers, health professionals and the community to work as partners, in creating awareness about the use and value of natural medicines for public health.

About Prof. Quinton Johnson...

Joined the University of the Western Cape (UWC) 17 years ago.

Quinton completed a Doctorate in Medical Science at UWC and thereafter accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship to continue his research at Oregon Health Sciences University. This was followed by his tenure as a Visiting Scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health. He has published in several peer-reviewed international journals, and has presented his research at numerous prestigious national and international conferences. He became the founding chairperson of the Medical Biosciences Department at UWC and is founding director of the South African Herbal Science and Medicine Institute (SAHSMI), and The International Centre for Indigenous Phytotherapy Studies. Through the Herbal Medicine Clinic Programme he has led the way in forging important partnerships among university researchers, health workers and communities, via service-learning. He has raised significant funds for research, supervised over 50 postgraduates, and continues to scientifically and clinically investigate the value of Herbal Medicine and nutrition for public health.

Notes on collaborators

Jeremy Klaasen... Senior lecturer at SAHSMI. A herbal horticultural specialist, he has made an important contribution, in using service-learning to help communities understand how to scientifically grow their own herbal medicines and remedies.

Olivia Case... Research officer at SAHSMI. A herbal product development specialist, she has made an important contribution by using service-learning to help communities understand how to scientifically create their own natural remedies.

André Braaf... Technical officer at SAHSMI. A herbal laboratory specialist, he has made an important contribution by using service-learning to help communities understand how to scientifically create their own natural remedies.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Quinton Johnson
University:	University of the Western Cape (UWC)
Disciplines:	Herbal Science and Medicine
Module title:	Herbal Medicine
Level of students:	Honours
Number of students:	6
Number of credits:	20

Community location of service-learning:

• Elsies River

Service agency:

• Elsies River Community Clinic

SUMMARY

The Herbal Science and Medicine Programme, located in the South African Herbal Science and Medicine Institute (SAHSMI) established in 2003 at UWC, is dedicated to the development of indigenous herbal medicine gardens, where communities can cultivate plants that are valuable as remedies or nutritional supplements for chronic conditions. In order to operationalise the development of herbal medicine gardens, a service-learning model was applied to an existing postgraduate module within SAHSMI. The service-learning model has been the basis of the link between the university, the community and the service-providing clinic.

The scientific development of herbal medicine gardens is a vital strategic component of primary healthcare in this country. The potential plant medicines and nutritional supplements that herbal medicine gardens provide may well be critical as safe, effective, accessible and affordable remedies for optimal health. The objective of the herbal medicine garden project has been to enhance the value and use of medicinal plants through a partnership between the university, a clinic and the community. To this end, we established a herbal medicine garden at the Elsies River Community Clinic in Cape Town. This has served as a dynamic site of learning and a rich source of knowledge on natural remedies.

The partners in implementing the service-learning module are:
• The higher education institution – including SAHSMI, university faculty and CHESP staff, students on the module and students who acted as mentors;
• The service agency – in the form of health professionals at the Elsies River Community Clinic and in the Department of Health; and
• The community – in the form of clinic patients and members of the Elsies River community.

From the inception of this service-learning module in 2002 to 2006, 19 BSc Honours students participated in this project. For the period 2002 – 2004 the average class size was about six students per year.

The students spend approximately 20% of their time at the community clinic, during which they are involved in several activities, including conducting surveys, gardening in the herbal medicine garden, and participating in workshops about the health and healing value of herbal remedies.

Through this project, the priority herbal remedies and/or medicinal plant species used by community members have been identified, community volunteers have been identified to establish home herbal gardens, seedlings for home gardens have been provided, and the condition of the plants established in home gardens in the Elsies River community has been evaluated. From the surveys conducted by students among the community of patients, the main medicinal herbs that the community uses, such as wild garlic or 'wilde knoffel' (*Tulbaghia violacea*) and wormwood or 'wildeals' (*Artemisia afra*) have been identified. These medicinal herbs are used by community members for the treatment of common chronic conditions such as colds, flu, fever, stomach ailments and high blood pressure.

In addition to the above activities, students have played a key role in increasing awareness of this important project. Since the start of the project in 2002, it has become evident that both need and demand for natural remedies are on the increase. In this regard, the community clinic has been excellently located to play an instrumental educational and service-providing role in conjunction with the university. There have certainly been challenges in integrating an academic science programme with service provision, but the full participation of students, clinic staff and patients have all contributed to a successful outcome thus far.

Working with the service-learning module partners, we will continue to refine the module – with the aim of cascading its delivery to a wider audience of students, clinics and communities. This module has allowed students to be exposed to the community, enabling students to understand better how community members' knowledge might be tapped and how students' own knowledge might be integrated with other knowledge systems, to the benefit of all. In the process, community members' knowledge has been validated.

Our service-learning module and model are vital for our knowledge portal at the university; they continue to create an important bridge of understanding and validation between indigenous community wisdom, on the one hand, and advanced scientific systems about medicines, healing and health, on the other.

Lessons learnt

In the process of developing and implementing this module, we have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- The community clinic has proved excellently located to play an instrumental educational and service-providing role in conjunction with the university. There have been limitations in integrating an academic science programme with service provision; but the enthusiasm of the students, together with the willingness of both clinic staff and patients participating in the project, have resulted in a successful service-learning outcome.

- Choosing senior students to act as mentors has ensured excellent management of the service-learning module.

- Communication among the university, community and service agency has been of the utmost importance, allowing for the transfer of important skills and knowledge among the groups. Good communication has also ensured that all partners involved could bring their respective competences to the table.

- The most significant challenges have revolved around human and financial resources. In this regard, it is strongly recommended that funders revisit their financial allocation to this project, as it has proved to be extremely time-consuming.

INITIATION

The inclusion of herbal remedies in primary healthcare systems is seen as particularly important in South Africa with the national Department of Health's commitment with respect to developing the National Drug Policy (1996) and the *Traditional Health Practitioners Bill* (Republic of South Africa, 2003), and the establishment in 2004 of the National Reference Centre for African Traditional Medicine.

The service-learning project was initiated because it became evident that the need for training in herbal remedies for optimal health was increasing. At the same time, the service-learning module was a response to a number of problems identified, as listed below.

Problems experienced by service agencies with their patients:
- High attendance for curative reasons;
- Dependency on conventional medication;
- Reluctance of communities to use home remedies; and
- Chronic chest infections and poor response to antibiotics.

Problems experienced by the community:
- Dependence on expensive curative western medicine;
- Lack of compliance with regard to completing courses of synthetic medicines; and
- Lack of access to safe and effective preventative herbal remedies.

Problems experienced by Science students and researchers:
- The Natural Science curriculum does not connect scientific knowledge to community development;
- Natural Science students do not formally learn to apply and transfer their skills to communities beyond laboratories; and
- The Natural Science formal body of knowledge does not sufficiently take account of existing indigenous knowledge among communities and does not include much space for a primary healthcare approach to wellness.

Furthermore, community clinics endure severe financial and human resource pressures as they struggle to provide western medicines to many thousands of patients, many of whom are non-compliant and all too dependent on conventional drugs. This service-learning module was initiated within the context of, and in response to, such challenges.

CONCEPTUALISATION

In relation to Natural Science education, service-learning has been identified, among other things, as a means of addressing public health problems in the community (Brosnan et al., 2005); as a means of enhancing the knowledge and attitudes of Physical Therapy students towards the older adult (Beling, 2003); and as a promising approach to reducing sexual risk behaviour (Denner et al., 2005). According to Cashman et al. (2004), the interaction inherent in an academic–community partnership has the potential to initiate systems change at the clinical and district levels, as it incorporates students in helping to implement or pilot a needed service in the community. Service-learning can also be a critical asset in the development of culturally effective training and implementation of effective care in paediatrics (Sidelinger et al., 2005). Finally, the establishment of home herbal gardens as an example of development with communities is a core component of UNICEF's human rights approach (Chopra & Ford, 2005).

Collaboration among the university, community and service agency has been of the utmost importance. From its inception, an important focus of the project has been on identifying the training needs of the various partners involved, in order to develop an outreach programme that would support the extension of herbal gardens into the community, thereby supporting the increased cultivation of indigenous plants with medicinal and nutritional value. The collaboration resulting from partnership has allowed for the transfer of important knowledge and skills among students, university staff, service agency and communities, in identifying and developing herbs that may provide accessible, affordable, safe and effective remedies. Furthermore, the Honours students have been exposed to the community and provided with an opportunity to increase their understanding of how community members' knowledge might be tapped, and how students' own knowledge might be integrated with other knowledge systems, to the benefit of all. In the process, community members' knowledge has been validated.

Some 80% of South Africans consult from among 200 000 traditional healers in the informal healthcare sector, seeking safe, effective and affordable herbal remedies (*Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy of South Africa,* Department of Science and Technology, 2005). Traditional healers in South Africa use 3 600 plant species as medicines (van Wyk et al., 2000). Given the plant biodiversity of the Western Cape, it made good sense to introduce students to our indigenous plant resources and their potential medicinal, nutritional, environmental and economic uses. The core content of the service-learning module has largely been Natural Science in orientation, with some coverage of community engagement being incorporated.

The major objectives of the module are:
* Connecting the learners with resource-poor communities for skills transfer;
* Adding to our existing scientific knowledge significant indigenous knowledge of medicinal and nutritional herbs;
* Ensuring that resource-poor communities are comprehensively informed, via student activities within the community, about medicinal and nutritional herbs as natural remedies;

- Elevating the profile and status of indigenous herbs as economically useful medicinal remedies and significant nutritional products; and
- Identifying and developing indigenous herbs as potential high yield alternative crops for small, medium and micro enterprises within communities.

The CHESP programme presented us with a unique opportunity to draw a much closer link between the scientific curriculum of our modules and its broader application to communities. The fact that the existing modules were academically sound and had an established track record allowed us to broaden out into service-learning from a solid base. However, in order to do so and for the project to work optimally, we had to factor in a number of new variables to the equation, including:
- Investing time in relationship-building with new partners;
- Understanding the pace differential among the various partners of the CHESP triad;
- Mentally preparing students for working in a high-risk community;
- Providing interpreters for students who were not fluent in the local language, Afrikaans; and
- Better comprehending the scheduling of patient groups at clinics.

The enthusiasm of the students and the staff on the module, excitement of the health professionals at the clinic, and willingness of the patients to participate were all key factors in promoting the move from an existing academic module to a service-learning module.

PREPARATION

Meetings with the partners have formed an integral part of this project as, in the long term, a successful service-learning project requires that all the pitfalls and logistical incompatibilities are recognised and addressed (Cashman et al., 2004). In preparing for implementation, researchers and students at SAHSMI held weekly planning and development meetings. Progress was discussed critically and objectively, looking for ways to improve the design and execution of the project. In order to ensure participation by the service agency and patients, meetings were also held with the nurse in charge at the Elsies River Community Clinic, to discuss project objectives and progress.

Student participation in the service-learning module is compulsory, and we focus on preparing students mentally for the prospect of working in a high-risk community, where gunshots are sometimes heard in broad daylight. In terms of language barriers, we provide peer interpreters for those students not fluent in the local language (Afrikaans). Moreover, students are also prepared in terms of the expected academic inputs and outputs of the project.

Prior to conducting the interviews and/or workshops, students formally introduce themselves to the patients attending the Elsies River Community Clinic. The students also explain to the patients the purpose of the project. Formal meetings are held with the senior nurse and her staff at the Elsies River Community Clinic. During these meetings, the purpose of the project, possible limitations and benefits are discussed.

IMPLEMENTATION

In terms of implementing the service-learning module, the various partner groups have a range of roles and responsibilities.

Students on the module spend approximately 20% of their time at the community clinic. Typically, students have interviewed patients about the use of herbal remedies; such information has ultimately been used to establish which indigenous herbal medicines are taken most often, and for which medical conditions these are used. The students have also helped to begin herb garden cultivation trials at the Elsies River Community Clinic.

Students who acted as mentors are of great assistance to the students on the module, who need help with interpretation, computing, transport and materials design, among other things.

University staff are responsible for teaching the module and linking the students with the other partners.

The **CHESP staff** at the university have provided vital operational and logistical support for the service-learning module; without their energy and enthusiasm, the project would not have been successful thus far.

Department of Health staff have played an exceptionally valuable role, providing managerial and political support for the implementation of the herbal medicine gardens project and its location at the community clinic.

The **health professionals at the community clinic** have been supportive of this project. Sister Jenny Hayward and her team have made significant contributions to our partnerships. These staff members have proved exceptionally valuable, in providing managerial and political support for the implementation of the herbal medicine gardens project and its location at the community clinic. Clinic staff have also been critical in introducing students and faculty to the patients. The staff are essential in 'selling' the concept of the herbal medicine garden to patients; without the support of these staff, there would have been limited buy-in from patients at the clinic. Clinic staff enthusiasm has thus been instrumental in encouraging patients to share their experiences and knowledge of indigenous herbal medicines with us. Moreover, the staff have been central to the sustainable development of the clinic's herbal medicine garden.

Patients who attended the clinic form the focus group of the project. They are the custodians of indigenous knowledge regarding plant medicines, and the end users of these natural remedies. With their consent, patients have been interviewed to establish their indigenous knowledge about medicinal and nutritional herbs. They have proved to be valuable sources of information on the topic, allowing us to identify in terms of their priority among users the medicinal plants that patients use for the most pressing common and chronic conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes and infections, among others. This knowledge, in

turn, has served as a platform for the development of home herbal medicine gardens, based on the herbal medicine garden model already operating successfully at the clinic.

Community members of the health committee and those responsible for the community food gardens have played a critical role in this project. They have provided us with information on the various food gardens in the Elsies River community with enough space for the cultivation of medicinal herbs. They have also been responsible for the excitement and enthusiasm of community members who wanted to develop sustainable herb gardens.

The service-learning module focuses on student involvement in the following activities, which are described in more detail below:
• Surveys and interviews;
• Workshops;
• Establishing the herbal medicine gardens in the community; and
• Public awareness campaign.

Surveys and interviews

The students conducted surveys at the Elsies River Community Clinic, focusing on patients visiting the clinic as well as a podiatry and a stroke group meeting at the clinic. The survey participants (i.e. the patients) were each required to complete a questionnaire about the medicinal plants they commonly use.[10] The information gathered typically included the names of the most commonly used medicinal plants, the number of participants using a specific plant, the medicinal uses of the plants, and how participants prepare the plants. From these results, the students searched for and provided scientific evidence for the use of these plants for specific aliments as indicated by the patients. Using this information, students subsequently made poster presentations to be evaluated by the module convenors.

During the interviews, interested participants were asked to attend workshops (see more below) on particular days. Chopra and Ford (2005) argue that ongoing community engagement is important in developing and implementing service-learning, as the community engagement ensures that the service-learning becomes an exercise in facilitation rather than one of designing and delivering messages. Thus, the workshops aimed not only to engage community members but also to create spaces and channels for the researchers and community members to communicate. To this end, discussions regarding the value, growth and development of herbal gardens were encouraged.

Workshops

The workshops have been aimed at community members who attended the Elsies River Community Clinic. Both university staff members and postgraduate students facilitated the workshops. Students were actively involved in all aspects of the workshops in terms of

---

10   The questionnaire was compiled by the project leader at SAHSMI.

preparation of workshop material, leading discussions on points mentioned during these workshops and establishing the community herbal gardens.

Four workshops were held, during which the following topics were discussed:

Workshop 1: Nursery training
- Planning a home herbal garden;
- Replanting/ propagation and harvesting;
- Water-wise indigenous gardening; and
- Soil quality.

Workshop 2: Cape Flats Nature Reserve
- Guided tour through the Cape Flats Nature Reserve (CFNR);
- Focus on specific medicinal plants growing in the CFNR; and
- History of CFNR.

Workshop 3: Environmental education seminar
- Discussion with partners about the value of indigenous medicinal knowledge; and
- Discussion about the value, growth and development of herbal gardens.

Workshop 4: Quality and safety assurance
- Focus on making infusions, concoctions, cough syrups, poultices and compresses, working under sterile conditions to ensure quality and safety;
- Focus on drying, preservation and storage of herbs; and
- Discussion of utensils used in the preparation of remedies.

Establishing the herbal medicine gardens in the community

In 2003, six of the community members interviewed during the student surveys showed an interest in establishing home herbal medicine gardens. Participants' gardens were measured to plan the layout. It was decided that the most commonly used plants, which had also been scientifically evaluated by the students, would be grown. The establishment of these herbal medicine gardens in the community was an opportunity for all partners concerned to implement the knowledge and skills learnt during the service-learning module thus far. Initially, 44 wild garlic plants were provided for each home garden.

In 2004 a follow-up workshop was conducted, but the participants indicated that a visit to their gardens to evaluate the condition of their wild garlic plants would be in order. The following observations were made upon evaluation in 2004:

Home garden 1:	There were 22 well developed plants;
Home garden 2:	Only five plants remained, due to activities of dogs;
Home garden 3:	Only five plants remained, due to activities of dogs; and
Home garden 4:	There were 28 well established plants.
The wild garlic plants that had survived could be described as generally in a very good condition.	

There were clear signs that people attending the clinic were harvesting the wormwood and 'wild dagga' (*Leonotis leonurus*) branches and leaves at the clinic garden. However, a large part of the garden was infested with weeds. The impact of the weeds and plant diseases on growth were discussed during this 2004 follow-up workshop. Clearing of weeds and cleaning of the garden at the clinic became an activity for the workshop.

Upon evaluating the success of the herbal medicine gardens established in the community, there was a strong indication that the project participants shared some of their plants with family or friends. There were also many young mothers who visited the baby clinic on certain days and were eager to participate in the survey, as they were interested in learning about herbal remedies that they could possibly use themselves or for their babies (Knowles, 2003). It was decided that the problem with dogs needed to be evaluated in the context of protection of participants' homes and families, which is of the utmost importance to households. In 2004, four participants were provided with three wormwood plants each, which they were encouraged to share with friends in the neighbourhood since the plant grows to quite a large size.

Public awareness campaign

Two articles, prepared by postgraduate students with the assistance of staff members, were published concerning the project in the northern suburbs district weekly newspaper distributed for free to the residents. The objective of publishing informational articles was to inform the residents of the area about the project. After the articles were run, numerous calls were received from interested community members enquiring about the programme and requesting information about obtaining herbs as well as using herbal remedies.

OUTCOMES

There have been various benefits associated with this project. The participating service agency (the community clinic) has always been a beneficiary of this project, and has proved an excellent site for service delivery. This partner provides health services to the very community that we are targeting, and we have had a very good relationship with the partner. In the short term, the clinic has benefited from the educational awareness that this project has introduced around herbal medicines. In the medium to long term, we should be able to measure quantitatively the positive impact of the use of herbal medicines on the problems identified earlier. This will be important if we are to get an accurate assessment of both the model itself and the chances of rolling it out to a variety of other clinics locally, regionally and nationally.

We were awarded R54 000 over two years for the project; this is about one-quarter of our original request. Although our targets had to be adjusted, we can still report on some of the following significant outcomes that have emanated from this project:
1. A significantly increased awareness of the use and value of herbal medicines;
2. Identification of the five most therapeutic herbs that patients take for the five most important chronic conditions;
3. Experimental cultivation of both wild garlic and wormwood as healing herbs, in the clinic's herbal medicine garden and in the community herbal medicine gardens;

4. Ten completed community-based research projects on the use of herbal medicines; and
5. Production of an educational brochure describing the importance of commonly used indigenous medicinal herbs.

Benefits for the community

We believe that much value has been added to the community, represented by the vast cross-section of patients that come to the clinic for medication. The main reason that the community members attend the clinic is to obtain allopathic medicines for common and chronic conditions. This dependence on orthodox medicine presents a number of challenges that relate to the community's access to therapeutics. For this reason, herbal medicine gardens play a vital role as a source of safe, effective and affordable remedies that patients can use in a substantially more compliant fashion.

Indeed, the problems we identified in the community have been addressed at a fundamental level:

Problem 1: Community dependence on curative western medicine

Through this service-learning project, community members have had an opportunity to speak and learn about herbal medicine therapies, which may be just as effective as conventional medicines. These engagements occurred when we held interviews and information sessions with – particularly – the older community members, who had knowledge of these herbal medicines. During such sessions, we were able to speak to everyone about the use and value of herbal medicines, and they in turn could share with us their indigenous knowledge about alternative therapies. This engagement – between older community members holding ancient knowledge and skills, and younger students with newer scientific knowledge and skills – has been quite inspirational.

Problem 2: Lack of access to safe and effective preventative herbal therapies

During our information sessions and interviews, we were able to identify the most commonly used herbs for the most common chronic conditions. Thereafter, we were able to make a scientific assessment of the safety and efficacy of the herbal extracts. Only the safest and most effective herbs were considered for possible cultivation at the clinic's herbal medicine garden.

As already mentioned, we started with the experimental cultivation of wild garlic and wormwood as anchor species within the herbal medicine garden at the clinic, and in community gardens. Wild garlic[11] can be used by the community in salads, soups, breads, butter, salt and a variety of medicinal tinctures, tonics and preparations. Wormwood, prepared as a tea or applied externally, is commonly used for high blood pressure, and to treat fever, colds and flu.

Benefits derived by the community from the module have been as follows:

---

11   The most common uses for wild garlic are for chest problems, leg pain, asthma and high blood pressure.

Immediate outcomes:
- Education and self-reliance; and
- Training of community workers.

Intermediate outcomes:
- Access to safe and effective preventative herbal remedies and nutritional supplements from the gardens.

Long-term outcomes:
- Improved confidence of caregivers to cope with sick children and the aged via the use of preventative herbal remedies;
- Increased awareness of healthy lifestyles; and
- Community members may replicate these gardens to produce their own herbal products as a business venture that could create jobs and generate revenue.

Benefits for the higher education institution

The students have benefited tremendously from their experience with the community. They are now in a much better position to see how their knowledge has direct application to community development. In this regard, the academic module convenors use a variety of assessment instruments – including assignments, presentations, tests, examinations and a community-based research project – to evaluate the students.

Our engagement with the community has added significant indigenous knowledge of medicinal and nutritional herbs to our scientific knowledge. The fusion of ideas has been significant, because no scientific text can substitute for people's knowledge of important natural medicines.

Benefits for the service agency

The clinic has proved an excellent site of service delivery and this has contributed to a strong and mutually beneficial partnership. In the short term, the clinic has benefited from the educational awareness that this project has introduced around herbal medicines. This process will help to address the problems (identified earlier) experienced by the clinic in relation to patients. In the medium to long term, we should be able to measure quantitatively the impact of the use of herbal medicines on the challenges faced by the clinic in relation to patients.

PARTNERSHIPS

As explained, the main goals of this partnership have been to develop a training and extension programme around community herbal medicine gardens to the benefit of all the partners, and to support the cultivation of indigenous herbs with medicinal and nutritional value. The partnership has allowed for the transfer of important knowledge and skills to communities, as

well as the transfer of indigenous knowledge to the university partners. The partnership has also made possible the development of herbal medicine gardens, which may provide accessible, affordable, safe and effective remedies. The triad collectively identified specific problems of common interest, their causes, and the outcomes that would allow us to monitor effective interventions.

All the partner groups have participated to the fullest possible extent and are committed to the success of the project. Students who have participated in the project report in their evaluation questionnaires that they enjoyed the interaction with the patients at the clinic as it broadened their horizons about different cultural backgrounds and the use of herbal remedies. Staff at the Elsies River Community Clinic report that they enjoy the interaction with the university and are committed to continuing to work with the programme in the future. Patients have been happy that the project validated their indigenous knowledge of herbal remedies that are beneficial to humankind.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

This project could help influence higher education policy and practice. The lessons learnt from this project could certainly have an impact on the manner in which we design our scientific programmes, to include a community aspect wherever viable. For faculties and departments, this would add further value to existing efforts to build better communities – which is, after all, at the heart of UWC's institutional mandate.

We must find better and more creative ways of generating and acquiring knowledge via service-learning. This is particularly important if we are to ensure that universities' roles become more relevant to communities. This process needs to be part of a continuum stretching from the paradigm of community engagement, to the mindset shifts that need to occur in academia, and all the way across towards the political arc of higher education policy-makers.

ETHICS

All participants involved in the research are informed about the process and the intentions of the research. Decision-making is shared, as all partners are represented equally in all of our decision-making processes. Regular meetings are held, during which all partners can voice their concerns as well as bringing suggestions to the table. The students involved in the project compile a summary report, and all participants have the opportunity of evaluating the project and providing feedback.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Given that we planned the service-learning module around a project budget of R100 000, the fact that we were awarded R54 000 over two years of the module altered our approach dramatically. Nonetheless, we proceeded with the project, which sparked a very positive series of spin-offs for students, staff, service agency and community members, as reported in this case study.

There are a few capacity-building matters that need to be addressed. We found the coordinators of the programmes at UWC very helpful and accommodating, and this promoted the project's progress. Furthermore, an enabling environment has been created by the deep passion, commitment, energy and shared vision of the partners. We would, though, require some capacity to be built in two main areas:

- It would be very helpful if sponsorship could be made available for health professionals to complete short courses in Herbal Medicine at our university – this would go a long way towards supporting the use of natural remedies in a conventional health setting.

- It would also be immensely valuable if resources were to be made available for community members to attend training workshops (e.g. summer or winter school programmes) – not only would this enable them to add to their existing knowledge about indigenous herbal remedies and their role in primary healthcare, but it would also provide an opportunity to gain formal training and accreditation, both for what they learn and what they already know.

We have attended to several important matters, which has helped us to improve the success and cascading of this project, including:
- Appointing an academic staff member as project leader to coordinate the project;
- Regularly using private transport in order to allow students and staff to visit the clinic site (the limited university transport capacity has always provided us with numerous challenges);
- Ensuring that students are mentally prepared for working in a high-risk community with significant socio-economic challenges; and
- Better management of our scheduling to fit with that of the clinic.

CONCLUSION

All partners have participated fully in this process of initiating and implementing the service-learning module. Our collective commitment has been very high, and where challenges have presented themselves we have tried to find creative solutions.

The suggestion is that the model adopted in this service-learning module should be rolled out, if viable, to a variety of other clinics locally, regionally and nationally. We believe that this service-learning project has enormous potential to add significant value to the lives of the millions of South Africans who cannot afford basic healthcare; and we would thus recommend that the appropriate resources be placed with the project. In order for the project with the clinic to function optimally, we suggest that:
- Funding should be made available for a full-time liaison person among university, clinic and community.
- Students should spend more than the current 20% of the time with the community and the clinic for this type of project.
- There should be more regular meetings with the clinic staff and community representatives, to improve communication and efficiency.

While the roles and responsibilities of our partnership continue to be defined and redefined, we have all brought strong competences to the table. The greatest benefit of the partnership resides in the exchange of knowledge and ideas among the university, community and service agency. The biggest challenges, on the other hand, revolve around human and physical resource availability. Nonetheless, the herbal medicine garden module is a unique contribution towards promoting healthy lifestyles naturally and has presented a valuable service-learning opportunity for all partners concerned.

REFERENCES

Beling, J. (2003). Effect of Service-Learning on Knowledge about Older People and Faculty Teaching Evaluations in a Physical Therapy Class. *Gerontology and Geriatric Education,* 24 (1), 31-46.

Brosnan, C.A., Upchurch, S.L., Meininger, J.C., Hester, L.E., Johnson, G. & Eissa, M.A. (2005). Student Nurses Participate in Public Health Research and Practice through a School-based Screening Program. *Public Health Nursing,* May – June 22 (3), 260-266.

Cashman, S., Hale, J., Candib, L., Nimiroski, T.A. & Brookings, D. (2004). Applying Service-Learning through a Community–Academic Partnership: Depression Screening at a Federally Funded Community Health Center. *Education Health (Abingdon)* Nov. 17 (3), 313-322.

Chopra, M. & Ford, N. (2005). Scaling up Health Promotion Interventions in the Era of HIV/AIDS: Challenges for a Rights Based Approach. *Health Promotion International Access,* August 1, 1-8.

Denner, J., Coyle, K., Robin, L. & Banspach, S. (2005). Integrating Service Learning into a Curriculum to Reduce Health Risks at Alternative High Schools. *Journal of School Health*, May 75 (5), 151-156.

Department of Health. (1996). *A National Drug Policy for South Africa.* www.doh.gov.za/docs/policy/drugsjan1996.pdf, accessed 13 January 2006.

Department of Science and Technology (DST). (2005). *Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy of South Africa*. Pretoria: DST.

Knowles, C.L. (2003). *Herbal Medicine Clinic Gardens*. Honours dissertation, University of the Western Cape.

Republic of South Africa. (2003). *Traditional Health Practitioners Bill*. Government Gazette No. 24751 of 14 April 2003, ISBN 0 621 33986 5. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Sidelinger, D.E., Meyer, D., Blaschke, G.S., Hametz, P., Batista, M., Salguero, R. & Reznik, V. (2005). *Pediatrics,* April 115 (4 Suppl.), 1160-1164.

van Wyk, B-E., van Oudtshoorn, B. & Gericke, N. (2000). *Medicinal Plants of South Africa*. Pretoria: Briza Publications.

CASE STUDY 7
SERVICE-LEARNING IN INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

HESTELLE VAN HEYNINGEN

About Mrs Hestelle van Heyningen...

Developed expertise in service-learning while working at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Prior to that, Hestelle worked at the (then) Border Technikon, where she realised that while many students were excellent at memorising for a test or examination, they were less successful at delivering when put in real-life work situations. She honed her ideas about the value of practical work in communities with her students before being introduced to the concept of service-learning at the UFS. Lecturing high volumes of UFS students doing final-year Human Resources and being concerned at students' apparent lack of readiness to take on adult responsibility drove her to change her educational approach; she saw results in enthusiastic students with an improved understanding of the purpose and value of a degree. Since then, she has undertaken research on the effects of service-learning on students' emotional intelligence, learning and learning styles. Other fields of research include adult learning; leadership of young, inexperienced managers in South Africa; training and its effect on performance; attraction and retention of staff in Africa; and leadership issues in the public sector.

AT A GLANCE...

SUMMARY

This case study reflects on service-learning as the integration of theory and practice, as expected by the HEQC of the CHE. The case study considers the service-learning experiences of third-year Industrial Psychology students (160 in 2004, and 230 in 2005) following the same service-learning module, Management of Training, at the UFS. The focus of this case study is specifically the years 2004 and 2005, although the module is ongoing.

The partners in the service-learning modules are:
- The higher education institution – including academic staff and the students on the module;
- A range of service agencies – including Municipal Library Services, school staff, and SETA facilitators; and
- Community members – in the form of learners at schools, learners' parents/ guardians, school teachers, various community action committee members, and so on.

For students, the intended learning outcomes of this service-learning module include:

- Development of a range of knowledge and skills (from subject knowledge and skills, through to managerial, personal and interpersonal skills);
- Integration of Modes 1 and 2 learning (i.e. 'deep learning'); and
- Valuable opportunities for cultural interaction.

The intended service outcomes include that students will participate in designing training activities and delivering them to community participants – across a wide range of community representatives from action committee members to school teachers and learners. Needs typically identified by the communities participating include study skills for learners, capacity building for teachers, skills in writing a CV, problem-solving skills, and so on. During training with community participants, the Industrial Psychology students are able to offer knowledge and skills to fulfil such needs.

Working in groups (of 12 – 14 members) with a mix of gender, culture and learning styles, students undertake a range of training and facilitation activities. In the process, students' learning is enhanced and students are offered the opportunity of mastering skills required by industry. Ultimately the result will be a higher calibre of graduate – a requirement of 21st century South African industry.

Research has been done on students' entries in their reflection diaries, in which students are required to record their thoughts during the experience of the service-learning module. Lessons learnt from the different phases of the service-learning module are reported in detail in this case study.

Lessons learnt

The following are the key lessons learnt about service-learning in developing and implementing the module:

Methodology that made a difference:
- Reflection journals are a valuable tool to assist students to reflect on the integration of theory and practice.
- An orientation workshop, where integration of theory and practice is explained, helps students to move mentally out of their traditional academic boxes into a 'non-traditional' learning approach.

The module convenor needs to be prepared to:
- Avoid stumbling over academic stumbling blocks;
- Make mistakes and learn from them;
- Get support from the community and get started;
- Be practical; and
- Maintain a good system for recording all contact persons' details.

At higher education institutional level:
- Policy changes need to be introduced to make service-learning a reality;
- Policy changes must include tools for empowerment; and

- Faculties must support module convenors in more than words.

Partnerships:
- It is important to avoid having too *many* partnerships as this results in confusion and may lead to distrust.

Lastly: It is not about *you* – it is about *your students*!

INITIATION

A number of factors in the wider national policy context prompted the university to initiate the Industrial Psychology service-learning module.

In South Africa, the triumph over the apartheid regime in 1994 set policy-makers in all spheres of public life the enormous task of overhauling the social, political, economic and cultural institutions of the country, in order to bring them in line with the imperatives of the new democratic order. The vision for the transformation of the higher education system was articulated in *Education White Paper 3* (Department of Education, 1997). Central to this vision was the establishment of a single, national coordinated system, which would meet the learning needs of all our citizens as well as the reconstruction and development needs of our economy (as articulated in the *National Plan for Higher Education*, Ministry of Education, 2001). New job entrants and the informal sector at large also form an important part of the society and economy under discussion in the National Plan, and they are important beneficiaries of the training delivered by students on the service-learning module.

Furthermore, the HEQC's *Criteria for Institutional Audits* (2004, 12, points 7 and 8) stipulates that higher education institutions should create a system to develop existing and new abilities, and to gain knowledge of work practices, while maintaining a balance of theoretical and practical or applied knowledge. The student should have opportunities to master the techniques and skills required by a specific profession or occupation. Service-learning is referred to by name, to be integrated into the academic planning and mission of institutions (point 7).

From the perspectives of both graduates and the public sector in South Africa, the ability to work in groups, and developing interpersonal skills, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that are integrated with sound subject knowledge are all indispensable skills for job entrants (see HEQC, 2004; and Bester & Boshoff, 2004). To use a different terminology, a Mode 1 knowledge rooted in the theory of a given discipline must be coupled with a Mode 2 knowledge in practical situations. One of the main critical outcomes of the particular service-learning module under consideration was exactly the integration of Modes 1 and 2 types of knowledge in the students participating in the module. This type of learning, which some have termed "deep learning" (Marrienaw & Fiddler, 2002), transcends "reproductive learning" (memorisation, mere knowledge acquisition) and is not easy to measure. However, the intention of the research done on our service-learning module has been to come closer to determining if more than so-called knowledge acquisition takes place in the course of service-learning modules.

A final dimension to student learning from service-learning relates to cultural interaction. Castle and Osman confirm the view that service-learning

> ...is a form of experiential learning in which students receive academic credit for addressing human and community needs [and] requires that community service be fully integrated in the academic curriculum. (2003: 1)

Further, several educationists point to an added dimension of service-learning, whereby students may have the invaluable opportunity of interacting with people from communities other than their own. Battistoni (1997), for example, argues that service-learning is a device for self-understanding and for positioning one's own identity among other cultures.

CONCEPTUALISATION

As far back as 1938, Dewey conceived of

> ...[e]very experience [as being] a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the grounds of what it moved toward and into. […] It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction an experience is heading. (Dewey, in Madsen, 2004: 330)

The flexibility of service-learning makes Dewey's statement particularly applicable to this type of learning experience. It is helpful to see the conceptualisation of a service-learning project as being driven by the moving force of what a community needs, while the direction in which the experience heads will be dictated by the curriculum and what it entails. The linkage between these two worlds – that is, the world of the community and that of the higher education institution – thus forms an 'experience' that not only offers students the opportunity to practically prepare for the 'real world' but also assures that developmental needs of the community are fulfilled.

During the initial conceptualisation process in 2003, the lecturer (representing the curriculum), and the community members and/or service agencies (representing the community needs), met to find a connection for a service-learning project. It cannot be overemphasised that the meeting with the community representatives is imperative because, quite simply, service-learning without students responsive to the true needs of the community is not service-learning at all. Furthermore, as communities' cultures differ, so too does each process of conceptualising a service-learning project. Even in the relatively small area of Mangaung there are many different communities, each with its own culture of deciding and prioritising needs; thus, the specificity of individual community cultures is an important factor to take into account when conceptualising a particular service-learning project or student placement. For the purposes of this case study, a close look at just one of the communities involved will suffice.

The Heidedal community is very structured, with many committee representatives on various action committees, for example: the Headmasters' Forum, the Policing Forum, the Social Worker Forum, and representatives from the various churches. The service agency, in this case the local municipal library, convened the conceptualisation meeting, after a preliminary discussion with

the university lecturer. The community members debated their knowledge and skills needs and priorities and passed their decisions back to the lecturer and the students. The students researched the topics suggested, brainstormed ideas and negotiated their plan of action with the action committees during a follow-up meeting. The committees accepted the students' proposals, thereby concluding the initial conceptualisation process. The next two years' conceptualisation meetings were follow-ons to that very first meeting. Every year a new group of students is sent to Heidedal and these students work on new proposals based on the original needs analysis and with the intervention of the action committees. In this sense then, while the main service-learning module has been conceptualised, the specific content thereof is reconceptualised afresh each year.

Among the knowledge/ skills/ training needs identified by the Heidedal community are certain topics that crop up every year and that fall naturally into the three-year curriculum of Industrial Psychology:
- Cultivation of self-respect;
- CV writing;
- Skills for job interviewing; and
- Motivational skills.

Other common topics identified as areas of need include:
- First aid;
- How to handle bullies at home and at school; and
- Specific activities like candle-making (to enable those infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS, for example, to earn an income).

In response to the community needs identified, students use their theoretical knowledge on skills and training programmes (the curriculum content of the first-semester third-year Industrial Psychology module) to design appropriate training programmes for the community.

The main prohibiting factor during the conceptualisation process of service-learning modules remains *time*: time for all the role-players to meet, and time to plan and organise. This obstacle was overcome through the service agency, Heidedal Library, acting as intermediary.

The major lessons learnt from this conceptualisation phase came via community feedback and the reflection journals students were required to keep. Group work and setting target dates helped 'kick start' the conceptualisation phase. On reflecting on their experiences during the service-learning module, the students valued working in groups with people from different cultural backgrounds and different learning styles, and found this ideal for generating more creative and inclusive ideas. This was expressed by a student in the 2004 group: "Differences between people create new ideas and creative thinking" (translated from the Afrikaans).

During this phase, it became clear that the lecturer should not intervene too much; the moment the project is in the students' hands it is necessary to let things be. Otherwise, students will never have ownership of their own learning and there is the danger of creating a situation where no learning takes place at all.

Finally, the biggest challenge in service-learning is to make it clear, right from the conceptualisation phase, that only *knowledge* and *skills* can be offered to the community. The following student journal entry says it all:

> While doing the needs analysis I realised that people want immediate satisfaction of a need, they want jobs, and all we can give them are skills to get jobs. […] We had to explain the reality to them. […] I thought needs would easily be defined – they aren't. (2005 group, unedited)

PREPARATION

Moving from conceptualising to implementing a service-learning project takes on average three months.

Industrial Psychology is a major subject for BCom Human Resources Management students, while many students from other disciplines also find Industrial Psychology a necessity. Each year, the class is divided into an Afrikaans-speaking group and an English-speaking group. These classes are normally slotted into different time frames.

The service-learning module under consideration runs over only one semester, thus presenting the lecturer with the problem of how to prepare students in time on the curriculum (or knowledge) side before the start of their community engagement. This challenge is handled in a workshop format. After the first three weeks of normal classes and habituating students to the idea of having to work in multicultural groups in the 'real world', a workshop covering about 60% of the curriculum is held. During this introductory workshop, 20 groups of between 12 to 14 students are formed through a process of selection according to gender, culture and learning styles – the intention being to get a good mix of each within each group. (In the implementation phase, each group implements its projects independently from the other groups.) Students meet their assigned group members and are allocated to a community. The preparation for the project starts there and then.

It was found that, although students were prepared by giving them either the knowledge needed or the resources to access the relevant information, it was still necessary to motivate them to move mentally out of their clearly defined 'boxes' in order to accept this 'non-traditional' learning curve. A session of the workshop was devoted to service-learning and to the following concepts:

- "It's not about me [i.e. the student facilitator], it's about my learners [i.e. the community]"; and
- "What I become in life is not because of my abilities, but because of my choices".

At this time, the service agencies are contacted and briefed on possible partnerships. The service agencies then contact the community to ensure that, once the students are ready to make contact, all role-players will be prepared.

IMPLEMENTATION

It was found that the biggest promoting factor during the implementation phase was the lecturers' passion/ enthusiasm for making the service-learning project succeed and enhancing students' learning. Among the students, the awareness of the fact that they needed to pass the subject, that there was no choice for the group but to work, and that the link between theory and practice would benefit students after the completion of their studies were motivational factors. At the UFS, the Chief Directorate: Community Service, which actively advocates for community service, trains staff and funds projects, must be seen as a boon for any service-learning project at the university. (However, it should be noted that funding from the Chief Directorate does not actively constitute a sustainable source of income.)

