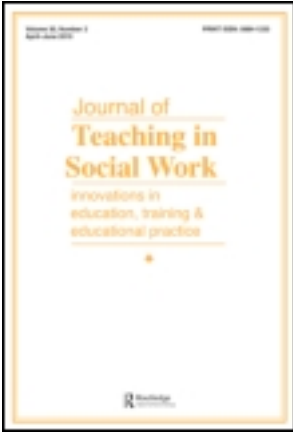


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### Creating Space for Marginalized Voices: Re-focusing Service Learning on Community Change and Social Justice

Robin Ringstad <sup>a</sup>, Valerie Lester Leyva <sup>a</sup>, John Garcia <sup>a</sup> & Kelvin Jasek-Rysdahl <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Social Work, CSU Stanislaus, Turlock, California, USA

<sup>b</sup> Department of Economics, CSU Stanislaus, Turlock, California, USA

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## **Creating Space for Marginalized Voices: Re-focusing Service Learning on Community Change and Social Justice**

ROBIN RINGSTAD, VALERIE LESTER LEYVA,  
and JOHN GARCIA

*Department of Social Work, CSU Stanislaus, Turlock, California, USA*

KELVIN JASEK-RYSDAHL

*Department of Economics, CSU Stanislaus, Turlock, California, USA*

*Although service learning was established as a method for combining relevant student learning opportunities with community engagement, recent critiques highlight the shift from achieving community-defined goals towards a predominate focus on assessing student learning. Focusing on a community's decision-making process regarding a homeless shelter, this article describes a cross-curricular project that combines critical service learning with participatory action research. Using community and participant defined goals and interactions to steer the research process enabled achievement of both student learning and attempts at community transformation.*

*KEYWORDS* Macro-practice, oppression, teaching research, policy practice

### INTRODUCTION

Acquiring knowledge through participation in community-based projects is a well-established element of social work education (McNutt, 1995; Taylor & Roberts, 1985; Weil & Gamble, 1995). Community-based research (CBR), focusing on the potential to improve student acquisition of research skills, and service learning (SL), which connects students to practice opportunities

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Address correspondence to Valerie Lester Leyva, Department of Social Work, CSU Stanislaus, One University Circle, Turlock, CA 95382, USA. E-mail: vleyva@csustan.edu

in real-life community settings, are two methods frequently employed to enhance student learning (Anderson, 2003; Billig & Eyler, 2003; Howard, Gelman, & Giles, 2000). However, recent critiques of these models cite as problematic their excessive emphasis on student-centered pedagogical innovation over that of community transformation (Marullo, Moayed, & Cooke, 2009; Scott, 2004; Swords & Kiely, 2010). This article describes a process wherein both objectives are achieved.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Community-Based Research

CBR is an established mechanism for university faculty to pursue research interests on topics related to communities. CBR also is a method for faculty to provide service to the community. Involvement in CBR often is provided through academic research projects that explore community needs, dynamics, and development (Hyde & Meyer, 2004). The degree of involvement by the community in such efforts has varied widely, ranging from active participation by community members to no direct involvement (Hyde & Meyer, 2004). CBR frequently results in university faculty conducting research *on* a community or *about* a community rather than *with* a community. Such activities involve conventional methods, conceptualizing research “as a linear process moving from theory to data to results . . . and authority and control rest with the researcher” (Hyde & Meyer, 2004, p. 74). Using such a frame, faculty conduct studies about community problems or needs and end their projects with a series of conclusions about what the results mean and what should be done. Although outcomes are sometimes shared with the community, the primary purpose of the research is to advance scientific knowledge. Such traditional methods represent minimal community involvement, valuing contribution to the academy and the university over benefit to the community.

