



# SILLIMAN JOURNAL

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION AND INVESTIGATION IN  
THE HUMANITIES AND THE SCIENCES  
Volume 56 Number 2 / April to June 2015

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All articles must be accompanied by an abstract of 200 words and keywords of not more than ten words, and must use gender-fair language.

SILLIMAN JOURNAL likewise welcomes submissions of “Notes,” which generally are briefer and more tentative than full-length articles. Reports on work-in-progress, queries, updates, reports of impressions rather than research, responses to the works of others, even reminiscences are appropriate here.

SILLIMAN JOURNAL also accepts for publication book reviews and review articles.

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## Editorial Notes

*“Every service is a structure of acts and words through which we receive a sacrament, or repent, or supplicate, or adore. And it enables us to do these things best—if you like it, it ‘works’ best—when, through long familiarity, we don’t have to think about it. As long as you notice, and have to count, the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance.”*

**- C. S. Lewis**

Welcome to a special issue dedicated to service-learning (S-L). Much of what you will read in this issue were presented at a two-day international gathering at Silliman University in September 2014, sponsored by the Asian Christian Faculty Fellowship (Philippines chapter) in cooperation with the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. The conference focused on “Ethics and Human Protection Issues in the Conduct of Service-Learning.” Since the mid-1990s, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia has been instrumental in the popularization of S-L as an approach to teaching (McCann, 2014). Through several institutional grants for faculty exposure and training, partner universities and colleges in Asia learned about S-L.

Service-learning was the focus at the first two national conferences of the Asian Christian Faculty Fellowship (ACFF) in the Philippines. In the gathering on 23-24 July 2003 held at Silliman University, then trustees of the United Board, Ms. Shanti Manuel and Dr. Willi Toisuta, led a panel that expounded on the significance of service-learning in higher education. The ACFF members saw its relevance to institutions that adhere to the mission of care and service to the community. On 14-15 April 2004, the second national conference held at the University of St. La Salle, Bacolod City pursued the theme “Promoting Service Learning in Philippine Higher Education.” The



Philippine Commission for Higher Education (CHED) endorsed the event and encouraged faculty members to adopt the methodology of S-L. This forum deepened the discussion on the general prospects of S-L in higher education as well as specific mechanics related to conceptualizing and institutionalizing service-learning.

Since then, several colleges and universities in the country have applied S-L in the teaching of their courses. Articles have been written documenting the practice of service-learning in some institutions of higher learning. In 2002, *Silliman Journal* devoted a special issue on S-L as experienced by the early adopters of this methodology. Recently, the collective Philippine experience in the conduct of S-L was highlighted in a series on the social commitment of universities in the world in a book report “Higher Education in the World—Knowledge, Engagement & Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change” (McCann, 2014).

Over a decade of S-L application necessitates a review of the processes involved in service-learning. Thus far, articles on S-L mostly deal with the basics of its application—its nature, content, college-community tie up, and in a few cases, measurement of learning outcomes. Fewer still, if at all, are articles reflecting on the higher-order dimension of protection of human subjects or of the general ethical issues in the conduct of S-L. Given this lack of articulation on the value of ensuring human fairness and dignity of people in local communities that serve as hosts to this teaching-learning pedagogy, the ACFE-Philippines deemed it right and proper to provide a venue for the discussion of matters in this area.

To start us off, Hope Antone and Betty C. McCann put the discussion of S-L in the context of the international S-L program as it confronts the realities of ethics in academic-community work. This introduction is followed by “Agenda of Higher Education Gets Accomplished Through Service-Learning” by Mercy Pshupalatha of Lady Doak College in India, “Sustaining Service-Learning” by Silliman University extension director Emy Ligutom, and “Employing Typologies of Learning for a Holistic Evaluation of Service-Learning Students” by long-time S-L advocate and Silliman University research director Ike Oracion.