Prohibiting factors experienced include the following:
- Time constraints;
- The fact that the lecturer spends more time in the communities than inside her office (due to the fact that she joins the site visits and evaluates progress of the different student groups);
- The challenge of completing 20 projects in five months; and
- The fact that there are more queries to be dealt with from students than normally arise from traditional lectures.

Another prohibiting factor is funding, which remains a weighty problem. Students are mostly from communities where personal transport is not a viable option. Transporting the students to the communities (which are on average 20 kilometres from the campus) remains a challenge, to which money is unfortunately the only solution. However, the reality is that fundraising by UFS Marketing is not always successful.

A further prohibiting factor is that initial negativity from the faculty and peers as to the creditability of such a module took more than average self-motivation and independent action on the part of the lecturer. In the case where students do only semester modules, the sustainability and viability of such projects is a constant cause for concern.

The individuals who drive such projects are ultimately responsible for their success. At student level, it is the student group leader; at community level, the service agency and/or community representatives; and, finally, at programme and higher education institutional level, it is the lecturer and the Chief Directorate: Community Service.

The following advice on implementing a service-learning module is offered to any module convenor:
- Don't stumble over the stumbling blocks;
- Make mistakes and learn from them – don't focus on the mistakes without learning from them;
- Get support from the community and get started; and
- Be practical and establish a good system for recording contact details of all involved (students as well as community members).

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

According to McCoskey and Warren (2003), apart from the obvious benefits service-learning delivers to students, community clients are also clear winners, receiving needed services that they are otherwise often unable to afford. Each community member takes away something different from each service-learning experience. This includes exposure to working with and learning from people from different communities and cultures. The needs identified at the start of each project are naturally the driving objectives. Examples of some of these objectives are discussed below.

- Batho Primary School indicated the need for children struggling at school to be taught study skills. The parents, grandparents or guardians of these learners were also invited to learn from the students how to help children learn. These skills can be short-term or long-term, depending on the motivation of helpers to apply them. After the initial module, students continued voluntarily visiting the school on a monthly basis, and the hope is that this intervention will have a long-term effect on learners' school results.

- SETA facilitators and school teachers expressed a need for capacity building in terms of developing new teaching ideas. Benefits from this project are definitely long-term; teachers at Batho Primary told us that they are motivated to continue varying their teaching techniques as they are seeing their learners respond positively. The SETA trainers also confirmed that the variety of methods used by the students motivated their learners to be enthusiastic about their own development.

- In the former Mangaung township, the students showed teachers from different schools and different levels the art of teaching with puppets made from waste materials. This skill will have a long-term effect on teachers' teaching abilities and has the added bonus that one does not need money to make puppeteering effective. The versatility of puppets regarding venue and subject makes them an ideal medium for teaching or facilitating learning.

- Grade 12 learners and unemployed youth were targeted for skills development with regard to CV writing and presenting themselves during job interviews. This intervention will hopefully have a long-term effect for those who succeed in finding employment and then keeping it. The youth stated their express satisfaction with the peripheral information (as opposed to basic, minimal information) gained via the workshop presentation. The practical manner in which the workshop was conducted resulted in each learner having written a personalised CV, ready to be typed.

- Unemployed youth from the Free State Youth League got the opportunity to learn facilitation skills in CV writing and appropriate interview conduct. According to the majority of the unemployed youth in Heidedal who attended a two-day workshop on self-image, first aid and skills in finding employment, they had a life-changing experience with regard to the way they see their future; in reality, of course, only the future can tell.

Benefits for the higher education institution

The literature on what students learn during service-learning is exciting. Hamel (2001) discovered through her Physical and Occupational Therapy students' diaries that their intervention with the homeless taught them important lessons about the importance of building rapport and trust with older adults. She maintains that deeper learning took place due to "acceptance, awareness [and] education" (Hamel, 2001: 69).

In this service-learning module, the reflection diaries of the students provide insights into the additional learning that took place. By looking at the recurring themes in students' diaries it has been possible to summarise the skills and knowledge students gained, and this information is presented below.

Table 7.1: Recurring themes in students' reflection diaries

Subject knowledge and skills	Managerial skills	Personal skills	Interpersonal skills
Presentational skills	Time management	Self-confidence	Conflict management
Public speaking skills	Planning skills	Creativity	Patience
Application of different learning styles	Organisational skills	Commitment	Culture and diversity management
Facilitation skills	Leadership skills	Self-knowledge	Understanding of others
Training methods	Delegation skills	Self-management	Acceptance of other cultures
Ability to think on one's feet	Meeting procedures	Management of own feelings	Communication skills
	Stress management		Team work/ group work
	Problem-solving		Overcoming language barriers

A few entries from students' reflection journals are included here to illustrate the categories found in the table above. Students' entries are, unless otherwise indicated, given exactly as they appear in the journals. The journals are referenced here only by the year of the module.

Journal entries on culture and diversity management:
- Whites are not all racists. (2004)
- I was so scared, this rag lady [Rag organiser] in my group were so clever en she know English so very much, I felt inferior. My first time to work in a group with whites. (2005)
- [The same student four weeks later after the last day of the project:] I wish I could work with this group for the rest of my life. (2005)

Subject-related journal entries:

- This is what I want to do one day, train people. (2004)
- I learnt how to think on my feet and to solve problems on the spot. (2004)
- ...build confidence to present and face an audience. (2004)
- People can be leaders without having qualifications, just by doing what they're gifted with. (2004)
- Your attitude towards your audience determines their attitude towards you as facilitator. (2004)

Journal entries on management skills:

- It does not help to panic. (2004)
- Be confident to be successful. (2004)
- Do not take weapons [sic] to group meetings, go without perceptions [preconceived ideas]. (2004)
- Make plans in time, and plan, plan, plan! (2004)
- Working in teams is the best way to get a job like this done. Delegate tasks to all group members. (2005)
- I learn how to handle disorganised members and determining what other people are good at. (2005)
- [The same student three weeks on:] I realised how to overcome my anxiety and stress and how important team work and sharing tasks are. (2005)

Journal entries on self-knowledge:

- ...learn to face my nightmares. (2004)
- I was terribly disappointed, all did not come to the meetings. I am thankful for those who came, this is why I will not give up on this project. (2005)
- I learnt how to be humble towards other individuals and to be honest and if I am not honest I will harm not only myself but also the group by giving false opinions. I have more self-confidence than before and I can make a statement without doubting myself. (2005)
- I reorganised my spirit. (2005)

The above clearly shows that the findings of this case study concur with those of Williams and Reeves (2004) as well as many other researchers – that self-discovery and the realisation of one's strengths and abilities form part of what students learn during service-learning modules.

Benefits of reflection journals for students

The value of students' diaries or reflection journals for mapping their development during the course of a service-learning module is borne out by several literature studies. Gardner (in Klink & Athaide, 2004) sees the keeping of diaries as a tool to ensure students' drawing a parallel between what they have learnt and industry's requirements. Students are required to compare the skills acquired via the service-learning intervention to requirements found in advertisements for employment in their disciplines, and this encourages students to actively acknowledge the value of learning.

Benefits for the students

Blieszner and Artale (2001: 86) summarise the rationale for assessment by saying: "Regardless of educators' goals when incorporating service-learning into courses, we recommend evaluating service-learning outcomes within the context of the discipline". Despite the aspect of service associated with service-learning projects, service-learning must still be seen in the context of a curriculum and the value that the service outcomes can add to the formal process of learning. Theory cannot be replaced by practice, but it can be enhanced by a community engagement connecting meaningfully to the theory presented to students during a university module. The student assessment must affirm the value of both theory and practice.

In our service-learning module, the lecturer assesses the projects of each group in terms of correct application of theory to practice. The service agency or a community representative is responsible for assessing the student service component. Feedback to students on both assessments is provided in a debriefing session directly after the training intervention. The group members further assess their peers in their group according to a range of criteria.

The assessment requirements for the module include the writing up of a report as well as the keeping of an individual reflection diary; collectively this constitutes 50% of the predicate mark. The predicate mark carries a weight of 40% of the final mark and the remaining 60% is made up by the examination mark. In the examination paper, 80% of the questions are based directly on the service-learning projects.

The impact of the service-learning module on the curriculum of third-year Industrial Psychology students has been enormous. Whereas students formerly conducted research for a written assignment, this component has been replaced by the service-learning module, which is by all accounts a richer experience for students. As has been explained above, the complete theoretical curriculum has been covered by the time students start on the service-learning, which requires the application of the theoretical principles learnt.

In terms of benefits for the academic staff of the higher education institution, the change of curriculum has had a significant impact on the module convenor; the module provides an excellent field for research and the fact that students come back to acknowledge the learning that took place is a reward in itself.

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences has benefited from the service-learning module in that the faculty makes use of the outcomes of this module in documentation for evaluation and accreditation by the CHE. This service-learning module potentially has long-term value for the faculty and it is feasible that in the future other programmes will increasingly be required to conform to the standards set by this module.

However, no policy changes have been made within our department, faculty or institution as a direct or indirect result of the module. The module is, nonetheless, in line with the general movement within the university; the UFS was one of only five South African universities involved in the first year of the implementation of the CHESP initiative during 2001 (Fourie,

2003). This means that management of the UFS is investigating the effects of providing more support to service-learning projects, which they see as part of the university's mission. The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences has gone as far as appointing a service-learning support person to assist the faculty's service-learning committee in the establishment of more such modules. This is a first for the UFS and is very promising for the future of service-learning at this institution. In 2002, the institution's first-generation service-learning policy was approved, with the second-generation policy approved in 2006.

Benefits for the service agencies

The service-learning module has had benefits for the participating service agencies, as evident in the examples provided below:

- The municipal library involved benefited from this module, as it increased library staff capacity to provide for the needs of the community. The projects were, in effect, included in the library's yearly service objectives. As a consequence of the service-learning intervention, the library in Langenhoven Park expressed the need for children's stories written in Tswana to be published, as well as for more projects focusing on reading development. (The students working with this project understood the role of the public sector much better after this experience.)

- The principals of the various schools involved in the service-learning initiative indicated that the interventions at their schools presented a social benefit to the learners, who were for the first time exposed to people from other cultures "they normally only see on TV". To the question of other needs, the principals of both schools replied "everything and anything". They felt that all the subjects at school needed to be "brightened up" by young, creative minds. Sports training by specialists was another need articulated.

PARTNERSHIPS

In service-learning, the forming of good partnerships is indispensable. In this specific case, the community representatives and the university representative (that is, the lecturer), were an integral part of the entire service-learning process. The role of the service agencies was significant. Firstly, they very obligingly helped to set up connections with the community and acted as the lecturer's mentors with regard to successful community communication. It was the service agencies that organised meetings for the various parties to help conceptualise a service-learning project and it was they who made facilities and secure venues available during the implementation. The libraries involved also actively marketed the proposed interventions to the public. The findings of this case study confirm Hennes's contention that service-learning has a strengthening effect on the capacity of communities to work together towards an "envisioned future and the development of students to become leaders in the communities" (2001: 9).

One factor that has promoted the whole service-learning process has been the good communication existing among the various partners. The many initial meetings, in particular, helped smooth out potential hitches.

However, a major prohibiting factor was found in parties' political agendas; some political parties tried to prevent the university from working in the communities should they not use the political parties' names as a banner for the service-learning projects. Some political parties, hearing that service-learning projects were running without first obtaining their go-ahead, suggested that the communities could not voice their opinion about their own needs without party involvement.

The findings of this case study reveal that no one partnership is the same as the next:

- It is important when embarking on a new intervention to put aside expectations raised by previous encounters.

- Mutual respect is important. It should be ascertained that partners do not have undue expectations of the academic institution.

- Partners should grow together and learn from one other.

- It is important not to expect partnerships to remain the same.

- Even where partnerships continue, people come and go and this does have an impact on the character of the partnership. Every year, it is necessary to renegotiate the partnership. Appreciation for partners should be shown and expressed.

- Ensure open communication between partners; the lecturer must establish a relationship of trust with the partners.

- Always keep in mind that students do make mistakes; this possibility should be communicated to partners and if students do make mistakes the lecturer needs to make amends.

- Avoid getting caught up in political wrangles; some parties have their own agendas and can slow down the process of service-learning.

- A last word of advice: avoid having too many partners as the resulting confusion may lead to distrust and finally to a situation where learning is impossible.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Castle and Osman articulate a view that many educationists currently share:

> Higher education institutions world-wide are being held more accountable for the effectiveness and relevance of their activities, and are increasingly required to contribute to national economic development. (2003: 107)

In South Africa, the value of service-learning as a tool to ensure effectiveness in national economic development can no longer be ignored. As is evident in policy and mission statements, higher education institutions such as the UFS are increasingly becoming aware of the value of service-learning. During the Community Service Seminar held in 2005, the rector and vice chancellor of the UFS, Prof. Frederick Fourie, emphatically stated that "we need to be a university of engagement, an African University" (18 May 2005). It is already clear that higher education will never be the same again; the transformation from classroom instruction to service-learning is soon to be irreversible as more research proves the latter's positive effects on students, communities and service agencies alike.

ETHICS

As is the case with any means of instruction, service-learning implies a particular ethics. As already mentioned, the module convenor of the Management of Training module impressed on students before their first encounters with community members the notion of respect and the importance of putting the school learners (the community) first. In general, it is necessary to ensure that students in their dealings with communities do not, directly or indirectly, make any promises that cannot be kept, or raise expectations that cannot be met. Institutions that present service-learning modules should have a risk management policy in place, and the module convenor should be up to speed on its content. Finally, the lecturer must make sure that the assessment is divided reasonably between the service and practical components of the module on the one hand and its theoretical components on the other.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Support and capacity building are indispensable to service-learning projects. In the case of this particular module the following bears mentioning.

It was found that the community needs to have contact phone numbers of academics involved in service-learning modules. During the course of the Industrial Psychology service-learning module, the communities became increasingly aware of the module's benefits and community members felt the urge to communicate their specific needs. A database of contact details of module facilitators, kept at a central point in the community, may lead to a better needs analysis and facilitate prioritising with regard to future projects.

A burning issue identified in terms of capacity relates to the students themselves, and transport. For obvious reasons, the lack of transport into communities poses enormous challenges to the success of the projects. Furthermore, while the lecturer was out in the communities with some of the students, the other students were compelled to direct any queries they might have to the student assistant, who was however not always able to resolve their problems.

Service-learning is a teaching method to enhance learning; research in many fields testifies to this fact. When implementing a module, remember your initial motivation and objectives for the module

and let them take you over and around the stumbling blocks. After the module, use the students' reflections to motivate you to repeat the exercise with improvements.

Flagship projects like the MUCPP need wider exposure, to market the value of the service-learning projects to people who can make a difference.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the case study that service-learning has the ability to explode the walls of the classroom in order for students to test their knowledge in different communities. Industry too will benefit in the end because newly graduated job entrants are becoming more skilled and experienced than previously. Finally, I, as the author of this case study and lecturer of the service-learning module, can attest to having experienced learning; bearing witness to the enhancement of students' learning has indeed been a valuable and personally rewarding experience.

REFERENCES

Battistoni, R. (1997). Service-Learning: A Democratic Citizenship. *Theory into Practice,* 36 (3), Summer College of Education, Ohio State University, 143-159.

Bester, C. & Boshoff, E. (2004). Unpublished report on appropriateness and relevance of training and development of entrants to the labour market.

Bliezner, R. & Artale, L.M. (2001). Benefits of Intergenerational Service-Learning to Human Services Majors. *Educational Gerontology,* 27, Brunner-Routledge, 71-87.

Castle, J. & Osman, R. (2003). Service-Learning in Teacher Education: An Institutional Model for an Emerging Practice. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 17 (1), 105 -111.

Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Education White Paper 3. A Programme for Higher Education Transformation.* Government Gazette No. 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria: DoE.

Fourie, M. (2003). Beyond the Ivory Tower: Service-Learning for Sustainable Community Development. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 17 (1), 31-38.

Hamel, P.C. (2001). Interdisciplinary Perspective, Service-Learning, and Advocacy: A Non-traditional Approach to Geriatric Rehabilitation. *Topics in Geriatrics Rehabilitation*, 17 (1), 53-70.

Hennes, S.A. (2001). *K-12 Service-Learning: A Strategy for Rural Community Renewal and Revitalization.* www.etr.org/nsrc/pdfs/fellows/henness.pdf, accessed 20 December 2005.

Higher Education Quality Committee. (2004). *Criteria for Institutional Audits*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Klink, R.R. & Athaide, A.A. (2004). *Journal of Marketing Education,* 26 (2), 145-153.

Madsen, S.R. (2004). Academic Service-Learning in Human Resource Management Education. *Journal of Education for Business*, July/ August, 328-332.

Marrienaw, C. & Fiddler, M. (2002). Bringing Students' Experiences to the Learning Process. *About Campus*, November, 117-196.

Ministry of Education (2001). *National Plan for Higher Education*. Pretoria Department of Education.

Williams, N.R. & Reeves, P.M. (2004). MSW Students Go to Burn Camp: Exploring Social Work Values through Service-Learning. *Social Work Education,* 23 (4), 383-398.

CASE STUDY 8
SERVICE-LEARNING IN LAW

DESIA COLGAN & VIV LININGTON

About Ms Desia Colgan...

Lecturer in Law at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg. In addition, responsible for lecturing in and coordinating a final-year service-learning course called Street Law.

Prior to becoming a full-time Law lecturer, Desia was the Gauteng regional coordinator for an NGO, Street Law/ Democracy for All – a national organisation tasked with both the delivery of preventative legal education and the institutionalisation of democracy in South African schools. During her tenure there, she developed an interest in educating for democratic citizenship for both formal and informal communities. Her current interests therefore focus on issues of access to justice for poor and vulnerable communities, particularly with regard to informing and capacitating communities in accessing their socio-economic rights. Her other passion is the ongoing development of and research into educating for a democracy and the importance of building citizens of the future. She believes that service-learning resonates with this philosophy and that it offers an alternative approach to teaching and learning that can only enhance achieving the constitutional vision of building future democratic citizens.

About Ms Vivien (Viv) Linington...

Lecturer in the Division of Social Context and Human Development at the Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Johannesburg.

Viv specialises in Educational Psychology, with a particular interest in social constructivism. Her research focuses on student teacher development in a socio-cultural 'in-field' context. She has researched and lectured for a number of years in the area of 'lived democracy', in an attempt to breathe life into South Africa's new Constitution and make the legalese of the document accessible and realisable to educators and learners in the current educational context.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Desia Colgan
University:	University of the Witwatersrand (Wits)
Discipline:	Law
Module title:	Street Law
Level of students:	Third- and fourth-year respectively
Number of students:	approximately 10 of the 25 students who register each year for the wider Street Law programme
Number of credits:	21

Community locations of service-learning:
• Prison community in Johannesburg, Leeuwkop and Emthonjeni Prisons

Service agencies:
• Department of Correctional Services
• Khulisa

SUMMARY

This case study describes how service-learning is being used in South African prisons to assist prison inmates (formerly referred to as prisoners) on the path to reclaiming their identity.

The service-learning module is one elective in a wider Street Law programme, and is offered to students who are registered for either the undergraduate (third-year) or postgraduate (fourth-year) LLB at Wits. Approximately 20 – 25 students register for the Street Law programme each year, with about 10 of them choosing to work on the prisons service-learning module. (These numbers could be increased with better advertising.)

The partners in this service-learning module are:
• The higher education institution – in the form of the module coordinator, Wits School of Education partner[12] and the Law students;
• The service agencies – in the form of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and an NGO, Khulisa; and
• The community – in the form of the prison inmates, as well as to a lesser extent staff of the DCS.

The service-learning intervention is part of a broader Street Law initiative begun in the late 1980s, and relies on partnerships built up over time between Street Law and various stakeholders. The aim of the service-learning intervention is twofold. Firstly, it aims to assist inmates to move towards thinking of themselves as citizens capable of participating in South Africa's new democracy. Secondly, it aims to skill students as citizens exercising their responsibilities and, at the same time, to equip them to deal in a practical sense with legal issues related to a prison inmate's life. The

---

12   The Street Law module coordinator is a full-time Law lecturer and administrator of the Street Law module; whereas co-author, Viv Linington, is not involved, at any level, with the module coordination. She became a working partner in 2005 when assisting in the delivery of a module called Conflict and Democracy, run initially with DCS staff and later with various prisons, as mentioned in this case study.

students participating in this service-learning module undertake to facilitate workshops for inmates, with a focus on enhancing their skills, knowledge, attitudes and values concomitant with an informed citizenry.

The current philosophy that underpins Street Law is the belief that if South Africa's society is to mirror her Constitution, then democracy must be a 'lived practice'. Important outcomes of the Street Law prison intervention have been an enhanced sense of civic responsibility and an enhanced sense of self among participants. Service-learning is consistent with the notion of collaboration and reciprocity. Data show that the students and the prison inmates have impacted on one another's learning through the collaborative and participatory approach to the teaching and learning process.

The belief that has informed this project is that democracy and the principle of civic responsibility are not innate. It therefore follows that if democracy and democratic practice are to be understood and internalised, they must be mediated to lawyers, educators, inmates and in fact all South Africa's citizens. Street Law – through its partnership with Khulisa, the prison community and the Wits School of Education – was ideally positioned to work within both a legal and prison context and address the need for learning in a particular situated context related to the real world. Each of Street Law's service-learning components is aimed at the practical realisation of human rights through theory-in-practice.

Lessons learnt

In the course of developing and implementing this module we have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- Flexibility plays a vital role in building sustainable partnerships.

- There is a need for ongoing critical reflection and negotiation to ensure maximum benefit for all stakeholders.

- Communication and inclusivity are important in the maintenance of vibrant, successful partnerships.

- Learning in the 'real world' requires 'real-world skills' such as diplomacy and tenacity, which are closely related to emotional intelligence.

- Nothing goes according to plan, as unexpected problems inevitably arise when working with communities outside of the university. However, hiccups can still be countered by good pre-planning and preparation.

- Student–lecturer relationships in this particular context call for very different power dynamics than those experienced in a more formal university context. In the Law School, for instance, Street Law has the reputation of being an alternative course. In service-learning the

student–lecturer relationships are less formal and more open than in other approaches and call for a great deal of shared responsibility and collaborative learning.

INITIATION

The service-learning intervention presented in this case study is part of a broader Street Law initiative, which started in the late 1980s and has implemented service-learning for Law students at a wide range of Gauteng community sites over the last two decades. The prison programme described is illustrative of the kind of service-learning that is now in place using partnerships built up between Street Law and a number of different stakeholders.

The South African Constitution commits itself to a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. It is equally committed to encouraging greater citizen participation, and a sense of civic responsibility, referring to a situation where citizens become participants – as opposed to simply subjects – in the form of governance in the country (Republic of South Africa, 1996: Sections 59, 72 and 118). If such participation is to become a reality, citizens must buy into their participatory roles and legal educators must mediate to their students the values of participation and democracy. Only then can participation become 'lived practice'. One cannot expect South Africa's citizenry as a whole to switch to this new role without support structures to facilitate an ordinary citizen's understanding of the relationship between legislation and life in each individual's socio-economic context. It was in this arena of need that Street Law saw a role for the Wits Law students. Law students, it is argued, have a responsibility to assist in improving communities' opportunities for accessing justice and human rights and to enhance and encourage greater citizen participation. Cappelletti (1992) points out that there is no possible popular participation unless citizens know the system, its rules and institutions. So the question is posed: How do communities access such information? It is in this regard that Street Law can play a constructive role.

During the late 1980s, as shifts started occurring in the political arena, so too were small shifts taking place in a number of Law Schools around the country. For some time prior to democratic change, Street Law existed as a programme. The aim of Street Law, at that time, was to facilitate access to justice for all. While the law clinics acted in a curative role, Street Law took on a preventative, legal education role.

Much has changed since early 1988, when Street Law was first introduced as a volunteer programme into Wits School of Law. In addition to being a programme aimed at demystifying the myriad complex legal issues facing the average person 'on the street', Street Law is now a final-year Law module involved in the institutionalisation of democracy at a number of different levels.

Prior to 2001 content was founded on two aims:
1) Street Law aimed to address general legal principles and show how they influenced the average person on the street.
2) Street Law aimed to broaden student attitudes and perspectives by exploring the socio-legal climate of South Africa at that time.

The intention of the Street Law programme was to expose Law students to the realities facing communities in and around Gauteng with the additional hope that there would be an increased interest, on the part of the Law students, in the practice of public interest law. It was also expected that the students' exposure to this reality would have the ripple effect of sensitising and educating future lawyers in poverty law issues, thereby ensuring their continued role in the provision of legal aid after they had completed their legal service (Sarkin, 1993).

In 2001 the Street Law elective was reconceptualised to some degree to fit in with the vision sketched out earlier. The reconceptualisation of the Street Law elective in 2001 should be viewed in the context of the advent of constitutional reform and putting in place of a democratic government, which significantly influenced all aspects of South African life. Two aspects that were greatly affected were law and education – both of which significantly impacted on the Street Law module. With transformation taking place in the universities and the surrounding communities, it became evident that the Street Law programme needed critical reflection and redesign to ensure it would meet the challenges of a new, post-apartheid South Africa – a new and dynamic democracy. Thus, in 2001/2002, a pilot programme was introduced as part of the CHESP initiative based at Wits. A central focus of the CHESP initiative was to develop new ways of creating knowledge and rendering service to communities through three-way (triad) partnerships between the university, community and service agencies.

Added to this, in 2001 Street Law and the students working in the prisons project experienced a series of frustrations with the administration and coordination of the programme, arising partly from widespread changes in the prison environment. The challenges experienced pointed, in developing future prison modules, to the need for a more *formalised* approach than had hitherto been adopted. Such a formalised approach came through the establishment of a partnership with Khulisa. Early in 2001 the Street Law coordinator was introduced, while working in Johannesburg Prison, to Khulisa, which operates in a number of prisons throughout South Africa as an NGO concerned with addressing the high crime rate in the country. Khulisa has a particular interest in encouraging crime prevention among youth. While Khulisa continues to run other programmes independent of its partnership with Street Law, the relationship that has developed between Street Law and Khulisa has proved invaluable; it has opened up a whole new approach to the formalisation of service-learning and brought innumerable reciprocal benefits.

(RE)CONCEPTUALISATION

Module (re)conceptualisation has been prompted by a range of factors, including:
- The students' own experience of the module and getting feedback from inmates; and
- Street Law's involvement with CHESP, which fed service-learning theory into the existing project.

In prisons such as Johannesburg and Leeuwkop, where there has been a long relationship with Street Law, the programme that was originally offered has undergone a number of adjustments,

often as a result of student intervention and the students' own research based on the needs of the inmates. Initially the prison programme was about the passing on of legal information in a simple and creative manner so that inmates were able to understand the law and the legal system. Students came into the prisons, ran a series of workshops on a variety of topics and left – never really knowing whether or not the information was useful and contributed to the inmates' rehabilitation process. Research showed up this negative factor and it became clear that module revision was needed. Not only did inmates want a more structured module, which they could 'study', but it was also evident that there was a need to give inmates a purpose for persevering with the module.

Furthermore, as a result of Street Law's involvement in the CHESP service-learning project, changes relating to service-learning initiatives were made to the original Street Law module. Most of these changes were about:

- Creating in Law students a better understanding of democratic participation;
- Creating in Law students an understanding of the community and its many aspects – particularly with regard to the communities with which the Street Law module worked with; and
- Strengthening the theoretical base of learning and assessment in the Street Law module in line with service-learning approaches.

In redesigning and changing the existing module the coordinator was mindful of incorporating both old and new approaches so as to enhance and improve upon the module without excluding valuable lessons learnt over the years.

What did inform much of the new module design was the authors' understanding and interpretation of service-learning as posited by Salinas (2005). According to Salinas (2005: 1): "…service-learning is based on a reciprocal relationship in which the service reinforces and strengthens the learning, and the learning reinforces and strengthens the service". This notion of reciprocity implies, it is argued, collaborative learning, co-operation and critical reflection by all stakeholders on whether their needs, as perceived by them, are being met. In other words, partnerships should be forged and implemented in such a way that the capacity of both the community and Law students is increased. In the process, what counts as knowledge may well be redefined and renegotiated by all stakeholders as they enhance their ability to participate meaningfully in civil society.

As stated earlier the original intention of Street Law, during the 1980s, was to expose Law students to the realities facing communities in and around Gauteng while at the same time addressing the needs of these communities. This focus on the students' learning and *their* contribution to the needs of the communities with which Street Law worked was, the authors realised, approaching service in a one-sided manner. Communities can be and have been active participants in their own change. It is our growing belief that communities already have the capacity within themselves to address access to rights and justice issues. This capacity needs to be encouraged and enabled so that Street Law and the community can be mutually involved in developing each partner's capacity. Students registered for the Street Law module began to take notice of and comment on the reciprocal nature of their learning. As one student observed in her journal:

> School children, prisoners and the elderly – these were all the different people I was exposed to and I learnt so much about myself and the world around me. This course gives one the opportunity not only to impart their knowledge but also teaches one that academic knowledge is not the be all and end all. (Brixey, 2005, unedited)

Although Street Law has a long history of working in prison, the work that was being undertaken, prior to 2001, was often informal and on an ad hoc basis. It continued, successfully, because of the advocacy and drive of a few staff members in the various prisons where Street Law operated. Unfortunately, but perhaps understandably, the transformation of the country and consequently of the penal system impacted negatively on a number of these constructive long-term projects, which were dependent on well established relationships. In certain instances, these relationships were either lost or severely affected and Street Law was one of the projects that suffered, at least in the short term. Difficulties arose in the administration and coordination of the Street Law programme. As a result, the agreement between Street Law and the prison often had to be renegotiated and reworked, sometimes from month to month. One student wrote that his first impression of prison was one of "complete disorganisation". He had thought, he wrote, that prisons would be well organised because of the implications of disruption in any prison context. "Any chaos and disorganisation (in prison) would just amount to more chaos and disruption", he wrote. But the student did not find what he expected. In fact, he wrote, "I was in for a rude awakening".

The same student wrote (reproduced here unedited) on a later visit to the same prison:

> What's extremely irritating is that the prison system seems to make it out as if we are begging to help out. As volunteers we don't have to go back but where does that leave the prisoners? It's all good and well being told by wardens that doing courses is in the prisoners' best interests but if the wardens don't make it happen…

The frustrations Street Law and the Law students encountered confirmed the idea that the development of future prison modules called for a more formalised approach. As mentioned earlier (in the section on Initiation), this need was met by the partnership formed with the NGO, Khulisa, in 2001. It is argued that external organisations such as NGOs, religious groups, trade unions and various educational institutions, many of which are founded in civil society, have a valuable part to play in the actualisation of South Africa's democratic quest; they can provide positive intervention that enhances skills, knowledge, attitudes and values concomitant with an informed citizenry. Through collaborative projects such as the service-learning module described here, such organisations are well placed to address, in the short to medium term, the significant challenges facing prisons in South Africa today.

The problems facing South African prisons have been clearly outlined by Judge Fagan (2004). These problems are also identified in the vision contained in the White Paper on corrections (DCS, 2004). Both sources stress that the fundamental problem facing our prisons is overcrowding, which impacts on everything else within the prison. In 2003 the prison population was approximately 200 000 offenders. Prison capacity at that time was about 112 000 – meaning that prison facilities were overpopulated by about 71%. Inmate numbers continue to

increase. Judge Fagan argues that in such overcrowded conditions the health and safety of both offenders and staff are under threat. This concern resonated with statements made in the students' research assignments. Students often expressed a concern about the prison environment; this is one area of the service experience that had quite an impact on students, as students wrote:

> Most prisoners spend the whole day in communal cells. Prisoners tell us they have no privacy when they go to the toilet. They have to use the toilet in an open space where other prisoners are cooking or eating. It's both unhygienic and humiliating. (V. Mukhari, M. Hlaba, 2005, unedited)

Judge Fagan also warns that in such conditions inmates may become dehumanised and our prisons may become universities of crime. Prisons could be increasing the crime rate, not reducing crime (Fagan, 2004).

One cannot underestimate the real difficulties that exist in the prison context and the problems facing most of the inmates. The prison community suffers as a result of the overcrowding; and because of a lack of resources within prisons not all inmates are able to participate in the few programmes that are being run. Interestingly, students noted in their reflection journals that even where there were programmes in the prison a large number of inmates were not interested in participating.

Overcrowding also affects the efficacy of the staff in their ability to regulate their prison and the inmates. A small group of Law students placed in Johannesburg Women's Prison made the remark that order exists in prison because the inmates choose it. These students observed that during the 5am showering and 7am parade the order that one sees in prison is because "the inmates choose it". But, the students warn, this is a dangerous situation because the "inmates can snap at any time".

These concerns impact on both the coordinator's and students' approach to the Street Law programme in prisons. The problems articulated by Judge Fagan and the students in the programme must and do critically inform future conceptualisation, planning and implementation of the Street Law programme. It is imperative too that the DCS recognises the importance of external organisations and makes use of their services, and this requires ongoing negotiation and partnership-building.

The table below summarises the current Street Law initiatives offered in prison – some of them conducted in partnership with Khulisa – including the learning outcomes for each. As evident in the table, Street Law offers the students four components within the prisons. In so doing, it brings final-year Law students into a reciprocal relationship with inmates at Johannesburg, Leeuwkop, Emthonjeni and other prison centres. The relationship is termed 'reciprocal' because, as stated earlier, the learning that occurs is collaborative – as skills, insights and reflection are shared among students and inmates.

Table 8.1: Current Street Law initiatives offered in prison

Prison programme	Participants/ inmates	Student facilitators	Aim of intervention	Learning outcome(s)
Street Law prison programme	• Johannesburg Women's Prison; • Leeuwkop Juvenile Prison, where two groups of 30 juveniles were involved.	Final-year Law students	To provide workshops on law and human rights with a view to specific outcomes.	• Basic legal information; • Understand the Constitution and human rights; • Motivate inmates – careers, family, problem-solving skills; and • Build responsibility for own life and as a citizen in a democracy.
Khulisa prison programme	• Leeuwkop Prison; • Emthonjeni Prison, Baviaanspoort.	Final-year Law students	Workshops on family law, crime and commerce.	Link in with the Khulisa 'my path' inmates' training programme.
Khulisa DCS programme	• Khulisa head office; • DCS staff.	Service-learning Law staff (Colgan and Linington)	Conflict resolution.	Educators and social workers from prisons in the Gauteng region participate in three-day skills training modules on conflict mediation and conflict resolution skills.
Khulisa drug peer counsellors' programme	• Leeuwkop Prison; • Emthonjeni Prison, Baviaanspoort.	• Module coordinators; • Student facilitators.	• Conflict resolution; • Workshops on family law, crime and commerce.	Participants are skilled in the mediation of attitudes, values, knowledge and skills to their peers. This intervention is known as Khulisa's drug peer counsellors' programme.

PREPARATION

In terms of student preparation, during the first semester students attend a series of lectures on basic facilitation skills. They are also provided with a booklet on facilitation, watch film footage of past Street Law presentations and have a Street Law resource library with teachers' texts and

students' texts from which to work. The assistant coordinator helps with workshop preparation and the introduction of students to their service sites. Where possible, students from previous years work with the new students. Students say that until the actual presentation takes place they always feel unprepared.

To help students in the ongoing negotiations that are necessary in managing the relationship with the inmates, the DCS and Khulisa, they learn a variety of conflict resolution skills and ways of dealing with officials and bureaucratic departments; the underlying premise of the conflict resolution skills is: "be hard on the problem not the person".

In terms of community partner preparation, while the ideal would be to share preparations and negotiations, the reality of incarceration means that the freedom for students to communicate with inmates is limited during the initial planning and preparation stages. Nevertheless, inmates are prepared to the extent that they know what modules to expect and are able to choose upfront the modules in which they would like to participate. Further, in making their opinions and needs known to students during the course of their interactions, the inmates ensure a significant amount of input into the content and shape of the modules on offer.

In terms of preparing service agents, the ongoing communications between Street Law (both the coordinator and students), the DCS and Khulisa ensure that adequate preparation is in place prior to each prison placement.

IMPLEMENTATION

As noted, the prison project is just one of Street Law's initiatives. Each year the Street Law programme attracts approximately 20 – 25 final-year LLB students and of these about 10 students choose to work on the prisons service-learning module. Other projects that are offered in the course are a schools project, a youth leadership project, an HIV/AIDS law project, a paralegal project and a rural project. Street Law is a full year's course, so there is an opportunity for students to become involved in several quite disparate communities. Students may choose to stay in one service area or to combine their experiences over projects. However, it has been noted (through analysing students' reflections on the service-learning) that a number of students felt that one of the most surprising and satisfying experiences they had came from work they carried out in the prison community. Street Law tries to ensure that students have a strong academic grounding in the area of service – in terms of both service-learning theory and the theoretical and legal perspectives that inform the project in which they are involved.

The number of site visits planned and the duration of these visits are flexible and dynamic; students' site visits are arranged so that they fit into each student's lecture timetable, but these visits also depend on service agency requirements. Students are also given site options from which to choose; at the beginning of the year each student fills in a timetable sheet for the lecturer to use when arranging site visits. The most common practice is for the students to travel out to their site once a week for one to two hours. Students are expected to perform an average of 20 hours of service in the community.

With regard to lectures students are required to attend one double lecture a week and one seminar session every alternate week. Unlike the usual lecture method encountered by students in the Law School, Street Law lectures are informal and collegial in nature, which often surprises and unsettles the new Street Law students.

During the Street Law lecture students and lecturer discuss, debate, brainstorm and role-play issues around workshop preparation, problem-solving and methodology used in facilitating class discussion. This informal discussion is usually confined to a single lecture period. The second lecture period is set aside for more formal input sessions either with guest lecturers or the module coordinator.

During the seminar session students are required to present a class to their fellow classmates on a contemporary legal topic. These seminars are aimed at introducing students to a learning approach that is critical and multi-dimensional in nature. Students are exposed to new material and are encouraged to apply complex legal theories in a creative but practical way. The intention is that in these sessions students will develop their skills in dealing with legal issues in relation to actual societal problems and practices.

The initial prison work carried out with Khulisa as a service partner started during the second semester of 2002. Students worked with a variety of prison groups both in Johannesburg Prison and Leeuwkop Prison (see Table 8.2, below for the programme of workshops).

Table 8.2: Workshops for prison inmates

Group	Venue	Time	Theme
Women	Johannesburg Prison	09h00–12h00	Mock trial, family law and criminal process.
Male maximum security prison		09h30–13h00	Consumer law and contract, buying on credit.
Peer counsellors – male		09h30–13h00	Consumer law, contract and buying credit.
Prison juveniles pre-release		10h00–12h00 12h00–14h00	Consumer law, street law basics and corporate entities.

These first workshops introduced prison inmates to basic legal concepts and information about setting up and running a small business, and provided them with skills needed to deal with daily problems that could be encountered. There was an overall coherence to all the programmes, because Street Law slotted into a larger, ongoing training programme being run by Khulisa. Students arrived at the prison, were met by their Khulisa contact and were escorted to their waiting prison inmate group. One of the Law students recorded:

> The group (inmates) were disciplined and were glad to see new faces and called more friends. They responded with questions and examples that we had not considered. (Nobuhle, unedited)

After the success of this first programme, Street Law discussed the way forward with the director and staff at Khulisa. As indicated in the earlier table (8.1) there are three arms to our prison work with Khulisa: the training of DCS social workers and educators; the 'my path' inmates' training; and the Khulisa 'drug peer counsellors' programme. Khulisa runs these programmes mindful of the fact that this training cannot take place in a vacuum. The programmes are holistic in the sense that the improvement and guidance are not only focused on the offender but also aim to support family members and the DCS.

The objective of the 'my path' programme is to guide the offender through a positive process of change. As part of this initiative Street Law offers two modules to the inmates: a conflict resolution module, and an introduction to basic legal principles. The Khulisa drug peer counselling programme focuses on training and developing young inmates as drug peer counsellors. These inmates are then expected to provide services in the cells, ranging from educating other inmates about the harmful effects of drugs to encouraging other inmates to go for rehabilitation. The drug peer counsellors serve as positive role models to other inmates and the objective is to eventually encourage inmates to maintain drug-free sections within the prison.

The Street Law coordinator and students were invited to assist with the programme in 2005 because problems were being encountered in one of the prisons. Small conflicts were starting to break out among the different prison groups. Some of the untrained inmates were jealous of the changing scenario and obvious empowerment of the peer counsellors. In addition, the more experienced peer counsellors were refusing to teach because they felt threatened by the newly trained peer counsellors. The conflict began to affect the efficacy of the overall programme. To avoid similar problems occurring with other drug peer counselling groups, and based on the pilot programme run with DCS staff, we were then invited to run a conflict resolution module and a Street Law module with the drug peer counsellors in Leeuwkop Prison and Emthonjeni Prison in Baviaanspoort.