In addition to being viewed as a mechanism for serving the community, CBR projects are seen by academics as a way to teach students about research. Much has been written about the need to make research relevant to students (Anderson, 2003; Harder, 2010; Margolis et al., 2000). This goal is especially true in professional and applied disciplines of study such as social work (Brzuzy & Segal, 1996; Hyde & Meyer, 2004; Reisch & Rivera, 1999). In fact, the social work profession increasingly is concerned about research competency among social work practitioners. The importance of linking social work research with practice in the field has been well-established (Berger, 2002; Engel & Schutt, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2005), and a focus specifically on evidence-based practice is a recurring theme in the profession (Gambrill, 2006; Gibbs, 2007; Rubin & Parrish, 2007). CBR involving students directly in a CBR project can provide one mechanism for connecting

practice and research. Student involvement in CBR typically is evaluated in terms of whether and how the project was successful as an effective pedagogical strategy and how it contributed to students' meeting their course learning objectives. Less common is evaluation conducted on what impact the research had on addressing the stated needs of the community in which it was based.

### Service Learning

Many BSW and MSW programs have adopted SL as a useful pedagogy for social work education. Some indeed hail this experiential model as a return to basic social work values (Forte, 1997). SL often is commended for providing real-world opportunities wherein students can experience the full range of organizational and systemic complexities inherent in agency-based practice (Hyde & Meyer, 2004).

In social work, SL has been used to facilitate student learning and community engagement in practice courses (Droppa, 2007; Hayashi & Favuzzi, 2001; Hegeman, Horowitz, Tepper, Pillemer, & Schultz, 2002; Singleton, 2007; Williams & Reeves, 2004); policy courses (Anderson, 2006; Anderson & Harris, 2005; Bye, 2005; Rocha, 2000; Scott, 2008); and research courses (Harder, 2010; Hyde & Meyer, 2004; Kapp, 2006; Knee, 2002; Rogge & Rocha, 2004; Wells, 2006). Others present models that attempt to engage students in courses spanning the full range of social work curricula. For example, Pierpont, Pozzuto, and Powell (2001) used an SL project to integrate the content of practice and policy courses. Sather, Weitz, and Carlson (2007) partnered with a single community agency to offer SL components across several practice, policy, and research courses. The project described here involved a CBR project on homelessness involving students in research, macro-practice, and policy courses. Many such efforts succeeded in their pedagogical goals of creating meaningful course assignments, increasing student interest in macro-practice, exposing students to the complexities inherent in community-based social work intervention, and engaging students in real-life, real-time, socially relevant research topics (Lemieux & Allen, 2007).

However, SL should equally value the service provided to communities with student learning outcomes. Prominent scholars of this field note, "The increased popularity of SL over the past 15 years is associated with a resurgence of interest in reestablishing higher education's commitment to solving social problems in the communities in which such institutions reside" (Lemieux & Allen, 2007, p. 309). Particularly attractive has been an emphasis on the collaborative efforts between the university, the learner, and the community (Lemieux & Allen, 2007). SL enables the integration of interpersonally oriented micro-practice skills, such as interviewing, listening, and making referrals, with systems-oriented macro-practice skills, such as

creating linkages among service providers and facilitating the civic involvement of traditionally disenfranchised groups (Sather et al., 2007; Scott, 2008). Still, often a value seems to be placed on student learning; hence, evaluation of SL projects primarily cites student learning as the demonstrable and desired outcome.

Many authors have called for balance between the goals of student learning and community contribution, and some caution against a tendency to focus on developing professional practice models as a singular end of SL (Marullo et al., 2009; Scott, 2004; Swords & Kiely, 2010). Marullo et al. (2009) highlight the inadequacies of SL that focuses on student acquisition of knowledge over the actual community issue. Marullo et al. and Scott (2004) caution against SL projects that fail to address power inequities between community members and the institutions they seek to change. They maintain that limiting student learning to a narrow focus on practice development does not mitigate the influence of traditional Euro-American theories of knowledge construction that sustain conventional models of community and social development. From their perspective, models not actively addressing the issue of power imbalances between the university and community cannot lead to authentic social justice and community change. Swords and Kiely (2010) propose a more radical model of SL focusing on movement building and community transformation. Their goal is to move from a traditional SL conceptualization, which places greater value on student learning, to a more transformative “movement-driven” model of SL that balances student learning needs with community service and transformation.