Lady Doak College Principal Pushpalatha traces community work at her institution from the 1960s through service-learning programs in the 2000s and the latest development—“life frontier engagement”—with a corresponding look at the ethical problems confronted at every step. Emy

Ligutom outlines the principles or phases of service-learning, namely preparation, engagement, reciprocity, reflection, and dissemination/celebration, but underscores the importance of sustainability of S-L programs. Ike Oracion suggests utilizing Howard's ten principles of S-L to help ensure that students engaged in S-L are evaluated fairly for their work.

Academicians Andrea Soluta, Gina Bonior, and Richard Salter then look into S-L in literature, in reading, and in religion, respectively. Soluta's "Challenges in Reconciling Cultural Beliefs with Christian and Nationalist Values in the Context of Common Ghost and Malevolent Spirit Narratives" is a particularly interesting look at how literature is taught in communities where cultural beliefs predominate. Bonior's and Salter's papers were not part of the S-L conference but are relevant to the conference theme. In particular, Bonior reflects on the experience of training reading teachers and attempts to answer the following questions: 1) What are the merits, limitations, and challenges of using reflective journals in pre-service education students' initiation to the practice of teaching through a service-learning activity? and 2) How may I, as a pre-service teacher educator, improve my practice particularly in facilitating reflective thinking among pre-service education students who are engaged in S-L activity? For his part, in "Promises and Pitfalls of Moral Formation in American Civil Religion," Salter argues that, while S-L seems like a positive thing to do, "there can also be unintended consequences of service that may undermine the very goals that service intends to achieve." In examining this argument, Salter's focus is on the United States and the role that service plays in American Civil Religion.

## NOTES SECTION

This long section is filled with short essays on ethical issues and concerns in a wide variety of disciplines, including information, and communication technology, medical technology and nursing, agriculture, nutrition and dietetics, social work, and mass communication and other social sciences. The section ends with the many remaining questions for S-L practitioners raised in "Kyosei in International S-L: Engaging Local Communities as Equal Partners" by Betsy Joy B. Tan. The Niponggo term *kyosei* denotes intercultural symbiosis.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia for its continued support of *Silliman Journal*. Their grant in support of the S-L conference held in September 2014 also provides SJ some assistance in the publication of the conference proceedings. Dr. Hope Antone attended the conference in behalf of the United Board which also supported the participation of colleagues in S-L from India (Dr. Mercy Pushpalatha) and Hong Kong (Dr. Carol Ma).

Special thanks go to the officers and members of the Asian Christian Faculty Fellowship. Its Philippine chapter has around twenty or so member colleges and universities from across the country and it was from this pool that service-learning practitioners and advocates were invited to speak at the S-L conference and submit their papers for publication in SJ.

I acknowledge with gratitude the work of my editorial staff and this issue's board of reviewers. I especially would like to thank our colleagues at Silliman University's Office of Information and Publication, ably headed by Mark Raygan Garcia, who have taken on the work of producing this issue and getting it out of press.

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe  
Editor-in-Chief

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# Reflections on the International Service- Learning Program: Surfacing Some Ethical Issues and Concerns

**Hope S. Antone**

*Program Officer, United Board for Christian  
Higher Education in Asia*

## INTRODUCTION

For the past 15 years, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (United Board) has organized conferences and training-workshops on service-learning and supported institutional projects that promote it as a methodology of teaching-learning. After super typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda hit the Philippines on November 8, 2013, the United Board decided to organize an International Service-Learning (IS-L) program from June 28 to July 11, 2014 in Panay and Negros Islands, The Philippines. The theme was “Learning from Yolanda: Disaster Response, Community Resilience and the Role of Asian Universities.” The program included a three-day conference, eight-day service in the communities, and reflection sharing. Nearly 220 people participated in the three-day conference while 186 joined the eight-day service with the communities. They came from 16 universities/colleges in Asia (India, China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Indonesia, Korea and Myanmar) and eight universities/colleges in the Philippines. The program was hosted by Central Philippine University (CPU), University of St. La Salle (USLS), Silliman University (SU), Filamer Christian University (FCU), and College of St. John-Roxas (CSJ-R). New to S-L, FCU and CSJ-R were badly

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hit by Yolanda but through their community service programs, they reached out to the typhoon-affected communities around them. In order to prepare them as IS-L hosts, a group of SL practitioners from CPU, SU and USLS facilitated training workshops for the faculty and staff of FCU and CSJ-R.