The aim of the conflict resolution module is to encourage an understanding by each participant that conflict is not 'wrong' or bad. Rather, the philosophy behind the module is that conflict is an integral part of a democracy. It is not the conflict that is the problem but the way in which one deals with conflict that can be either destructive or constructive. Inmates began to understand that each person has a natural conflict identity or conflict style and that constructive conflict is about being aware of the self and working within this understanding; one may, for example, *choose* – as a reasoned response in a particular context – to adopt a conflict resolution style very different from one's natural response. As an inmate said at the close of day three of the workshop: "I feel like Mandela. I am empowered with the knowledge of how to solve conflict. I am still eager to learn more" (prison inmate at Leeuwkop Prison). Another prison inmate who had completed the conflict resolution workshop commented: "The problem can be solved together. It can be a commitment…not keeping anger inside you".

The workshops at both Leeuwkop and Emthonjeni showed themselves to be tools for enablement. The students engaged the inmates in an alternative way of solving conflict. The inmates were introduced to the 12 skills of conflict resolution and then practised these skills in role-plays based on actual conflicts they were experiencing in their prison life. In a number of instances the inmates

themselves detailed the conflict and then worked with them in a role-play context. Conflicts related to 'sex exchange' and 'gangsterism' openly featured in the role-plays enacted. The students learnt valuable lessons from the prison inmates as the honesty and openness that the inmates displayed showed that there was humanity behind the label of 'prisoner'.

An interesting aspect of the students' involvement in the prison module is the way in which they have worked at delivering a programme of relevance and interest to the inmate participants. The students have displayed a sense of commitment and concern about the quality and relevance of the modules being delivered, and have adjusted and experimented in order to succeed. One student journal read (unedited):

> …no sooner had we started talking about human rights than we got a few objections. They liked the idea but they thought that the workshops could focus more on prisoners' rights.

When this group of students started to implement the planned programme they were surprised by the inmates' reactions:

> I realise we took the wrong stance on prisoners' rights when we went into the discussion of rights from a 'justified limitations' point of view. In hindsight one can appreciate the flack we got for that. The discussion degenerated into groups, despite efforts to pull it back together. (unedited)

The students decided to seek advice from the Street Law coordinator about the problem. After their initial meeting they then worked as a group in developing their new programme and implementing it with the same group of inmates with whom they had been working all the time:

> We began a somewhat symbiotic relationship that day: the prisoners needed certificates for the Parole Board and we needed regular attendance. It became more than that but that's what it started out as. (Gillian, facilitator in the women's prison, unedited)

In sum, development and growth – for both students and inmates – has come from critical reflection and collaborative planning.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community (prison inmates)

As stated in the introduction to this case study, our aim is enablement – the kind of enablement that would allow both Law students and prison inmates to play a societal role concomitant with democracy. For the inmates, the Street Law workshops offer awareness of and knowledge about the self. The workshops provide a mirror of alternatives, and data indicate that this notion has begun to take root among the inmate participants. The reciprocal nature of the learning process also mirrors inherent principles of democracy at work; participation, sharing, debate, questioning – to mention but four.

Workshops also consider why there are laws in place and what these laws do to create a harmonious

society. The workshops consider how rights balance responsibility and the multi-faceted nature of respect, for oneself, for others and for processes that can enable. Through service-learning, the Law students provide inmates with skills and tools that could help them to deal more effectively with issues of legal process and conflict as well as providing insight into the reasons behind the somewhat confusing process of trial advocacy and the perception of many of the inmates that 'lawyers are liars'.

Student facilitators also help to create the belief in some of the inmates that they too can achieve similar goals to those achieved by their Street Law facilitators: "I think I would like to study Law…Will my criminal record ruin this hope for me?" (Anon).

Many of the inmates had never been exposed to programmes like Khulisa or Street Law, and training in life skills was a new and exciting experience for them. As one inmate said: "When I was outside I did not know about life skills, aggression courses, Street Law. Now I know these things and I want to further my studies" (Melusi).

Often all the inmates want is someone who is able to see beyond the prison label, who will talk to them like normal human beings or to, as one inmate put it, "just be friendly". Some of the Street Law students asked the prison inmates in a survey: What do you expect from us? The majority of the responses were, "be kind and open and treat us like peers". Some of the inmates said they wanted respect and a few said they wanted to learn how to be responsible citizens.

Previously, the workshops for inmates were run without preparing the inmates or providing them with choice. However, over time inmates began to ask the student facilitators to write letters explaining the purpose of the module and the content that was covered. These letters were then used, when the inmates came up for parole, as proof that they had not been wasting their time in prison. Furthermore, the letters were able to state the range of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that had been covered by inmates. At this point, after a series of discussions between the Street Law coordinator, the student facilitators and the inmates themselves, the students decided to offer inmates a number of different modules. Inmates could then select the module they would like to study first, similar to the selection of electives at university. At the end of each module, which usually runs for four to six weeks, inmates are assessed and each participant receives a certificate. The student facilitators then came up with the idea of holding graduation ceremonies, where inmates who have actively participated in the module receive their certificates.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Benefits for the students

Student assessment is ongoing throughout the year. There is no examination as the assessments are based on a range of skills. The assessment criteria developed for the Street Law module aim to assess growth in the students' knowledge and skills. Students are assessed on their ability to:

- **Design, analyse and write up qualitative research on socio-legal problems.** In Street Law students are required to compile a research report on their service-learning elective. The report, which counts for 50% of the overall module mark, is aimed at assessing the needs and the planning of an intervention founded on the site where the student is placed.

- **Present seminars on a series of socio-legal issues facing South Africa today.** Seminars account for 20% of the year mark and are presented to class colleagues.

- **Prepare and facilitate interactive workshops with communities.** Student assessments account for 20% of the year mark. Students are assessed on site throughout the year with a minimum of two on-site visits by their coordinator.

- **Write on observations and experiences in reflection journals.** This makes up 5% of the students' overall mark.

- **Display trial advocacy skills.** Students participate in a mock trial, which accounts for 5% of the overall Street Law mark. Mock trials take place in the High Court or in a venue at the Constitutional Court. For example, in October 2005 students had the honour of appearing before Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs.

- **Display sensitivity, respect and tolerance for diverse communities and their life experiences.**

- **Identify and develop many different approaches to informing communities about the Constitution, human rights and the rule of law.**

In their reflection journals, the students write about having shared very similar experiences even though they were placed in different prisons. This is a common trend that we, as lecturer/coordinator, have seen since the start of the use of journals in 2001. All who choose the prison as a site for their service-learning leave with a different attitude from the one with which they arrived. As students have noted in their journals:

> I remember our first encounter with the prisons like it was yesterday. I have prided myself on being open-minded and accepting of all individuals…However I was apprehensive about being in the same room as the inmates. Lethabo (my partner) recalls the same feelings of apprehension. (Vallissia, exchange student from Minnesota, USA, unedited)

> The more I go there the more I realise that the women in prison are not freaks, nor abnormal nor scary. It's humbling to think that they come from good homes, some of them, and they did one thing wrong. (Gillian, unedited)

A qualitative analysis of student data showed that many had learnt how to empathise, to plan and to adapt when plans go awry. The students had been exposed to the changing face and unpredictability of prison. They had learnt how to work collaboratively with their fellow classmates, who had diverse and sometimes very different styles, as well as with inmates with very different life experiences. They had learnt to cope with difficult situations and to solve them together, often without the help of their coordinator. They shared, they talked, and they adjusted to the differing temperaments and response styles of their colleagues.

One of the most noticeable effects of the prison as a site in which to work have been the

changes that I (Colgan) have observed in the students in terms of their personal growth and maturing of opinions. The students are all left with a sense of purpose and wellbeing. Many have indicated that they have indeed experienced personal growth and made a very personal connection with the groups with which they worked.

> Seven weeks after our [first] journey to Leeuwkop our opinions have not drastically changed, but our lives and thoughts about the individuals currently serving time have been changed forever. (Vallissia and Lethabo, unedited)

> And then we said goodbye to the structure and its high mesh walls and its guards…I don't want to go back there too soon, because that's a chapter in my life that has come to an end. But I will never be afraid of prisoners again, nor will I entertain the naïve assumptions that I held before I ventured inside those walls. I would encourage anyone to make the prisons their first choice, because you will never learn in Law School what the prisons can teach you about yourself and your career path. (Gillian, unedited)

Benefits for the academics involved

Working and collaborating closely with communities, students, partners and colleagues in other schools within the university environment lends itself to a number of rich and rewarding relationships. Academics who work in a service-learning framework encounter opportunities to:

- Enhance their ability to translate theory into practice, so that abstract notions such as civic responsibility become observable, tangible features of legal practice;

- Bridge the often debated divide between the realities of academia and professional practice;

- Stand outside their normal lecture mode and critically reflect on relevance and on the possible adjustments that need to be made to enhance teaching and learning in an academic context;

- Increase or enhance their emotional intelligence. As pointed out in *Ways of Learning* (Pritchard, 2005: 82): "Emotional intelligence describes abilities which are distinct from, but work alongside, what can be called 'academic intelligence'". Emotional intelligence is key to the optimal development of self-awareness and interpersonal relationships, which are themselves a key component of democratic citizenship; and

- Broaden their skills base with practical knowledge in project management, fundraising and financial accounting.

Although there are many benefits to be had in the implementation of a service-learning module of this nature it would be incorrect to ignore the challenges encountered within the university environment. These challenges are discussed in more detail towards the end of this case study.

Benefits for the service agencies (DCS and Khulisa)

Such benefits are often difficult to assess because of the more formal relationships established

with the DCS and Khulisa. These relationships require formal communication systems being followed between the partners and often meetings need to be organised in order to obtain the required feedback. Students and inmates are easier to access as they are in constant formal and informal contact with the coordinators.

With regard to the DCS, benefits include the obvious ones of prison inmates being the beneficiaries of the modules offered by the students. In addition to these benefits, the social workers and educators based in prisons such as Johannesburg's Women's, Men's and Juveniles' Prison sections, Leeuwkop Prison and Emthonjeni Prison (Baviaanspoort) received workshop-based training in conflict resolution skills.

Feedback from Khulisa is often supplied in report form at the end of the year. With regard to Khulisa the benefits are reciprocal – as this is the type of relationship that has developed over the years. Khulisa has the structure, the contacts and an ongoing weekly relationship with the DCS and is able to provide the necessary access into the prisons for Street Law. Street Law is able to provide legal information and module components that Khulisa does not have the capacity to provide, without additional financial implications. Through Khulisa, the Street Law programme can reach a greater number of inmates in a more structured and efficient manner. An example of this is the conflict resolution module run with staff from DCS and inmates doing the 'my path' and drug peer counsellors' programmes. In this case, Khulisa identified the need; while it had no capacity at the time to address the need, Street Law had the capacity and knowledge readily available.

PARTNERSHIPS

As the environment within the prison system has changed and continues to change, Street Law has continued to adapt to fit in with the needs of the inmates and the DCS as it attempts to implement its vision. Our ongoing relationship with Khulisa has time and again provided the logical solution to the ongoing problems that we have experienced in running service-learning within the prison. What we have learnt (students and coordinators alike) is that perseverance does pay off and the rewards are not to be ignored. Challenges, reflection and negotiation have become a way of life and, as a result, students have learnt valuable lessons through these encounters. In the process, students have learnt that the real world is very different from that to which they are exposed in a purely academic legal context and that human nature is never predictable.

The notions of reciprocity and collaboration are extended into the forming of relationships between Street Law and its partners. What this means is that during the academic year the module coordinator and the Street Law students share the preparation and negotiations about the programme with service and community partners.

The partnership with the community in question is constrained by the reality of the inmates' incarceration. However, the needs voiced by the inmates do indeed impact on the shape and form of the workshops offered, and students and inmates work in a reciprocal fashion. The intention for future expansion of the service-learning module is to work at extending the notion of partnership further to the 'community' participants (i.e. the prison inmates).

In addition, both community and service partners participate, where possible, in lectures or input sessions with the students. How these interactive relationships develop depends upon the community, the service agencies and students. There is no single approach for all stakeholders. Some partners wish to determine the content and the part they play in the students' development, while others want the coordinator to take a more dominant role in student development, and yet others elect to work more closely, on an individual basis, with the students.

The ongoing partnership between Street Law and Khulisa has proved a great source of reciprocal benefits. What has been revealing in the relationship thus far is that it is possible to approach the notion of partnership in a number of different ways. The process that has evolved between Street Law and Khulisa has demonstrated the necessity of factors such as reflection, flexibility and accountability in the establishment of a sound, transparent and robust partnership. With these features in place – and, in fact, non-negotiable – there is room for informed minor/ even major adjustments and adaptation, particularly when working in such unpredictable contexts as the prisons. (Khulisa and Street Law are not the only programmes providing pre-release education to prison inmates. The Street Law coordinator has found that the challenges encountered by many of the outside organisations are not dissimilar to those experienced by Street Law.)

However, Street Law in its prison programmes is just addressing a small part of the problem. If the vision contained in the DCS White Paper is to become more than words on a potentially transformative document, we need to build on the notion of *partnership with the prisons* so that more prison inmates can become involved, and in the process more programmes can be introduced.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

As stated earlier the changes within Street Law were influenced by the overall democratisation of South African society. Underlying the change within the module was the belief that past inequalities cannot be sufficiently addressed through policy alone, particularly policy that was hastily introduced in order to deal with the demands of a new government with high expectations. Democracy may be the overriding goal hoped for by the government, but it will not happen overnight because change takes time and needs to be seen more as "a process than an event" (Fullan, 1996: 130).

The contention is, therefore, that although innovation may start at government level through legislation it will not be successful if the important participants in the process of change are excluded – namely, the three service partners: academics (including the students), service agencies and the community.

Democratic change calls for a radical transformation at all levels of society and more specifically for all educational levels. One of these levels is universities and colleges, which are an important part of the change process. They have a particular educative and mediatory role to play. In an attempt to fulfil this role and help effect the envisaged transformation, the authors chose an

interpretation of the legislation that presented a number of responsibilities and tasks for higher education. The legislation calls on institutions and those who lecture in these institutions to facilitate the following:

- To help lay the foundations of a critical civil society with a culture of public debate and tolerance that accommodates differences and competing interests (see *Education White Paper 3*, Department of Education, 1997); and

- A move away from academic insularity and closed-system disciplinary programmes.

Street Law as a service-learning module aims to address the first issue – both for students and for prison inmates. It emphasises the role of civil society and the importance of debate in our democracy. The second issue has been addressed through the establishment of a collaborative lecturing partnership between the Wits School of Education and the School of Law at Wits.

The formulation of the exit outcomes of the module has drawn on the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997) to which we have referred above, which sets out a vision, principles and goals. The aspect of the vision that particularly applies to our module refers to a system of higher education that "supports a democratic ethos and culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices" (Department of Education, 1997: 11: 1.14). The relevant principle refers to the democratisation of higher education, which requires that governance of the system (Wits in this instance) should be democratic, representative and participatory and characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and maintenance of well ordered and peaceful community life (Department of Education, 1997: 12: 1.19).

This principle impacts on how students and lecturers at the university should view their role in the Wits community. As democratic citizens, they should both participate in the process of democratisation and accept responsibility for their part in its implementation. This notion of participation combined with responsibility is further explored in the goals of the White Paper, which sets out key targets and outcomes for the implementation of transformation. These include:

> …to produce graduates with the skills and competencies that build the foundations for lifelong learning including critical, analytical, problem solving and communication skills, as well as the ability to deal with change and diversity, in particular, the tolerance of different views and ideas. (Department of Education, 1997: 14: 1.27.9)

In other words, the national initiative is to transform society; and higher education's challenge is to translate this into practice by, according to then Minister of Education, Prof. Sibusiso Bengu, in the Foreword to *Education White Paper 3*, creating "a learning society which releases the creative and intellectual energies of all our people towards meeting the goals of reconstruction and development" (Department of Education, 1997: 3).

However, the goals contained in the White Paper discussed above present challenges to the university in terms of both policy and practice. If taken seriously, higher education

transformation goals impact on a wide range of areas relevant to service-learning modules such as the one described in this case study, including: human resources and staff workload planning and allocation; financial support (e.g. to assist with employing support staff, providing transport to placements, and so on); research, promotion and advancement policies and practices; and many more. We discuss this need for support and capacity building below.

ETHICS

With regard to working with communities and external agencies, students and staff comply with recognised research procedures. Over and above this requirement is the added dimension of Street Law's fundamental objective, which is about the institutionalisation of democracy and civic responsibility. This means that all Street Law representatives, students and staff alike, work within the democratic principles of accountability, transparency and respect for all. This encompasses the notion of tolerance and acceptance of diversity and recognises the need for privacy and sensitivity towards those with whom we partner in the programme. Student research therefore is not about blaming or exposing their partners but about assisting, partnering and enabling.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Despite the positive returns that derive from running a service-learning module, support and capacity building are problems within the university, or within schools in the university. This criticism is even more applicable here, at Wits, since the changes during early 2005 to the partnership office (CUPS). It is noteworthy that, with regard to this service-learning module, the university has failed to provide administrative support, and provides very little financial support (apart from the involvement of the School of Law, which pays for the coordinator's transport to various Street Law sites). Needless to say, to date most service-learning modules at this institution have been introduced in each case through the advocacy of an individual, who has made the choice to take on a more rewarding process of engagement and learning with his/her students. This choice carries with it an automatic workload increase.

It is imperative that the university and in turn the various departments within the university begin to understand that where there is an increased need for quality input and a different approach applied to teaching and learning, time is an essential component. Preparing for a successful service-learning module takes a lecturer outside of the university comfort zone and exposes him/her to addressing real-world concerns for all the partners. Where service-learning is to be offered lecturers need:

- The service-learning module to be seen, by both the university and department heads, as offering a viable alternative to teaching and learning that is innovative and can only enhance the schools' reputation;

- The encouragement, recognition and support of their colleagues, their department heads and their institutions;

- Inclusion, of the additional administrative and logistical duties, in a coordinator's overall workload allocation – including the responsibility of some coordinators to do their own financial accounting, fundraising and administration;

- Other financial assistance such as the provision, by schools, of additional funds for extra support staff who can assist specifically with the administration and organisation of service-learning modules within that school;

- Assistance within the university when accessing its transport facilities or to offer extra funding for travel expenses at reasonable Automobile Association rates;

- Schools or departments to offer fundraising assistance or recognise the fundraising initiatives pursued by staff and support such staff in their endeavours. Support could entail financial administrators' assistance with provision of regular monthly statements, and feedback and explanation about financial systems. In addition the support of a department head at both a practical and emotional level is imperative; and

- Service-learning to be offered as a viable alternative route for research, promotion and advancement within the university.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors conclude that the Street Law intervention has begun, through service-learning, to move all the participants towards a new understanding of personal enablement. Inmates are developing a sense of identity outside of the label of 'prisoner'. They are acquiring knowledge and skills to take them beyond the prison and into lifelong learning – learning about responsible citizenship in a democratic era and the skills, attitudes and knowledge that this entails. Law students, too, are learning through the development of socio-legal knowledge and skills about their role as future leaders and lawyers in the new South Africa. Through hands-on experience, students learn to deal with real-world problems and develop and internalise the attitudes, beliefs and responsibilities that can enable others.

As the students reflected:

> Although Street Law cannot truly fix the problems in the lives of individuals in trouble with the law, it can…provide them with adequate information concerning the consequences of criminal actions and provide much needed information about the meaning of democracy. It has been our experience that Street Law inspires these young men to aspire for more in life than just returning to prison. (Vallisia and Lethabo, 2004, unedited)

However, given the significant need in prisons for the kind of enablement this module can offer, building on partnerships with the prison community participants could help to substantially expand this Street Law service-learning elective. For example, 10 students working in a prison site translates into five workshops a week with approximately 20 – 30 inmates involved in each workshop. This

means that there will be 150 inmates participating simultaneously on a weekly basis in a Street Law programme. In terms of expanding the programme, we could perhaps run workshops more frequently or over a longer period of time. If we increased the length of the workshops, this would increase the opportunities for the enhancement of enablement, in terms of both the prison inmates and the Law students. This would be concomitant with our findings, which were that as relationships between stakeholders deepened, enablement too deepened its roots.

We therefore contend that despite the numerous contextual constraints – many of them related to extreme overcrowding in the South African prison system – Street Law, and programmes from other organisations, can impact constructively on the lives of some of the country's most vulnerable people, her prison population. External organisations like Street Law can begin to point the way to the path of rehabilitation and in so doing begin to concretise the vision contained in our new democracy. And that aspiration, we would argue, is the start of a constructive, self-enabled, life path for students and prison inmates alike.

REFERENCES

Cappelletti, M. (1992). The Future of Legal Education: A Comparative Perspective. *South African Journal of Human Rights,* Vol. 8. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Department of Correctional Services (DCS). (2003). *Draft White Paper on Corrections in South Africa*. Pretoria: DCS.

Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Education White Paper 3. A Programme for Higher Education Transformation*. Government Gazette No. 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria: DoE.

Fagan, J. (2004). *Annual Report 2003/2004. Prisoners and Prisons*. Office of the Inspecting Judge. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Fullan, M. (1991). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell Educational Limited.

Pritchard, A. (2005). *Ways of Learning*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Republic of South Africa. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Act 108 of 1996, 10 December 1996. ISBN 0-620-20214-9.

Salinas, R. (2005). *What is Service-Learning?* www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/chu/edc/s, accessed 15 September 2005.

Sarkin, J. (1993). Restructuring the Legal Profession and Access to Justice: The Duty of Law Graduates and Lawyers to Provide Legal Services. *South African Journal of Human Rights,* Vol. 9. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

CASE STUDY 9
SERVICE-LEARNING IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

GENEVIEVE HART

About Prof. Genevieve Hart...

Associate professor and chairperson in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

Genevieve had many years of experience as a high-school teacher and librarian before taking up her post at UWC in 1995. Her research interests include: the impact of changes in local government on public libraries; the role of public libraries in the transition of South Africa towards a knowledge society; South African adolescent literature (in English); and the teaching of children's literature in South Africa. She has published papers and spoken at local and international conferences on her research in schools and public libraries. From 2000 – 2002 she served as chairperson of the School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group of the Library and Information Association of South Africa. In 2004 she chaired the programme committee of the International Board on Books for Young People Congress held in Cape Town, and initiated and piloted its Schools' Programme, which has brought collections of new books to over 50 schools.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Genevieve Hart
University:	University of the Western Cape (UWC)
Discipline:	Library and Information Science (LIS)
Module title:	Children's and Youth Library and Information Services
Level of students:	Fourth-year
Number of students:	14
Number of credits:	10

Community locations of service-learning:
- Bellville South
- Delft
- Delft South

Service agencies:
- Community libraries in Bellville South, Delft and Delft South
- Goeie Hoop Primary School in Bellville South

SUMMARY

This case study describes a service-learning project in Library and Information Science (LIS) at UWC. The module was offered only once, in 2002, when 14 students enrolled for the service-learning elective – the fourth-year second semester module, Children's and Youth Library and Information Services (LS 421). The final-year second semester programme comprises four equally weighted modules: an elective, a bibliography project and two fieldwork modules. In 2002 the strategy for the service-learning module LS 421 was to merge it with the two fieldwork modules.

The children and youth of the Delft and Bellville South areas face huge challenges arising from the histories and socio-economics of their communities. The lack of literacy and information literacy was identified by the academics involved as an area for the intervention of librarian students. Students on the service-learning module spent two days a week working in the three libraries in Delft, Delft South and Bellville South and attended a weekly seminar. The aim was to embed the theoretical learning of the LS 421 module in real-life experience in the community libraries, specifically in children's and youth library work, thus also fulfilling what had been identified by the academics involved as a significant community need.

The partners in this service-learning module were:
- The higher education institution – in the form of the lecturers and the students;
- The service agencies – in the form of the community library staff and the teaching staff at a primary school; and
- The community – in the form of the children and youth who used the community libraries, and the young learners of the Goeie Hoop Primary School.

As will become evident in the course of this case study, the real experience of attempted partnership was much more complex than the listing above would suggest. The CHESP framework and triad partnership model were experienced as quite rigid and of course could not be loosened in this first pilot funded project. The way things worked out, the academic partner had no control over choice of community service site, and the formal triad meetings and official community representative did not yield community buy-in. Furthermore, because the module was offered only once, the partners had neither the opportunity to take the lessons learnt from experience and apply them in order to improve the module, nor the time required to build levels of trust among partners in an ongoing relationship. Had the module been repeated, there would have been more freedom subsequently for the academic and service partners to seek out their own choice of community partners; and the pressures in general would have been less intense.

The case study reports the various challenges encountered. It describes the pitfalls, obstacles and difficulties encountered, many of which, on reflection, could have been avoided; and would certainly have been handled differently in subsequent offerings.

The study relies heavily on a narrative report written in November 2002, just as the service-learning module was coming to an end. The module was not repeated in 2003 since the numbers of final-year students dropped substantially and none enrolled for the module. Two sets of factors might explain this: changes in patterns of librarian employment; and conditions inside the academic programme itself, which will become evident in the course of the case study. Had circumstances allowed for the module to be offered the following year, this would have been a welcome opportunity to revisit the partnership model, and for all partners to implement lessons learnt from the first experience and continue to make improvements to the module.

At UWC we are in the process of restructuring our whole degree – and hopefully our new programme from 2009 will include a service-learning component.

Lessons learnt

In the course of developing and implementing this module, we learnt several invaluable lessons about service-learning:

- More interrogation of the difference between library-based fieldwork and service-learning is required by the academics involved.
- Offering a service-learning module is more complex and more time-consuming than offering traditional modules.
- The demands on the students in terms of both time and engagement are also heavier with a service-learning module than with conventional modules.
- The partnership model chosen for the service-learning module is very important.

INITIATION

The CHESP pilot learning initiative came at an opportune moment in our department for two reasons. We were reconsidering our traditional approach to fieldwork and we were planning a new module in children's librarianship. A colleague in the Department of Library and

Information Science, Sally Witbooi, participated in the initial discussions with CHESP, where she met a group of nuns working on a project with young children in Delft. She recognised the proposed new children's librarianship module as an appropriate service-learning module.

Fieldwork programme

Elsewhere, Sally Witbooi has provided an analysis of the various models of fieldwork found in professional librarian education (Witbooi, 2004). Our approach at UWC until 2001 was to build in two fieldwork sessions of three weeks each, in the university vacations. The students would choose a library, often close to their homes, and the Department of Library and Information Science would negotiate access.

Fieldwork has several aims; for example:
- To provide practical training and experience;
- To give students insight into the different kinds of libraries and career opportunities; and
- To enable students to apply their theoretical learning.

In the above list of aims, there is no emphasis on the students contributing to the community. However, in other areas, UWC's Department of Library and Information Science shows a preoccupation with 'community librarianship'. Its research and teaching themes are evidence of this interest and it has taken part in a number of community projects – for example, working with the Western Cape Education Department over a number of years to set up libraries in disadvantaged schools.

In 2000 we restructured our BBibl programme and, after a roundtable discussion with practising librarians, embedded the two fieldwork modules (to be IS 421 and IS 422) in the formal fourth-year curriculum. This decision reflects the problems we had been experiencing in managing the quality of the fieldwork experience. Students were scattered throughout the country in their vacations and the learning experience was uneven. Some students were no more than an extra pair of hands at the circulation desk of their small local library – while others were benefiting from an in-depth educational experience in complex library systems. We hoped that in placing our students in libraries in Cape Town inside the teaching term, we would resolve these problems.

New module in Children's and Youth Library and Information Science

As we examined our fieldwork programme, we were also deciding to introduce a new fourth-year elective module – Children's and Youth Library and Information Science (LS 421). This decision had its roots in two areas of activity within the department: our concern over the reading and information needs of South African youth, as evidenced in the international symposium, Focus on Youth: The Reading & Information Needs of South African Youth in the 21st Century, which we had hosted in 1999; and a research project into the state of children's libraries that I had undertaken in 1999.

The research project (Hart, 1999) explored the position of children's libraries in the public libraries of Cape Town. I visited 67 libraries throughout the metropolitan region and conducted interviews with "the staff member responsible for children's services". My conclusions were that

children's libraries were in a precarious position (Hart, 2000). Respondents were unanimous that they were in need of more resources, more support and more education. When I reported my findings at the annual national conference of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) in 1999, I found that they resonated with librarians from all over the country. The paper led to a conference motion being passed at the LIASA AGM of that year, which pointed to the need for specialist children's librarians' posts in all local government structures.

However, subsequent changes in the public library sector served to worsen the situation. The climate surrounding librarian education since 1999 has meant that nothing in fact came of the conference motion. For, in what has been described as a 'crisis' in public librarian employment, our overall numbers have continued to drop. The public library services in Cape Town and in other regions used to be the major employer of our graduates; in the last few years none of our new graduates have been employed in Cape Town's libraries – the result of a general 'freezing' of posts as municipal structures are repositioned. The position is not unique to Cape Town, as evidenced in Prof. Dennis Ocholla's 2005 survey of advertised job opportunities in South African public libraries between 1997 and 2004, which confirmed that the public library sector, at present, offers very few professional positions to young graduates (Ocholla, 2005). The optimism evident in the introductory sections of the case study, where the initiation and conceptualisation of the module are described, makes for painful reading in the light of these later developments.

However, it can be seen that the CHESP offer came at the right time. Linking the two fieldwork modules with the proposed new module offered the chance to cross-pollinate the two strands of learning experience. The students who elected to do the Children's and Youth Library and Information Science module would be expected to spend two days a week in one of the libraries (Delft, Delft South or Bellville South). It would allow the theoretical learning of the LS 421 module to be grounded in real-life experience in children's and youth library work. Moreover, the concept of service-learning offered a new conceptualisation of our traditional approaches to community work. It seemed that the CHESP project might allow us to weave together the threads of interest and activism within our department.

CONCEPTUALISATION

The module has 10 credits and is one of the eight modules in the final-year programme of the BBibl degree, a professional degree within the field of LIS. Two of these eight modules are 'fieldwork' modules, where students are placed in libraries and information services to gain practical experience.

The academics involved, by means of logic model building, conceptualised ambitious aims – to "improve the literacy and information literacy of youth" in the chosen communities. Reading levels at South African schools are low, affecting learners' academic performance across all learning areas. Pre-school children in disadvantaged communities have inadequate access to stories and to print. Public libraries in South Africa are struggling to cope with the demands of the hundreds of school learners who flock to the libraries in the afternoons in search of information for their school assignments. The learners are often unable to articulate what they

need – in terms of the topic they are 'researching' and what information might help them. The absence of school libraries and of information literacy education in their schools leaves learners ill-prepared for the high-level cognitive demands of information seeking, whether using print resources or the world wide web.

The logic modelling exercise did not clarify how and where to achieve the above aims. There were vague suggestions of "reaching out to the youth" with storytelling and literacy programmes but no clear idea of how this might be done outside of established schools, educare centres and libraries. The changing faces at planning meetings perhaps meant that a common understanding did not evolve from meeting to meeting. The three libraries found it difficult to release staff for the series of planning meetings and thus participation by the service agency partners was patchy. Moreover, some months into the planning process (and after a series of rather unsatisfactory meetings, consisting of polite but vague talk), our specific project was still missing the third component of the desired triad – a community member active in the field of literacy and information literacy. The group of nuns, who had initially suggested the project to colleague Sally Witbooi, had left South Africa, and the focus of the community activist first 'allocated' to our project by CHESP in 2001 was community *health*. Of course, in different circumstances, a community library could have made an excellent partner for her. However, in this case the absence of a dynamic community partner with specific LIS experience and expertise meant that the CHESP project managers completed our logic model on *behalf of* the 'community'.

In any case, it soon became clear that the service agencies saw the project as library-based. The service agencies regard themselves as *community* libraries – they interact directly with their communities, both formally through various community forums and informally on a day-to-day basis. The understanding and expectation was that each of them was in regular contact with schools, crèches and youth groups in their communities. This expectation perhaps blurred the need to continue the active search for a formal community partner to complete the partnership triad. Invitations to schools to participate were thwarted by the fact that educators may not leave their schools for morning meetings. My hope, eventually, was that working in the libraries would be the students' springboard into the surrounding communities.

'Development politics' also surfaced during the process of conceptualising the module. In June 2002, Bellville South Library apparently decided to withdraw from the project. It had sent no representatives to our planning meetings in the first semester of 2002 – citing staff changes and staff shortages as the reasons. On speaking to the librarian, I learnt that the real reasons were more complex; community representatives from Bellville South had heard comments from Delft that Bellville South was "too advantaged" to be part of the CHESP initiative. On hearing the comment, the CHESP staff intervened. It is ironic that, of the three sites, perhaps Bellville South came to conform most closely to the ideals of the concept of the three-way partnership in service-learning. The four students placed at the Bellville South Library soon were spending two days a week in a nearby Afrikaans-medium school, where they identified a group of isiXhosa-speaking children in desperate need of literacy support. My aim in reporting this hiccup is that it points to the negotiating demands often placed on the academic partner by the service-learning ideal of the triad. It also points to the value of partnership relationships in which communication and levels of trust have had time to be established; presumably, effective and

ongoing three-way communications among all partners would allow for such stereotypes and opinions to be debated and addressed over time.

PREPARATION

The 14 students enrolled for LS 421 had met with CHESP staff in the first semester and had been introduced to the project. The transport and seed portfolio money for the students was crucial. At times I was shocked to witness the extent of our students' poverty. Some students clearly used their funds up too soon and some were unable to provide documentation for what they had spent on their portfolios. These are life skills that urgently need developing if students are to be expected to participate in service-learning modules.

We set aside the first three days of the second semester for an orientation programme – the necessary transport being provided by the CHESP office. The first day aimed at introducing the 14 students enrolled for the module to the service agencies. Their journals later revealed how nervous and insecure the students felt:

> I feel very nervous and anxious because I'm not too sure that I will cope and I'm not sure what is expected of me. (Student journal, 22 July 2002, unedited)

> I was very concerned about my lack of work experience in the LIS field. This is one of the reasons why I registered for this module. One of the things that made me more relaxed was that their people speaking to us seemed to be less concerned than I was. (Student journal, 22 July 2002, unedited)

Several of the students revealed fear of working in the community:

> I've never been in a community based work and never dealt with young people and children so I'm not sure I will treat them as they expect me to. (Student journal, 22 July 2002, unedited)

> I was afraid of dealing with the community. I was not sure exactly about their expectations. (Student journal, 22 July 2002, unedited)

The second day's workshop took place at Delft South and brought together about 40 people: the students, the service agencies and a number of role-players from the Delft and Bellville South communities – health workers, police, youth workers and managers of childcare centres. Although the agenda listed "Introduction to schools", no school educators were present, so once again an opportunity to gain a foothold in schools was missed. Each person present was invited to talk about his/her work and how s/he saw the needs of youth in the area. The discussion was lively and the students asked many questions. The students' journals contain several comments on the social challenges within Delft – high levels of unemployment, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, gangsterism, abuse, crime, drug abuse. The students were impressed by the dedication of the community workers. As one put it: "It was wonderful to learn how all these people are united working together to develop their communities" (student journal, 23 July 2002, unedited).

Several of the students commented that their eyes had been opened to the role of a community library. For example:

> It's a huge responsibility working in the library. Librarians have a huge responsibility of taking care of their users helping them solve their problems – helping them to be information literate and to love reading. (Student journal, 23 July 2002, unedited)

However, one or two of the students expressed reservations about being placed in largely Afrikaans-speaking communities:

> I learned that most of the time I will serve the Afrikaans-speaking people. And I don't understand their language. (Student journal, 23 July 2002, unedited)

> I realise that most of the children in Bellville South Library don't understand English, they are Afrikaans speaking people. (Student journal, 23 July 2002, unedited)

The third day was a tour of the sites. Students visited each library and chose where and when they were to work. Six chose Delft South, four Delft and four Bellville South. Of the 14 students, one was an Afrikaans-speaking male. The rest were isiXhosa-speaking women. Delft and Bellville South, largely Afrikaans-speaking communities, were clearly not ideal for the largely isiXhosa-speaking group of students enrolled for the module; but the nature of the pilot project left no room to go elsewhere.

Overall, the three-day orientation was a success. One student said:

> If today were to set the tone for the rest of the project I think I will enjoy it very much and gain valuable experience as well…I feel confident, excited and I can't wait to start working. (Student journal, 22 and 24 July 2002, unedited)

IMPLEMENTATION

Weekly seminars

The module description for LS 421 shows a programme of 14 seminars, each with its own theme. These covered the theory, research and professional practice of children's and youth librarianship. About R8 000 was spent early in 2002 on module reading materials – professional and academic manuals and texts that were made available to the students. These materials provided the reading for the seminars and served to expose students to the breadth and depth of children's librarianship. The seminars also covered themes outside the narrow confines of librarianship, such as family literacy and the position of South African children and youth in post-apartheid South Africa – of clear relevance to students training to design and manage services responsive to children's needs. It was envisaged that the students would undertake two projects in the course of the semester – a literacy portfolio and an information literacy portfolio. These would include examples of activities and programmes the students were to embark on at their service-learning sites (the schools and libraries). Instead of the information literacy

portfolio, the students at Delft opted to build a database of children's and youth community services in Cape Town – something that had been identified as desirable in the course of the logic model building.

The seminars followed a similar structure from week to week. The first hour was spent on general group discussion on what had happened that week at the sites. Students were asked to keep a journal to reflect on their day-to-day experiences and to connect it to their seminar work and to their readings. I used this first hour to pick up on preoccupations and professional issues revealed in the journals, thus trying to make connections to that day's seminar theme.

Service-learning programme at the three sites

At the end of 2002, I recorded the pang of regret I felt on comparing the early journal entries of the students with those at the end. Many of their expectations were not met. This does not come out in their final questionnaires for CHESP, where they give uniformly positive responses to the questions that probe their attitudes to "courses in a community setting". Their main complaints in the questionnaires concern the amount of time the module occupied, their safety fears and their transport worries. It was in their journals that students let off steam and complained – and sometimes appealed for my intervention. The truth of the success of the service-learning component probably lies somewhere in between the journal woes and the positive questionnaire responses.

On being asked in their first week's journal to say what advantages the service-learning approach might have over traditional fieldwork, many of the students expressed great idealism and hoped that they would be working outside the library building, in the community. Thus, one student wrote:

> I have to come up with a programme to develop the information literacy of children in the Bellville South community. Not much time will be spent on issuing books [or] on being in the library all day. I have to be in the community helping children realise the importance of the library – how it will give them lifelong learning experience…I know we will be working hand in hand with the community and library users. Not all users come to the library but we are going to the community. (Student journal, 24 July 2002, unedited)

The comment above comes from a student placed at Bellville South Library. In their first week, her group took picture books to the local clinic and read stories to mothers and children. However, they found themselves at a disadvantage, because their Afrikaans was weak. They then found a niche at Goeie Hoop Primary School, a street away from the public library. Another student in her group reported in mid-September: "Working at Goeie Hoop was a wonderful experience for me, one I will treasure until I'm in my own library". Another in this group claims: "[The experience] made me feel so wanted and useful" (student journal, 10 September 2002, unedited).

The students – three isiXhosa-speaking women and one Afrikaans-speaking man – at Delft Library were not feeling so wanted. One commented: "The staff don't know what to do with

us" (student journal, 2 September 2002). The fact that Delft Library, like Bellville South, serves a largely Afrikaans-speaking community created problems for the students: "It's the language barrier that is the problem. Some users get angry when you answer in English" (student journal, 2 September 2002).

The students in Delft were unable to find a focus outside the library's walls and were soon complaining of the tedium of the work in the libraries. The male student worked through this slump with enthusiasm and, by the end of August, was using his journal entries and the seminar discussions to explore particular issues that preoccupied him – such as his 'authority' or status as a student, the management and supervision of library staff, his relationship with other staff members, the role of the security guard at the library, his enjoyment of reference work, the management of the Smart Cape computers, and so on. After being away with the flu, he reported: "I truly enjoy working in the library, particularly the reference section. I couldn't wait to get to work in the reference section after being away" (student journal, 10 September 2002, unedited).

Meanwhile, the three women students with him at Delft claimed that they were doing nothing but shelve books. Delft library is understaffed and is crowded every afternoon with hundreds of school learners doing school projects and using the Smart Cape computers. Each morning the library is littered with piles of books in need of shelving and the students kept complaining that the library staff were expecting the students to do all the tidying: "I wouldn't mind if they [library staff] were helping us but they no longer do. They just sit and wait for us to do it" (student journal, 19 August 2002, unedited).

The students also worried that, as soon as they sat down to prepare a programme or discuss a plan, they were made to feel they were shirking and were interrupted. They also were finding it daunting to be faced with 70 children unexpectedly arriving for story time. They could see no evidence of systematic programming and communication with the schools in the area and felt insecure. Unlike the group at Bellville South, the students in question did not have the capacity to suggest changes, visit schools and develop a systematic programme.

But of course there are always other versions of a story, as I discovered when I visited the senior librarian at Delft in an attempt to intervene in response to the students' unhappiness. This was followed up by a meeting of all the library staff and students. According to one student my intervention had a positive effect: "You made a big difference. They said that they don't have the time [to allow students experience in other areas like cataloguing] but it's not true. After you came things changed" (student journal, 20 September 2002, unedited).