### Concerns and Solution Strategies

Several specific problems with CBR and SL are identified in the literature. These include focusing on the needs of academic researchers over those of community partners, valuing student learning over community service, differing needs and timeframes of academic institutions and community organizations, failing to value community members as equal partners, and communities not taking ownership of projects and project results. One remedy for these problems entails refocusing on the community needs and community-engagement aspects of these models. By adopting models of CBR and SL that directly engage community members, outcomes that are more specifically focused on addressing community issues in ways that value knowledge and solutions created by community members are more likely to be achieved.

The authors of this article were presented with an opportunity to engage in a CBR and SL project focusing on concern over a municipal proposal to build a local homeless shelter. In an attempt to deal with extensive public dissention about the proposal, city officials came to the University looking for experts to “study the problem” and “make a recommendation.”

Subsequent discussions demonstrated that a wide range of constituencies were interested in the issue and that many were passionate about their views (both pro and con) on spending city resources. Some constituents also expressed skepticism about any reports or research results obtained from “university experts,” making the value of a conventional study questionable.

University faculty advised that a methodology fully involving community constituents would increase the chances that research results would be relevant, accepted, and useful. Therefore, to ensure that the views of widely divergent stakeholders were heard, university researchers agreed to participate only after city officials consented to a research methodology focusing on maximum participation by the community. After city officials agreed, a participatory action CBR project, with a 1-year time frame, was developed.

### Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) represents an alternative to traditional methods that involve top-down, linear approaches to research. PAR methodology “requires that community members be active participants in the identification and definition of the research questions, in the development of methodology, in collecting and organizing data, in data analysis, and in dissemination of findings” (Alvarez & Gutierrez, 2001, p. 2). Such projects typically are flexible, multi-faceted, and resource-intensive. Results are “owned” by the community and often are intended to spur social action. “The themes of empowerment, social justice, and grassroots activism clearly inform this paradigm” (Hyde & Meyer, 2004, p. 74).

Using PAR as the methodological approach, social work and economics department faculty and students engaged in several SL activities to support community members’ efforts to develop an action plan for responding to the issues. Faculty, community members, and students from practice, policy, and research courses applied aspects of the PAR process. Engaging a broad local constituency that held personal investment in the issues was the goal. Diffusing a selective focus on academic research and student learning objectives was an important consideration. Using an authentic PAR protocol re-centered the actual community issue as the focus of the learning process and community-based results as the ultimate outcome measure.

The following discussion focuses on the process and results of engaging students and faculty in a locally relevant community issue via SL and CBR. The discussion also examines the project from the point of view of the criticisms recently expressed about the focus of CBR and SL as primarily being related to university and student learning concerns. With the multiple views of SL and CBR as the pedagogical milieu, this project demonstrates the broad scope required of a community-based project seeking to achieve social change in addition to student learning. Outcomes of various types (university-focused, student-focused, and community-focused) are reported,

and reflections on lessons learned are reviewed. We provide key details of our processes and outcomes to allow for critique of the project and to demonstrate how others might replicate such efforts.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

As noted, the current project began when city officials contacted the University asking for assistance with conducting a study about whether they should build a homeless shelter. City staff were put in touch with the co-directors of a research center on campus, the Center for Public Policy Studies (Center), to discuss the potential research project. The Center, co-directed by two University faculty members (both co-authors on this paper; one from the economics department and one from the social work department) set up meetings with city staff to determine the scope, nature, and intent of the city officials' request. Given the wide range of constituencies who were passionate stakeholders in the community and the expressed concern that University researchers might possess a "hidden agenda," it was immediately apparent that any successful project would require placing community input, need, and inclusion as the central focus. A PAR methodology was utilized to ensure full community engagement. Initial steps by Center researchers included scheduling a series of individual meetings with representatives from a variety of concerned groups in the community. These contacts with pivotal individuals led to identification of additional key informants. Because of the suspicion expressed by some community members and to ensure community ownership of the project and the results, it was paramount to contact key stakeholders and invite those with diverse or opposing views to be part of the research process. The Center researchers conducted a total of 45 individual interviews over a period of 1 to 2 months.