The IS-L aimed at convening academics in the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia to a) examine the aftermath of recent natural catastrophes and understand how universities can prepare for such calamities, and b) express solidarity through practical assistance/service to the affected communities, while learning from the experience.

During the three-day conference, participants heard inputs on the following: a framework on facilitative crisis and disaster intervention to build resilient communities; tools for S-L in post-disaster sites; impacts of Yolanda on ecology and on the community; responses from government, international aid agencies, and churches; best practices in disaster response by selected institutions; psycho-social responses; assessment and reflection; and, a public lecture on natural disasters, climate change, public policy, and the role of universities. The conference also included participatory activities done through the site team meetings through which service-learners get to know their team members, build their team spirit, learn about Philippine culture and language, do interview and reflection exercises, learn about needs assessment of communities, and plan for the work with the communities.

For the eight-day S-L with the communities, participants were grouped into 12 teams assigned to 12 sites in Panay and Negros. Service included some of the following, depending on the community needs: day care program; eco-farm restoration; youth activities; house build/repair; non-formal education on gender, family planning, public health and sanitation, solar panel maintenance; tree planting; basic livelihood training; psycho-social intervention; coastal resource management; environmental cleanup; medical services/consultation; grade school-based literacy activities, and so on. Faculty on each team facilitated regular reflections on site. At the end of the service e-learning period, teams held a celebration and dissemination activity with their respective communities. They also made their team report presentations to the whole IS-L group on the last day.

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## THE PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN RELATION TO THE IS-L

How did the IS-L fare in terms of the five principles of service-learning (S-L)? With the able leadership of the S-L practitioners from the host institutions, the program was carried out with the S-L principles as the guiding framework.

As far as the **Preparation** was concerned, S-L practitioners from the three host universities did a lot of ground work. They provided orientation/training for the faculty and students of their respective institutions. They reached out to the two host institutions that were still new to S-L. Then, the faculty of the 5 host institutions connected with the host communities, the local government units and non-government organizations to assess their needs and find possible areas of service. It was quite important to prepare the communities and the organizations to not expect too much from the service-learners as they were coming to “learn to serve as well as serve to learn.” Reading materials and video links were sent to all the participating universities so they could prepare their delegations. Orientation on the guidelines for community immersion and integration was done at the conference. Part of the groundwork was also to check on the security of the service-learners. Through this preparation, it became clear that education is truly the work of the whole community.

The forms of **Engagement/Service** were based on the needs assessment of the sites. In order not to raise any hope for the provision of finance or materials, communities were informed that service-learners were offering their labor and service. Staying full-time with our service-learners in the communities, Filipino and international faculty and staff supervised the eight-day engagement in cooperation with the leaders of the communities and the organizations working there. A few service-learners came with expectations to do something related to their academic/professional studies. Where it was possible, they were encouraged to share and carry out their plans—e.g., psycho-social intervention through dance therapy; mangrove and coral reef assessment; social enterprise, and so on. The input by a scientist at the conference on the need to know the appropriateness of the tree/mangrove species to the planting location reminded the service-learners to be more careful and critical about their tree planting activity.

The process of **Reflection** was done regularly at the sites, facilitated by the faculty and staff on the teams. Journaling was part of the process where

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service-learners were encouraged to write down their thoughts and feelings about the activities and their achievements, the problems that arose and how they were addressed, and the learning insights from their experience. Efforts were made to ensure the following connections in the service-learners' reflection: a) personal connection, e.g. related to their behavior and attitudes; b) academic connection, e.g. related to the applicability or non-applicability of have learned in class; and c) social connection, e.g., related to their ability to relate with others, to learn from other cultures, and to sharpen their communication skills. Evaluation was also done by the whole IS-L group, through the session for all the faculty and staff and through the prepared forms.