Perhaps the story had a happy ending. All four of the students had positive comments on the experience at the end of the module and two weeks later Delft held a party for them, which the students appreciated. And it is interesting to see how many of the staff in their final questionnaires commented on how they had enjoyed having people of a "different culture" in their midst. For example, one said that the best aspect of the experience had been: "The

different cultural groups teaming up to finish tasks [and] learning about their culture" (service agency final questionnaire).

The issues at Bellville South and at Delft preoccupied me – so that I neglected the six students at Delft South, where things seemed to be going smoothly. There was no language barrier, Delft being largely isiXhosa-speaking. At the beginning, the students were in the hands of a community mentor – a library volunteer. They had a community partner, an educator from Delft South Primary Number Four, who brought groups of children to the library every Monday. However, conflicts suddenly arose among the students. One student was being ostracised and began to visit my office often. The making of a video on the project brought out a strongly competitive streak in the students and her peers had said that she was not "good enough" to take part. Moreover, once the video was made, the group seemed to feel that their work was complete and lost motivation. My solution to re-energise them was to use the seminar on user surveys to initiate a research project investigating the information needs of school learners using the Delft and Delft South libraries. Over one week in late October, the students conducted 800 interviews, which was a very valuable exercise (Hart, 2003; 2004).

At various times, students across all three sites asked questions about the impact of what they were doing. Programme assessment, accountability and performance measurement became common themes in our seminar discussions. Libraries all too often rely on instinct and anecdote in talking of the value of their work. There is very little attempt to assess systematically the value of their interventions. Students became frustrated at the lack of structuring in their programmes. For example, the educator in Delft would send large groups of children, completely mixed in terms of age and ability, to the library every Monday and there was no continuity or feedback. The fact that the students were prompted by their service-learning experience to become more critical of how library services are run could be seen as a very good thing, despite the frustration they experienced.

Revisiting what I wrote in 2002, I question my role as the academic partner. I was in constant contact with the service agencies and the students' community contacts; yet, my preoccupation was, I must acknowledge, always the academic module. I relied on the Friday afternoon seminars to encourage students to learn from what they were experiencing – good or bad. Students compiled portfolios of their literacy and information literacy programmes as the module progressed. But it was difficult for some to implement their plans since they would suddenly be faced with a different and unknown group of children.

Questions that surfaced, as I wrote up the case study subsequently, related to the responsibility of the academic partner. For example:
- Should I have intervened more actively in the decisions made by the libraries?
- Should I have got more directly involved in the planning of the various interventions? and
- Should I have spent more time looking for community partners?

However, the reality is that the new module took an inordinate amount of time. In fact, this could be said to be a prohibiting factor in implementation:

- The meetings and planning over two years, described above, make no mention of the large amount of time needed to prepare a new academic module.

- As the new module was actually being implemented, it was necessary to spend hours at a time negotiating the various problems that arose at each service site.

- The experiential learning approach is more demanding than lecturing – with seminars having to be carefully planned, and students' cajoled into participating and their journals responded to sensitively.

- At the same time as managing the service-learning module, I was teaching two other modules.

At times, I looked a little enviously at my colleague responsible for the other 26 students who were tucked away quietly in library and information services across Cape Town. Probably, the 14 service-learning students were looking at the other 26 students in the same way.

In analysing the module with the value of hindsight, two points are significant. Firstly, it soon became clear that the students in 2002 had a particularly heavy timetable, as some were doing an extra module in order to switch from our old Lower Diploma in Librarianship, then being phased out, and some were 'carrying' modules. The BBibl degree is a four-year degree with three majors – two in LIS and the third in another discipline. Students' complicated timetables made clearing two full days for work in the community difficult. Some found it easier to work a few hours a day. This might explain the constant anxiety over transport that was evident in students' journals. Taxis are unreliable and dangerous. One student had two mugging incidents in her taxi rides from Delft. Another noted: "It was scary – we had to get off though we had paid" (student journal, 10 September 2002, unedited).

A second related point that is noteworthy in the case of this service-learning module is the gap between it and the fieldwork of other students. The 14 students enrolled for the LS 421 module were part of a class of 40. The other 26 students, having chosen other electives, were placed in libraries and information services in Cape Town in the conventional way – with occasional contact with the staff member responsible for the fieldwork modules. The assessment of the fieldwork modules for these 26 students depended solely on two final reports: one from the students and one from the hosting library. However, the assessment process for the 14 service-learning students was far more complex, including components such as students' journals and their regular reporting and analysis at weekly seminars. Indeed, it is clear that the service-leaning students' experience was far more demanding than that of the other 26 students – in terms of induction, number of hours on site, rigour of supervision, service agency input, and the students' own reflection and writing. On reflection, some years later, the difference in demands and students' perceptions of these differences should have been addressed. Courses have 'reputations' – perhaps the perceived demands of the LS 421 module led to its failure to attract students in 2003.

The following lessons were learnt about implementing a service-learning module, particularly for the first time:

- Offering a service-learning module is more complex and more time-consuming than offering traditional modules, and this must be taken seriously by the department in the work allocation of the academics involved.

- The academics involved need to focus not only on the academic programme but also on keeping the whole service-learning project on track.

- Implementation can require of the lecturer(s) involved a great deal of mentoring and support of the students. Student placement situations can be dynamic and it is necessary to be flexible and often innovative, and sometimes to intervene to change the plan so as to re-energise the students' commitment to the service-learning experience.

- The demands on the students in terms of both time and engagement are also heavier than with conventional modules, and thus it is probably necessary to 'market' the service-learning elective to students in terms of some of the potential positive outcomes.

- The reflective and experiential learning implied in service-learning should infuse the whole BBibl programme. Students cannot be expected to embrace more demanding approaches to learning in the final six months of their degree.

- Logistics of student timetables and student transport are crucially important issues that must be planned for, as they impact significantly on the students' service-learning experience.

- The partnership model chosen for the service-learning module is very important. In this case, if all three participant groups had been able to offer their inputs on an ongoing basis in a relationship of trust, the kinds of misunderstandings and clashes experienced between students and service agencies, for example, could presumably have been avoided or at least managed effectively.

OUTCOMES

There was no attempt to measure the outcomes with respect to the different partner groups — apart from the completion of the questionnaires provided by the CHESP office. For example, we collected no data to measure the impact of the students' presence in the libraries – on the libraries themselves or on children and youth. A thorough evaluation implies the services of a research unit with more resources than we had at our disposal.

It is also true that the blurred focus of the project would make it hard to measure its outcomes. Were the students in the community in order to serve in the libraries – to help them in their day-to-day functioning? Or were the students there to intervene in the reading and information behaviours of youth? If the former, then, given the nature of the project, the outcomes for the community are intertwined with those for the service agencies. The students, in impacting positively on the three libraries, were serving the community – since by definition the service agencies are community service organisations. If the latter, then I wonder if we realised how ambitious our project was. If we want more than extra pairs of hands in the public libraries,

service-learning in the library context implies a new kind of library service – one that moves out of the barriers of the library walls and that cuts across long-established barriers (between the school library sector and the public library sector, for example). I suspect that there are no models to follow – despite the commonplace use of the label 'community' library.

Benefits for the community and the service agencies

Providing figures for the numbers of children involved in the project is not possible. The students in the course of their daily activities interacted on a one-to-one basis with children – helping with projects – and they also engaged with groups in the libraries and at Goeie Hoop Primary.

One of the threads of concern in the above account has been the issue of assessment of impact. It is something that the students mentioned from time to time: thus, "How do we know whether we are making any difference?" In the absence of a structured programme for the same group of children and some kind of assessment of their skills before the programme, it would seem impossible to talk of assessing outcomes. The underlying aim of the storytelling and reading programmes was to improve reading enjoyment and reading ability, the two being inextricably linked. But measuring impact is extremely complex. One simple measure might be counting how many books the children take out immediately after the session or in the weeks following a programme, but most of the children are not registered borrowers and do not take out books.

If the partnership had been working optimally, with the necessary ongoing communication between all partners and regular reflection on the part of all participants, then this could have yielded valuable feedback from, for example, a community representative on community members' perceptions. Further, if the necessary relationship with the schools had been established and nurtured, educators would have been able to feed back information, for example, about improved literacy levels and increased enjoyment of reading among learners in their classes.

The students undertook 'library orientation', introducing children to the library and encouraging them to join. How many did join the library after their interventions is not known. I had hoped that the students working with the library staff would set up more structured information literacy interventions, perhaps working with one educator and one class on a project over a few weeks. Then we could have assessed the project as it went – using agreed-upon criteria. Such measurement implies careful planning – by the service agency, the students and the educators. It would indeed be a valuable project, perhaps for a postgraduate degree. The fact that such criteria were not commonly agreed upon among the different partners points to the reality of unmet expectations, indicating the need to improve communication and for each partner to be as explicit as possible about needs, processes and expected outcomes.

One potentially useful outcome of the service-learning module for the community and the service agency was the study we conducted in late October on the use of the two Delft libraries by school learners, which was referred to earlier (Hart 2003; 2004). Another visible outcome was the database of youth and children's services that the Delft students constructed; it had 50 entries and aimed at supporting youth workers.

Benefits for the higher education institution

The CHESP pilot module brought clear benefits to students and to me as the academic partner:

- Thanks to CHESP funds, the Department of Library and Information Science now has a good collection of books on the practice and theory of children's librarianship and an attractive collection of educational games, puzzles and craft materials.

- The Friday seminars achieved some of their aims. Students learnt to engage in lively argument. It became easier for students to argue analytically, because they had experiential learning on which to base their arguments. They were able to put a case, support it and listen to other students' cases. They would listen to or read a point and consider it in the light of their learning in the library or school. This was thus an exciting teaching experience.

- The journal writing was an important tool in the nurturing of a reflective frame of mind and in the building of connections between doing and learning. Not all of the students engaged with the journal writing at the same depth, however; one or two wrote perfunctory summaries of what they were doing.

Very few students came well prepared to the seminars. Students took turns leading the seminars, each of which involved preparatory reading. Their difficulties in reading ahead and preparing seminars that applied theoretical reading to their practical experiences convinced me that experiential learning cannot be introduced in the final year of a degree; it should infuse the whole programme from the first year. This of course implies commitment to its ideals from all staff members – which cannot be assumed, given the increased demands of this kind of teaching (referred to above).

Importantly, final questionnaire responses and fieldwork reports showed that the 14 students emerged from the module with a positive attitude to community work and convinced of the importance of the role of libraries in the development of communities. As one said:

> The course helped me realise that this fieldwork could help me develop my community library at Fort Beaufort – to help people understand the importance of the library, also to improve their information skills and their children's reading skills. (Student fieldwork evaluation report, 6 November 2002, unedited)

In retrospect, I can report that, despite the failure of the LS 421 module the following year, the service-learning pilot had a positive impact on our BBibl programme through its impact on the general fieldwork programme. At our end-of-year retreat in 2002, it was resolved that responsibility for students' field experience would be shared among all academics, that closer contact would be maintained with students and their hosts, that keeping a journal would be required to encourage reflective learning, and that regular report-back seminars would be held in the course of the fieldwork. Thus, I would argue that important elements of the learning style of service-learning have been adopted – if not, as yet, the actual community service component.

PARTNERSHIPS

This account has included several comments on partnering issues. From the beginning there was a crucial gap – left by the departure of the original community motivators. A key principle of quality service-learning is that the community is involved in defining its needs, or that there is community buy-in; this was not the case with this module. Our obvious community partners were the schools; yet the absence of teacher-librarians in the schools made it difficult to find, ahead of the module's implementation, champions of the cause of literacy and information literacy within the Delft and Bellville South schools. There was no one staff member in the schools who might be assumed to share the interest. However, as shown in the above account, interested educators did emerge once the students were in the libraries.

One of the lessons of the pilot module in 2002 was the difficulty of defining partners' responsibilities. It was difficult at times, for example, to know what my role was in terms of the students' day-to-day experience in the libraries. I was being kept well informed by their journals and by the discussions at the seminars. Yet, I felt I could not tell the library staff what to do with the students. I also felt that I could not interfere with the day-to-day library procedures and practices.

A key reason for the overall lack of success of this service-learning module was that a basic principle of service-learning partnership was not followed; namely, that equal partnerships – where all participants have clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities – need to be established. Ordinarily, such partnerships take time and ongoing effort to establish and maintain, and with the module offered only once, the opportunity to learn from previous mistakes was not available.

CONCLUSION

The LS 421 experience in 2002 raises the question of whether or not our practical fieldwork should stress 'community service' or 'best practice'. Ideally, the two are not contradictory. But much depends on the service agencies. Of course the staff at the three sites have years of experience and knowledge to impart. Yet the libraries at the three sites in this case study are unusually under-resourced. Only four of the staff across all three libraries have post-school education. There are no specialist children's staff and there has been little (if any) in-service education in the needs of young people. We need to examine fieldwork and community service in other professional fields in order to decide our priorities. It is hard to believe that student doctors are exposed *only* to struggling, under-resourced clinics in their tertiary education. Should librarian education be any different?

Academics are sometimes accused by practising professionals of being out of touch with the 'real world'. Before and during the module, there were several comments that "the students are learning about the real world now". One of the refrains of experiential learning is that it serves to expose students to the 'real' world. However, when some people talk of the 'real' world, they mean the 'bad' world – from the perspective of disillusioned experience. One of my aims as a librarian educator is to nurture the idealism of youth and to provide a vision of possibilities.

Given the theme of the module – services to children and youth – and given the fact that this was the students' first and only experience in the field, I suggest that the students and the other partners would have benefited from a preliminary placing, perhaps for one month, in libraries with dedicated children's librarians. Towards the end of the module, the theme for our seminar discussion was the pros and cons of specialist children's or youth staff as opposed to generalists. None of the students argued for the need for specialists. They had spent a few weeks in environments where everybody was expected to 'do the same' and they could not conceive of alternatives. If they had been placed with one of the specialist dedicated children's librarians in Cape Town, some might have argued differently. Internationally, professional practice recognises children's librarianship as a specialisation, demanding its own competences, attributes and education.

In conclusion, I suggest that our pilot service-learning module in 2002 might more accurately be viewed as *enhanced fieldwork*. This case study has identified its weaknesses in terms of the CHESP service-learning model, with four chief flaws highlighted:

- There was inadequate interrogation of the difference between a conventional library-based fieldwork approach and service-learning.

- For various reasons already discussed, there was too little buy-in from and participation by community partners.

- Workable partnerships, including those with the service agencies, require an ongoing investment of time and energy to establish the necessary levels of communication and trust. Best practice is not possible in a one-off programme, because continuity and learning from experience are key to building partnerships.

- The students and service sites were mismatched in terms of a language (communication) barrier, and this was not taken into account in how the module was conceptualised and implemented.

The fact that the module was not repeated in 2003 did not allow these weaknesses to be addressed; thus, for example, the service agencies were not provided a subsequent opportunity of learning how to engage students more effectively.

The restructuring of our BBibl degree provides the opportunity to return to these issues. It is important to assess rigorously the purposes and outcomes of our fieldwork programme – perhaps in a formal research project. In future, our basic professional fieldwork experience could well be built into modules in the second- and third-year programmes, thus allowing for reflective and deeper-level learning. Such modules will not be service-learning modules but they will involve experiential learning in libraries chosen as service sites because of the excellence of their services. The students, most of whom have no prior direct experience of good libraries, will there experience 'best practice'. (For such students, service-learning will come later and will probably be outside library walls.) Our students might thus be better prepared for community service in their final year.

REFERENCES

Hart, G. (1999). Ready for the Information Society? A Study of Cape Town's Children's Librarians. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 5, 169-188.

Hart, G. (2000). Cape Town's Children's Librarians. Cinderellas of the Library World? *Cape Librarian*, 44 (4), 72-74.

Hart, G. (2003). Public Libraries Stepping into the Gap? A Study of School Learners' Use of Libraries in a Disadvantaged Community in Cape Town. In Zinn, S., Hart, G. & Howe, E. (eds.). *IASL Reports 2003: School Libraries Breaking Down Barriers*. Selected papers from the 32nd Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) and the 7th International Forum on Research in School Librarianship, 7-11 July 2003, Durban, South Africa; and Seattle: IASL, 71-83.

Hart, G. (2004). Public Libraries in South Africa: Agents or Victims of Educational Change? *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science,* 70 (2), 110-121.

Ocholla, D. (2005). *Librarian Job Advertisements: 1997 and 2004 Compared.* Paper presented at Indaba of Librarian Educators, 28 February 2005, University of South Africa.

Witbooi, S. (2004). Service-Learning in the Library and Information Studies Curriculum at the University of the Western Cape: An Exploratory Study. *Mousaion*, 22 (1), 89-102.

CASE STUDY 10
SERVICE-LEARNING IN NURSING

IELSE SEALE

About Mrs Ielse Seale...

Lecturer in the School of Nursing, University of the Free State (UFS) and responsible, since 2005, for the post-basic qualification in Nursing Education, entailing coordination, lecturing and facilitating the theory and practice of the qualification's core modules. Also involved in postgraduate supervision and in-training workshops on education principles; and involved, on a part-time basis, in co-facilitating a module on service-learning (an elective within the degree of Master's in Higher Education Studies at the UFS).

Previously, Ielse acted as the portfolio head for Community Service at the School of Nursing and coordinated the first year of the generic degree in Nursing. Her particular research interests include education (Nursing education, service-learning, curriculum studies) and action research. Service-learning was chosen as a methodology as a result of enthusiastic peers and visionary, transformative leadership, with the CHESP service-learning initiative being an additional motivating factor. Service-learning has had a strong impact on her as an academic; she completed a Master's in Higher Education Studies with service-learning as the focus of her research component; and service-learning has helped her became a more reflective practitioner with a lifelong learning approach – and a passion for the benefits offered by service-learning.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Ielse Seale
University:	University of the Free State (UFS)
Discipline:	Nursing
Module title:	Addressing Health Needs with a Focus on Community-based Care
Level of students:	First-year
Number of students:	Approximately 60 (varies annually)
Number of credits:	20

Community location of service-learning:
- Mangaung community (Bloemside Phase Six)

Service agencies:
- Botlehadi Primary School
- Tjebelopelo Primary School

Acknowledgements:
It is my pleasure to thank the following people for the privilege of working with them, for the wonderful opportunity of developing my knowledge and skills, and for their contribution to the success of this service learning module:

UFS service-learning campus coordinator:	Dr M.A. Erasmus
UFS Chief Directorate: Service-Learning:	Rev. K. Jaftha
Former head of the UFS School of Nursing:	Prof. M.J. Viljoen
JET-CHESP project manager:	Mr J. Lazarus
Academic staff involved in the module:	Ms S. Honniball, Ms L. Nogabe, Ms C. Foord and Ms M. Purcell
Service sector partners:	Mr. E.M. Peterson and staff of the Botlehadi and Tjebelopelo Primary Schools
Mangaung commmunity:	Bloemside Phase Six
All the students involved	

SUMMARY

The service-learning module discussed in this case study is offered in the field of Nursing and is a first-year module within the generic degree of Nursing at the UFS. Annually, approximately 60 students enrol for the module.

The partners in this service-learning module are:
- The higher education institution – in the form of UFS staff and first-year Nursing students;
- Service agency partners – in the form of two local schools: Botlehadi Primary and Tjebelopelo Primary; and

- The community – in the form of the people of Mangaung, and particularly the inhabitants of Bloemside Phase Six.

Bringle and Hatcher (1995) define service-learning as an educational experience where students take part in an organised academic activity that meets the needs of a community. Students later reflect on the activity in order to gain further understanding of the module content as well as to enhance a sense of civic responsibility.

Traditionally, Nursing students are exposed to courses where the emphasis is on the mastering of clinical knowledge and skills (Seifer & Connors, 2001). However, service-learning in Nursing shifts the focus to the importance of addressing both community-identified concerns and factors influencing the health and quality of life of a whole community. The Nursing students enrolled for this module are therefore introduced to the communities and families before they deal with the clinical complaints of individuals in hospital beds. This case study argues for the ways in which Nursing can benefit from service-learning principles.

The service-learning module entails that students assess the community's health needs and address the identified needs related to the curriculum. This is done by means of a community project that is the sole responsibility of the students. In order to further enrich the module, this project has been placed within a research-based framework. The framework consists of quantitative research steps, the application of which ensures that the project is implemented in a scientific way. The integration of service, learning and research is facilitated by using a participatory action research process, namely, a 'step-up' action research model.

The key learning outcomes for the students stem from integrating action and reflection; that is to say, using action research improves the service-learning module in this case. The success in bringing about student learning and preparing students for research has been phenomenal, especially when considering the fact that this is a first-year module. Early exposure of students (from any discipline) to research principles will naturally advance the goals of the *National Plan for Higher Education* (NPHE, Ministry of Education, 2001) and contribute to the capacity and output of higher education research.

Another remarkable aspect of this service-learning module is the long-term, sustainable relationship that has been established with the local community. The co-operative understanding between the School of Nursing and the Botlehadi Primary School has played an important role in the overall success of the module. However, such easy co-operation cannot be taken for granted as occurring in all partnerships; and so it is advisable that roles and responsibilities be clearly stipulated in writing.

In this module, the uncompromising commitment of academic staff to walking the extra mile has contributed substantially to the success of the service-learning module; their dedication is undeniably at the root of the successful learning experience of the students.

Lessons learnt

In developing and implementing this service-learning module, we have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- Action research is an ideal approach to use in the development and improvement of service-learning modules as there is a close relationship and 'natural affinity' between action research and service-learning (Erasmus, 2003).

- The value of reflective processes, both in the development of the module and in the promotion of student learning, should never be underestimated.

- Clear stipulation of roles and responsibilities as well as regular involvement of all partners will provide a sound basis for further collaboration and sustainability.

- Innovative thinking in the design and assessment of student activities that will integrate theory and practice is vital.

INITIATION

Various factors such as political driving forces, visionary leadership in the higher education institution in question and funding by national service-learning initiatives led to the initiation of this module as a service-learning module.

Due to political changes in South Africa during the 1990s, it became vital to adapt education to the needs and demands of a changed society. This was one of the greatest forces in the process of educational change and resulted in the NPHE (Ministry of Education, 2001) and *Education White Paper 3* on the transformation of higher education (Department of Education, 1997). According to the White Paper, community service programmes should promote an awareness of the social and economic development role in higher education and broaden participation in social interests and needs (Department of Education, 1997). Service-learning as a pedagogy is the ideal means to promote such an awareness.

Surprisingly, a dedicated and visionary leader in healthcare had already laid the foundation on which to build, even before the transformation of education became legislated. This initiative was rewarded when the previous head of the School of Nursing, Prof. M. Viljoen, received a centenary award for her pioneering work related to community health. It was under her leadership that the School of Nursing became involved in the formation of the Mangaung University–Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP) during the course of 1991. This partnership initiative contributed to the development of a CBE approach for the generic Nursing degree programme. The premise underlying the new approach was that early student exposure to health-related problems in communities better prepares students to deal with challenging situations in their future careers. In Seifer and Connors (2001), for example, reference is made to a vision of leaders in the field of Nursing, with the argument made that innovative CBE and service-learning will be effective in preparing nurses for the realities of current and future

practice. Nursing programmes must accordingly develop appropriate partnerships. The staff of the School of Nursing were, moreover, keen to produce lifelong learners and assertive graduates with the capability to address ever-changing healthcare needs of communities (Fichardt et al.: 2000). Although this approach was community-directed, at this point it was not a fully-fledged service-learning module.

The CHESP service-learning initiative provided the means to transform this first-year Nursing course into a service-learning module. In fact, this module formed part of the CHESP initiative for a period of four years.

As a leading institution of higher education, the UFS approves of community involvement and participation in community service; this became particularly clear through the development of a Community Service Policy (UFS, 2002; 2006) as well as through related speeches presented by the institution's rector/ vice chancellor on various occasions.

When implementing service-learning initiatives, it is important to remember that each module is unique and should take on a character of its own through innovative ideas pertaining to that particular module only. An enthusiastic and positive leader, who is willing to walk the extra mile and to get people on board, is crucial to initiating a successful service-learning module. Furthermore, effective planning is essential. It is important to keep in mind that everything cannot be perfect the first time around; the success of a module is tied to the continuous planning and reflective actions regarding its implementation.

It was found that using an 'action research cycle' to systematically identify challenges, initiate change and improve upon ideas worked very well in the module in question. Because this experience bodes well for the use of action research in other service-learning modules, I provide here a brief review of its most relevant aspects.

Most of the literature refers to Kurt Lewin, an American psychologist who coined the term 'action research' in 1946, as the father of this approach (Waterman et al., 2001; O'Brien, 1998). O'Brien (1998: 2) refers to action research as "learning by doing", which is a very general definition. However, action research differs from general problem-solving activities in that the research interventions are informed by theoretical considerations. The emphasis on scientific study separates this type of research from general professional practices or daily problem solving (Waterman et al., 2001). Dick (2000) argues that the action research design serves a dual purpose, for it yields change (the 'action' part) and understanding (the 'research' part) at the same time. This corroborates O'Brien's idea of "learning by doing"; action (doing) results in change, while understanding (learning) emerges by means of reflection.

Altrichter et al. (2002) warn in an article abstract that, due to its breadth as a research practice and its depth as a discourse of theoretical insight, action research does not have one neat, widely accepted definition. At the end of the article, two pragmatic working definitions jointly authored by participants at the Brisbane International Symposium on Action Research in 1989 are presented (Altrichter et al., 2002). These definitions include ideas such as: interlinked action and reflection to improve one's own work situation; participation in decision-making; learning

progressively by means of a self-reflective spiral; and the public making of experiences. Action research also includes a spiral model of cycles consisting of four phases: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (see Figure 10.1, below).

Figure 10.1: The action research spiral
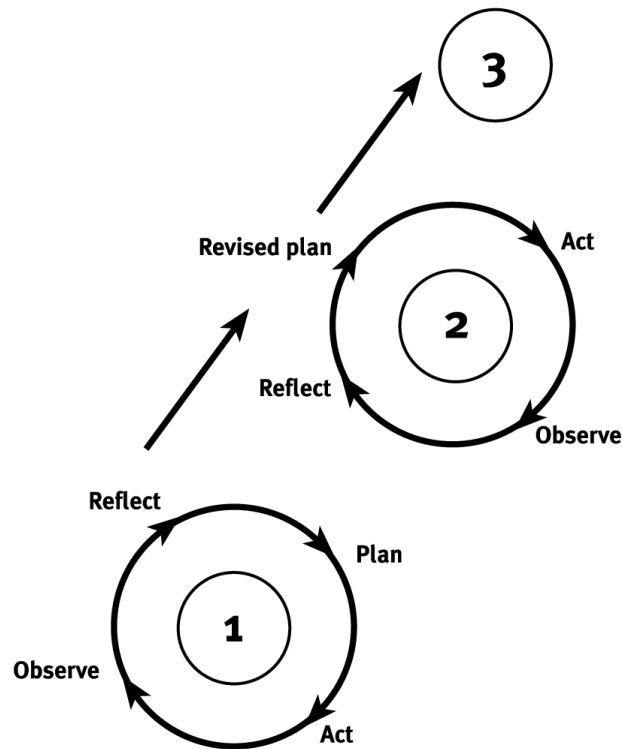
SOURCE: SANKARA, DICK AND PASSFIELD, IN ZUBER-SKERRIT (2001: 20).

It was exactly by passing through several such cycles consisting of the four stages of action research that the service-learning module in question could successfully identify challenges, initiate change and improve upon ideas. In addition to the obvious suitability of the work design of this type of research for any service-learning module, action research seems to be particularly relevant to the context of healthcare. Moreover, according to Waterman et al. (2001) it is the diagnostic, democratic, pragmatic and empirical nature of Lewin's work specifically and action research in general that is of particular significance to healthcare action research.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Representatives of the UFS, and representatives from the community and from the service sector were all involved during the conceptualisation process. The triad partners – namely, the School of Nursing, two local schools (Botlehadi Primary and Tjebelopelo Primary) and the Mangaung community (Bloemside Phase Six) – were involved in the planning and implementation of project activities. A committee was formed to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each

partner as well as the intended benefits for all. Not all members were able to attend the meetings at all times, because of understandable logistical challenges. At times, telephone conversations were used as an alternative, in order to ensure the involvement and participation of all members. Annual reviews of the module included suggestions from the community, the service sector and the students.

According to Bringle and Hatcher (1999), community service activities need to be selected for and aligned with the educational outcomes of the module. The activities of this module address needs that relate to the module content and student learning outcomes. For example, students receive instruction on themes such as: research steps and principles; partnership formation; community assessment and development; and epidemiology, demography and environmental health principles. Furthermore, students are trained to develop skills that will help them in actually performing the community project. Themes such as communication techniques, meeting procedures, public speaking and group dynamics are addressed. The student learning outcomes are aligned with the professional exit-level outcomes for the programme and the content of the module.

The main service objective of the module in question is to address health needs in the community. As part of the healthcare team, students are expected to deliver quality comprehensive nursing care to communities. The service part of the module entails a community project that includes a range of activities. Students perform a community assessment with the aim of identifying health-related needs. This assessment is done by means of structured interviews. Once the needs that bear a relation to the module content have been identified, the students become involved in activities to address these needs.

The significance of this module lies in the fact that theory and practice are integrated by placing the community project into a research-based framework. Multipurpose action research was considered the best vehicle to facilitate effective integration. The development and utilisation of a 'step-up action research model' (see Figure 10.2 below) has aided the process. The community project has been enriched by the additional aims of integrating service, learning and research and facilitating an understanding of the research steps and principles involved.

The key challenge has been to structure the community project activities in order to introduce to first-year students the academic concept of research. The contention was that early involvement with research principles would promote a research culture among undergraduate students and would facilitate the implementation of outcomes 13 and 14 of the NPHE (Ministry of Education, 2001). Collier and Morgan (2002) state that research methods can provide a foundation for modules that include community-based learning. They developed a methods-based service-learning project, where the nature of focus group methodology facilitated the student's understanding of Sociology. Likewise, the community development project of the Nursing students was situated within a quantitative, research-based framework (see Table 10.1, below).

Table 10.1: Situating a community development project within a quantitative, research-based framework

Research process	Applied to project
• Formulate a research problem/ question.	Students' task: • Compile a community profile. • Assess a specific community (structured activities in workbook to guide the process).
• Define the purpose of the study.	• Compile a community profile and make community diagnoses. • Identify health risks.
• Review relevant literature. • Develop a frame of reference.	Module content: • Research; • Demography; • Epidemiology; • Environmental health; and • Community assessment.
• Hypothesise. • Make assumptions explicit and identify limitations.	• Assume that environmental safety will be lacking.
• Select a research design.	• Quantitative design, descriptive in nature, and using a survey method (examples provided to guide students).
• Define a population. • Conduct sampling.	• Bloemside Phase Six population; and • Random selection.
• Conduct a pilot study.	• Test assessment instrument.
• Implement the research plan. • Collect data.	• Collect data from the community; and • Conduct interviews with selected community members.
• Analyse the data. • Interpret the findings.	• Organise and code data during class time (all students involved); • Analysis conducted by biostatistician; and • Identify patterns and trends in class (in different groups, covering different themes).
• Communicate the findings.	Presentation of community project: • Written profile. Conference participation: • Nationally and internationally.

It is vital to plan and design for moments when students can purposely reflect on service experiences and learning activities. Dewey, as cited in Bringle and Hatcher (1999), states that educational experiences are created by face-to-face communication and that an experience becomes educative when critical reflection creates new meanings and results in the ability to take informed actions. Structured reflection on the service-learning activities forms an integral part of the module throughout the process of implementation.

Thiagarajan, as cited in Brackenreg (2004), suggests that before analytical debriefing (reflection) takes place, students' feelings about the service experience must be aired. Furthermore, Dewar and Walker, also cited in Brackenreg (2004), explain that the role of emotion in new learning should be acknowledged since it can either hinder or promote critical thinking. The students taking part in this module are given informal opportunities to reflect on their experiences by verbalising them directly after each visit to the community, at the service site and in the classroom. Students also meet in their various small groups to support one another, and discuss their service experiences (i.e. to debrief) and also to plan future service activities. Formal reflection on feelings and experiences takes place on a pre-, mid-, and post-service experience basis by means of written reflection reports.

Various structured activities that promote critical thinking in terms of the specific service activities related to the theory being covered also form part of the reflective processes. For example, students receive theoretical background on environmental issues, after which they must assess the macro-environment of the community that they serve according to the principles taught. Students then reflect on their practical findings and compare them with theory as encountered in the literature. To further reinforce critical thinking, students are then required to compile a nursing care plan to address the shortcomings between theoretical principles and the practical situation. The compilation of a nursing care plan forms part of the nursing process, which is taught as a vertical and horizontal strand throughout the module curriculum. The nursing process is a problem-solving method that transcends national borders and can be seen as the heartbeat of scientific nursing processes. These written theoretical content-related activities, which promote critical thinking in terms of the service activity, thus form an integral part of the reflective processes in which the students engage, thereby providing invaluable practical, work-related experience for students' future careers.

The generic degree of Nursing at the UFS falls into the category of career-focused Bachelor's degree and lies on level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The design of the qualification requires that students acquire a specialised knowledge, together with practical skills and experience in the context of the workplace. The aim is to develop students who can demonstrate the ability to operate in variable and unfamiliar learning contexts – contexts requiring responsibility and initiative from students to address their own learning needs and to interact in a learning group (Department of Education, 2002: Chapter 7).

This service-learning module covers a period of 14 weeks and has an approved value of 20 credits. The South African Nursing Council, the professional regulating body for Nursing, requires experiential learning hours in the community prior to a member's registration as a professional nurse. The expected hours for placement in the community are six hours per week, while five hours per week are allocated to theoretical contact sessions. Weekly interaction of the student groups with the community and service agencies ensures sufficient fulfilment of learning outcomes. Groups of approximately 12 students are placed under the supervision of facilitators during all contact times with the community. Through various activities, the different groups conduct the community project. These groups are heterogeneous in terms of race, language, (pre-determined) learning styles and gender. Such diversity has been found to enhance group members' sense of commitment and understanding of one another's cultures.

Early involvement of external partners contributes to a project design that is relevant to the challenges in the community and the specific nature of a service-learning module. Open, honest communication is essential to prevent the expectations of the various participants from remaining unfulfilled.

PREPARATION

Reconstruction and development activities conducted by the local authorities contribute to the promotion and development of the community. Thus, the service-learning site for this module is assessed on an annual basis by the facilitators involved and in consultation with the community and schools. This is done to ensure that the health needs in the community still correlate with the curriculum of the students. As soon as the activities and services implemented by the students become self-sustaining, a new site with challenges relevant to the module will be chosen.

Regular meetings with the schools and community representatives take place on an ongoing basis and involve more than just the service-learning issues. Due to a well established partnership, preparing the partners is generally easy to facilitate. The schools and community show a positive attitude and are willing to share resources and to assist in the implementation of service-learning activities and the orientation of students.

Generally, a student orientation session takes place during the first couple of contact sessions. Issues such as conceptualisation of service-learning, logistics, policies, professional behaviour, objectives, activities and student assessment are addressed. Thereafter, students sign an agreement to confirm that they have worked through the module guide and understand it. As part of their orientation process, students undertake a bus tour to the service site and are introduced to the community and service partners.

The following advice can be shared regarding preparation:

- It is imperative that meetings to plan activities for this phase involve all partners.

- Proper recording and distribution of meeting minutes prevent confusion and misunderstandings.

- Timetables (schedules) must be available to all and should correlate with the programme of the service agencies and the communities involved. It is advisable to compile a timetable or schedule that indicates all aspects of the service-learning module, especially if the activities are to take place in different groups and at different times. For example, aspects such as theoretical contact sessions, service times, venues, service sites, group numbers, themes, person responsible and so on can be indicated on the schedule. Although the construction of such a schedule is time-consuming, it is of great value once the implementation starts.

- Accurate monitoring of student placements is a priority for Nursing modules. A register of class attendance and community visits is essential and forms part of the professional body requirements for this module.

Finally, it is worthwhile to appoint an academic staff member as a module coordinator in order to deal with large numbers of students. This person must be experienced in the field of study and, in order to allow for the time taken up by all the extra demands of service-learning modules, this person should not have too heavy a lecture load.

IMPLEMENTATION

The coordinator of this module plays a significant role in the implementation process and drives the process. The coordinator takes responsibility for drawing up schedules and interacting with the partners on a regular basis, thus contributing to the flow of events. In addition to their teaching responsibilities, the facilitators are charged with accompanying student groups to the community.

Students are responsible for the completion of all activities of the community project. Before the needs assessment, they visit the community leader and request permission to undertake a survey in the area. The community is thus able to receive the students with confidence. Then, in order to address the identified health needs, the premises of the school as well as community members' residences are utilised for the implementation of the activities.

Although the service sector (school staff) and the community are actively involved in the implementation process, the service sector has indicated the need for more extensive collaboration and collaborative planning of student involvement in the schools and the community in future projects. In general, the academic staff and the community are given the opportunity by means of meetings to take part in reflection processes that can be described as pre-, mid- and post-implementation. The reflection process promotes personal growth in all participants, shaping an understanding of one another and revealing opportunities for improved service-learning experiences. In addition, academics meet weekly to reflect on module activities and make necessary formative adjustments in the process.

The students' role is to plan their own implementation of the service activities in their various groups by following the guidelines set out in the module guide. Regular group meetings improve the efficiency of students' planning. They are also responsible for compiling a community profile at the end of the service experience. The profile must be written up in the form of a research report and must include an analysis of the survey as well as a section on addressing the health needs of the community involved. Although students all serve in the same community, each group addresses different needs. Various other written activities relating to the community project and the Nursing discipline, such as compiling a nursing care plan to satisfy the identified needs, form part of the whole learning experience. Students are required to hand in their reports on activities in relation to the schedule provided at the beginning of the term. Continuous assessment takes place, since regular feedback on assessment further promotes the link between service and learning objectives. Furthermore, students' reflection reports on service experiences form part of the assessment process.

In the new teaching paradigm, students have become more active. Likewise, the role of the lecturer has changed visibly. Educators are more involved in providing active learning

experiences to develop talent and competences. This implies that thorough and rigorous design of relevant materials and assessment methods is vital. Furthermore, educators are more involved with the students. The presence of the facilitators during the whole process of implementation leads to reflective discussions that promote critical thinking and understanding as well as providing support. Any indications of students in need of academic and/or emotional support are immediately attended to by means of referring them to appropriate services on campus.

The module in question is costly in terms of transport and adequate academic accompaniment of students. For the most part, it has been the implementation grants supplied by the CHESP initiative that have permitted the adaptation of the module according to a service-learning pedagogy. Because of its commitment to CBE, the School of Nursing was prepared to budget for the additional funds needed. This has placed the module in a privileged position when compared to traditional courses where less academic staffing is the order of the day. Occasional financial support for the service-learning module is also offered by the office of the Directorate: Community Service of the UFS.

The following advice can be shared regarding implementing a service-learning module:
- In order to sustain service-learning modules, an annual situation analysis of the available resources should be done.
- It is imperative that financial viability be taken into account when selecting service sites.
- It is necessary to bear in mind that junior students will show a greater need for facilitation, for transport, and so on, whereas senior students may possibly be able to arrange their own transport.
- To ensure the successful implementation of new service-learning modules, management (at departmental level) should consider additional fundraising projects such as contract research, publications and conferences.

Ultimately, the highlight of implementation is the 'demonstration' or 'showcasing' part. Kaye (2003) explains that recognising students' accomplishment publicly may make them more aware of the fact that both the School of Nursing and community members appreciate and understand their contribution. This is, naturally, a significant motivational factor for students. Every year, the Nursing students present their project to the partners, other disciplines and special guests. They also have the opportunity to showcase their achievements on various other occasions such as at conferences.

OUTCOMES

One of the main motivations behind undertaking service-learning in the context of post-apartheid South Africa is to encourage higher education institutions to shoulder their responsibilities in terms of social and economic development. Service-learning should be beneficial to all partners and stakeholders, while also satisfying the core purpose of student learning.

Benefits for the community

Each year different needs are voiced by the Mangaung community, and more specifically the inhabitants of Bloemside Phase Six, when students conduct their surveys. Thus, because students must attend to new and different needs each year, the community has benefited from the service-learning intervention in a variety of ways over the years. To promote hygiene, an improvised but efficient hand-washing method was implemented at schools without running water. Flourishing vegetable gardens at schools and at a number of homes in the community are due to students' actions to ensure an improved nutritional intake for community members. Other service activities aimed at improving the community's health and lifestyle include training courses on water purification methods, food storage systems, ventilation and other environmental issues. In addition, students have referred needs they identified but that were not related to their curriculum content to the relevant structures; for example, inadequate immunisation statistics were referred to primary healthcare settings. Most of these efforts have had long-term benefits for the health of the inhabitants. Another result has been that other university departments have also become involved in the community; for example, the Department of Agriculture at UFS has contributed to the vegetable garden projects.