### Establishment of Co-researcher Groups

True community-engaged, CBR requires "principled community partnerships that have clear, open, and accessible communications, [and] which are built on trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment" (Reynolds, 2009, p. 7). Core principles of participatory CBR include the systematic creation of knowledge through a collaborative approach equitably involving interested community members. All stakeholders need to be invited to participate in identifying, defining, and struggling to solve the problem. Critical social action and social change goals should be the end result (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003). The success of this project rested on attending to divergent views, including the historically marginalized voices of individual community members and homeless persons, giving all impacted persons equal status and shared power.



Because of initial distrust expressed in the individual interviews, multiple work groups were established with the hope that, later in the research process, these groups would begin to work together. The groups included a city government representatives group, a business owners group, a service-providers group (including public and nonprofit faith-based organizations), and a homeless persons group. Each one had strong collective opinions about the issue of homelessness and a strong investment in decisions about how to respond to the issue. Over a period of approximately 3 to 4 months, Center researchers met one to two times per month with each group to discuss the issues, purpose, and logistics of participation and the PAR process. After a series of such discussions, a relatively consistent group of engaged participants emerged in each group.

### Service Learning Development

Members of each of these groups (along with University researchers) began the process of engaging as *co-researchers* in a PAR project. Each group worked together to define the problem, identify research questions, develop research methodologies, and plan for data collection and analysis. As four separate co-researcher groups were operating, each with different research questions and different methodologies, the scope of the original project expanded exponentially. The expected time allotted to the project by Center researchers significantly increased from original estimates. Co-researcher groups quickly identified the need for additional manpower to carry out their proposed studies. Center researchers, therefore, requested and received permission from each of the co-researcher groups to seek assistance from additional University members in carrying out the various research activities.

The two Center researchers approached faculty in the MSW department at the University to inquire whether they could refer students who might be interested in working on this research project. Two of the co-authors of this paper, each social work faculty, expressed interest in more formally involving students via SL activities to assist the community co-researcher groups and enhance learning opportunities for students. All agreed, and an SL component was developed in several graduate social work courses, including research methods, data analysis, and macro-social work practice/policy classes. As the timeline remaining to complete the research was 5 months, the SL activities were to be completed during a one-semester academic time frame.

Though relevant student learning objectives were readily identifiable based on existing course objectives, the primary intent of student participation was to carry out activities specifically identified by the groups. The goal was to empower community members to obtain information, knowledge, voice, and impact on the issue of homelessness in their community. A goal of “immediate and substantial impact on the community” (Chupp &



Joseph, 2010, p. 196) has been identified as an aim of what has been termed *critical SL*. According to Mitchell (2008), critical SL is distinguished from student-focused SL by the redistribution of power, promotion of authentic relationships, and goals of social change or amelioration of problematic social conditions. In the current project, a total of 30 graduate social work students (22 from the research courses and 8 from the practice/policy course) and 2 undergraduate students (from the economics department) chose to participate in this critical SL opportunity.

### Cross-Curricular Service Learning Assignments

Since the SL opportunity in this project became available shortly after the social work courses had commenced and because the primary focus was on meeting community need, the SL assignments were presented to students as optional activities. Approximately 90% of the research methods students and 33% of the macro-practice/policy students participated in the assignments. The remaining students in the classes completed the traditional course assignments, primarily written papers. Assignments for the SL students were modified to allow for project participation and reflection. One student from the economics department joined the research methods students in these SL activities.

Each of the co-researcher groups requested assistance in a variety of ways. Only some of these could be accommodated in the time frame of the study. The service-provider/faith-based group wanted demographic information about homeless individuals to determine what services and resources were needed. City staff were concerned about the amount of city services being utilized to address homelessness and wanted data collection from a variety of public agencies, such as law enforcement, the fire departments, and schools. The homeless persons group was concerned about the misconceptions about who the homeless really were and the stigma related to being homeless. The business owners cohort wanted data about the costs of homelessness from their perspective, including the financial, social, and emotional costs to the business community.

The original portion of the SL opportunities in this PAR project were focused around the needs of the business owners co-researcher group because their methodology was labor-intensive and would be time-limited. The specific activities students engaged in also lent themselves well to specific learning objectives in each of the social work courses. This business-owners group expressed major concerns about the possible location of a homeless shelter in the downtown area. They were concerned about its impact on businesses located near the area. Many of the members of this group indicated businesses near the location already were dealing with issues related to the number of homeless individuals and the amount of crime-related activity in the area. This group decided to survey businesses

in the area to determine the perceived versus the real impact from the perspective of local business owners.

Based on the methodology developed by this co-researcher group, a stratified sampling plan was used to identify businesses to be surveyed. This sample included all businesses in the downtown area and a sample of businesses in other parts of the city for comparison purposes. Data collection involved face-to-face and telephone surveys. Students were enlisted both to conduct the survey and to statistically analyze the results. The total sample size was 191, with a participation rate of 50%. Classroom activities prepared students for their participation and for relating their activities to course learning objectives. Class activities in the research methods class involved providing course content on PAR; familiarizing students with the nature of the current study; reviewing the procedures, content, and construction of survey questions; training on procedures for obtaining informed consent; actually administering the surveys; reviewing procedures for conducting interviews and recording responses; increasing student awareness about safety in the community; and identifying problem resolution procedures. Institutional review board approval was obtained by the Center after review with the students and the community co-researchers. All students worked in teams while engaged in data collection to promote accuracy, decrease anxiety, and ensure safety.

Students in the macro-practice/policy course also were prepared in advance for their service learning activities. Because practice/policy students were engaged in the project as managers for the community survey activities, their preparation included reviewing maps of the areas to be surveyed, developing procedures for following up with businesses unable to complete the survey that day, and establishing translation protocols for non-English-speaking business owners. Each macro-practice/policy student was assigned duties as a team leader and placed in charge of student research teams in different locations of the city. Team leaders maintained all supplies, city maps, addresses of businesses in the sample, and completed surveys. Using cell phones, they served as contact persons for all survey takers and functioned as conflict-resolution problem solvers. These students tracked which businesses in the sample were contacted and coordinated follow-up visits when original survey takers were unable to reach the business owner or complete the survey. Practice/policy team leaders also served as liaison persons with faculty supervisors (all authors on this paper) who were continuously available in the community during the data collection process. All original face-to-face contacts were attempted in a single day. In cases where survey takers were asked to return at a later time or on another day, team leaders made specific arrangements with research student survey takers and faculty members to ensure all original protocols were maintained.

After the completion of the data collection, student assignments continued in the classroom settings through the end of the semester. Research

students enrolled in the data analysis class used the business survey to learn about quantitative data analysis. Survey data were entered into student-developed data sets via the SPSS. These data were used to conduct various statistical tests to answer particular research questions. A report of statistical results from the data analysis assignments was prepared by students with instructor review and was provided to the lead researchers who were engaged with the co-researcher groups. These group members collectively reviewed the preliminary results to make meaning out of the findings. When the groups needed additional information or guidance with statistical analyses, they informed the faculty, who assisted students with completing the additional analysis.