Various actions unrelated to service-learning occasionally benefit individual community members. For instance, a student gave her own personal baby cot and baby accessories to a family with an infant in need. Although the focus is not on charity, the deed is witness to the sense of civic responsibility and compassion engendered in students by their service-learning experience.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Service-learning is an ideal approach to complement the critical cross-field outcomes identified by SAQA (Republic of South Africa, 1997). These generic outcomes shape all teaching and learning and extend across curricula, and are thus not restricted to a specific learning context. In addition, these outcomes address the cognitive, social, psychomotor and affective areas of student development. Activities such as group work, using technology, public speaking, conducting meetings and reflection all contribute to the realisation of the critical cross-field outcomes. One of the benefits of the module is illustrated by the following remark of a student – reproduced exactly as it was written:

> I think our course's approach was very effective, not only did us students develop people and communication skills, but also develop better understanding or background knowledge of their circumstances.

Various assessment methods such as reflection reports, workbook items, tests, group assessment and peer assessment are employed to ensure the validity of the end marks assigned to students. Members of the triad partnership are also given an opportunity to contribute to the assessment of students by voicing their opinions during the annual student project presentation. The diverse stakeholders present react in an immensely positive way to the students' achievements. One of the stakeholders who assessed the students' presentations concluded as follows:

Die studente se ondersoek, voordrag en aanbieding was werklik puik en indrukwekkend. Veels geluk vir die dosente wat hulle begelei het en vir al die deelnemers wat bygedra het tot 'n puik studie met insiggewende gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings.[13]
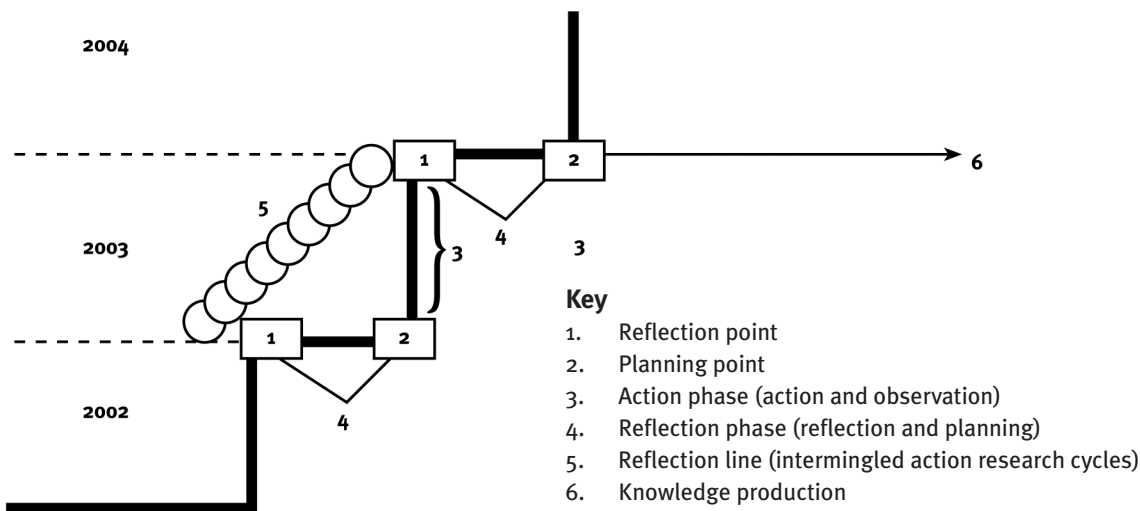
The module has made a definite impact on the discipline of Nursing (with specific reference to healthcare applied to community settings) and on service-learning as such. An action research initiative has been employed to monitor, evaluate and improve the module. In order to explain the research process that was followed, a so-called 'step-up' model has been developed, based on the 'moments' of the conventional action research spiral. The research done led to the publication of an article in an accredited journal (Seale, Wilkinson & Erasmus, 2005: 215, 216). The following two paragraphs and Figure 10.2 (below) are excerpted from the article:

The step-up model consists of ascending action-research steps. Each step represents an action research set, each of which consists of two phases, namely an action phase (see Figure 10.2, number 3) and a reflection phase (see Figure 10.2, number 4). The action phase takes place when participants act on the planning and collect the data or observe the situation. During this phase, upward movement representing improvement and change takes place, thus taking the quality of the project to a higher level. During the reflection phase, planning and reflection create the basis for the next action phase to be built upon. Planning for further action is done in order to move up yet another level. Knowledge production is a result of the reflection process. The forward movement of the reflection phase to the right indicates the contribution to knowledge (see Figure 10.2, number 6). Within each step-up action research set, multitudes of intermingled action research cycles occur including formative reflection. This is illustrated by using a diagonal line in the form of a spiral (see Figure 10.2, number 5) that cuts through each reflection point (see Figure 10.2, number 1). Summative reflection takes place at the reflection points. These reflection processes contribute to both quality improvement and knowledge creation, as indicated by the upward movement of the slope. The planning point (see Figure 10.2, number 2) serves as a basis for departure in identifying and implementing actions. This planning point is an extension of the reflection process. New actions and challenges for the next step-up movement emerged as a result of reflection on research results and outcomes.

The step-up model may also be used to explain service-learning in general. The reflection processes reinforce the learning that takes place in the student. Service in the community allows, through action and observation, for learning to take place and contributes to community development. The upward movement is indicative of this. There is a direct relationship between the action phase (service) and the reflection phase (learning) of student learning when using service-learning as a teaching strategy. The integration process of service and learning results in sustainability of the learning process and involves reflective processes.

---

13   The research of the students and the presentations were excellent and impressive. Congratulations to all the lecturers who acted as facilitators as well as to all participants who contributed to an exemplary study with insightful conclusions and suggestions.

Figure 10.2: The step-up action research model developed by Seale

Key

1. Reflection point
2. Planning point
3. Action phase (action and observation)
4. Reflection phase (reflection and planning)
5. Reflection line (intermingled action research cycles)
6. Knowledge production

Melrose (2001) argues that self-reflection on the research process leads to an understanding of action research as well as the area of practice. The coordinator of the module has experienced this type of impact through self-reflection on the research process. Furthermore, the sustained action research initiative has made a valuable contribution to the discipline.

Benefits for the service agencies

An article in the *CommTalk* community service newsletter of the UFS shows the impact the service-learning module under discussion has had on the community and schools involved. Botlehadi Primary School was declared a 'health-promoting' school and the author commented as follows on the achievements of the lecturers and students involved: "This would not have happened without the contribution from the University of the Free State's School of Nursing" (UFS, 2004: 4).

The principal of Botlehadi Primary School made a presentation at a service-learning conference held by an academic institution. The title of the presentation was: 'Invigorating the Community through Service-Learning'. The aspects addressed by him provide an excellent account of the impact on the school and community in general. He addressed, inter alia, the influence of service-learning on the community in terms of health and caring. The community has been equipped with basic life skills and there has developed a greater understanding of cultural diversity. The benefits of interaction include supporting the environment, developing personal skills, creating community involvement and establishing a school library. The fact that Botlehadi Primary School has been declared a health-promoting school as a result of service-learning involvement is an outstanding example of how a school and community can and did take ownership of the projects initiated by students.

PARTNERSHIPS

As mentioned earlier, the partners involved in this module are UFS, the Bloemside Phase Six community in Mangaung and two local schools in the area. Students perform their weekly community service in this context.

Gelmon et al. (1998) state that partnerships provide new opportunities for relevant and quality professional preparation. A well established partnership had existed between the Botlehadi Primary School in Mangaung and the Nursing School since 1997. The relationship with Botlehadi Primary served as a bridge to partner up with another school in the same community, namely the Tjebelopele Primary School. The two schools (or service partners) have been vital for implementing the service-learning module.

The following advice is shared about partnerships for service-learning:

• A written memorandum of understanding is a requirement that should not be overlooked in service-learning partner involvement, even in cases where the partnership relationship seems quite effortless or few partners are involved. For example, although there now exists a good understanding and co-operative relationship between the School of Nursing and the two schools mentioned, this may change if more schools get involved.

• Together with the triad partnership committee, cross-committee representation helps ensure transparency regarding the activities and needs of all involved. Thus, in the case of this service-learning module, an academic staff member of the School of Nursing serves on the Health Promoting Committee of the Botlehadi Primary School and in turn the school principal serves, in the capacity of a community representative, on the Community Service and Learning Committee of the School of Nursing. Such transparency is critical in order to prevent a situation where expectations remain unfulfilled. It is also important that the community should not see the academic institution as a kind of 'Superman'. More importantly still, the community should never feel that they are simply being used or misused.

The value of institutional involvement in service-learning is illustrated in the following (unedited) remark of a community member and it is quite reassuring regarding continued involvement with the community:

> We are what we are because of the Nursing Department. Both learners and the community have learned a lot and are still prepared to work together with the Nursing Department.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Higher education in South Africa is still in need of ongoing change if it hopes to address past inequalities that are the legacy of apartheid ideology. Neave and van Vught, cited by Fourie (1996), contend that the role of higher education institutions has become crucial for

transformation in developing countries. Transformation in higher education is still called for, and institutions cannot negate their responsibility to add value to society – in particular through community involvement and social upliftment.

Higher education institutions need to introduce policies and structures regarding the promotion of community service and/or community service-learning. Such policies and structures are imperative for the successful implementation of service-learning modules. One specific issue that needs to be addressed is the importance of drawing up contracts and agreements to be signed by all partners involved.

At national level, executive documents to facilitate policy must be grounded in reality. Structures should be put in place to support and implement the policy related to service-learning, in a bid to speed up the implementation process.

ETHICS

Ethical issues need to be addressed at the very commencement of the service-learning module. The following advice is shared:

- While each discipline and/or profession certainly has unique ethical aspects, issues such as confidentiality, privacy and dress code should be dealt with by all disciplines. Consider a declaration of intent that includes the vital ethical aspects of the profession and module.

- Risk management is another very important consideration. Policy related to possible risks should be in place at institutional and departmental levels. Insurance and labour union membership could provide solutions, where policy is not in place. It goes without saying that risks must be reduced to the minimum.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

A university that is resolute in its commitment to all three core functions of a higher education institution (namely, education, research and community service) has without a doubt been the main enabling factor in the success of this particular module. Capacity-building workshops and conferences for academics from all levels of the institution are regularly organised at the UFS. Positive, enthusiastic individuals in the office of the Directorate: Community Service, and visionary leadership in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences have proved indispensable as factors promoting success.

Support and capacity building should take place throughout the process of planning and implementation. The Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development at the UFS offers a course on the design of service-learning modules. Academic staff can register as occasional students for this course. The course objective is to assist participants planning to develop or initiate service-learning modules.

An ideal way for junior lecturers to prepare themselves to conceptualise and implement service-learning modules is to get involved in research with the aim of furthering their studies and bettering their qualifications. The benefits of such work-related research are obvious.

It is worthwhile to invite community and service agency members to workshops and conferences on service-learning in order to sustain and support them in their task. Furthermore, they should be invited to rise to the challenge of taking part in presentations and discussions since much may be learnt from their input.

Student orientation must be strongly grounded in service-learning principles; if not, the conceptualisation of projects and the experiences gained during the service-learning module cannot be worthwhile. A pocket guide on service-learning could be included in the module content.

CONCLUSION

This case study clearly indicates both the benefits and the challenges service-learning holds for higher education institutions, communities and service sectors. That service-learning indeed leads to educational experiences, preparing students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens and skilled workers, is no longer a debatable issue. The paradigm shift toward this approach is a challenge that cannot be ignored; seize the opportunity and soar with it!

In conclusion, I refer to Oliver Wendell Holmes's contention that once "a person's mind [has been] stretched to a new idea [it] never goes back to its original dimensions" (quoted in Kaye, 2003: 27). Through service-learning the gap between the so-called 'ivory tower' to which the university is often likened and the society that surrounds it may be permanently bridged to the satisfaction of all.

REFERENCES

Altrichter, H., Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R. & Zuber-Skerrit, O. (2002). The Concept of Action Research. *The Learning Organisation,* 9 (3), 125-131.

Brackenreg, J. (2004). Issues in Reflection and Debriefing: How Nurse Educators Structure Experiential Activities. *Nurse Education in Practice, 4* (4), 250-257, www.sciencedirect.com, accessed 31 August 2005.

Bringle R.G. & Hatcher J.A. (1995). A Service Learning Curriculum for Faculty. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* Fall, 112-122.

Bringle, R.G. & Hatcher, J.A. (1999). Reflection in Service Learning: Making Meaning of Experience. *Educational Horizons,* Summer, 113-119.

Collier, P.J. & Morgan, D.L. (2002). Community Service through Facilitating Focus Groups: The Case for a Methods-based Service-Learning Course. *Teaching Sociology*, 30 (April), 185-199.

Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Education White Paper 3. A Programme for Higher Education Transformation*. Government Gazette No. 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education (DoE). (2002). *A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education*. Pretoria: DoE.

Dick, B. (2000). Session 2: *The Change Process and Action Research*. www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/areol/areol-session02.html, accessed 12 October 2004.

Erasmus, M.A. (2003). *The 'Natural Affinity' between (Participatory) Action Research and Service-Learning in South African Higher Education Institutions*. Paper presented at the 10th International ALARPM & 15th International PAR Conference, 21-24 September 2003, University of Pretoria.

Fichardt, A.E., Viljoen, M.J., Bothma, Y. & du Rand, P.P. (2000). Adapting to and Implementing a Problem- and Community-based Approach. *Curationis,* September, 86-92.

Fourie, M. (1996). Higher Education – *An Overview. Institutional Governance of Higher Education in Transition: A South African Perspective*. PhD thesis, University of the Orange Free State.

Gelmon, S.B., Holland, B.A., Seifer, S.D., Shinnamon, A.F. & Connors, K. (1998). Community–University Partnership for Mutual Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning,* Fall, 97-107.

Kaye, C.B. (2003). *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

Melrose M.J. (2001). Maximizing the Rigor of Action Research: Why Would You Want to? How Could You? *Field Methods*, 13 (2), 160-180.

Ministry of Education. (2001). *National Plan for Higher Education*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

O'Brien, R. (1998). *An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research*. www.web.net/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html, accessed 12 October 2004.

Republic of South Africa. (1997). *South African Qualifications Authority: Draft Regulations Governing the Activities of National Standards Bodies (NSBs)*. Government Gazette, 9 May 1997. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Seale, I., Wilkinson, A. & Erasmus, M. (2005). A Step-up Action-research Model for the Revitalisation of Service-Learning Modules. *Acta Academica Supplement*, 2005 (3), 203-229.

Seifer, T. & Connors, K. (2001). Introduction and Ideas for Using this Guide. In Seifer, T. (ed.). *Partners in Caring and Community: A Team Approach to Service-Learning in Nursing Education*. San Francisco: Community–Campus Partnerships for Health.

University of the Free State (UFS). (2002). *University of the Free State Community Service Policy.* Available at: www.uovs.ac.za, under community service, accessed 4 October 2004.

University of the Free State (UFS). (2004). Nursing Students Make a Difference at Botlehadi School. *CommTalk. Special Edition: Service Learning.* (2), 4, UFS.

University of the Free State (UFS). (2006). *Community Service Policy of the University of the Free State.* Available at: www.uovs.ac.za, under community service, accessed 20 July 2007.

Waterman, H., Tillen, D., Dickson, R. & de Koning, K. (2001). Action Research: A Systematic Review and Guidance for Assessment. *Health Technology Assessment,* 5 (23), 1-67.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2001). Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs. In Sankara, S., Dick, B. & Passfield, R. (eds.). *Effective Change Management through Action Learning and Action Research: Concepts, Perspectives, Processes and Applications.* Lismore: Southern Cross University Press.

CASE STUDY 11
SERVICE-LEARNING IN PHARMACY

ANGENI BHEEKIE, TRACEY-ANN ADONIS & PRISCILLA S. DANIELS

About Dr Angeni Bheekie...

Doctorate in Pharmacy, and senior lecturer in Pharmacology at the School of Pharmacy, University of the Western Cape (UWC).

Before embarking on a full-time academic career, Angeni worked for five years in public and private sector hospital pharmacies. She teaches Pharmacology to undergraduate students from across the Health Science disciplines and coordinates the School of Pharmacy's service-learning module. Her research includes the design, implementation and evaluation of health improvement interventions for primary care management of chronic diseases. She is exploring opportunities for the expanded role of the pharmacist in the health services. Service-learning was adapted as an undergraduate teaching methodology to enable students to work jointly with the pharmaceutical services to understand and address some of the challenges encountered in public sector health facilities. Greater exposure to service-learning has resulted in review of course relevance and assessment procedures and integration of course work, with a focus on patient-centred care suitable for the South African healthcare context. Collaborative efforts between the School of Pharmacy and the health services have been strengthened through the service-learning module.

About Ms Tracey-Ann Adonis...

Academic coordinator and researcher in the CHESP project, a service-learning initiative at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

Curriculum development, mentoring and staff development of academics in service-learning are key areas of this programme and areas in which Tracey-Ann has been able to hone her skills. She has a background in community and research Psychology. Partnership-building among

higher education, the public services sector and the community has always been a passion and being involved in service-learning at UWC has enabled her to facilitate the process of partnership development in various communities and public services sectors. Her CHESP experience has provided her with opportunities to present at conferences in the area of service-learning and education, with many of these experiences resulting in publication opportunities. Service-learning has therefore had a profound academic impact, as research and publication in this field are current key focal areas.

About Prof. Priscilla S. Daniels...

Associate professor and head of the Department of Human Ecology and Dietetics at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). She manages the CHESP project, a service-learning initiative at this institution.

Prior to her involvement in service-learning, Priscilla's key areas of interest included teaching and research in the area of family studies and management, and she has always employed experiential learning methods. Service-learning has provided her with the opportunity to pursue her passion for mentoring and staff development; she has consequently authored various articles in this area of interest. She has published extensively and also presented at numerous conferences in the fields of service-learning, education and human ecology.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Angeni Bheekie
University:	University of the Western Cape (UWC)
Discipline:	Pharmacy: Pharmacology
Module title:	Skills Development in Rational Pharmacotherapy and Good Pharmacy Practice
Level of students:	Fourth-year
Number of students:	2002: 30; 2004: 66; 2005: 90
Number of credits:	7.5

Community locations of service-learning:
• Bishop Lavis
• Delft
• Kewtown
• Parow
• Ravensmead
• Vanguard

Service agencies:
• Bishop Lavis Community Health Centre
• Delft Community Health Centre
• Dr Abdurahman Community Health Centre, Kewtown
• Parow Community Health Centre
• Ravensmead Community Health Centre
• Vanguard Community Health Centre

Acknowledgements:
• Prof. J.A. Syce conceptualised and initiated implementation of the Pharmacotherapy module. His acute clarity of vision and steadfast commitment ensured a smooth transition to service-learning between the School of Pharmacy and the service agencies.
• The School of Pharmacy is greatly indebted to CHESP (UWC) for sterling research and administrative support. Prof. Priscilla Daniels, Ms Tracey-Ann Adonis and Ms Liana van de Heuvel's efforts are sincerely appreciated.
• The facilitators' sacrifice, team spirit and patience have been especially instrumental in the programme's sustainability.
• The Metropole District Health Services (MDHS) pharmacy staff, management, facility managers and patients provided an enabling learning environment and an exciting partnership-building journey with academic staff and students.
• The School of Pharmacy acknowledges the communities at various sites, for their role in facilitating the service-learning experience.

SUMMARY

The UWC Pharmacotherapy service-learning module was initiated in 2002, in the second semester, from an existing on-campus PBL module in Pharmacotherapy for fourth-year (i.e. final-year) Pharmacy students (Syce, 2003). Student numbers increased from 30 (2002), to 66 (2004), to 90 (2005). This case study focuses specifically on the years 2002 – 2005 (inclusive), although the module continues to be offered.

The partners in this service-learning module are:
• The higher education institution – including students, academic staff and postgraduate students as mentors/ facilitators;
• Service agencies representing the public service sector – made up of the community health centres of the Metropole District Health Services (MDHS), and MDHS resident pharmacists/ pharmacy staff, management and facility managers; and
• The community – as represented by community representatives and community health forums, community volunteers, and patients visiting the community health centres (the service-learning sites).

The primary aim of the service-learning partnership is to develop, among the students, skills in rational Pharmacotherapy, thus meeting a vital objective of the National Drug Policy (Department of Health, 1996). The on-campus based student groups in the service-learning module are introduced to the principles of rational Pharmacotherapy and good prescribing and dispensing practice. The undergraduate service-learning programme at the service sites is intended to enable students to familiarise themselves with the range of Pharmacotherapeutic approaches, referral and follow-up care under the local authority and/or district health system.

The intended student learning and service outcomes are as follows:
• Developing dispensing skills (competence in prescription assessment);
• Developing skills in therapeutic counselling and educating patients on appropriate medicine use;
• Understanding the principles of the essential drug list (EDL) and its standard treatment guidelines; and
• Improving on communication skills with other healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses).

The students are involved in the following activities as part of the service-learning exercise:
• Writing and checking medicine label instructions; and
• Counselling and dispensing clearly facilitated service delivery at sites with poor pharmacist and/or pharmacist assistant complement.

The students also complete a number of service-related projects ranging from:
• Designing drug information leaflets;
• Development of insulin labels;
• Designing a drug formulary;
• Investigating the incidence of common chronic conditions; and
• Designing an educational video for the waiting area.

The module is thus pivotal in preparing students to work in the 'real world', particularly during times of high patient load, and serves as a preview of students' roles in the Pharmacy internship and community service programmes.

Lessons learnt

In developing and implementing the module, we have learnt the following key lessons about service-learning:

- Service-learning modules such as this one, which place students in situations that contextualise patients' life experiences, promote the development of empathy and caring among the students.

- Partnerships present structural and organisational barriers that must be negotiated (on an ongoing basis) in order for the service-learning module to run smoothly.

- Given the particular discipline content of this service-learning module, it has been necessary to understand and work with the constraints presented by the wider context of the primary healthcare system.

- Such community-based research as occurs in the course of setting up and implementing such a service-learning module is imperative for improving the wider pharmaceutical services offered in the province.

INITIATION

This service-learning module was initiated in response to the vision of the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC):

> The vision of the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), in service of the public interest and in terms of statutory obligation, is to ensure that pharmaceutical services are the best to meet the health care needs of the people. The vital element in this vision is the commitment of the pharmacy profession to promote excellence in practice for the benefit of those they serve. (2004a: 1)

According to the SAPC (2004a: v1), the education and training of pharmacists in South Africa must equip them for the roles they have to undertake in practice. The undergraduate Pharmacy module in Pharmacotherapy specifically aims to train students in dispensing and counselling on appropriate medicine use. The intention from the outset has been that in-service implementation of the Pharmacotherapy module would facilitate undergraduate skills development and attempt to narrow the 'gap' in service provision, by teaching students not just to provide the medicines but also to provide patients with tailored information on appropriate medicine use, storage and side effects; and this would contribute towards fulfillment of the mission and vision of the SAPC.

Experiential education in general and service-learning in particular are appropriate for addressing the concerns raised by professional boards such as the SAPC regarding the output of graduates from higher education institutions and the competence of such graduates in the workplace. According to Eyler and Giles:

> The emphasis in service-learning on applying knowledge to community problems and the reciprocal application of community experience to the development of knowledge meets the concerns about the lack of connectedness in higher education. (1999: 13)

Those authors state that service-learning aims to prepare students who are lifelong learners and participants in the world to be able to engage in critical thinking. Through applying service-learning in the training and education of students, future graduates are significantly prepared for engaging in community contexts.

The service-learning partners played a crucial role in initiating the service-learning module. Key activities and aspects of initiating the module were to:
- Plan, initiate and sustain a collaborative partnership;
- Conduct capacity building for all three partners identified;
- Establish and nurture good communication and feedback to sustain the partnership;
- Plan the logistical aspects (e.g. time, transport, supervision, accommodation and number of students) with site management;
- Clearly identify student learning outcomes, so that services and community would know what to expect from the students and what they could do to facilitate these learning outcomes;
- Ensure that time for structured reflection by all partners and particularly the students was built into the module;
- Secure support from the departmental head, services sectors and community; and
- Identify appropriate student assessment procedures.

CONCEPTUALISATION

The SAPC (1997) has identified seven key professional competences (unit standards) and outcomes that Pharmacy graduates must attain during their training. These unit standards are:
1. Organise and control the manufacturing, compounding and packaging of pharmaceutical products;
2. Organise the procurement, storage and distribution of pharmaceutical materials and products;
3. Dispense and ensure the optimal use of medicines prescribed to the patient;
4. Provide pharmacist-initiated care to the patient to ensure the optimal use of medicine;
5. Provide education and information on healthcare and medicines;
6. Promote community health and provide related information and advice; and
7. Participate in research to ensure optimal use of medicine.

To ensure and assess the attainment of such competence, the SAPC has also introduced a

pre-registration/ post-internship professional examination for all pharmacists. And, in addition to understanding principles of pharmaceutical formulation (product/ medicine), there is continuing pressure for Pharmacy training to focus on a 'patient-oriented' approach. Collectively, these developments have placed increasing importance on the practical and applied modules in our undergraduate Pharmacy curriculum.

For the period 1999 – 2001 the UWC School of Pharmacy had conducted an Applied Pharmacology module consisting of two modules: a clinical block module; and a PBL module on Rational Pharmacotherapy. These two modules helped us to meet the new requirements in the curriculum, but the curriculum still fell short in some areas; it still did not provide our students with a realistic view of current practice patterns, what and how students should learn in those settings (i.e. preparation for lifelong learning) and how to develop the practical skills they would need. As Spencer et al. (2000) assert, such a controlled environment limits patient-orientated contextual learning.

It was thus decided that most of the Rational Pharmacotherapy module should also be done in practice settings, thus focusing on the development of the skills needed by the students to implement Rational Pharmacotherapy in primary healthcare hospital pharmacies. For our purposes, we use the following definition of service-learning:

> …a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995: 112)

The Pharmacology staff believed that skills development in real-life situations would enable students to reflect on and value their professional knowledge. As Eyler and Giles argue: "Learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection, not simply through being able to recount what has been learnt through reading and lecture" (1999: 7-8). This type of learning would therefore impact on the development of the students' skills as, rather than experiencing simulated learning situations without the dynamics of interpersonal interaction between individuals, students would be placed in settings where they would engage with the reality of dealing with patients.

In such practice settings, social accountability tends to permeate knowledge production, leading to transfer of Mode 2 (indigenous) knowledge and enabling students to develop problem-solving skills to foster civic responsibility (Muller, 1996). While it is evident that such learning settings encourage within students increased civic responsibility, emphasising this type of learning not only enriches the learning process but also has the potential to renew communities, and gives new dignity to the scholarship of service (Boyer, 1996).

The Rational Pharmacotherapy module was accepted as part of the CHESP project (2001). This allowed for the development of the module to proceed in a structured manner, with increased monitoring and evaluation of the module so that it would be improved on an ongoing basis

according to feedback. (This had not occurred in the PBL modules.) It was decided to implement the programme in two phases: in the first phase (2002), we focused on transferring as much as possible of our training activities from campus to the service site without compromising the 'academic' level of the module; in the second phase (2003) we focused on deriving all the benefits that training our students at service sites has to offer.

The transition from a PBL approach to a service-learning Pharmacotherapy module entailed modifying learning objectives to include an understanding of practice-based experiences. In addition to understanding theoretical Pharmacotherapeutic principles, the objectives included principles of good dispensing practice and primary care. The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) was modified to patient-centred learning – that is to say, learning with skills development in counselling and dispensing of medication and critical analyses of prescriptions. In addition, structured reflection entailed submission by the student of a weekly report to assess personal and professional development.

The module was conceptualised within the following parameters:
- National and regional needs;
- Coherent learning objectives/ outcomes that would stand up to public scrutiny;
- Collaborative partnerships;
- Equity of access and outcome; and
- National qualification standards.

Given the fact that what was to be transformed into the Pharmacotherapy service-learning module was an existing (PBL) module, the fact that the module was initially driven mainly by the academic partners was evident. Decisions around focus areas of the module were negotiated between the university and service agencies, and the community was largely absent from these discussions. This can also be explained by the fact that at that stage we knew very little about service-learning; however, after several capacity building sessions, we realised where we were lacking and we identified the vital role that the community could and should play – both in informing the content of the module and helping in its delivery.

In the Western Cape, primary healthcare facilities (popularly termed 'day hospitals')[14] serve as the first port of call for management of common acute, chronic and minor ailments. While the facilities serve the health needs of the indigent, they relieve the load on regional and teaching hospitals (Vlok, 2000). These primary healthcare facilities, and particularly those sites relatively close to the university, were identified as the service sites for students.

The undergraduate service-learning module at these service sites would enable students to

14   Previously termed Community Health Services Organisations (CHSOs), and now called Metropole District Health Services (MDHS).

familiarise themselves with the range of Pharmacotherapeutic approaches, referral and follow-up care under the local authority and/or district health system. One of the many responsibilities of the pharmaceutical services is to monitor prescriber drug use patterns and patient adherence to therapy. Such experiences would enable students to understand and implement standard operating procedures, assess prescribing patterns relative to standard treatment guidelines, and monitor drug therapy restricted for specialist use and/or for regional use. Students would also familiarise themselves with monitoring of expensive drugs (e.g. anti-hyperlipidaemic agents), to ensure accessible and equitable distribution. Specially designated 'club days' at the health facilities would provide students with the opportunity to engage with patients in management of common chronic diseases (asthma, epilepsy, hypertension and diabetes). Such exposure would prepare Pharmacy students for their internship and community service.

Both the undergraduate and postgraduate arms of the module were designed specifically to address needs of all partners: students, pharmacists, the community, and pharmaceutical services (see Table 11.1, below). The objectives were designed to meet competences (unit standards 3-7) required for entry-level pharmacists (SAPC, 1997). Development of such skills would not only prepare students for Pharmacy internship and community service, but also inculcate habits of lifelong learning. However, undergraduate training to meet laboratory-based competences (unit standards 1-2) in practice settings was not considered for the initial implementation phase (2003 – 2004).

This service-learning module thus flowed entirely from the identified shortcomings and specific needs of our existing academic programme, on the one hand, and from how we anticipated we could assist the service agencies responsible for pharmaceutical service delivery to communities at primary healthcare hospitals, on the other. As mentioned, initially the service agencies and the community had (beyond brief introductory explanations) minimal or no input into the conceptualisation of this module; however, during the second phase of the module their input was understood to be crucial.

The module has been pivotal in preparing students to work in the 'real world' especially during times of high patient load, and to experience a preview of their role in the Pharmacy internship and community service programmes.

Table 11.1: Outline of service-learning Pharmacotherapy module objectives for students, pharmacists, community and the pharmaceutical services

Students

The module objectives aim to enable students to:
- Develop dispensing skills (competence in prescription assessment);
- Develop skills in therapeutic counselling and educating patients on appropriate medicine use;
- Understand the principles of the EDL and its standard treatment guidelines;
- Improve on communication skills with other healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses);
- Gain familiarity with standard operating procedures of the pharmaceutical services;
- Understand the primary healthcare concepts; and
- Acquire skills for lifelong learning/ continuous professional development.

Pharmacists

The module objectives aim to enable pharmacists to:
- Develop skills in PBL techniques;
- Facilitate (tutor) training of students and assistants using PBL techniques;
- Understand the Personal (P-) drug and P-treatment concepts and drug selection;
- Understand the principles of rational drug selection; and
- Assess students in Pharmacotherapy training.

Community: patients

The module objectives aim to enable patients to:
- Establish and strengthen partnerships to jointly address barriers to optimal medicine use;
- Improve knowledge on medicine use and storage; and
- Understand and adhere to preventive care strategies.

Pharmaceutical services

The module objectives aim to:
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with management to promote joint service-learning initiatives;
- Improve pharmaceutical service provision with regard to appropriate drug information through provision of leaflets and oral presentations for common chronic diseases; and
- Identify and address barriers to optimal medicine use with regard to: patient adherence; prescriber and patient knowledge and attitude; and operational issues.

PREPARATION

The students are prepared for the service-learning placement in the following manner. At the initial session of the module, an introductory lecture on service-learning is given and a module reader (developed by the CHESP-UWC office on service-learning) is distributed to all students. This reader highlights the CHESP initiative, provides definitions of service-learning and contains a few articles that motivate the choice of service-learning as a teaching methodology. Students are informed that they are entering into a contractual agreement with the service agency and the community. Over time, the partners all agreed that it would be more appropriate for *all* partners (students, service agencies and community) to sign an agreement in order to highlight the different responsibilities in the service-learning module.

The community and service agencies are prepared for the service-learning module through a series of initial visits by academic staff to the service site. Once again the introductory module reader is distributed to all key individuals at the site. Meetings are also held with the site

managers in order to negotiate the entry of the students into the community health centres. Further, the required indemnity forms have to be completed by each student. The service-learning placement also involves supervisory training for pharmacists at the sites and these arrangements have also had to be negotiated with the site managers.

At the end of the module, students, academic facilitators and service agencies participate in a structured focus group discussion as part of the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the module.

The following advice is shared regarding preparation for implementing a service-learning module:
• Wherever possible, build on existing faculty, staff and student relationships with the community.
• Meet face to face early on, preferably in the community – build the communication channels from the outset as this sustains the partnership.
• Assess the community's needs and identify the assets that the institution offers the community via the service-learning module.
• Negotiate formal partnership agreements.

The partner groups have identified the following 'do's and don'ts' in terms of preparing to implement a service-learning module:
• Do ensure that adequate planning takes place prior to implementing the module;
• Do make logistical arrangements with relevant and key people, and don't work through a 'middleman'.
• Do ensure that all partners are aware of and in agreement on the nature of the learning outcomes.
• Do clarify roles beforehand so that each partner knows what is required (e.g. student supervision etc.).
• Don't take it for granted that previous partnership agreements provide a foundation for partnership – partnerships require constant work and attention.

IMPLEMENTATION

Students are required to dispense under supervision, adhering to good dispensing practice, evaluate patient therapy through critical analyses of prescriptions, engage in actual dispensing of prescription items, and give advice on health and wellbeing and use and purpose of medicines. Senior postgraduate students are given the roles of mentors and assist with the supervision of the undergraduate students in the assigned tasks. These graduate students/ facilitators also assist in supervision of mini service-related projects.

The lecturer's role in implementation includes preparing the students for the service-learning experience by doing PBL case studies prior to the service-learning placement. This gives the students simulated examples of what could occur in practice settings, as well as discipline-specific knowledge and skills required in this real setting. The lecturer also has to develop methods of supervising the students on-site and ensure that students engage in structured reflection.

Throughout the course of the module, the lecturer is required to build and sustain partnerships, particularly with the community. At the module's inception, it was still unclear precisely how the community would be able to contribute to the service-learning experience. As the module has progressed, the lecturer has focused on a process of engaging the community in various ways such as attending health forum meetings and delivering presentations at community forums, and this has assisted in defining the role of the community in the service-learning module. At a focus group session, the community representative highlighted how she engaged in health promotion (training) and the development of resources, following combined training sessions with the academics and pharmacists:

> …we as the community or as volunteers of the community now went to the day hospitals and give programmes while they wait for medicines, and that's really effective now… (Combined focus group, 2004)

It is envisaged that the community will become actively involved in the orientation of students at the service sites and also ensure a safe work environment through providing access to the community, which will provide the opportunity for students to learn through real-life experiences. Risk management issues are very important in service-learning and therefore entry into disadvantaged communities needs to be negotiated and facilitated by community leaders so that there is a level of acceptance and tolerance of students. This will ensure that the benefits of service-learning are achieved. Further, at various waiting points trained community volunteers will support the service agencies through educating patients around correct medicine usage.

In terms of implementation, the role of the resident pharmacists at the service sites is to accommodate students, expose students to normal operations at a pharmacy, assist with reading and interpretation of prescriptions, and assist with the facilitation and assessment of students.

A concerted effort has been made to engage the higher education and service partners in reflecting on their activities. This has provided the lecturer with an opportunity to critically consider the module and, where required or so identified, to make changes to address concerns raised during structured reflection activities. The reflection is organised in the following manner:

- Regular meetings are held in order to keep partners informed.

- At the end of each session at the service site, service agencies, students and facilitators engage in a structured reflection session. All the partners are invited to reflect at an evaluation session arranged by the CHESP-UWC office. A focus group discussion is held with service agencies, academics and community representatives from the service sites.

The module is monitored throughout and, at its conclusion, a detailed evaluation occurs, which involves doing a cost analysis, and completing questionnaires. It has been found that implementing a service-learning module can be a costly exercise, and various elements would need to be budgeted for in future planning. This includes transport, which has proved to be a significant cost due to the

large student numbers and the use of several sites within the district. Printing and photocopying have also proved to be expenses due to the large student numbers.

There are various promoting and prohibiting factors in the implementation of a service-learning module. These have been identified in reflection sessions and reports. The module coordinator indicated that time was an issue, particularly given the work overload of academics, and that funding was needed for sustainability:

> In addition to our heavy teaching load, the service-learning programme takes time in planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the activities. Further, funding for transport and facilitation has to be secured to ensure that the programme is sustainable. (Focus group, 13 September 2004)

We would have been able to clarify roles and opportunities for each sector much earlier on in the process if the development of the module had proceeded differently – that is to say, if the module had not initially been driven solely by academic partners. Through further discussion and combined meetings, we were enlightened as to whom to approach in order to secure the full support from the service agencies: "You need the managers to buy in or they are not going to see the value to service delivery of supplying pharmaceuticals in the province" (focus group, 13 September 2004).

In UWC's case, the School of Pharmacy forms part of the Faculty of Science and not the Community and Health Sciences Faculty. Through this service-learning experience, it became clear that the notion of *joint* health sciences must become a reality, so that the School of Pharmacy can align itself with other health professions at the university rather than being secluded in a faculty where it does not really belong. A fully integrated Health Science Faculty that embraces allied health disciplines is necessary at UWC.

Furthermore, it became clear that it is essential to have a full-time service-learning coordinator in the School of Pharmacy to manage the development of a service-learning programme. This implies that a specific person is required to continue to develop the module and to coordinate and facilitate the placement of students. It is also essential that a tool for assessing students' critical reflection be identified and used.

Thus, many lessons have been learnt with regard to the implementation of service-learning modules. The following advice can be shared:

• Establish sound partnerships among the various sectors involved.

• Ensure that you secure the support from top management structures in the public sector (if this is applicable to your context and discipline), to guarantee buy-in to the philosophy of service-learning.

• Develop a standardised tool for student assessment, which includes the tool for assessing critical reflection, so that the qualitative aspect of service-learning forms part of the overall assessment of students.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

The community has benefited in various ways from the service-learning module. Not only are there shorter waits for medicine by the patients (short-term benefit) as the students are assisting the pharmacists at the service sites but, as a long-term benefit, community volunteers have also been trained, and patients at the sites receive better pharmaceutical care as more attention is given to individual patients.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Benefits for the students

Pharmacy students completed a number of service-related projects ranging from design of drug information leaflets, development of insulin labels, design and implementation of a drug formulary, investigating the incidence of common chronic conditions, and the use of an educational video for the waiting area. In addition one group developed a TB manual for use by nursing staff. Students displayed competence in designing and implementing service interventions.

The TB manual was designed to educate mainly newly diagnosed patients about the symptoms, sputum collection and interpretation of results, drug treatment and preventive care (Amardien, Messenheimer & Fourie, 2004). The module coordinator conducted a telephonic interview with a clinic staff nurse with seven years' experience in TB management, to explore her experiences with the manual (personal communication, le Roux-Eksteen, MDHS Parow TB Clinic, 2004). The respondent found the manual to be "very useful" as patients seemed to "pay attention". Further, the "easy-to-understand" language and graphic material "aided patient understanding". The staff nurse rated the manual as being "equally important" as the "TB programme's flipchart". The respondent suggested that translation of the manual into "Xhosa and Afrikaans" would facilitate patient counselling.

As a result of their involvement in the service-learning module, the students have generally been found to be better able to cope with their compulsory community hospital service (even if they have not served their internship in a community pharmacy) and better prepared to do their pre-registration examination (requirement for registration as a pharmacist with the SAPC, 2004b). This is evident in the fact that the UWC School of Pharmacy has been ranked second nationally in the pre-registration examination.

Student performance on the module is assessed using facilitator assessments:
• A competence-based OSCE;
• A progress test;

- Focus group discussions (facilitators and students); and
- A needs assessment survey.

Facilitators use the modified Objective Structured Dispensing Examinations (OSDEs) at the pharmacies to assess skills development in Rational Pharmacotherapy and good dispensing practice. The progress test conducted on campus further reinforces learning. In focus group discussions students admitted that their "skills improved with time" as there was "increase in confidence" and "ease in communicating with patients". Further, they believed that patients were generally "receptive towards the [drug] information and appreciated their input". A student survey investigated the need for this module, and preliminary findings reinforced sustainability and greater exposure to service-learning in Pharmacotherapy and good dispensing practice (Molosiwa, Bheekie & von Zeil, 2005).