Students involved in the macro-practice/policy course also engaged in supplementary classroom assignments. They completed a mapping process, for example, based on the findings of the survey of businesses. Students were able to use the results to plot on a city map where the highest levels of concern were located and where the most frequent problems related to the homelessness issue occurred. They subsequently identified social service programs in the city and examined the availability of these public and private resources to various community constituencies. This information was provided to the co-researcher groups for their continued interpretation of results. In class, these students utilized the data to discuss community development, examine economic impact, analyze resource allocation, and examine the local policy implications for various community constituencies.

Though most of the social work students completed SL activities involving the research needs of the business owner co-researcher group, several students (including one from the economics department) also collaborated with each of the other three groups in various ways. Their activities included participation at group meetings, providing note-taking and transcription services, conducting literature searches, and gathering data for the groups. These students voluntarily remained involved with the project on a longer-term basis (well past the end of the academic semester) based on the needs of the groups, rather than on the end date of their university courses.

Several other MSW students assisted the co-researcher groups over a 2-year process (the original study was 1 year, and the original SL activities were for one academic semester). Five social work students became members of co-researcher groups. Twelve social work students completed their master's theses on topics of interest to their group. All theses were chaired by MSW faculty members who had been part of the original PAR project, so relationships with co-researcher groups were maintained after the completion of the original project. (These research efforts were well beyond the scope of the original project.) These independent research projects included investigating law enforcement/crime statistics related to homelessness in the city, determining shelter use among the homeless population, examining what other local governments in surrounding communities were doing to

deal with homeless issues, analyzing data from local schools around the educational services and needs of homeless children, and further exploring the experiences of engaging in a PAR. Several students also participated in advocacy activities that developed after the conclusion of the research with various community groups around the issue of responding to the unmet needs of the homeless in the local area. Community co-researchers developed a community action group to address homelessness that remained in operation for 2 years after the completion of the original PAR project.

### Reflections on Faculty and Student Learning

As CBR is regarded as a mechanism for university researchers to provide service to the community, it is important for communities to establish and maintain their voice in such research agendas. In many communities, a history of disempowering relationships between academic institutions and communities can result in significant caution and outright distrust between the two (Rogge & Rocha, 2004). Hence, it was important to researchers involved in this project that a wide range of community voices be included in the research initially requested by city staff and for community constituents to gain confidence in and ownership of the results. To encourage such confidence, ownership, and engagement, community-based PAR involves

scientific inquiry conducted in communities in which community members, persons affected by [the] condition or issue under study and other key stakeholders in the community's health, have the opportunity to be full participants in each phase of the work (from conception-design-conduct-analysis-interpretation-conclusions-communication of results). (Interagency Working Group for Community-Based Participatory Research, 2002 as cited in Rogge & Rocha, 2004, p.105)

As such, community-based PAR was used as the conceptual and operational framework for this project and the critical SL activities it included.

The use of this model not only served to provide a successful approach for conducting the research but resulted in changed perceptions of one another by many participants. For example, members of a community co-researcher group became much more informed about the complexity of the issues surrounding homelessness; city government officials gained insight into community needs and concerns; historically disenfranchised co-researchers (particularly the homeless) were empowered to participate in local government and civic action; and various stakeholders decreased their overt dissention.

Additionally, the project provided evidence that both the needs of the University for faculty scholarship and the learning needs of students could be met when simultaneously focusing on very real and tangible community

needs. The project served to increase faculty commitment to PAR as a valid way to conduct research, empower groups in the community, and stimulate social action.

Academic SL ideally places equal emphasis on student learning, community service, and the development of collaborative relationships between students and community members (Harkavy, 2004). Swords and Kiely (2010) add the goal of developing community-led movements that value co-construction of knowledge and community transformation. Chupp and Joseph (2010) report immediate and substantial impact on the community as an aim of critical SL. We believe each of these outcomes was achieved in the current project. Students overwhelmingly reported their experience to be valuable in terms of learning the course content and completing course assignments. They also reported increased sensitivity to what they originally perceived as community resistance to addressing the needs of the homeless. Many students reported gaining a deeper appreciation for the complexities of these issues in a community and the value of diverse voices in decision making. Several students commented that the experience changed their stereotypical views of community constituent groups. For example, many students reported surprise at their own response to the various co-researcher groups participating in this project. Through conducting research, they learned how groups previously perceived as unreasonably resistant to a homeless shelter also experienced significant and real vulnerabilities (e.g., small business owners' concern about the loss of income and diminished status in the community if a homeless shelter were built near their location). This reality led to a more sophisticated consideration of the practice and policy issues inherent in questions regarding the costs and benefits of service provision, how providing services to one population may adversely affect another, and the immediacy of controversial issues embedded in a small community. Perhaps even more important, many students reported an increased interest in research, policy, and community practice.

Additionally, we believe civic engagement was evidenced by the significant number of students who remained involved with various groups and in the social action that took place after the completion of this research project. Engagement was evidenced by the considerable number of graduate social work students who continued, long after the SL courses were completed, to remain involved and to actively conduct independent thesis research based on the needs of the original groups that remained intact after the conclusion of the original study. The results of these thesis projects were provided back to the relevant groups.

At the same time, the impact was not exclusive to the students or the researchers: It was reciprocal. The process of the research study was beneficial to community co-researchers. Many expressed an increased understanding of the perspectives of members of the other groups. Members of the homeless persons co-researcher group expressed deep satisfaction

with having a voice in the decision-making process, and many continued to remain involved after the study by joining a community action initiative developed to address homelessness within the community.

Results of this PAR study were widely disseminated in community-centered, University, and student-centered venues. Outcomes were shared in the local community via an official report to the city, numerous public comment meetings, newspaper articles, and ongoing agency and business agendas. Results were disseminated in the academic setting by faculty via presentations at peer-reviewed conferences and through publication on the University website. Results were disseminated by students through 12 master's theses and thesis defense presentations. Though the investment of resources including time, labor, and money on the part of the university, the community, the students, and the co-researchers was significant, each group saw real and measurable benefits from their investment.

## IMPLICATIONS

“Social work, with its emphasis on social justice and the amelioration of social problems, is a natural host to curricular innovations that embrace student reflection, community service, and empowerment-oriented mutual collaboration with community residents” (Lemieux & Allen, 2007, p. 309). Community-based PAR, in which the community has greater involvement, and SL, where transformation of the community is the paramount concern, are naturally suitable partners when embarking on progressive community change. Though universities have legitimate interests in productivity, scholarship, and resource development, these need not be sacrificed by engaging in PAR. An important outcome of the current project was the ongoing symbiotic working relationship developed between University researchers at the Center and a variety of community constituents. This process resulted in increased university/community collaboration and enhancement of the image of the University as a source for legitimate consultation and knowledge building. Since the conclusion of this project, several other funded PAR projects have followed. Several factors including ongoing training in SL pedagogy, knowledge of and experience in using CBR methods, and establishing a culture of valuing community voices all contributed to the development of these additional projects.

Successful community-based projects are better assured through advanced planning. Particularly in terms of SL, advanced preparation and collaboration with community partners is one of the hallmark criteria (Lemieux & Allen, 2007). Though the SL components worked well in the current project, advanced preparation will ensure that the educational needs of students and service needs of the community are equally valued and achieved. Those attempting to arrange such opportunities, however, face



numerous obstacles. Developing CBR addressing a real-time issue is not always possible. Doing so on a timetable coinciding with a particular course or academic term is even less likely. Still, significant opportunities to participate abound, even if not in a real-time capacity.

Finally, our belief in achieving community change through democratic processes addressing all points of view increased our ability to facilitate the inclusion of multiple and, at times, discordant voices in this project. Engaging in practices such as these that encourage a broad exchange of ideas and perspectives should naturally lead us back to SL activities that result in community transformation.

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