The students are assessed for their critical competence, and for synthesis, insight and facilitation of change. The assessment is planned according to the outcomes for students. Student outcomes are identified as:

1. Having greater insight into how healthcare facilities (especially the pharmacies at these sites) function;
2. Becoming more familiar with roles of individual healthcare professionals and having experience of interacting with them;
3. Being able to list typical problems experienced by patients receiving medicines from community and day hospital pharmacies;[15]
4. Understanding the P-drug concept and the basic principles of Rational Pharmacotherapy (i.e. treatment of disease with drugs);
5. Knowing how to provide pharmaceutical service (i.e. dispense medicine and counsel patients on medicine use); and
6. Compiling a P-drug formulary suitable for use in pharmacist-initiated therapy.

Student attainment of outcomes 1 – 5 is assessed by means of:
- Written student reports on selected topics (drug effects in patients; therapeutic plans; assessment of prescriptions; counselling patients on medicine use; interaction with other health professionals);
- Reports from facilitators at sites to test the progress;
- Evaluation of students' portfolios;
- The student's service-related project; and
- The reflective component of each student report – the reflection is also assessed.

Attainment of outcomes 4 – 6 is assessed on the basis of:
- OSDEs;
- P-drug formulary; and
- Reports from facilitators.

---

15 Outcomes 1-3 should be reflected in students' portfolios.

Students have benefited from the service-learning module in the following ways:

- Their knowledge increases (students identified in the focus group that they obtained an overview of the primary healthcare system).

- They obtain in-depth insight into Pharmacotherapeutic management of common chronic conditions, while their greatest enthusiasm stems from interacting with patients and having the opportunity to strengthen their own work ethics.

- Students' experiences in patient counselling teach them to be cautious in knowledge translation.

An additional outcome has been that students who have been through the service-learning module qualify as facilitators/ mentors. The success of this module is reflected in the students' responses; they have claimed that as a result of service-learning they "understood the relevance and application of Pharmacological concepts", which had become more meaningful to them.

Benefits for the academics

The service-learning module has also impacted on the *lecturer/ module facilitator* as this individual has become a champion of service-learning in the School of Pharmacy. The module facilitator has since then included service-learning in her research agenda and that of the students. One Master's student completed her thesis: *Development and Evaluation of the Objective Structured Dispensing Examination for Use in a Pharmacy Training Programme* (Frieslaar, 2005), while another wrote up the following study: *Design, Implementation and Evaluation of a Diabetes Pharmacotherapy Programme for Pharmacy Staff in MDHS* (Molosiwa, Bheekie & von Zeil, 2005). The module coordinator has also tried to infuse service-learning into teaching and curriculum development.

An interdisciplinary meeting with *academic staff* representing Pharmacology, Pharmacy Practice, Pharmaceutics and Pharmaceutical Chemistry was initiated to explore service-learning initiatives (2004). The previous module coordinator (2003) shared experiences from the Pharmacotherapy programmes and all staff indicated interest in collaborating. After each discipline's objectives had been discussed, the current coordinator translated them into activities that could be conducted and evaluated in practice settings. Discipline representatives agreed to work collectively to refine learning objectives and to design practice-based assessments. This teaching methodology has now become part of the School's teaching, learning and research strategy.

Benefits for the higher education institution generally

As a result of the School of Pharmacy's involvement in service-learning, its *international linkages* have improved, resulting in joint conference presentations. Collaboration with a visiting professor from the University of Washington on investigating patient drug knowledge

and staff perceptions of pharmacy services at a day hospital resulted in a poster presentation at a major conference (Moscou, Bheekie & Butler, 2003). A Master's student also presented her study at the 25th Congress of the Academy of Pharmaceutical Services, Rhodes University, Grahamstown (12 – 15 September 2004). A combined paper, *Service-Learning in Pharmacy: Undergraduate Training at UWC*, compiled by the Pharmacy service-learning coordinator, the CHESP office and a service partner, was presented at the 26th Annual Conference of the South African Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Innovations in Pharmaceutical Sciences, in 2005.

Another spin-off that has occurred has been the development of a co-operative agreement between the Health Department of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) and the Health Science Faculties of UCT, UWC, Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Stellenbosch University. The aim of the task team that has been set up is to establish joint appointments between the two sectors to govern the professional relationship between the PGWC and the four universities regarding Health Science education. This includes service-learning, research and service provision. The implication is that in future the UWC School of Pharmacy will have more options for student placements because the joint co-operative agreement increases accessibility to various learning sites that were previously reserved for only some of the academic institutions in our region.

Benefits for the service agencies

The services sector has also benefited from involvement in the service-learning module. The service agencies now have an increased knowledge and understanding of service-learning, as indicated in a reflection session held on 13 September 2004: "I gained very good insight not only into what service-learning is about but also the requirements". As indicated by another pharmacist, the services sector has committed itself to promoting service-learning:

> The challenge is that we have to prove that the service-curriculum can work…the challenge on our side is to ensure that we have enough supervisors or tutors to assist. (Focus group, 13 September 2004)

The additional training programme for pharmacists has been found to further update pharmacists' knowledge of latest developments in the discipline.

In addition to engaging pharmacists at the service sites we have felt that it is necessary for us to target the *administrators* at provincial level, who are responsible for managing the health centres. This is to ensure that information gets filtered through the appropriate channels, and also that pharmacists have the mobility to make themselves available for service-learning capacity building programmes and seminars.

PARTNERSHIPS

The following timeline highlights the various stages of partnership development in this module.

Table 11.2: Timeline of the development of partnerships in the Skills Development in Rational Pharmacotherapy and Good Pharmacy Practice module, 2002 – 2005 (inclusive)

March – July 2002	A senior Pharmacology professor initiates discussion with the MDHS, pharmaceutical managers, facility managers, pharmacists and community representative.
July 2002	CHESP funding for service-learning programmes is made available.
July 2002 – November 2003	Review of PBL module and piloting of the adapted service-learning module.
November 2003	Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken.
February 2004	Interdisciplinary meeting with academic staff to explore service-learning initiatives – translating of learning objectives of each discipline into possible service-learning activities.
August 2004	Capacity building workshop facilitated by Prof. C. Kapp and associates – partners present include community, service agencies and academics.
September 2004	The benefits of service-learning are acknowledged by all partners.
October 2004	Consolidation of the collaboration between the service partners, academic staff and community – adhering to service-learning principles.
October 2004	The partnership is strengthened at a joint CHESP meeting attended by pharmacists, facilitators, academic staff and service managers. The community does not attend – which could be attributed to various factors (e.g. transport challenges etc.).
March 2005	A follow-up partnership meeting is held with service managers and academic staff to clarify community, service and academic needs.
March 2005	Service partners identify additional sites to facilitate activities – and the need to obtain written permission from the superintendent general of Health, Western Cape, to incorporate service-learning at the academic hospitals for 2005.
July 2005	The service-learning coordinator presents at Tygerberg Sub-district Health Forum (a community forum) in order to get community buy-in and identify key individuals at selected service sites.
September 2005	Pilot of expanded service-learning programme takes place at academic hospitals.
November 2005	Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken.
November 2005	Lack of community representation is still evident.

The gradual approach adopted has allowed the partners to familiarise themselves with the service-learning concepts and identify potential activities that would be mutually beneficial and feasible within the time frame of the academic schedule.

Since the introduction of the School of Pharmacy's interdisciplinary teaching programme (2003), experiential learning has provided opportunities to integrate theoretical knowledge. Consequently, institutionalisation of service-learning has implied strengthening of interdisciplinary, service agency and community partnerships (Furco, 2001; Ward, 1998).

From the experiences in the development of this module, the challenges of engaging in partnership are seen to be as follows:

- Practice contexts are different and continually changing and therefore engaging in the development of partnerships is an ongoing process of consultation and relationship-building.

- Sustainable partnerships are crucial: continuous monitoring and evaluation of service-learning at UWC will ensure that development of partnerships at this institution will be sustainable, and it will also enable the institution to develop best practice guidelines for partnership development that could be utilised in the development of future service-learning modules.

The following factors have been identified as *promoting* or *prohibiting* the development of partnerships in this service-learning module:

Promoted	Prohibited
- Adequate and strategic planning; - Knowing the setting/ service site; - Formalising the partnership; - Constant communication with key people; - Acknowledging each partner's capabilities.	- Assumptions based on previous partnership agreements; - Lack of communication; - Change in contexts – i.e. mobility of individuals; - Continual changes – lack of continuity.

We have learnt the following about developing partnerships for service-learning:
- There must be careful planning and organisation, with the necessary levels of communication: before orientation and placement, each partner must be informed and appropriately involved.
- Relationships with partners must be consultative, with due consideration of how power relations can impact on participation.
- Conceptualisation and planning of the module need to be conducted collaboratively, preferably involving all partners.
- The partnership needs to be formalised in the form of an agreement/ contract so that roles and responsibilities are clear and agreed upon.
- Even when partnerships have been formalised, it is important not to assume that you know the partner setting, as contexts are dynamic and changes are common.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Service-learning has significant implications for higher education policy and practice. In order to ease institutionalisation of the service-learning module at departmental/ school level, a dedicated/ full-time academic staff member is needed to coordinate:

• Interdisciplinary administrative duties;
• The undergraduate training module (seeking service site permission, appointing and training facilitators, collating assessments);
• Collaboration with all partners and strengthening community involvement;
• Postgraduate activities (building capacity in participatory action research (Furco, 2001);
• Regular monitoring and evaluation (in the form of reports and structured reflection); and
• Staff involved in regional activities.

Alternatively, a joint agreement between the School and the pharmaceutical services and pharmaceutical councils is imperative. This would be unique in the South African context as there has never been a formal agreement between the pharmaceutical services and higher education relating to the training of pharmacists. Such an agreement could be formalised by being endorsed by the SAPC, as it is the vision of the Council to promote excellence in practice for the benefit of the community. This could also then lead to joint responsibility between the SAPC, national government and higher education institutions in facilitating the in-service training of future pharmacists.

ETHICS

Ethical considerations are central to the service-learning methodology, because successful service-learning requires involvement of individuals from widely different backgrounds and cultures. Thus, in order to get the best out of the partners, it is essential that partners are aware of their rights.

From implementing this service-learning module, we have the following lessons to share with regard to partners' rights:

• Enter into formal contractual agreements with students/ university and all partners.
• Arrange for adequate and appropriate supervision of students.
• Negotiate and reach agreement with the service agency around the number of students that can be accommodated at any given time.
• Determine the skills level of the students, and ensure that these meet both the needs and expectations of the service agencies.
• Ensure that all partners are thoroughly prepared before participating in the service-learning module.

From our experience of running the service-learning module, we can share the following 'do's and don'ts' about the importance of questioning assumptions:

• Don't assume that, once established, a partnership will run itself: continuously strive to sustain the partnership.

- Don't assume that students know what is expected of them.
- Do be clear and specific in preparing students for their service-learning involvement.
- Once students are involved in the module, do encourage them to use reflection to clarify their roles and the learning outcomes expected of them.
- Don't assume that students will understand the different service contexts and be comfortable in them.
- Don't assume that the community is willing to function as a case study for student learning: ensure reciprocity and equity.
- Do ensure that students avoid assuming roles of superiority: rather, students need to be encouraged to develop empathy and interpersonal and professional communication skills.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Service-learning is a body of knowledge that requires intersectoral collaboration and exposure. Institutionalising trans-disciplinary Mode 2 knowledge is a priority. Reflecting on our service-learning module, the following enabling factors have been particularly valuable:

- Active pharmacist participation, which was a crucial contribution to successful implementation;
- The community partners' enthusiasm in developing pamphlets and engaging with the community at the service site, which was instrumental in getting buy-in and co-operation from patients; and
- The appointment of postgraduate facilitators to supervise and mentor students at the site, which contributed towards making the module sustainable.

For a module to be implemented successfully, a high level of commitment is required from all partners. Furthermore, it is important to develop a support structure at departmental and faculty level in the institution. Sufficient staff and research support is also a necessity as well as funding and resource availability in order to coordinate and facilitate the service-learning experience for students. In order for all partners to participate effectively and meaningfully, it would be useful if students were to receive support with regard to access to clinical information and data, mentoring on-site and transport.

In terms of support and capacity building for conceptualising and implementing a service-learning module, we offer the following advice:
- Focus on building sustainability into partnerships.
- Access research funding.
- Ensure that the module has intersectoral collaboration and exposure.
- Put the necessary structures in place.
- Document everything.
- Empower all participants to play an active role.
- Focus on developing transdisciplinary knowledge.
- Identify champions among the various partners and focus on strengthening the involvement of such champions.

CONCLUSION

The School of Pharmacy at UWC has successfully sustained the Pharmacotherapy service-learning module for a number of years. Although partnerships with resident pharmacists and management are established, structural and organisational barriers need to be considered. Ongoing capacity building training programmes are essential to strengthen participation in service-learning for all three sets of partners; and concerted efforts are needed to secure and sustain community involvement. This institution's response to the vision of the SAPC is therefore to employ service-learning strategies that promote opportunities for lifelong learning for current pharmacists and future graduates.

REFERENCES

Amardien, N., Messenheimer, J.A., Fourie, M. & Molosiwa, E. (2004). *Design of a Tuberculosis Desk Manual for Clinic Use*. School of Pharmacy, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

Boyer, E.L. (1996). The Scholarship of Engagement. *Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1, 11-20.

Bringle, R.G. & Hatcher, J.A. (1995). A Service Learning Curriculum for Faculty. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Fall, 112-122.

Department of Health. (1996). *A National Drug Policy for South Africa*. www.doh.gov.za/docs/policy/drugsjan1996.pdf, accessed 17 December 2005.

Eyler, J. & Giles, D.E. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Frieslaar, D. (2005). *Development and Evaluation of the Objective Structured Dispensing Examination for Use in a Pharmacy Training Programme*. Master's thesis, University of the Western Cape.

Furco, A. (2001). Advancing Service-Learning at Research Universities. In Canada, M. & Speck, B (eds.). *Service-Learning: Practical Advice and Models*. New Directions for Higher Education Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Molosiwa, E., Bheekie, A. & von Zeil, M. (2005). *Design, Implementation and Evaluation of a Diabetes Pharmacotherapy Programme for Pharmacy Staff in MDHS*. Paper presented at the 48th AGM and 19th Annual Conference of South African Association of Hospital and Institutional Pharmacists (SAAHIP): New Horizons, 10 – 12 March 2005, Wilderness, George.

Moscou, K., Bheekie, A. & Butler, N. (2003). *Patient Drug Knowledge and Staff Perceptions of Pharmacy Services at a Day Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa*. Poster presented at the Public Health 2003 Health Systems Development Equity conference, 24 – 26 March 2003.

Muller, J. (1996). *Higher Education and New Knowledge Production.* Unpublished paper, School of Education, University of Cape Town.

South African Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. (2004). Silver Jubilee Congress, 12 – 15 September 2004, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

South African Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences. (2005). Innovations in Pharmaceutical Sciences. Conference of 29 September – 01 October 2005, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth.

South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC). (1997). *Draft Unit Standards for the Future Pharmacist at Entry Level. Discussion document.* Arcadia: SAPC.

South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC). (2004a). *Good Pharmacy Practice Manual.* Second Edition. Arcadia: SAPC.

South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC). Education Committee. (2004b). *Pre-registration Examination.* Arcadia: SAPC.

Spencer, J., Blackmore, D., Heard, S., McMrorie, P. & McHaffie, D. (2000). Patient-oriented Learning: A Review of the Role of the Patient in the Education of Medical Students. *Medical Education,* 34, 851-857.

Syce, J.A. (2003). *CHESP-UWC School of Pharmacy Report: Skills Development in Rational Pharmacotherapy.* School of Pharmacy, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

Vlok, M.E. (2000). *Manual of Community Nursing and Communicable Diseases. A Textbook for South African Students.* Kenwyn: Juta.

Ward, K. (1998). Addressing Academic Culture: Service Learning, Organizations, and Faculty Work. In Rhoads, R.A. & Howard, J.E. (eds.). *Academic Service-Learning: A Pedagogy of Action and Reflection.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

CASE STUDY 12
SERVICE-LEARNING IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

KIRSTEN TROTTER

About Ms Kirsten Trotter...

Master of Commerce degree in Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships from the University of Natal, Durban, and has worked as a lecturer in Policy and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Her research interests include the role of civil society in South African policy processes, service-learning as a teaching and learning pedagogy to promote learning about policy, and issues around the institutionalisation of service-learning in higher education.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor: Kirsten Trotter
University: University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
Discipline: Political Science
Module title: Policy Issues and Community Service
Level of students: Third-year
Number of students: On average 22 students in the first semester, 22 students in the second semester and 10 students during the mid-year winter school.
Number of credits: 16

Community location of service-learning:

• Greater Pietermaritzburg

Service agencies:

A wide range of service agencies operating in the greater Pietermaritzburg area, including, for example:

• Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA)
• AIDS Training, Information and Counselling Centre (ATICC)
• Career Resource Centre (CRC)
• Centre for Criminal Justice (CCJ)
• Centre for Public Participation (CPP)
• Children in Distress (CINDI)
• Keep Pietermaritzburg Clean Association (KPCA)
• Khayalethu Street Children's Shelter
• Midlands Women's Group
• Prosecutors' Assistance Programme (PAP)
• Provincial Parliamentary Programme (PPP)
• Thandanani
• Salvation Army
• Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR)

SUMMARY

Developing and implementing the module, Policy Issues and Community Service, on the Pietermaritzburg campus of UKZN has – through a range of challenges and successes – provided excellent lessons in service-learning. This case study focuses on the years 1996 – 2005 (inclusive), although the module continues to be offered.

The service-learning module is an elective final-year undergraduate module in Political Science, and has been experienced by more than 450 students since its creation in 1996. On average, in any given year, approximately 55 students participate in this service-learning module. Having initially employed service-learning to teach students the concepts of citizenship and democracy, the module content evolved in line with national political trends to explore issues of democratic

consolidation and finally to investigate issues of policy-making, implementation and evaluation.

The partners in this service-learning module are:
• The higher education institution – in the form of the Department of Political Science, its lecturers and third-year students;
• A wide range of service agencies operating in the greater Pietermaritzburg area – including local government departments, provincial parliamentary committees and NGOs; and
• The community – only to the extent that they are already in partnership with the service agencies involved; for the most part, for reasons explained here, the service-learning module *specifically avoids* partnering with geographically identified communities.

The many service-learning activities conducted by students have varied considerably – from running environmental education programmes in rural high schools in KwaZulu-Natal, to monitoring provincial government sittings in the legislature, to supervising homework programmes in a local children's home. While the activities have been diverse, the objective has been the same: learning about aspects of Political Science through personal experience.

Lessons learnt

In the course of developing and implementing the module, we have learnt a number of key lessons about service-learning:

• It is important for the practitioner to be clear about his/her motivation for doing service-learning and about the ultimate objectives; only once the service-learning practitioner has achieved such clarity can the service-learning programme exist – and flourish.

• It is imperative that the service-learning module be designed to suit the discipline within which it is housed. There should be no such thing as a generic model of service-learning. Thus, careful discipline-specific planning is imperative for a service-learning module to succeed.

• Experience with this module has highlighted the strange combination of luck, unexpected opportunities, personal relationships and institutional support required to conceptualise and implement a service-learning module.

INITIATION

Service-learning has been part of the undergraduate Political Science curriculum since 1996 at UKZN (previously known as the University of Natal). The installation of South Africa's new democracy provided the 'window of opportunity' required to pursue the development of a module that centred on what was, at the time, an unusual teaching and learning pedagogy.

The head of Political Science had been exposed to the mechanics and benefits of this approach to learning about Political Science, after a series of visits to American institutions that were heavily engaged in this pedagogy. On his return to South Africa, he began to conceptualise a module entitled Citizenship and Community Service, which exposed students to the realities of their

citizenship in the South African context. As he once commented, "You can't learn about citizenship properly unless you actually do it". The intention was that this module would provide students with the unique opportunity to explore their rights and contribute in the spirit of participatory citizenship. In 1999, the module content changed slightly from a primary focus on citizenship to policy analysis. The module, which at that point took on its current name – Policy Issues and Community Service – gives students the opportunity to come to grips with the formal and informal policy-making environment in South Africa, with opportunities to explore these issues presented to them during their service-learning experience.

CONCEPTUALISATION

In conceptualising this module, staff looked to the political context of the time for inspiration. All citizens were now eligible to vote and the nature of the classroom was now a microcosm reflective of the country as a whole, with its multiracial nature. Students were asking questions about the 'reality' of South African life – often questions that could not be answered from a textbook, such as: "Am I allowed to listen to parliamentarians discuss issues that affect me?"; "How will the government fix the problems created by apartheid?"; and "How can I be a part of the solution?".

The notion of democracy in a multicultural context became the broad framework within which the module functioned. Issues of citizenship within this framework formed the second component of the module. A year later, with ideas such as the 'rainbow nation' being used extensively by the country's leadership, the topical issue of nation-building was incorporated into the module content. This was motivated not only by broad governance issues but also by the students themselves, who were becoming increasingly frustrated with the use of American and European material in a module so particularly South African. Four years after the democratic elections of 1994, there was a need for a slight shift in general discussions of democracy to a more focused discussion around the consolidation of democracy. Citizens were dealing with issues beyond simply achieving democracy – issues such as democratic consolidation.

As mentioned above, in 1999 the module changed both its name and orientation to that of Policy Issues and Community Service. This was motivated in part by the creation (by the same head of Political Science as had conceptualised this module) of a postgraduate programme in Policy and Development Studies, as well as in part by the need within the discipline to produce graduates with skills in policy analysis, implementation and evaluation.

However, after a few years of implementation, other staff members began to enquire about the specific relevance of service-learning for Political Science. For some, particularly those more academically purist in orientation, the service-learning approach to teaching and learning was too 'touchy feely' for it to be considered good Social Science. This began the first phase of proper critical reflection centred on how the learning of the student in Political Science could be *maximised* and not *compromised* through the use of the service-learning pedagogy. Initial findings held that the module content had to change and adapt to suit the environment in which it was located. It was felt that this module had achieved this, moving from understanding basic issues of democracy; to thinking about democratic consolidation; and finally exploring aspects

of policy analysis. Further reflection, facilitated by a variety of processes, revealed that the experiential aspect of the module did indeed maximise student learning in Political Science.

Nature of the service-learning placement

Colleagues from other disciplines using service-learning comment that service placements need to reflect some kind of 'authentic relationship'. In the particular 'authentic relationships' involved in this service-learning module, the students have real-life experiences of various aspects of policy through carefully conceptualised placements with a variety of service agencies. Thus, while these experiences are not always happy, the student ultimately has a realistic, 'authentic' learning experience.

Successful service-learning rests on the discipline's decision of where, how and with whom students will have their service-learning experience. It is the nature of the placement that sets the tone for both the kind of internship experience the students will have and the nature of the logistical challenges placements present. In order to maintain the integrity of Political Science as a discipline – and as a means of avoiding the tempting lean towards Social Work, Anthropology, Sociology or any number of other disciplines (which was a primary critique levelled at the module) – the decision was made to form relationships exclusively with service agencies (local government departments, provincial parliamentary committees, and NGOs), thus specifically *avoiding* direct contact with geographically identified communities.

The reasons for this approach were numerous:

- The roles of service agencies should not be duplicated by student involvement in an identified geographical community. At the time of the decision (1996), NGOs were struggling to find an identity for themselves in the new democratic dispensation and the idea of their place in civil society being challenged by students who would complete tasks for free would both undermine future service-learning initiatives in Pietermaritzburg (a relatively small city) and fuel distrust and negativity between the institution as a whole and the outside community.

- Final-year undergraduate students would not be able to solve the very real material needs of geographical communities. In sending students into these communities, expectations would be raised and the students simply do not have the capacity, resources or (often) inclination to build roads, schools, toilets etc.

- Dealing directly with geographical communities presents a number of logistical difficulties, which can be avoided by the approach undertaken by this module. Transport is one such challenge and is usually dealt with by students 'piggybacking' with service agency staff.

- Capacity to achieve something tangible and sustainable is enhanced when paired with an organisation that is both committed to getting the task done and more likely to remain in the area for an extended period of time.

- Expectations on the part of the community remain realistic (given that the university is often perceived by communities as being 'rich') and the consistent involvement of familiar service agencies in these areas ensures consistent activity.

PREPARATION

For service agencies

Before the module was launched in 1996, the head of Political Science held a joint meeting with a variety of organisations that had expressed a desire to become more closely linked with the university. At the time, the Ford Foundation was sponsoring university students to do part-time work in Pietermaritzburg. An ex-Political Science student was closely affiliated with the project and she was interested in exploring avenues that would see the students gain credit for their Ford-funded activities in various organisations around the city. Thus, the head of Political Science, with assistance from this ex-student, gathered together civil society organisations, political parties and party whips (who controlled the newly formed portfolio committees) and the local government municipal manager (whom, incidentally, the head of Political Science had met at an international city managers' conference). Once the intentions of the module had been explained to those gathered at the meeting, those interested in participating met individually with the head of Political Science. It was from here that relationships with service agencies began to develop.

For students

At the time of the module's inception in 1996, very little was known about teaching critical reflection (it remains a serious obstacle to institutionalised service-learning that no one teaches staff *how* to do service-learning). It was only from 1999 onwards that formal sessions were held with the students to prepare them for their service-learning experience.

An initial lecture on what service-learning is and how it aims to assist in learning is crucial. This module uses Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984) as a means of explaining the general principles behind the service-learning process. The cycle is then adapted to reflect where the various module assignments would fit in, further illustrating to the students the logic behind various assignments and how, if completed accurately, the assignments could facilitate student learning. It is imperative that time is spent explaining this process, and in-depth sessions on aspects of critical reflection are given – especially since most students have never encountered this type of learning before. This particular module draws extensively on the work of Tim Stanton (in particular, Stanton, 1995), which provides critical reflection guidelines for both staff and students. Importantly, though, the lecturer of the module must modify the guidelines to suit the particular discipline in question – generic tools are useful as frameworks but these also need to be adapted to reflect the intended discipline-specific outcomes for the students.

IMPLEMENTATION

Initial approaches to and experiences of implementation

Written evaluations and discussions with students quickly revealed that students were often both

pleasantly surprised and disappointed by their service-learning experience. The reason for this was that initial expectations they had of the nature of their experience were often different from what they actually ended up doing. Good examples of where students were surprised by their experience included students placed with Keep Pietermaritzburg Clean Association (KPCA, an NGO that receives some support from the local government Waste Management Division). The students' initial perception of their internship was that their time would be spent picking up litter and painting rubbish bins. Instead, the students become involved in environmental education programmes in rural schools, assisting with creative skills training (plastic bag weaving) workshops for rural communities and health gardening in various schools and geographical communities.

An example of where students often felt the most disappointed was when they were placed with Thandanani Association for Abandoned Children. The organisation's name implies activities such as finding suitable homes for abandoned children, locating missing family members and setting up community-based care systems. Instead, though, the organisation's greatest need, and something students often ended up doing, was documenting the organisation's activities. Often, too, students would participate in the organisation's Hospital Project, where they would assist hospital care workers with entertaining and stimulating abandoned HIV/AIDS children in two hospitals in Pietermaritzburg. This was emotionally draining and frustrating for students not prepared for dealing with this kind of exposure.

Other illustrative examples of student experiences in the module include:

- An American student worked closely with the Black Sash Pensions Project, tracing pension applications and exploring why there had been non-payment from the government for certain applications.

- One of the students worked for the Midlands Women's Group on the *Midlands Women's Handbook*. The main objective of this document was to provide practical information for addressing key issues identified by women in Pietermaritzburg.

- Two students worked with the Chief Prosecutor and the Regional Prosecutor, through the Centre for Criminal Justice (CCJ), to bring about a mechanism for ensuring access to justice for women. The programme that was set up by the students – the Prosecutors' Assistance Programme (PAP) – came about after both students observed the poor success of prosecuting rape cases at the Pietermaritzburg Magistrates Court. After extensive research the students discovered that the prosecutors were simply swamped with cases and did not have the time to prepare the material needed for successful prosecution. The PAP remains a highly successful student-run programme within CCJ.

- A Rutgers (State University of New Jersey) student engaged in a self-initiated project with KPCA and various local council departments, entitled Woodhouse Road Development and Beautification Project. After identifying an area in Pietermaritzburg that was in desperate need of attention, the student collaborated with local communities and service agencies in devising a project that would result in the 'beautification' of the area. It is now maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department of the Local Council and is no longer

an overgrown eyesore renowned for being a hive of criminal activity.

Opportunities for reflection

The service-learning module offers all participants opportunities for reflection, which is crucial to learning from and improving the module.

Reflection opportunities for students

Journal: The journal is submitted periodically throughout the semester. The lecturer reads the content of the journal and offers the student suggestions for improvements to the learning process, ideas on how to solve problems being experienced and recommendations on how to improve the engagement. A single mark is awarded to the student for the journal at the end of the semester, as it is only here that it is possible to tell whether the degree of reflection has deepened and the student has 'grown'.

Structured reflection sessions: These are run during class periods and tie together theory and experience. Students are expected to identify something that they didn't understand or that caused frustration in their service placement and attempt to find an explanation in the theory discussed in class. This is done in plenary and with guidance from the lecturer.

Final report: The report (discussed in more detail elsewhere in this case study) has a dedicated section for reflection, in which the student is required to reflect on the entire semester.

Final examination: Students complete a two-hour examination focusing on their understanding of the concepts covered in class as well as their experiences in their internship. (For example, the 2000 examination question was based on a discussion paper written by Harkavy and Benson, which highlights discussion of how universities and service-learning modules can make a difference to democracy. The intention in the examination was to get the students to answer this question for themselves in the light of their experience.)

Reflection opportunities for service agencies

The module coordinator meets with service agencies periodically during the duration of the module to discuss various problems and to gain a sense of the students' performance at their placement. It is critical that the relationship between the service agency and the lecturer is sound, as it is only through having a good relationship that a sufficient level of trust exists so that both parties might honestly communicate their reflections.

Reflection opportunities for staff

Reflection on the part of staff did not happen automatically. Minor initial steps (such as curriculum development sessions for the module with the entire Political Science staff) were taken when the value of the module within the discipline was challenged; however, it was only through exposure to other practitioners at conferences such as the international service-learning research conferences that any formal, structured reflection took place; in other words, when staff were

pressed to think critically about the module for comparative purposes (with international modules) this spurred rigorous critical reflection.

A number of prohibiting factors can be highlighted with regard to implementation:

- A common issue that service-learning practitioners have to deal with is that of *transport*. Without formal transport systems such as regular buses or trains and with the perpetual unpredictability and unclear safety of minibus taxis, students struggle to get to their service sites – especially if working directly with geographical communities and not with service agencies (with whom they would ordinarily travel). Compounding this problem in this case has been the large number of foreign students participating in this module. None of these students have driver's licences and therefore they cannot hire university (or other) vehicles.

- *Time* is also an issue, given the need for academic staff to provide constant guidance and reassurance to students in this unfamiliar learning environment. Without attention given to this pastoral role, however, there is potential for much of the learning for the student to be lost. It is not insignificant to note, too, that this kind of teaching also makes the success of the module dependent on personalities with patience.

- As alluded to earlier, staff are not taught how to *do* service-learning and this lack of knowledge becomes evident when conceptualising and implementing a service-learning module. Lack of proper guidance can potentially result in a poorly conceptualised and implemented module, which would obviously be detrimental to both the students and the community and service partners involved.

Promoting factors that can be highlighted with regard to implementation include the following:

- This module, particularly in the last few years, has benefited from the good relationship with other disciplines on campus practising service-learning. Advice has been shared both about various practices and techniques (such as approaches to critical reflection or useful literature) and placement options.

- Further, this module has benefited enormously from a close relationship between the lecturer and a colleague in Psychology with extensive experience in service-learning. Not only has she offered guidance about useful pedagogic readings for students, but she has also directed the lecturer towards various civil society organisations with which she worked, where she felt Political Science students could make a contribution.

We can share the following advice with other academics about implementation:

- It is important to attempt to match student placements with student expectations. The biggest lesson learnt during the implementation of this module has been the decision to 'advertise' specific projects rather than actual organisations. Staff meet with the service agencies before the start of the semester and establish what specific projects are currently being undertaken, in which students could meaningfully participate. These are then 'advertised' to the students, who

sign up for a project rather than a service agency. In this way students understand exactly what their task will be and the likelihood of unmet expectations is reduced. Since the implementation of this approach to placing students, the number of negative experiences has lessened considerably.

- It is imperative to match the nature of the service agency with the student level. While the quality of the placement experience depends on the quality of the student and the student's ability to seize the initiative, it is also important to ensure that the nature of the service-learning placement is appropriate for the particular level of student. Thus, a postgraduate placement might not be the same as a second-year, undergraduate placement.

- The building of trusting relationships among partners is crucial. Without established and trusting relationships with off-campus partners, service-learning can be exceptionally trying and time-consuming. Thus, one should only embark on implementing a service-learning module if sufficient time has been spent nurturing and developing honest, trusting relationships with the off-campus partners.

- As far as possible, finalise student placements early in the semester. Over the years, students have expressed some frustration at the delay in placing them. This process usually takes two or three weeks, the time being spent confirming placements (these often change despite consultation before the beginning of the semester). Perhaps if this were done during the first week or two of the semester, more time would be available for students to become acquainted with their placement.

- If at all possible, identify double period timetable slots for the service-learning. The bigger the time slot made available to the student, the better the quality of the time students spend at their service sites.

From the challenges experienced in implementing this service-learning module, a number of valuable lesson have been learnt:

- One of the key lessons has been to maintain links with service agencies rather than geographical communities – especially when money is involved. As a result of a brief deviation from the model in which this module was conceived, it became obvious that it is impossible to promote equality and partnership when, for example, transport and photocopy costs can only be distributed to a service agency and not within a community with no formal structures. Another money-related challenge has been the expectation of unemployed community members to be paid for their participation in projects.

- A successful placement partner with which this module works is the Environmental Health Department of the Msunduzi Local Council. This department has a dedicated employee who works with volunteers and students. Having a single contact person and member of staff within a service agency, dedicated to monitoring and assisting students (from a range of disciplines and higher education institutions) in these projects, means that placements and the resulting projects are more likely to be beneficial for all involved.

- As with any module, the success of service-learning modules is often dependent on the quality of the student involved. Importantly, however, quality is not necessarily judged on academic performance alone. Over the years, selection for this module has come to include a written motivation letter as well as an interview to establish whether the student has sufficient initiative and drive or whether s/he is simply looking for 'easy credits'.

- A common frustration for teaching staff in this module has been the constant reorganisation of civil society organisations and local government departments. A placement on which you were relying may undergo an internal reorganisation process, making it impossible to host the students. Thus, willingness to remain flexible is important.

- Although it is often unnecessary, staff decided to make use of an attendance register. The success of service-learning for both staff and students relies on the students' commitment, and without basic class attendance the value of things like reflection sessions are lost.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

The concept and definition of 'community', especially in the South African context, are varied. Often the term is associated with 'previously disadvantaged', black areas. 'Community' can also refer to a geographical area that groups a set of individuals. Finally, the notion of community can refer to the grouping of individuals around a common issue such as being physically disabled.

As has already been discussed, this module limits direct interaction with a geographical community. However, due to participation in the CHESP project, the module was compelled to partner with a geographical community (located 40 kilometres outside Pietermaritzburg). Attempts were made to work with service agencies already working in the area in which the geographical community was situated, including the KPCA, KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Services (KZNNCS) and the City Engineers Department of the local council. Initially students from the University of Illinois (Urbana Champaign) participated in a programme with KPCA and KZNNCS to set up an environmental club within the local high school (something identified by the school as a need). Once the club was established, the students guided the learners through the process of designing an environmental policy for the school (another identified need). KZNNCS also designed and developed a health garden in the school grounds where school learners were taught the benefits of certain plants and how to correctly manage the garden. In the course of the International School (a 'winter school' designed for international students and held during the June – August break in which this module also runs), students became involved in gathering gardening donations for the school (again motivated by a need identified by the school); these came in the form of saplings and vegetable seeds, which were then planted. What was envisaged, based on requests from the school management and the local community, was the development of this garden into a fully fledged community garden, where members of the wider community could participate in growing vegetables to be sold to the local community on a regular basis. Not only would this incorporate the wider community in the activities of the school but it would also meet the envisaged goal of the school

becoming an 'open school'. (This was the term used by the deputy principal, who wanted to see the school as a resource for the whole community rather than simply the learners who study there.)

The success of the initiative was in the hands of the community. Student (and service agency) activity was not consistent enough to ensure the healthy development of the garden, implementation of the environmental policy or successful running of the environmental club. The school had also been struggling with blocked toilets and unsanitary conditions and was desperately seeking assistance in this matter. Students, together with the City Engineers Department of the local council and the 'Toilet Task Team' (made up of learners responsible for keeping the toilets in good condition) built specially designed ablution blocks. However, it was learnt that almost immediately after the withdrawal of the students and the City Engineers Department, the ablution blocks fell into disrepair (despite the fact that the school had been given lessons on how to maintain them).

Benefits for the higher education institution

Curriculum

An ongoing challenge in the discipline of Political Science was for this educational pedagogy to be taken seriously by all members of the Political Science staff. With a very strong political theory and international relations component in the Political Science curriculum, gaining recognition for the module and its pedagogy was difficult. Slowly, however, recognition is being achieved with, for example, thesis topics examining the value of service-learning in the discipline being accepted as legitimate.

Impact of the module on the discipline

One result of the module has been that increased exposure to and work done with colleagues from other disciplines has led to the initiation of collaborative research around service-learning activities.

Another impact of the module relates to student assessment. The move away from a purely theoretical, content-based examination was very difficult to introduce into the curriculum – particularly when external examiners (who had little knowledge of service-learning) were required to approve examination questions. This has since been achieved and is a very important aspect of assessment for the module.

Impact on other academic staff

An inter-module project was undertaken between this module and Political Science 390 (an independent research module). The experiential aspect of this module served to inform the work of three students involved in Political Science 390, where the students were exploring the issue of transformation policy at what was then still the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. The students' service-learning placement was the Employment Equity Office

on campus as well as the Students' Representative Council. While learning the intricacies of working within organisations such as these, the students gained insights and information that would be used in their independent research module. What resulted was a more informed and better quality research project (the findings of which were published by the academic supervisors).

Benefits for the Department of Political Science

South Africa's new democracy has drawn a number of international students to this campus; for example, for the 2000 academic year this service-learning module had – besides our local South African students – approximately 70 international students participating in various service-learning initiatives and completing various research projects. Having these students in Political Science has led to the development of significant links – for the discipline generally as well as for certain members of staff – with international institutions.

Benefits for the students

Not only do international students bring a fresh perspective to the policy issues facing the citizens of South Africa, they also bring immense skills, such as computing, fundraising and proposal-writing skills. Ideally the module attempts to pair South African students with these visiting students as a way of sharing their knowledge and expertise with host organisations as well as with their fellow South African students.

Students are given a number of avenues for voicing their opinions of the module: module evaluations, journals, and students' final reports. Analysis of these various forms of assessment would seem to indicate that students are certain that service-learning is beneficial to their learning. In the words of the students themselves:

> I can sincerely say this is one of the most interesting and worthwhile courses I have done in the last three years. I was able to observe the running of a powerful NGO; tremendous value of the course as an eye opener; it made me more sensitive to the issue of citizenship and we realised that when we leave sheltered lecture hall things look vastly different and we made some useful professional contacts. (Slater, 1996, unedited)

> As a Political Science student I gained valuable insight, experience and knowledge of political life and furthermore, the internship gave me the opportunity to understand the structure and workings of local government. (Hanuman, 1997, unedited)

> Through my experiences with the volunteer work, I was able to see first hand the issues confronting many of South African youth and was able to help out as best I could. My experiences in South Africa with my internship have taught me that the democratic system is constantly struggling to be as effective as possible. Along the way many obstacles arise that can make it appear that the system is failing its citizens. (Washington, 2000, unedited)

This has been a course like no other I have ever taken. The biggest challenge for me has been linking up one's own life, not just in the placement, to the course content, something I've never had to do systematically in any course before. (Wright, 2002, unedited)

How often does a 21 year old kid get to be at a negotiating table with superiors of 20 odd years? I not only know that my expectations were met, I exceeded them and this course offered me opportunities and avenues that I never originally fathomed. (Garrett, 2002, unedited)

Assessment of students is achieved through a mix of reading exercises, journal entries, interview exercise, oral presentation, report and examination, as follows:

Reading exercises (15% of total 70% class mark): Two open book reading exercises based on literature distributed and discussed in class give the students a framework within which to locate their learning.

Journal (10% of total 70% class mark): A journal documenting internship experiences and providing an avenue for critical reflection is also used. The journal allows students to reflect on their learning experiences, the progress they are making and their more personal feelings. Here students are given the opportunity to explore specific public policy issues, and deliberate various themes given in class work and experienced at their place of internship.

Interview exercise (15% of total 70% class mark): What has often been considered the most beneficial assignment is the interview exercise. Here students are grouped together into teams. After initial class discussion establishing the major policy issues facing citizens in South Africa, the teams are required to draw up their own questionnaire and administer this to a specified number of South African citizens. The interview exercise is aimed at gauging different opinions and perspectives of South African citizens from across a broad socio-economic and ethnic spectrum.

Oral presentation (15% of total 70% class mark): In line with the practical aspects of the module students present their experiences through a poster and oral presentation. This presentation is a formal, organised event. Off-campus placement hosts are invited and encouraged to ask questions and participate in establishing the extent of the student learning, thus contributing to the assessment procedure.

Final report (15% of total 70% class mark): Lastly, the final reports are regarded as the 'end product' of the students' 40-hour community service. This is an integrative paper, in which students are expected to synthesise their community service experiences, independent research, assigned readings and in-class discussion.

Examination (30%): Students complete a two-hour examination focusing on module content as reflected upon during their service-learning experience.

Benefits for the service agencies

Given that the service-learning module has a large pool of service agency partners and that the

off-campus partnerships vary each semester, the following examples are included to illustrate the kinds of benefits deriving to service agencies from involvement in the module.

Community Development Unit (CDU): A part of the Pietermaritzburg local council, the CDU was involved in designing a training programme that would provide previously excluded (black) students with the knowledge that they would need to be effective members of the Pietermaritzburg Junior City Council. A crucial and unique step in civic education, this programme has the ultimate aim of expanding into rural areas throughout Pietermaritzburg. The CDU has benefited from the students' theoretical knowledge, which it, as a service agency, lacked. Furthermore, students have been used to carry out the actual workshops and thus increased capacity of the organisation to reach audiences they would otherwise not have been able to reach. Students have also participated in implementing a Schools Safety Programme in a range of high schools around Pietermaritzburg. The students have assisted schools with devising a safety policy and have then provided assistance, in the form of workshops, with its implementation. Without student participation, the CDU would not have had the capacity to implement this programme.

Thandanani Association for Abandoned Children: This organisation has expressed the benefits of collaboration as being the capacity to accomplish tasks that staff would ordinarily not have the time to do. For example, students have compiled both a community care manual and a lesson book for children in hospital, and launched an educational toy drive to gather donations.

Keep Pietermaritzburg Clean Association (KPCA): This organisation recognises the value of both local and international students in terms of their knowledge and expertise. Additional capacity in the form of the students has assisted this organisation in writing reports on its activities, running extra workshops and implementing projects such as the aforementioned beautification project run by the Rutgers students. In addition the organisation has received publicity through its relationship with the module.

Centre for Public Participation (CPP): This organisation has made use of the students to monitor provincial government sittings, with the information gathered then being compiled into monitoring reports published by CPP. This has increased public access to parliamentary discussions, thereby aiding CPP in its role in civil society.

Salvation Army Children's Home: A very successful host, as a placement this children's home appeals mostly to international students. The organisation thrives on the involvement of the students and many tasks, such as homework supervision, would not be possible without the students' involvement.

PARTNERSHIPS

Given the model this module prefers to work with, the list of off-campus partners changes each semester. Choosing a service-learning placement is based largely on which service agency is currently engaged in projects that could benefit from student assistance as well as which projects are likely to enhance students' Political Science learning.

Perhaps the best way to comment on the role of each partner in the process as well as describe some of the successes and challenges of partnership is to provide a series of illustrative examples of partnership engagement since the module's inception.

KPCA: This has been the longest running partnership (over a decade) between the Department of Political Science and an off-campus partner. The director of KPCA and her staff are always willing to contribute time and offer support to students engaged in projects with them. They meet with the students on a regular basis, offer office space when required and are generally available to deal with any questions the students may have. Funding received through the university's involvement in a national service-learning project has been used for transport for KPCA staff when working with students and this has facilitated logistical arrangements.

Thandanani Association for Abandoned Children: This organisation has undergone massive (and constant) internal restructuring. Thus, this partnership has been a little more difficult, with appointments not being honoured and students (those with less initiative) often left to wander. The organisation is extremely busy and does impressive work; however, engagement requires a persistent student who is not easily frustrated. Furthermore, the organisation is swamped with volunteers, which often makes students on this module redundant. This is still one of the most popular placements, especially with international students who are keen to become involved in HIV/AIDS related work. Thandanani offers very little in the way of resources (office space, meetings with students etc). Regardless, the module has had sustained involvement with the organisation for a number of years.

Salvation Army Children's Home: This children's home is close to the university, making transport relatively simple. Also, it is a 'reliable' placement where students can be sure that staff will be available to assist them. Given the degree of dependence this organisation has on volunteers from this module, the organisation's staff willingly offer an orientation session for the students.

Khayalethu Street Children's Shelter: This placement, while invaluable given the kind of learning environment it offers students, is unreliable. Students have often arrived at the head office to discover that a scheduled meeting has been cancelled. This is usually because the director has been called out to a crisis on the street, or because the community workers were not told about the volunteers. This partnership will require constant and sustained effort to ensure that all partners understand the implications of this relationship.

CPP: This partnership has been one of the most successful of the module. A structured activity exists in which the organisation relies heavily on the students. The organisation also offers a stipend for the students, which is attractive (albeit unusual). Students can choose when they attend provincial parliamentary meetings, so if scheduling clashes emerge they are free to adjust their timetables. CPP staff drive up from Durban (where they are located) to run orientation sessions with future monitors – an indication of the CPP's level of commitment and its reliance on this partnership.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Service-learning practitioners around the country agree that it is only through institutionalisation of

the pedagogy that many of the common challenges can be eliminated. For example, the perpetual reliance on 'soft funding' for contract service-learning teaching staff must be resolved if the pedagogy is to survive within higher education in South Africa. While there are mechanisms in place at UKZN to move towards improved institutionalisation (for example, service-learning is in the Strategic Initiatives document), there will be a need for considerably more support from the institution itself to make substantial progress towards institutionalisation.

Unfortunately, the merger experienced by the university for a while served to direct priorities away from further developments in service-learning. In order for service-learning to become institutionalised, a central office headed by an academic might be key, to support, facilitate and advocate for service-learning at the university. Support from the university's academic and administrative leadership is also important. Those already providing leadership for service-learning need to continue to offer support and information to colleagues, and to raise further awareness through presentations and publications.

One of the biggest administrative obstacles within higher education is that of timetabling. With sufficiently large time slots in the timetable (such as the practical slots in disciplines like Science and Agriculture), the quality of the work done by the students as well as benefits to the service agencies and ultimately the communities will be increased.

Incentives are also lacking within higher education for staff to become involved in service-learning. Promotion criteria as well as recognition for service-learning projects must be reconsidered if this approach to learning is to expand and receive attention from senior academics.

A major lesson learnt through the implementation of this module has been that service-learning modules should not be driven by single individuals or personalities. The danger is that once the 'champion' teaching the module leaves, the module will lose momentum – and ultimately credibility.

This module has run at its most efficient with both a lecturer and a module coordinator. With the lecturer taking responsibility for teaching the module content as well as guiding the students through their assignments, the module coordinator is responsible for contacting host organisations, discussing potential projects and liaising on a weekly basis with the hosts to monitor students' progress. It is crucial, though, to have a lecturer and a module coordinator with the same requirements and intentions; if the coordinator does not understand the nature of the projects, and indeed the focus of the module that particular semester, the students will not be able to reflect on internship experiences in terms of the module material. However, at the same time it is debatable whether the roles should in fact be separated; for example, with the important task of liaising with community partners often being given to the 'junior' staff member, as this could incorrectly imply that the nurturing of relationships is not as important as the lectures offered at the university.

ETHICS

The ethics of service-learning is, undoubtedly, subjective. There are too many stakeholders with too many agendas for there to be complete honesty when discussing the degree to which activities have been ethical or not. Some ethical reflections are included below:

- **Forcing a partnership:** In attempting to create three-way partnerships (made up of students, service agencies and geographical communities) this module made the fundamental error of forcing the creation of a partnership. A geographical community was identified and notice was sent to the community that the university was interested in working with that community. This was instantly interpreted as an employment opportunity for the youth of the community. Expectations were raised and not met. If service-learning relationships are to have integrity they must be based on partnerships in which there is complete mutual honesty about objectives and capacity to meet expectations.

- **Community-based activity:** Again, serious ethical errors were made with trying to force service-learning activities within Political Science to match community development priorities identified within a particular geographical community. As a discipline, Political Science (and especially third-year undergraduates) could not provide employment, roads and other infrastructure. When an attempt was made to deliver ablution blocks to the high school, the community made no effort to maintain the toilets (once the university had completed the project) and the project failed dismally.

- **Benefits to whom?** If they are honest, many service-learning coordinators will admit that there have been very few cases where everyone in the partnership has truly benefited. Balanced, mutually beneficial relationships are rare.

- **Motivation:** Service-learning practitioners need to be clear about why they are using the pedagogy. In the case of this module, the primary motivational factor for doing service-learning has been providing a better educational experience for the student – not meeting community development priorities.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Enabling factors for the students

Through external 'soft' funding received over a number of years, the module has been able to pay for transport for students as well as provide materials for their oral presentations – both of which would ordinarily have been for their own expense. Service-learning is expensive for students so any reprieve in this regard is beneficial. Obviously, the more these types of activities become institutionalised, the better off the students will be.

Enabling factors for staff

The single most beneficial activity for staff teaching this module is the opportunity to converse and collaborate with service-learning practitioners within South Africa and, indeed, around the world. Grants to attend conferences are a rarity in the current higher education climate and this is going to prove detrimental in developing capacity among service-learning practitioners.

Enabling factors for the service agencies

Many service agency partners have stated that having a dedicated member of staff there to assist the students has contributed greatly to the success of projects.

CONCLUSION

Service-learning is not an easy approach to teaching – especially in a higher education climate of instability and financial crisis. However, only once actual implementation of a service-learning module has been attempted is the undeniable value of service-learning revealed.

For the service-learning practitioner, a structured, post-implementation reflection process (be it through the writing of a journal article, conducting a conference presentation or simply a perusal of the module evaluation), will highlight the benefit of the pedagogy for the students, for the discipline, for the academic her/himself and for the project's off-campus partners.

In critically reflecting on the years of implementation of this service-learning module, a number of issues emerged. The first of these was a questioning of the meaning of 'development' and the role of higher education institutions (and particularly service-learning as a pedagogy) in this process. In this case, I believe that the objectives of the service-learning pedagogy (community development-orientated or not) must be connected to the objectives of the discipline employing the pedagogy. Thus, for example, Political Science and Information Studies will have very different ideas of what constitutes relevant and useful service-learning, given their particular disciplines. Realising that this is acceptable and is, in fact, the only reasonable way to implement service-learning throughout the complex fabric of higher education is a critical milestone in learning about service-learning.

The commitment of staff, students and indeed the institution is central to the future success of service-learning. Some investigation has taken place around this issue. Although the merger context in South African higher education has produced obstacles to many aspects of teaching and learning, it also has the potential to create valuable opportunities for facilitating dynamic approaches to teaching and learning – approaches such as service-learning.

REFERENCES

Harkavy, I. & Benson, L. (2000). *The Role of Community–Higher Education School Partnerships in Educational and Societal Development and Democratization*. Unpublished discussion paper presented at a seminar at the University of Natal, 2000.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Stanton, T.K. (1995). Writing about Public Service: The Critical Incident Journal. In Watters, A. & Ford, M. (eds.). *A Guide for Change: Resources for Implementing Community Service Writing*. New York: McGraw Hill.

CASE STUDY 13
SERVICE-LEARNING IN PSYCHOLOGY

LUZELLE NAUDE

About Dr Luzelle Naudé...

Counselling psychologist and lecturer in the Department of Psychology, University of the Free State (UFS), where she is involved in the training of counsellors and psychologists.

Being committed to the holistic development of individuals, Luzelle employs service-learning as pedagogy in her teaching activities. She coordinates and facilitates various service-learning initiatives on her campus. She has just completed her Doctoral research at the intersection of psychological learning theory and higher education, investigating the use of reflection to facilitate the development of students during service-learning activities.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor:	Luzelle Naudé
University:	University of the Free State (UFS)
Discipline:	Psychology
Module title:	Counselling and Community Psychology
Level of students:	Mainly fourth-year students: BPsych (compulsory) and Honours (voluntary); since July 2004: third-year students engaged on an informal basis
Number of students:	Approximately 35
Number of credits:	16

Community locations of service-learning:
• Secondary Schools in the Mangaung area

Service agency:
• Department of Education

Acknowledgements:

Community representative:	Mrs Lolly Thlomola
Service agency representatives:	Mr Mischak Khabola/ Malotle

SUMMARY

Strongly linked to the commitment of the UFS to social responsibility and greater responsiveness, is the challenge inherent in the praxis of Community Psychology: the quest and commitment towards social transformation (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). Responding to this challenge, the Department of Psychology became involved in several service-learning projects, one of which focused on the youth of Mangaung – our future leaders. Given limited and inadequate opportunities, black youth in South Africa have been described as "the lost generation" (Sharp, 2003: 2). In an attempt to prepare youth for the leadership challenges ahead and to empower school-leavers with the skills and knowledge to enjoy a higher quality of life, the Mangaung Schools Counselling Project (MSCP) was launched in 1995.

The project includes weekly visits to 14 different schools in Bloemfontein and Mangaung. Focus areas include learning skills development, career counselling, life skills training and personal counselling. As a result, school learners are better equipped to face challenges and teachers experience a marked improvement in learners' adjustment and behaviour.

The service component of this project has been integrated into the modules (Counselling and Community Psychology – 16 credits) of the Honours and BPsych (applied) programmes. As part of their credit-bearing activities, approximately 35 Psychology students visit the schools under the supervision of an academic coordinator at the Department of Psychology and teachers of the Department of Education's Guidance Teachers' Forum.

The partners in this service-learning project are as follows:

- The higher education institution – including academic staff and the Psychology students;
- Service agencies – including the Guidance Teachers' Forum of the Department of Education; and
- The community – in the form of Grade 12 learners at the schools, and the youth representative of the Mangaung University–Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP).

As an immediate outcome of the service-learning experience, it is envisaged that Psychology students will be equipped with the competence to plan, implement and evaluate community counselling interventions in order to facilitate the growth and development of individuals, groups and communities. These competences include knowledge of the principles and procedures relating to the counselling of individuals, groups and communities; practical skills in the application and evaluation of the above procedures and interventions; and a sensitivity regarding preventative and developmental strategies contributing to the welfare of the broader community. Ultimately, students develop a theory-based, integrated frame of reference, to inform their practice of Community Psychology.

Lessons learnt

The following key lessons have been learnt during this service-learning experience:

- If the educational system wishes to do justice to the unique South African multicultural situation, a paradigm shift is imperative. There is thus a need for service-learning practitioners to promote the *scholarly nature of service-learning* in order to participate in this academic debate and challenge existing notions.

- Service-learning must be explicitly included in the *institution's mission statement, policy guidelines and priorities* in order to shift reward systems – providing incentives for more academics to participate.

- Constant communication and *reciprocal exchange of knowledge and information* among partners ensure that the voice of the community is heard in academic activities and vice versa. The fundamental feature of academic culture, namely discourse, must be embraced and extended to include the knowledge base, namely, the epistemology of all the partners involved.

- Ongoing feedback from all partners involved is crucial. For positive daily functioning of the project, as well as for attaining the project outcomes, *frequent reflection and feedback* are essential. Regular revisiting of reflection and feedback techniques is vital to ensure that all partners are challenged to honest and critical reflection.

- A valuable outcome of service-learning involvement is the establishment of visible *collaborative efforts among different departments and faculties and other higher education institutions* – providing opportunities for exchanging new ideas and networking beyond a single institution.

- Service-learning experiences *enhance the communication between students,* prompting them to work together while disregarding cultural and language barriers.

- Integrating the knowledge systems of communities with the academic sphere can yield valuable results, and a wealth of *research opportunities.* Furthermore, the use of a participative paradigm when doing research ensures the incorporation of community viewpoints, making the results more accessible and valuable for everyone involved.

INITIATION

A central topic of discussion at the UFS is the changing role of higher education regarding social responsibility and transformation. Mindful of its core functions – the three pillars of training, research and community service – the UFS regards integrating the needs of communities with academic learning, teaching and research as a significant challenge.

Strongly linked to the institution's commitment to social responsibility and greater responsiveness is the challenge inherent in the praxis of Community Psychology: the commitment to social transformation (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). The discipline of Community Psychology strives to redefine the role of Psychology to include a broader portfolio embracing community mobilisation, advocacy and policy transformation. Community Psychology is concerned with broadening the sphere of Psychology to all citizens, transforming the way in which Psychology is conceptualised and understood (Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). Locating individuals in their social and cultural contexts provides a basis for the development of theory, research and interventions – taking cognisance of social issues and environmental stressors, while radicalising the praxis of psychological service delivery to include prevention initiatives, which improves the human condition and promotes psychological wellbeing (Pretorius-Heuchert & Ahmed, 2001; Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2001). Keeping these contextual principles in mind, the value of service-learning in the praxis of Community Psychology seems to be evident.

Responding to these goals, the UFS Department of Psychology became involved in several service-learning projects, one of which focused on the youth of Mangaung (an informal settlement adjacent to Bloemfontein) – our leaders of the future. Given limited and inadequate opportunities, black youth in South Africa have been described as "the lost generation" (Sharp, 2003: 2). The assumption that these learners were also academically and personally impoverished by inadequate counselling facilities and opportunities was confirmed by members of the Mangaung community and by the Guidance Teachers' Forum (established by teachers in the Mangaung area to address educational and related needs observed in their daily teaching activities). The MSCP was launched in 1995, in an attempt to prepare the youth for the leadership challenges they face and to empower Grade 12 learners with the skills and knowledge to enjoy a higher quality of life.

CONCEPTUALISATION

As a result of this partnership between the Department of Psychology, the Guidance Teachers' Forum and the MUCPP, the conceptualisation and development of the service-learning project

was based upon the self-regulatory cybernetic principles as proposed by von Bertalanffy (1973) and adapted for psycho-developmental interventions by Schoeman (1993: 11), as evident in the diagram below.

Figure 13.1: Self-regulatory cybernetic cycle
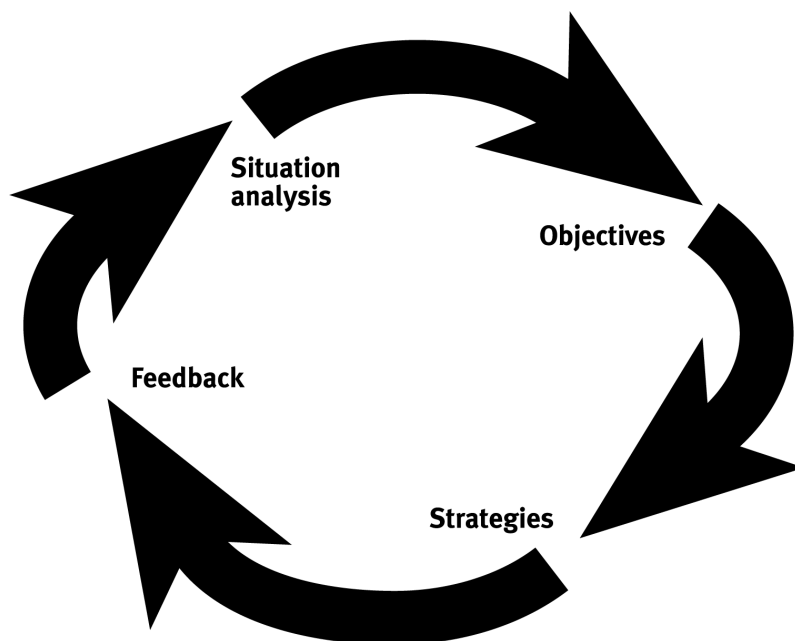
- The school guidance teachers in conjunction with community representatives orchestrated a thorough community-based *needs assessment* in the Mangaung community.

- In order to determine *appropriate goals*, regular meetings between the Department of Psychology and Guidance Teachers' Forum were held. It was determined that, by enhancing the counselling services offered at the schools in the community, many of the identified needs could be addressed. A further gain in this process would be that curricula and practical exposure of students of the Department of Psychology would be improved.

- *Strategies* and intervention plans were devised as a joint endeavour. Decisions were aimed at providing learners with counselling services. Psychology students with appropriate skills were made available to implement community interventions and to provide consultation services to guidance teachers.

- *Feedback* was obtained from all stakeholders, including Grade 12 learners, students and lecturers of the Department of Psychology, community members and guidance teachers.

Since the implementation of the project in 1995, regular feedback from all the parties involved has been obtained, resulting in the continual revisiting of the above process and streamlining of the project. The project has been extended to include weekly visits to 14 different schools in

Bloemfontein and Mangaung. Focus areas include learning skills development, career counselling, life skills training and personal counselling. As a result, learners are better equipped to face challenges and teachers experience a marked improvement in learners' adjustment and behaviour.

The service component of this project has been integrated into the modules (Counselling and Community Psychology) of the Honours and BPsych (applied) programmes. As part of their credit-bearing activities, these Psychology students visit the schools under the supervision of an academic coordinator at the Department of Psychology and teachers of the Guidance Teachers' Forum.

Intended student learning objectives

As an immediate outcome of the service-learning experience, it is envisaged that Psychology students will be equipped with the competence to plan, implement and evaluate community counselling interventions in order to facilitate the growth and development of individuals, groups and communities. These competences include knowledge of the principles and procedures relating to the counselling of individuals, groups and communities, practical skills in the application and evaluation of the above procedures and interventions, and a sensitivity regarding preventative and developmental counselling strategies aimed at contributing to the welfare of the broader community. Ultimately, students develop a theory-based, integrated frame of reference to inform their practice of Community Psychology.

Intended service objectives

This module addresses the identified counselling needs in the school community, focusing specifically on the Grade 12 learners in the Mangaung area. The project aims at supporting community capacity building, empowering learners with skills and knowledge, and improving standards of living while providing disadvantaged learners, in particular, with the opportunity to enjoy a higher quality of life.
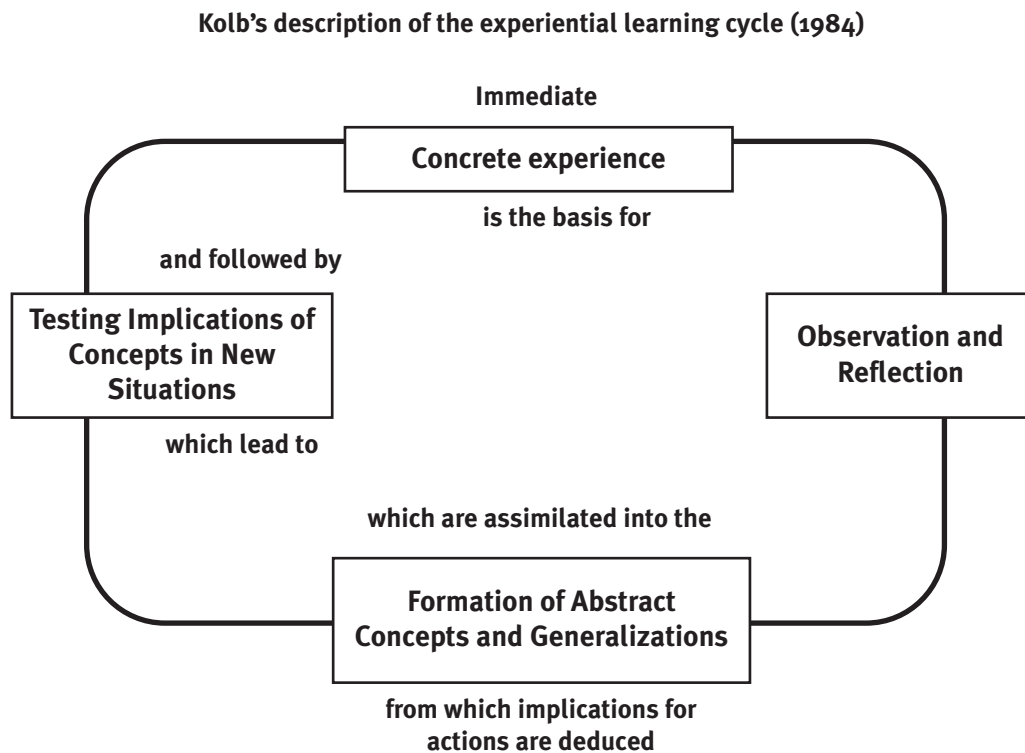
Focus areas include:
- Learning development and achievement enhancement;
- Career counselling and career development;
- Life skills training; and
- Personal counselling.

PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984; see Figure 13.2 below) provides the conceptual framework for the preparation and implementation of this service-learning project. Kolb's cycle provides guidelines for the unique blending of 'hands on' experience and learning – with reflection as a vital link. This cycle offers students the opportunity to achieve appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes, enhancing the development of a higher level of competence.

Figure 13.2: The experiential learning cycle of Kolb (1984)

Kolb's description of the experiential learning cycle (1984)

Immediate

Concrete experience

is the basis for

and followed by

Testing Implications of Concepts in New Situations

Observation and Reflection

which lead to

which are assimilated into the

Formation of Abstract Concepts and Generalizations

from which implications for actions are deduced

Zuber-Skerritt (1992) remarks that experience and constant reflection on experience are the key to effective learning. Therefore, a methodology of constant exposure to concrete experiences and opportunities to reflect on these experiences is used. The experiential learning cycle maps the environment for optimal learning. Learning activities are aimed at providing opportunities for concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualisation/ generalisation and application.

Concrete experience

Palmer (2001) argues that people are more likely to *live* their way into a new way of *thinking* than to *think* their way into a new way of *living*. Zlotkowski (2001) agrees with the above statement, claiming that higher-order thinking grows out of real-life experiences. The service-learning activities at the Department of Psychology are therefore structured in such a way as to make the most effective use of concrete experiences. Students are initially exposed to the community through visits from community leaders, talks by students who were previously involved in the projects, observations of more experienced students, and videos and case studies. To supplement these classroom activities, students are introduced to the community through direct experiences and fieldwork. Visiting the community on a weekly basis, students gain first-hand experience and exposure to different cultures.

Observation and reflection

One of William James's most widely cited quotations is, "A great many people think they are thinking while they are merely rearranging their prejudice". Zuber-Skerritt (2001) maintains a similar viewpoint, namely, that all individuals create, through their everyday experiences, a worldview or lens, which determines future behaviours and strategies. To facilitate honest and valid reflection on experiences, various opportunities must be created for students. In the MSCP, the importance of informal reflection is emphasised. Observations made by students during their trips from the university to the community and back are valued; during these trips the students regularly and excitedly discuss their immediate experiences. These informal reflections make it clear that much learning occurs outside of the classroom. After every visit to the community, students are also expected to complete a weekly short report (journal), in which they reflect on their experiences and activities. The reflection reports have the additional benefit of providing a journal with continuous inscriptions through which development and progress throughout the year can be measured. This process provides an ongoing feedback system between the students and the other parties involved.

Abstract conceptualisation and generalisations

The next step in the experiential learning cycle is assisting students in giving meaning to their discoveries by relating them to other students' discoveries and other forms of knowledge. Weekly reflection contact sessions fulfil this purpose. From the reflection reports, general themes to be considered in the discussion sessions (such as the need for information on HIV/AIDS) are extracted. As the classes consist of students from various demographic backgrounds, students tend to share culture-related explanations for their different experiences. In the process, ideas and tips for future community interventions are brainstormed and shared.

Formal academic lectures given on a weekly basis also expose students to theory from texts and proposed models of community interventions and psychological phenomena. These lectures connect the theoretical content with the services rendered.

Testing of implications in situations

In this phase students get the opportunity to make a connection between their learning experiences, theoretical grounding of these experiences and the real world (Sharp, 2003). With the guidance provided (discussed above), students gain the confidence to use theory in practice during the civic engagement sessions that follow.

In summary, the primary activities of this service-learning initiative involve:
- Weekly visits to schools, where students conduct individual and group counselling sessions;
- Weekly reflection reports by students on counselling sessions, with feedback from the lecturer;

- Weekly facilitator classes, including teamwork assignments, feedback and reflections by students on counselling sessions and provision of general guidelines for counselling sessions; and
- Weekly lectures, including class activities, case studies, role-playing and videos.

Feedback through assessment and reflection

It is evident in service-learning activities that change always occurs throughout the process and not only at the end. Consequently a cyclical process, where action and reflection can be used reciprocally, proves to be most efficient in providing opportunities for the understanding of the process and the refining of the service-learning activities. In order to ensure a continuous spiral of learning and feedback, a variety of reflection strategies can be used during service-learning activities. This will provide the lens for viewing the services rendered and the changes that result from them.

Bringle and Hatcher (1999) mention that different forms of reflection and feedback can lead to different experiences and conclusions. They warn that reflection and assessment activities should be aimed at gaining information to enhance new ways of thinking and not to confirm existing stereotypes. Therefore, various reflection and feedback strategies are implemented on an ongoing basis. This also ensures that triangulation takes place; that is, that feedback is gained from different sources in order to confirm the assumptions made.

In following the principles of the monitoring and evaluation programme of the CHESP project, structured opportunities for reflection and feedback in the MSCP are aimed at all three partners in the triad: Psychology students, service agencies and community members. Quarterly triad gatherings, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, and pre- and post-intervention focus groups including all the members of the triad also provide valuable information. Regular contact with the community representative and meetings of the Guidance Teachers' Forum provide further opportunities for feedback from the community and respective schools. Feedback from the Psychology students themselves is gained from formative and summative forms of assessment such as journals, self-assessment (where students assess themselves as participants), peer evaluation and feedback, poster presentations and a final integrated report completed by the students.

In summary, the main opportunities for reflection and feedback include:
- Guidance Teachers' Forum meetings;
- Quarterly triad gatherings;
- Pre- and post-intervention questionnaires completed by all partners;
- Pre- and post-intervention focus groups attended by all partners;
- Formative assessment strategies (weekly reports and peer activities during facilitator classes); and
- Summative assessment strategies (poster presentations and an integrated report).

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

Fourie (2003) emphasises reciprocity in service-learning; both communities and students should benefit from service-learning projects. In a developing country such as South Africa, regarding the community needs as a primary component of service-learning is of even greater importance than elsewhere.

In the MSCP an effort is made to address identified counselling needs in the school community, focusing specifically on the learners in the Mangaung area. The project aims to support community capacity building, empowering learners with skills and knowledge, improving standards of living and providing especially disadvantaged learners with opportunities to enjoy a higher quality of life.

In accordance with von Bertalanffy's (1973) systemic view, the impact of the project can be seen on different levels. At the *individual level,* learners are empowered by skills acquisition to enhance their learning, improve their career planning and resolve personal problems. Learners are better equipped to face challenges and teachers report a marked improvement in learners' adjustment and behaviour. As *groups* are employed as the medium for growth, schools also benefit from the project. Through better communication and co-operation between learners in classes, as well as between learners and teachers, relationships within the school environment are improved. At the *community level*, evidence of the success of the project is found in the reported improved results of the learners, as well as in requests from the community each year for the project's continuation.

The impact of the project on learners is illustrated anecdotally by learners' comments in post-intervention feedback (reproduced here in unedited form):

> The message was so important because it changed the very way I was feeling about myself.

> It changed my life from a discouraged to a courageous person. It changed me from a disorganised person to an organised person. It changed me from a playful person to a serious person.

> It has changed my life because now I know who I am, what I really want and how to achieve what I want!

Although the above statements do give some support for the positive impact of the project, it is important to note that these data are probably skewed by factors like social desirability, as well as learners' efforts to ensure the continuation of the project. This can result in unreliable and invalid data. It would be more valuable if the information gained from the questionnaires and focus groups were to be validated through other forms of observation.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Benefits for the Department of Psychology

Benefits for the Department of Psychology are twofold in nature:
- Training and practical exposure of postgraduate Psychology students are enhanced and extended; and
- Elaboration and development of relevant curricula are ensured.

Since the implementation of the new dispensation in South Africa, the need for greater collaboration between the academic sphere and the community has become clear. 'Covering the content in the curriculum' cannot be seen as a higher priority than applying and reflecting on the knowledge gained. Contrary to an old belief among lecturers that students' time could better be spent in the library, today we understand that bringing communities into classrooms extends the boundaries of learning. This notion grows from an understanding of the collective construction of knowledge.

For Zlotkowski (2001), service-learning is experienced as a vehicle for curriculum reform; it challenges the lecturers' authority and often stretches academics outside their comfort zones as it decentres the instructor. Knowledge is acquired in and outside the classroom, directly impacting on the discipline's knowledge base. Although this service-learning project suggests that students demonstrate an increased capacity to challenge existing knowledge, it would be interesting (and necessary) to investigate the ripple effect that service-learning activities have on the discipline, on teaching methodologies and on the development of curricula.

Further impacts that the project has had on the department/ faculty include:
- Creating an awareness of the importance of service-learning; and
- Changing attitudes in such a way that the benefits of the service programmes are recognised.

Additional evidence that the Department of Psychology recognises the importance of service-learning is found in the fact that a service-learning coordinator was appointed in the department. Furthermore, when the workload of the staff members in the department was calculated, the service-learning modules were accorded more credit.

Benefits for the students

By integrating community development with academic modules, three outcomes are envisaged for the students involved:
- The students' learning experience is enhanced while new processes of learning and assessment are employed.
- Social responsibility and cultural awareness are developed and promoted.
- Community exposure results in changing attitudes and better understanding of cultural diversity.

Service-learning facilitates a process where learning is extended beyond the realm of the classroom. Through processes of active experimentation and reflective interaction, students' social responsibility and awareness are developed and their understanding of one another promoted. This was clear from the feedback received from the CHESP questionnaires completed by the students involved (reproduced here unedited):

> Combining the lecture room with the real world gives a greater understanding of the work and helps me to understand the material/ knowledge learned in the class.

> We enjoyed our time at Sehunelo a lot. We learned a lot about other cultures, about intervening in a preventative way and also we learned more about ourselves.

> We walk away from this experience liberated and having learned so much. We are so grateful for this opportunity. The learners have crawled deep into our hearts.

> The main benefit of the module for me personally is the fact that some of the information I gathered for the learners was useful for me too! The module also gave me the opportunity to evaluate my skills…Now I am more aware of my strengths and weaknesses.

Benefits for the service agencies

Teachers are under extreme pressure, always struggling to find the time to address student needs outside the academic realm. Guidance teachers benefit from the service-learning module, as the Psychology students assist them during counselling periods. Problems identified by guidance teachers in their respective schools are addressed in co-operation with the Psychology students. Teachers' workloads are relieved as service-learning students assist in addressing some of the school's psychological needs. Furthermore, teachers are better equipped with the skills needed to address the problems experienced by learners. In the process, teachers also receive support and information about coping with their own stressors and pressures. These points are illustrated by the kinds of comments teachers make in the post-intervention surveys (unedited):

> It reinforces what we teach. Also gives overall support.

> The window of opportunities opened at our school.

> The presence of the Psychology students has been invaluable. They couldn't have come at a better time. They went out of their way to empower our learners in various ways.

Additional evidence that the project is proving valuable to the community is found in the fact that new schools approach the Department of Psychology on a regular basis, requesting to be included in the project.

An ethical dilemma hidden in the positive picture sketched here concerns the extent to which service-learning preserves the status quo. Schools are keen to participate in the service-learning activities due to the shortfall in service provision by the state. We must guard against 'colluding'

with the system by providing services and filling gaps, which would simply allow the status quo to prevail; a result is that underserved communities remain underserved. In this regard, the guidelines of Lewis et al. (1998) can be of value. They urge community practitioners not only to focus their activities on direct services to the community, but also to include indirect services like advocacy – drawing the attention of the 'powers that be' to the need for change in the system at a higher and more influential level.

PARTNERSHIPS

The UFS acknowledges its responsibility to increase participation in the community through greater responsiveness and the formation of community partnerships. Evidence of these partnerships is seen in the working relationship between the UFS, the MUCPP and CHESP, in which the UFS has been involved for a number of years. The triad partnership model proposed by CHESP is used as a vehicle for engagement. The triad model proposes an active partnership between the academic partner (in this case, the Department of Psychology, UFS), community representatives (e.g. the youth representative at MUCPP) and service agencies (e.g. the Department of Education).

In keeping with the belief: "Nothing for the people without the people", all service-learning activities are undertaken collaboratively – based on shared decision-making, community involvement and participation – and most responsibilities are shared. It is proposed that the initial conceptualisation of projects should be done in partnership, as it is believed that interventions will be more beneficial if the unique perspectives of every partner are taken into account and "insiders and outsiders" become shareholders (Fear et al., 2001: 28). The joint construction and mutual determination of goals and objectives lead to the development of shared norms, while still ensuring the advantage of diversity. So-called 'connected conversations' among academic, community and service partners are held on a regular basis to discuss important issues of the project implementation. Regular feedback on the effectiveness of interventions and activities is gained. The shared appraisal of outcomes is a form of quality assurance, providing the opportunity to discuss serious questions and gain honest feedback.

Further benefits of the partnership triad result from each partner – having a different perspective – providing the system with unique information that improves the quality of interventions. Shared responsibilities also make the project much more viable; the workload is shared and support is reciprocally given.

The academic partner has a comprehensive role to play with regard to training, and to equipping Psychology students with the skills to make the necessary community interventions. The academic partner is further responsible for preparing students, monitoring the student activities and integrating these activities with the university curriculum. This entails the responsibility of informing and preparing Psychology students for their meetings with the community. This is accomplished by formal lectures in which theoretical background in Community Psychology is offered, in facilitator classes where Psychology students are equipped with practical guidelines for community interventions, and during individual consultations. Furthermore, both community representatives and service agencies are involved in student preparation during contact sessions.

The community representative plays a crucial role in ensuring relevance and making the community voice heard through regular contact with the school and teachers. In this project, this contact is enhanced by the fact that the community representative is responsible for the transportation of the Psychology students to the different schools. This facilitates regular contact with the Psychology students, as well as with the schools.

The service agency in this project ensures the sustainability of the project and coordinates monthly teachers' meetings. The service partner has the further responsibility of providing the physical resources in the form of classrooms and specific, scheduled counselling periods. The service agency's responsibilities also include guiding Psychology students during their first visits to the school. The community representative and service agency jointly prepare the respective schools for the implementation of the project and manage the logistics involved.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Higher education institutions in South Africa face the challenge of diverse roles based on their three core functions of teaching and learning, research and community service. Fourie (2003) mentions that, in the previous political dispensation, higher education institutions seldom succeeded in finding a balance where community development and service-learning were duly acknowledged as an integral part of the institutions' responsibilities. Currently, national policy documents such as the National Commission on Higher Education report, *Framework for Transformation* (1996), and *Education White Paper 3* on the transformation of higher education (Department of Education, 1997) emphasise the importance of partnership, participation, responsiveness and co-operation as the pillars of transformation in the modern South African higher education system. Consequently, the UFS regards the integration of community needs with academic learning, teaching and research as one of its greatest challenges (Jaftha, 2004). A central topic of discussion at the UFS has been the changing role of higher education with regard to social responsibility and transformation.

The result of this more open politico-educational system is a realisation that knowledge production occurs in dynamic interaction with community interests. A paradigm shift has occurred: training, research and community development, which did not appear at first glance to be compatible, are integrated through service-learning, which cuts across the three domains. As a result of this paradigm shift, in August 2002 the UFS developed a policy document on service-learning, which portrayed the university's commitment to participation, development and partnership. This policy has since guided action plans towards implementation of service-learning modules, and has been reviewed over time on the basis of valuable lessons learnt from implementation. In 2006 the UFS Senate approved the institution's second (and second-generation) Community Service Policy.

ETHICS

Fourth-year students (all of whom have been selected for further studies in Psychology – either in the BPsych or Honours programme) participate in this project. BPsych students complete service-learning activities as part of their required 720 hours of practical work (prescribed by

the Health Professions Council for registration). For Honours students, the project is voluntary; students thus have the option of choosing a different module if they are not comfortable with the methodology and activities of the service-learning module.

Psychology students involved in psychological counselling are made fully aware of ethical practices prescribed by the Professional Board for Psychology. By means of a contract that every student has to sign, Psychology students are also sensitised regarding their responsibility towards the community.

Although a concerted effort is made to prepare students for possible risks during service-learning activities, the issue of liability and risk management is a serious ethical and practical concern requiring further consideration.

SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Service-learning implies a border crossing beyond the realm of prior experience for academics (Fear et al., 2001). It is thus of the utmost importance that energy be invested in the support of students, but also in the support of academics. Furthermore, support within the discipline itself is vital in order for service-learning activities to be integrated to a satisfactory extent.

At the UFS, the activities of the Directorate: Community Service play a crucial role in providing the necessary support, training and development for the partners involved. The development of other structures, such as the Faculty Committee for Community Service and the task teams, also indicates the existence of support for service-learning. Capacity building workshops and conferences, and national and international exposure are particularly helpful, providing guidelines on service-learning and welcome networking opportunities. Furthermore, conversing and interacting with like-minded colleagues has proved to be a valuable form of support.

CONCLUSION

Although it is clear from the previous sections that service-learning in the form of the MSCP has had a valuable impact on the community, it is equally true that certain issues, as highlighted below, warrant further consideration:

Paradigm shift

Most people find it hard to change; they tend to cling to existing securities and preconceptions rather than wishing to venture into the unknown. Just as some people find it difficult to accept the changed political dispensation, others find it difficult to accept the new educational dispensation. Universities have been viewed as having a monopoly on knowledge. Service-learning challenges this assumption, resulting in discomfort for academics. Too many lecturers still regard the academic as 'the expert' and believe that bringing communities into classrooms blurs the boundaries of the 'sanctity of the classroom'. Some lecturers remain of the opinion that service-learning waters down the curriculum and weakens educational quality. The question is still asked by some: "If excellence in research breeds prestige, why invest in communities?"

Still, some experts are of the opinion that an educational paradigm shift must be made. If the educational system wishes to do justice to the unique South African multicultural situation, a paradigm shift is imperative. In this regard, Heron and Reason (1997) argue that people need to change their positivist worldview – that higher education has all the knowledge and communities have all the problems – to a more participatory worldview, where all people are viewed in context. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this is exceptionally difficult. There is thus a need for service-learning practitioners to promote the *scholarly nature* of service-learning in order to participate in this academic debate and challenge existing notions.

Mission statement and policy guidelines

Lazarus (2001) rightly mentions that if service-learning programmes are not acknowledged in the mission statements and policy guidelines of university structures, they will always remain on the margins where a few innovative and altruistic academics and students function. Service-learning must be among the institution's priorities in order to shift reward systems, providing incentives for more academics to participate. Service-learning has become a priority in the policy of the UFS (UFS, 2002; 2006), which ensures and justifies long-term involvement. Several burning issues (Erasmus, 2004) in the practical implementation of this policy (such as risk management action plans and performance appraisal criteria) have been more adequately addressed in the updated policy, but merit ongoing attention.

Reciprocal exchange of knowledge and information

Fourie (2003) regards valuing indigenous knowledge and the epistemologies of local communities as a prerequisite for successful service-learning projects. The current author experienced that constant communication among partners ensures that the voice of the community is heard in academic activities and vice versa. The fundamental feature of academic culture, namely discourse, must be embraced and extended to include the knowledge base, namely, the epistemology of all the partners involved.

The importance of reflection and feedback

Continual feedback from all partners involved is crucial. For positive daily functioning of the project, as well as for attaining the project outcomes, frequent reflection and feedback are essential. Ongoing measures to assess the project efficacy and to plan further interventions are valuable for the academic staff, students and community members. Discussions concerning power dynamics, roles and responsibilities of the partners involved are also crucial in order to avoid uncertainties and misconceptions. It is of the utmost importance that community partners be active participants in what is largely (and wrongly) considered an academic exercise. Regular revisiting of reflection and feedback techniques is vital to ensure that all partners are challenged to honest and critical reflection.

Inter-sectoral co-operation

During service-learning activities the need for inter-sectoral co-operation has become evident. The learners, for example, enjoyed the visits of representatives from other university departments during career days; and needs were identified that could be better addressed by other

departments of the university. A valuable outcome of service-learning involvement is the establishment of visible collaborative efforts between different departments and faculties. Inter-sectoral co-operation could be extended to co-operation with other higher education institutions, providing opportunities for exchanging new ideas and networking beyond a single institution.

Improved student relations

Feedback has demonstrated that service-learning activities provide an excellent opportunity for students of different language and cultural groups to work together. The project enhances the communication between Psychology students, prompting them to work together while disregarding cultural and language barriers.

Compulsory service-learning

A question frequently raised during the planning of service-learning activities concerns whether service-learning modules should be optional or compulsory for students. There is merit in the suggestion that students should be involved on a voluntary basis and that the activities of service-learning should be seen in the light of the so-called 'challenge by choice'. A different viewpoint in this regard is that service-learning should be a compulsory, credit-bearing activity for all students. As one of the students in the MSCP mentioned (unedited): "Therefore I think it should not be an opportunity or a choice, it should be a policy…". This might ensure that all students in higher education get the opportunity to gain the civic responsibility and citizenship skills that are needed in South Africa today. It goes without saying that the choice students have in doing service-learning will have an impact on their experience as well as on their learning.

Practical issues: Time and resources

Service-learning modules are definitely more time-consuming than modules without community service elements. Given the work pressures experienced by both academics and students, time is a precious commodity and must be spent effectively. Preparation and supervision of students are time-consuming activities and can become a burden. When academics feel that these inputs are not duly recognised in performance evaluations, frustration results. A further practical issue that complicates service-learning activities is the constant need for funding due to a variety of expenses such as transport. Although in the course of some years the UFS has allocated money for the management of service-learning projects, sustainable funding remains a challenge (Erasmus, 2004). Institutional systems addressing these needs must be in place to assist academics involved in service-learning.

Research opportunities

Fourie (2003) is of the opinion that academics have traditionally followed a positivist approach to research, discouraging community participation. Fear et al. (2002) propose an engagement model based on a participative worldview. Similarly, Prof. Frederick Fourie, the UFS rector and vice chancellor, in his inaugural speech (February 2003) stated that the "ivory tower mentality" of universities should be dispensed with and that higher education institutions need to move

beyond their current boundaries. This author agrees that integrating the knowledge systems of communities with the academic sphere can yield valuable results, and a wealth of research opportunities. Furthermore, the use of a participative paradigm when doing research ensures the incorporation of community viewpoints, making the results more accessible and valuable for everyone involved.

South Africa is a country with untapped potential. There is no better way to develop such potential than through the nation's education system. Service-learning is uniquely positioned to develop these opportunities. This author agrees with Wessels (2004), that integrating community service and service-learning opens our minds to new possibilities and new developments. When a partnership model (as proposed in this case study) is followed, service-learning leads to a broadening of knowledge within the academic sphere, while providing socially useful information and expertise for the building of a better South Africa – together.

REFERENCES

Bringle, R. & Hatcher, J. (1999). Reflection in Service-Learning: Making Meaning of Experience. *Educational Horizons,* Summer 1999, 179-185.

Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Education White Paper 3. A Programme for Higher Education Transformation.* Government Gazette No. 18207, 15 August 1997. Pretoria: DoE.

Erasmus, M. (2004). *JET Education Services Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP) Grant. University of the Free State Higher Education Institution. Narrative Report.* Unpublished report, University of the Free State.

Fear, F.A., Bawden, R.J., Rosaen, C.L. & Foster-Fishman, P. (2002). A Model of Engaged Learning: Frames of Reference and Scholarly Underpinnings. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement,* 7 (3), Spring/ Summer.

Fear, F.A., Rosaen, C.L., Foster-Fishman, P. & Bawden, R.J. (2001). Outreach as Scholarly Expression – A Faculty Perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement,* 6 (2), 21-34.

Fourie, M. (2003). Beyond the Ivory Tower: Service-Learning for Sustainable Community Development. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 17 (1), 31-38.

Heron, J. & Reason, P. (1997). A Participatory Inquiry Paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 3 (3), 274-294.

Jaftha, K. (2004). *Chief Directorate: Community Service.* www.uovs.ac.za/community_service/, accessed 6 February 2004.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lazarus, J. (2001). *A New Contract between Higher Education and Society: Responsiveness through a Scholarship of Engagement.* Paper presented at the 3rd Consultative Conference of the Council on Higher Education, 29 and 30 November 2001.

Lewis, J.A., Lewis, M.D., Daniels, J.A. & D'Andrea, M.J. (1998). *Community Counselling: Empowerment Strategies for a Diverse Society.* Pacific Grove: Brooks/ Cole Publishing.

National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE). (1996). *National Commission on Higher Education Report: A Framework for Transformation.* Pretoria: NCHE.

Palmer, P. (2001). *Colloquy on Teaching and Learning.* Public Comments. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Pretorius-Heuchert, J.W. & Ahmed, J. (2001). Community Psychology: Past, Present, and Future. In Seedat, M., Duncan, N. & Lazarus, S. (eds.). *Community Psychology: Theory, Method and Practice. South African and Other Perspectives.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Schoeman, W.J. (1993). *A Theoretical Model for Psycho-development.* Department of Psychology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Seedat, M., Duncan, N. & Lazarus, S. (eds.). (2001). *Community Psychology: Theory, Method and Practice. South African and Other Perspectives.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Sharp, A.A. (2003). *Towards the Integration of Academic Competencies and Content in an Access and Bridging Programme.* Master's Dissertation, University of the Free State.

University of the Free State (UFS). (2002). *University of the Free State Community Service Policy.* Available at: www.uovs.ac.za, under community service, accessed 2 October 2004.

University of the Free State (UFS). (2006). *Community Service Policy of the University of the Free State.* Available at: www.uovs.ac.za, under community service, accessed 13 September 2007.

von Bertalanffy, L. (1973). *General Systems Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Wessels, B. (2004). *Chief Directorate: Community Service.*
www.uovs.ac.za/community_service/, accessed 6 February 2004.

Zlotkowski, E. (2001). Mapping the New Terrain: Service-Learning across the Disciplines. *Change*, January/ February 2001, 25-33.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (1992). *Professional Development in Higher Education: A Theoretical Framework for Action Research*. London: Kogan Page.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (2001). Action Learning and Action Research: Paradigm, Praxis and Programs. In Sankaran, S., Dick, B., Passfield, R. & Swepson, P. (eds.). *Effective Change Management Using Action Research and Action Learning: Concepts, Frameworks, Processes and Applications*. Lismore, Australia: Southern Cross University Press.

CASE STUDY 14
SERVICE-LEARNING IN PSYCHOLOGY

KERRY FRIZELLE

About Ms Kerry Frizelle...

Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Kerry is responsible for training professional Master's students in HIV/AIDS competency, is the coordinator of the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Counselling and now offers her service-learning module to Honours Psychology students. Kerry is a registered counselling psychologist with research interests in HIV/AIDS, female sexuality and other gender related issues.

AT A GLANCE...

Module convenor: Kerry Frizelle
University: University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
Discipline: Psychology
Module title: HIV/AIDS and Service-Learning: Transforming Theory into Practice
Level of students: Third-year (Psychology majors)
Number of students: On average 20 – 30
Number of credits: 32

Community location of service-learning:
- Cato Manor

Service agency:
- Local high school

SUMMARY

The service-learning module on which this case study is based is offered to third-year students majoring in Psychology at UKZN. On average, the class consists of 20 – 30 students.

The partners in this service-learning module are:
- The higher education institution – in the form of UKZN (Howard College campus); more specifically, though, the academic staff member responsible for the implementation of the module and the students who register for the module represent the higher education institution;
- The service agency – in the form of a local high school situated in Cato Manor and in close proximity to the university; and
- The community – in the form of a group of local learners who attend this high school.

The students are given the opportunity to develop and implement an HIV/AIDS and sexuality intervention with young learners at a local high school, with the aim of enabling these youth to make more health-promoting decisions. Evaluation of the programme has indicated that the service-learning provides a valuable learning experience, where both university students and school learners begin to think critically about their location within the HIV/AIDS pandemic. School learners' knowledge base is extended, and through debate and dialogue they come to understand better the factors that influence sexual behaviour. University students have the opportunity to translate theory into practice and to begin to think critically about their assumptions about themselves, others and the HIV/AIDS context. The school is provided with an extramural activity that creates a safe and appropriate space for learners and students to discuss questions around a topic that most teachers feel ill-equipped to deal with.

Lessons learnt

In the course of developing and implementing this module, three central lessons have been learnt about service-learning:

- Service-learning partnerships are most effective if they are formed in response to real community needs and available resources rather than being 'arranged marriages'.
- The development of service-learning modules is an ongoing process that requires constant critical reflection on the part of all involved.
- Service-learning can be a powerful site for critical pedagogy, enabling participating students to engage in a critical social analysis of the HIV/AIDS context.

INITIATION

In the context of an emerging democracy, higher education institutions in South Africa have been faced with a series of challenges. McMillan (2002: 58) describes the system of higher education in the late 1990s as fragmented, with its many parts carrying out "their teaching and learning practices in insular and tightly-bound disciplinary ways", which did little to contribute towards addressing many of the pressing needs of South African communities. In the years following the official dismantling of apartheid legislature and policies, South African higher education institutions recognised the need to contribute towards the reconstruction and development of South African society. The strategic plan of the University of Natal (now UKZN) envisaged integrating development activities into the university's curricula so that students would gain skills needed to contribute towards the reconstruction of their society.

It was within this context that the university was asked to become involved in the CHESP project. The role of CHESP was to provide appropriate intellectual and practical spaces within which communities, higher education and the service sector could interface to generate new forms of knowledge for social development (CHESP, 2000). As a result service-learning was introduced as a pedagogical methodology that "integrates experiential knowledge with related readings, lectures, classroom discussion and structured reflection in order to engage students as active rather than passive learners" (Martin, 2003: 416). Most importantly, service-learning aims to provide students with a new learning opportunity that will ultimately meet *real, identified* community needs in a *meaningful* way.

A report by the Medical Research Council (Dorrington et al., 2001) provided comprehensive data on adult mortality rates and suggested that it was reasonable to interpret the rise in the mortality of young and middle-aged adults in South Africa since the late 1980s as being largely the consequence of HIV/AIDS. Recognising the threat of HIV/AIDS to society, the CHESP coordinators requested the School of Psychology to develop a service-learning module that would focus on the pandemic.

Service-learning is a unique pedagogical methodology, which requires various types of support for its successful implementation. Inclusion into curricula should depend on academic and financial support.

I can share the following advice about initiating the inclusion of service-learning in a module:

- Most importantly, the commitment of a dedicated module convenor with interests in both situational/ experiential learning and community outreach is necessary. Teaching a service-learning module requires more time and presents more administrative responsibilities than a conventional university module.

- There are a number of hidden costs involved in the implementation of such a module (stationery, transport costs, tutor support) and these should be considered before initiating service-learning.

- The human resources required for the successful implementation of the module ultimately place constraints on the number of students that can register for the module. Over 30 students were registered for the pilot module; subsequently, it has been necessary to cap the number of students to ensure adequate support and supervision for participating students.

- It also became apparent that not all students registered for the module were necessarily appropriate candidates. Believing that a service-learning module would be an easier alternative to other modules, students 'blindly' registered for service-learning, not fully understanding the academic and emotional demands of the module. We now inform students in more detail about the practical demands of the module and assure them that it is as theoretically demanding as other modules.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Partnership development

In an attempt to actualise the service-learning model, CHESP developed partnerships among communities, service agencies and higher education, working together to conceptualise and implement a service-learning module.

A word of caution is offered in this regard, though; although such partnerships are ideal, they should not be 'arranged marriages'. Developing partnerships within South Africa, which has a unique political and social past, is not an easy task. In the implementation of the pilot module we became increasingly aware of the 'political dynamics' that characterised our partnership. The idea of community participation in political and social processes was relatively new at the time of implementing the pilot project and, as Kelly and van der Riet (2001: 166) warn, within a context like South Africa a continued degree of suspicion and mistrust was to be expected. In the case of our pilot this militated against "the development of shared understandings and co-operative action". This suspicion and mistrust played out in subtle yet powerful ways within the partnership. For example, our community partner's relationship with the community in which she worked was

seriously compromised by her participation in the project. Members of her community were suspicious of the role she played in the project and this had serious implications for where our students were able to work (Frizelle & Sliep, 2002). Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005) highlight a number of important lessons learnt about partnerships during the implementation of their pilot service-learning module. For example, they point out the limitations of having a particular geographical community allocated to them, which created difficulties due to the distance of the community from the campus. In addition, limited understandings of the dynamics of this particular community itself led to unmet expectations and disappointments.

Over the last few years a more sustainable and compatible partnership has been developed with a local high school, where all our students implement their service-learning projects. In 2002 the School of Psychology developed a programme called Fast Forward, and invited learners from a local high school to participate. The programme aims to introduce learners to the university, while developing a sense of future in the learners who participate. The programme involves a number of activities, such as interactive dance and music, career workshops and outdoor adventure. Incorporated into this programme is an HIV/AIDS and sexuality workshop, which ensures that all the learners have covered and understood the basic facts. During the first implementation of Fast Forward a number of the programme's facilitators indicated that the learners had responded positively, but required follow-up to this particular component of the programme. It was decided that this offered an ideal service-learning opportunity. We received a positive response when we approached the learners and asked whether they required follow-up. The school was approached and offered our services. Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005) report that there is often a mismatch between academic skills on offer by the university and the needs within a community, especially when a particular community has been allocated to an academic institution. In our experience it has been far more worthwhile to work with a community that clearly needs the skills and capacity that we can offer.

Learners were invited to attend a series of workshops. In this way an already established partnership with the school and its learners was extended and has become a workable alternative to the initial partnership initiated on our behalf. In the past we had offered the students a variety of programmes; however, this became a logistical nightmare and extremely stressful for the module convenor. Placing students at a single site has proved a much more manageable alternative. The school (the service agency) has been extremely supportive of our follow-up programme entitled Let's Talk, run by students (the university) registered for the service-learning module. Almost 100% of the learners (the community) who attend the Fast Forward programme go on to attend the Let's Talk programme voluntarily.

Module development

The service-learning module was developed around a pre-identified developmental issue, HIV/AIDS. While service-learning encourages equal participation of the different partners in the conceptualisation of the module, the term equal requires careful consideration. Swartz and Gibson (2001) comment on the way in which our concern with democracy has led us to be reluctant to acknowledge differences where they do exist – differences in both outlook and competence. However, it is essential that these differences are acknowledged, especially when working

within the context of HIV/AIDS. Equality does not preclude difference. When working with a sensitive and value-laden topic like HIV/AIDS (we are, after all, trying to change specific behaviour) it is not possible to expect the learners (the community) to immediately know what they need to know, and it therefore becomes problematic to expect them to contribute to the conceptualisation of the programme in advance. While it certainly is important to recognise community knowledge and skills it is problematic for the higher education participants to deny the different knowledge and skills they bring with them. As Tomlinson and Swartz (2002: 100) warn, obscuring professional power can lead to enslavement rather than emancipation, making it difficult for the community "to voice their neediness given that they have been constructed as experts regarding issues in their own communities".

Acknowledging that, within the context of HIV/AIDS, interventions are anything but neutral and value-free, creative ways of enabling more *appropriate* participation from the learners have been developed. While the university students prepare themes for each workshop, the learners are provided with a topic box via which they can anonymously raise issues that they would like discussed in future workshops, and in this way learners contribute towards the content of the workshops. The same issue can be raised when considering the participation of the university students in the conceptualisation of the programme. The HIV/AIDS context has produced a wealth of literature that is critical of interventions aimed at changing risky youth behaviour. It is essential that this knowledge informs the development of the interventions and that students are not simply left to their own devices. It is here that the importance of theory informing practice becomes apparent. The students learn that interventions need to be informed by current research, literature and the learners' responses during the workshops.

Until recently the students were given a pre-developed programme. While I firmly believe that theory and current research on HIV/AIDS interventions should inform the content of the programme and that students should not simply resort to fact giving and didactic teaching forms, I have become convinced that I need to give the students more freedom and opportunity to contribute to the development of each of the workshops. My reluctance to do this in the past highlights my own anxieties and concerns as a module convenor who often feels immense pressure to *protect* the communities in which I work. I have become aware that this is based on problematic notions of vulnerable communities that need my protection, rather than acknowledging the resilience and knowledge that the community brings to the experience. Further, I have become convinced that 'mistakes' on the part of students create spaces for debate and negotiation where more *equal* opportunities for learning are created. King (2004: 124) confirms that it is necessary to create opportunities to counter the "tendency of privileged students to consider themselves the 'providers' of service for those 'less fortunate' than themselves; they must be made aware of how they, too, benefit from the service experience".

While I continue to believe that the students need guided assistance (from both myself and current research and literature) in developing the workshops, I also believe that in allowing the students more leeway to develop the content of the workshops in *partnership* with the learners, both parties benefit from and add to the learning experience. Spaces for contestation and debate are normalised, creating a space for dialogue and understanding rather than simply imposing a 'safe'

intervention. Students are guided in the development of workshop themes, and then given the opportunity to decide on the form and specifics of these workshops in *consultation* with the learners. As King (2004: 124) points out, these joint decision-making experiences provide students with unique opportunities for "a critical re-examination of either existing social systems or of their own pre-conceived opinions and assumptions".

This highlights the importance of structured opportunities for reflection, where students are encouraged to make links between their practice (their engagement with the learners) and theory, allowing for adjustments to the programme. As Tomlinson and Swartz (2002) suggest, rather than denying their status, professionals should acknowledge and own their skills, but this should not imply that they should assume that they know better. This acknowledgement creates far more productive opportunities for the community to *interrogate* and *criticise* the role of the professional, allowing for the more appropriate development of the intervention. Another warning: this process of negotiation is not always an easy one with simple solutions; and often the development of partnerships and interventions happens over a couple of years, rather than within the lifespan of one programme.

Intended outcomes

The Let's Talk programme was designed with the intention of creating spaces in which the learners could begin to understand and negotiate their location within the context of HIV/AIDS (Frizelle, 2005). Current literature on HIV/AIDS has made it increasingly clear that we cannot anticipate major behaviour change (we have subsequently heard of an unplanned pregnancy in the case of one of the learners who attended the workshops). We do, however, hope that through the workshops the learners are better able to negotiate their way through the complex sets of relationships and social organisation that characterise their lives, thus placing them in a better position to make health-enabling decisions. Many school teachers express discomfort and lack of skills to address issues around sexuality that go beyond basic biology, and the intention is, via this service-learning module, to provide a needed service for the teachers.

The assumption is that through their engagement in the programme the university students will themselves begin to think critically about their own location within the HIV/AIDS pandemic and be in a better position to deal with some of the professional demands the pandemic will impose on them once they are qualified. Another central aim of the module is to deconstruct the ways in which HIV/AIDS in Africa is understood and explained, enabling a much more critical and reflexive response to the pandemic. In addition, students are encouraged to think critically about the notion of 'help' and the fact that this can never be a neutral act in response to community need. Students' critical engagement with relevant theory and literature will, it is hoped, inform the design of more carefully considered and appropriate interventions in the long run.

PREPARATION

Community and service agency preparation

The high school's participation in the Fast Forward programme, implemented during the July

school vacation for the past few years, has ensured that both the school and its learners are adequately prepared for their participation in the Let's Talk programme, which happens in October of the same year. The school's administrative staff and teachers have become familiar with our presence at the school, and dedicated staff members are available each year to help with the organisation and logistics of implementing the programme at the school. The learners have had the opportunity of working with university students during the Fast Forward programme and are therefore well prepared for the small group work that characterises the Let's Talk programme. In addition, during Fast Forward the learners have already been introduced to the topic of sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Formal invitations are sent out to the learners, explaining the objectives of the workshops and asking them to motivate why they would like to participate. These responses are passed onto the university students, who use them to become more familiar with the learners' expectations and desired outcomes.

University student preparation

Over the years it has become apparent that the university students require the most preparation for the service-learning experience. Most students arrive with a set of pre-existing 'knowledges' about HIV/AIDS within South Africa and about youth who come from backgrounds and contexts different from their own. Having been exposed to HIV/AIDS interventions themselves, many of these students cannot think beyond these limited and often problematic experiences. These knowledges have to be deconstructed before the students are able to prepare for the implementation of their programme. In sum, the process of critical reflection has to begin from the start of the module, not just during the implementation of the programme. King (2004) proposes that service-learning can become a site for critical pedagogy. He is critical of contemporary educational practice that is dedicated towards "specifying and assessing the knowledge expected to be transmitted from teacher to student". He proposes that in such educational contexts existing social arrangements remain intact, hegemonic assumptions about the way the world is become naturalised, and students simply learn "to accommodate themselves to existing conditions". King argues (2004: 133) that, by contrast, critical pedagogy aims to destabilise these assumptions about the world and open up a space for "social critique and transformation by exposing the contingent and power-laden processes through which knowledge claims and social relations are generated".

The first six weeks of the module are dedicated to facilitating a process of critical reflection in line with King's definition (2004). Students are expected to engage with theory and literature that provide a *critique* of the way in which the HIV/AIDS pandemic is explained in Africa, of behaviour change interventions and of common-sense assumptions about youth, sexuality, help and communities. In addition, the students are encouraged to think about their own location within the pandemic and how the disease has impacted on their communities. It is not possible for the students to begin conceptualising a programme without this critical theoretical grounding. In addition, students visit a local heritage museum, which provides a historical narrative of the community in which the students will work – adding to their understanding of the political factors that impact on individual lives.

The lectures are structured to familiarise the students with the process of group work. Student feedback, however, has highlighted the importance of training the students in facilitation skills,

which they argue will further enhance their ability to create a space for dialogue and debate with the learners. Again, this highlights the cyclical nature of the development of any service-learning programme. Through module evaluation students provide useful insights into how the module can be adapted; and in this way the students' reflections contribute to the long-term development of the module.

Before module implementation, past students are invited to talk with the students. The past students are uniquely able to prepare the current students, given that experience has shown that the current students are more likely to be honest and open about their fears and apprehension with a peer than with their lecturer (the lecturer–student relationship being imbued with power imbalances, no matter how much one tries to avoid this). This technique is in line with the call by Estes (2004) for the establishment of more student-centred (rather than teacher-centred) facilitation techniques in experiential education. The past students become mentors and are available for the duration of the intervention to provide support and encouragement.

IMPLEMENTATION

The involvement of each partner in the implementation phase

The Let's Talk programme is implemented over a period of six weeks, consisting of six two-hour workshops with the learners at their school. During my discussion with a school staff member it was decided that running the programme after school would be the most practical alternative to trying to find space within an already overstretched timetable. Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005: 12) refer to a school that turned down a service-learning module, explaining that they were already "under-resourced and over-stretched and as such had no capacity to absorb the University's interventions". It is essential that the implementation of a programme adds value rather than placing an added burden on the community.

By running the programme after school we also felt that we would be locating the programme in a less formal space, which would facilitate more comfortable and open discussion around the topic. This also informed the decision not to have teachers involved in the actual workshops. The programme run at the school is informed by literature on the use of peer educators as a method for sexual health promotion among young people. Well informed peers of the same age and from the same community or school are trained to talk among themselves in an unstructured way about sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS. Although this is a method that holds great potential, Campbell (2003) warns that the implementation of such programmes is extremely complex. Peer educators are encouraged to take responsibility for the content and activities of the programme, with the non-directive support of a guidance counsellor. Campbell's research (2003: 134), however, showed that this was rarely the case, with learners falling "under the strict supervision and authority of the guidance teacher and school principal"; for example, teachers were insistent that the educators emphasise the importance of abstinence, despite high levels of sexual activity among school learners. It was therefore decided that not involving teachers in the workshops was an appropriate and well supported decision.

In addition, Campbell (2003) points out that, despite changing educational approaches in South

Africa, many youths are still largely exposed (and accustomed) to didactic teaching methods, which undermine autonomy or critical thinking. While youths may be trained in the use of participatory methods, Campbell (2003) cautions that they often do not have enough previous experience with the approach and therefore tend to make use of the more familiar didactic methods. In addition, Campbell (2003) found that the youth had not been given enough time to develop critical thinking skills and were therefore unable to initiate and facilitate critical discussion among their peers. By contrast, third-year university students are more likely to be familiar with critical thinking and participatory approaches to education, enabling them to facilitate more relevant and necessary discussion with the youths. This further supports the decision not to leave the content of the workshops entirely up to the learners themselves and the need for more creative means of participation, as discussed above.

Reflection process

King highlights the importance of opportunities for critical reflection if service-learning is to become a site for critical pedagogy. He argues that

> when service-learning affords students opportunities to cross social, economic, and cultural borders, and to form caring relationships across those borders, students are provided access to the cognitive and affective resources through which critical reflection becomes possible. (2004: 135)

Structured reflection sessions are facilitated throughout the implementation of the programme. Students are given the opportunity during class to journal their experiences and to reflect on the process. After this the students engage in a group discussion, sharing and debating their thoughts. It is through this process that students are able to recognise the contradiction between theory and practice and to appreciate that knowledge is socially constructed rather than an immutable truth. Students also become aware of the contradictions and similarities between their and the learners' backgrounds and lifestyles, enabling a process of defamiliarisation that allows for a unique learning experience. King (2004: 134) found that through such destabilisation, "students came to confront the limits of their own perspectives and acknowledge the need to 'critically examine the historically and socially constructed forms by which they live'".

King (2004) highlights that it is the *relationship* formed between the community members and students that enables this process of critical reflection.

Assessment

Multiple forms of assessment are structured into the module at various stages. Students' knowledge of HIV/AIDS is assessed prior to the implementation phase. Prior to programme implementation students write two critical papers, in which their understanding of the theory is assessed. A mini-conference is held at the end of the programme and students present a paper on their experiences and are assessed on the process of reflection rather than on outcomes. Students write an examination at the end of the semester; however, this examination does not count for as much as in the case of standard modules because the focus of assessment in this service-learning module is

on the students' service experience. It has been decided recently that in future students registered for this module will be required to produce a learning portfolio rather than writing an examination. This decision was based on feedback from the external examiner and was made in consultation with the head of the School of Psychology. It was suggested that a learning portfolio aims to assess the *integration* of learning, whereas the traditional examination tends to compartmentalise knowledge in an artificial way.

OUTCOMES

Benefits for the community

In an attempt to ascertain what benefits the programme offered the learners, 10 learners were selected to keep diaries for the duration of the programme. In addition, a focus group was run with the learners after the programme's conclusion.

The responses during the focus group suggest that the learners' basic understanding and information about safer sex and HIV/AIDS had improved due to their interaction in the workshops. While providing facts and information was not the aim of the programme, correcting misunderstandings and adding new useful information during the discussion groups were important aspects of the facilitators' role. We do, however, have to consider the possibility that some of the students themselves felt more comfortable with fact giving and thus focused on this more readily. The feedback from learners also provided evidence that the discussions had gone beyond the limited sets of facts that learners are often presented with in HIV/AIDS interventions. For example, learners reported that they had learnt that masturbation was an alternative to penetrative sex and in this way their understanding of abstinence was reconstructed. In addition to basic facts and information, the students also indicated that their understanding of relationships had shifted significantly. The learners referred to the need for communication with their partners and recognised that trust should not be a factor that undermines safer sex. It was clear that the students had discussed peer pressure and tactics used to coerce each other into having sex.

The diaries provided interesting insights into the experiences of the learners during the programme. One female learner gave an account of visiting an ex-boyfriend and described in detail how their reunion turned sexual and how she successfully used the communication skills she had learnt through a role-play scenario during a workshop to negotiate her way out of this risky situation. While we could not claim that she would be able to do this every time, she was better enabled to protect herself in this particular situation. The diaries also provided evidence of debate and dialogue during the sessions; one learner reported on a discussion about young girls getting involved with older men for luxuries. Her account of the discussion suggested that there was some debate around the issue, and highlighted the diversity of the learners' experiences. While there appeared to be agreement on the issue of 'sugar-daddies', there was also an account of resistance to be pressured into having sex because something has been given to you. These types of discussions are valuable for all involved, especially for students who have read research on the 'sugar-daddy' phenomenon and may incorrectly homogenise the experience of young girls as passive victims.

While we can claim to have created a space in which learners have been encouraged to think

critically about their location within the context of HIV/AIDS, we cannot claim sustainable change. Research indicates that behaviour change at the individual level is not possible without major changes at the social, economic and political levels. While a female learner may be able to negotiate safer sex in one relationship, she may not necessarily be able to transfer these skills to a new relationship characterised by a unique set of dynamics. In an attempt to provide a more supportive context, I have attempted to develop a relationship between the learners and the nearby health clinic. An HIV counsellor at the clinic showed interest in the students and addressed them, reassuring them that the clinic is a facility that they can use. We know that a number of the learners have been for testing since participating in the programme. However, with this counsellor moving to a new clinic there is no guarantee that the new counsellor will be as responsive to the needs of the learners.

Benefits for the higher education institution

Benefits for the students

In an attempt to ascertain what benefits the module offers students, they were asked to fill in questionnaires and an evaluation survey and participate in a focus group (2005). The student evaluation indicated that all of the student participants in the module that year agreed that the programme had provided them with a unique and valuable learning experience. In addition, they all agreed that they felt inspired to participate in community work in the future. When asked, however, if they believed that the programme had made a difference to those learners involved, some students said they felt it had, while a number of the students were unsure of whether or not it had made a difference. Their responses indicated a realistic understanding of the impact of the programme. While they hoped that they had made a difference, they acknowledged the difficult circumstances in which these youths have to negotiate their lives.

During the focus group discussion it became apparent that the students' perceptions of the learners had shifted considerably during the programme. Most of the students agreed that they had come to realise that, although the learners came from backgrounds different to their own, the challenges these youth faced were similar to the students'. In this way the divide between 'us and them' was narrowed through the process of interaction and discussion. By contrast, another student's response indicated that she had for the first time become aware of her own privileged position. She was able to understand that her own social positioning had reduced her vulnerability to HIV infection, while the social positioning of many of the learners had increased their vulnerability. Another student acknowledged that she had never believed that condom use could not be an option, and had come to appreciate the complexity of negotiating safer sex. A student approached me in private to 'confess' that despite being involved in this module and working with the learners he had recently engaged in unsafe sex. He explained that he had become more sympathetic regarding the pressures on youth. Other students expressed levels of disillusionment, believing that they were powerless to bring about change in an unsupportive context and were not optimistic about trying to change years of socialisation in a few weeks. The diversity of responses suggested that the students' interaction with the learners provided unique learning experiences, where students came to re-evaluate preconceived notions about sexual behaviour and to think critically about their own lifestyles and positioning within the world.

My contact with some of my past students has indicated that many subsequently remain involved in community work. Many of the students participating in the Let's Talk programme go on to become facilitators during the Fast Forward programme, in this way supporting other interventions offered by the school. I have heard of students changing the direction of their studies after engagement in the service-learning module and of one student being employed at an NGO based on her participation.

Benefits for the academics

In terms of benefits for the academics involved, service-learning opens up great opportunities. Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005) point out that there is a tendency for service-learning module convenors to report that engagement within communities is often thwarted by the pressure to fulfil other responsibilities, such as research and publication. As a counter argument it is suggested that service-learning provides unique research opportunities for academics interested in teaching, learning and community interventions.

Benefits for the service agency

One of the staff members involved explained that while the teachers were initially suspicious of our presence at the school, they have subsequently expressed relief that the learners have the opportunity to speak to someone other than themselves about issues related to sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Staff have indicated that learners are more open to the topic once they have participated in the programme. Due to limited funding the school does not have a fulltime guidance counsellor and as a result this particular teacher has taken on the role of school guidance counsellor in addition to her own teaching load. She told me numerous stories of abuse and abandonment among the learners and expressed gratitude for our presence at the school. One of the learners has already seen an intern psychologist based at the university for counselling. It is hoped that learners will use these services more readily in the future, relieving this teacher of some of the stresses and demands placed on her.

In addition to providing workshops on HIV/AIDS related issues, we are also providing learners at the school with the opportunity to mix with university students; in this way we are introducing the learners to the university context and the different disciplines if offers.

PARTNERSHIPS

As already mentioned, while the CHESP triad model of partnership is a valuable one, developing partnerships within South Africa is challenging. In particular, as pointed out earlier, 'arranged marriages' need to be avoided and political dynamics must be taken seriously.

Mitchell and Rautenbach (2005: 11) correctly suggest – and this applies to this service-learning module – that it is useful to explore pre-partnership conditions (including environmental and situational factors and task characteristics), in order to decide whether both the university and community have "the basic social, economic and awareness factors required for effective

partnering". Their paper is a valuable tool and offers a number of useful suggestions for the development of 'workable' partnerships.

As is clear from the details provided elsewhere in this case study, a functional three-way partnership among higher education institution, service agency and community – in which all parties' needs are clearly stated and all partners' expertise is taken seriously – has been the foundation of this service-learning module. While this partnership has presented challenges at times, creative approaches have been employed to ensure appropriate participation by all parties.

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

The School of Psychology at UKZN has a very strong community outreach ethos – particularly since the university merger. The service-learning module is one of a number of academic modules that provide students with an outreach experience. In this way service-learning supports one of the core focus areas of the School of Psychology: community involvement. While service-learning has a particular underlying theoretical model and provides a unique set of practice guidelines, it is only one form of meaningful community engagement. I believe that it will be useful for academics involved in different forms of community outreach to collaborate more in the future. Service-learning should not stand as an isolated form of community intervention but rather work alongside and in partnership with other forms of intervention to enable more effective programmes. These partnerships will also serve as support networks for academics working within the field.

ETHICS

One of the main concerns expressed by students and their parents is the safety of the students while participating in the programme. While we can never *guarantee* students' safety, precautions should be taken. In the case of our intervention, security guards are always on duty while we are on the school premises.

When students are transported off-campus it is essential that they have signed the necessary indemnity forms.

Students' needs may arise unexpectedly during the workshops. For example, one student expressed fear of having been infected with HIV while helping his father who had been shot and killed. The student was unaware of his father's status and the discussion of the modes of transmission had made him nervous. It became apparent during the discussion that the student was still dealing with the death of his father and was in need of bereavement and trauma counselling. It was necessary to provide this student with pre-test counselling, facilitate a testing appointment and provide him with bereavement counselling. It was equally important to spend time debriefing the other students after this particularly emotive experience.

In another case, via the anonymous question box a learner suggested possible child abuse and this had to be dealt with, with the students carefully using the ethical guidelines provided by the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

CONCLUSION

Service-learning provides an exciting and rewarding teaching experience. It is, however, not easy. When working alone on a module, an academic can feel isolated and under an immense amount of pressure. It is essential to have a supportive network, or a mentor with whom one can discuss decisions and ideas.

The most important lesson I have learnt is to accept the changing nature of such a module. HIV/AIDS literature and research change by the day and it is a demanding task to remain up to date. In addition, partnerships are characterised by interpersonal dynamics and thus they too will change and develop over time. Student numbers will increase and drop from one year to the next. Unexpected dilemmas will rear their heads. Expecting this as the norm is perhaps the most useful tip to pass on.

I believe that this partnership is a useful and necessary one, with the students being the real winners. I believe that learning should extend beyond the classroom and that students should be given more agency in the learning process, while contributing to the development of their society. Most importantly, I believe that we are doing society a great service if we contribute to the development of students who are able to think critically about their own location within the world.

REFERENCES

Campbell, C. (2003). *Letting Them Die: Why HIV/AIDS Intervention Programmes Fail.* Cape Town: Double Storey Books.

Community – Higher Education – Service Partnerships (CHESP). (2000). *Strategic Plan.* Braamfontein: JET Education Services.

Dorrington, R., Bourne, D., Bradshaw, D., Laubscher, R. & Timaeus, I.M. (2001). *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Adult Mortality in South Africa.* Pretoria: South African Medical Research Council, Burden of Disease Research Unit.

Estes, C.A. (2004). Promoting Student-centred Learning in Experiential Education. *Journal of Experiential Education,* 27 (2), 141-160.

Frizelle, K. (2005). Negotiating Identity within the Politics of HIV/AIDS: Developing Interventions for Young South Africans. *International Journal of Critical Psychology,* 13, 76-95.

Frizelle, K. & Sliep, Y. (2002). *Subjugated Knowledges in the Process of Service Learning Evaluation*. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual International Conference: Advances in Service Learning Research, Nashville, Tennessee.

Kelly, K. & van der Riet, M. (2001). Participatory Research in Community Settings: Processes, Methods, and Challenges. In Seedat, M., Duncan, N. & Lazarus, S. (eds.). *Community Psychology, Theory, Method and Practice. South African and Other Perspectives.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

King, J.T. (2004). Service-Learning as a Site for Critical Pedagogy: A Case of Collaboration, Caring, and Defamiliarization across Borders. *Journal of Experiential Education,* 26 (3), 121-137.

Martin, E.J. (2003). Critical Social Analysis, Service Learning, and Urban Affairs: A Course Application in Public Policy and Administration. *New Political Science* 25 (3), 407-431.

McMillan, J. (2002). The Sacred and Profane: Theorising Knowledge Reproduction Processes in a Service-Learning Curriculum. In Billig, S.H. & Furco, A. (eds.). *Service Learning through a Multidisciplinary Lens.* Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.

Mitchell, C. & Rautenbach, S. (2005). Questioning Service Learning in South Africa: Problematising Partnerships in the South African Context. A Case Study from the University of Natal. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 19 (1).

Swartz, L. & Gibson, K. (2001). The 'Old' versus the 'New' in South African Community Psychology: The Quest for Appropriate Change. In Seedat, M., Duncan, N. & Lazarus, S. (eds.). *Community Psychology, Theory, Method and Practice. South African and Other Perspectives.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Tomlinson, M. & Swartz, L. (2002). The 'Good Enough' Community. Power and Knowledge in South African Community Psychology. In Swartz, L., Gibson, K. & Gelman, T. (eds.). *Reflective Practice: Psychodynamic Ideas in Community.* Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

CHE