**Reciprocity** in S-L was emphasized through the motto, "learn to serve and serve to learn," which was shared not only with the service-learners but also with the communities. The partnership between the host universities and host communities, including the government and non-government organizations working at the sites was crucial to the realization of that motto. This component of reciprocity affirmed that education is indeed the task of the whole society. It meant mutual responsibility, mutual accountability of all the groups or institutions. It also meant interdependence and interconnectedness of everyone.

As for **Public Dissemination or Celebration**, the IS-L teams did their own activities at the sites. This included presentation of their findings or the fruit of their projects to the leaders of the communities and local government units. This public dissemination was also shared to the whole IS-L group when it re-gathered for the final celebration. Some public dissemination has also found its way into various media such as local papers and the social network, such as Facebook and YouTube. It has continued even further as the delegations of service-learners went back to their respective institutions and countries, and reported on their IS-L experience to their own universities and colleges.

Overall, there was a lot of good and positive feeling about the IS-L. Video presentations by the teams showed touching and sometimes tearful farewells between the service-learners and their host communities. The United Board has received an outpouring of thanks from the service-learners for their "life-changing" experience.

But is feeling good about the S-L experience good enough?

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## SOME ETHICAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

A number of ethical issues and concerns came up in the course of planning, implementing, and evaluating the IS-L. By 'ethical issue' we mean "a problem or situation that requires a person or organization to choose between alternatives that must be evaluated as right (ethical) or wrong (unethical)."<sup>[1]</sup> Although some of these issues may seem peripheral to the conduct of S-L, nevertheless, they were issues that needed to be addressed.

For example, for the United Board, the idea of organizing an IS-L was away to respond to Haiyan's devastation in central Philippines, since relief or development work is not part of its mandate or mission. However, as staff, we asked ourselves whether we should invest much time and energy in organizing the program or let partner/host institutions take the lead. We also asked whether we should even be involved in programs that dealt directly with students since our work has traditionally been with faculty and administrators. We asked how universities in Hong Kong could participate in the IS-L in view of the "black travel warning" to the Philippines at the time. When the registration deadline got closer, we received an unexpected outpouring of interest from many institutions that we faced the dilemma of whether to accept everyone or limit and turn down some registrants.

More issues came up during the implementation of S-L in the communities. Since S-L is primarily aimed at students' learning, how do we try to address their learning needs especially when they came from different programs, levels, and disciplines, not to mention countries or regions? Majority of the service-learners were undergraduate students, but there were master and PhD students with their own expectations and plans. We had students from social work, political science, public administration, business/accounting, politics and international relations, nursing, physical therapy, psychology, sociology, zoology, biotechnology, computer science, engineering, languages, communication, translation and interpretation, education, theology, hospitality management, marine biology, information technology, medical technology, clothing design, architecture, and law. How would their academic studies make sense if they were tasked to carry hollow blocks, sift sand and back fill the building site, or repair and paint

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1 Taken from BusinessDictionary.com accessed at <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/ethical-issue.html>.



houses? What contribution could their academic studies make to the communities? For example, the marine biology doctoral students expected to do something with coral reef and mangrove assessment, while the MBA students expected to do something related to their field.

Although S-L is primarily aimed at students' learning, what about our responsibility to the communities who host our service-learners? In the case of the IS-L, our hosts were generally the poor farming and fishing communities who were still recovering from the devastation of Haiyan. As is usual of Filipino hospitality, the host families tried to make the service-learners feel at home, giving and serving them the best that they had despite their poverty. How should we make sure that we did not treat their communities as mere laboratory, their stories and lives as mere artifacts or objects for study?

Dr. Sharon Joy Berlin-Chao, manager of the Learning Management Office of SEAMEO Innotech in Manila, shared with UB staff some advice, based on her work with education institutions affected by Haiyan in Leyte and Samar.<sup>[2]</sup> She said that in some cases, people may be tired of psychosocial intervention, of being surveyed, questioned again and again. Sometimes, she said, in their minds is the question, "What is in it for us?" So, when documenting their stories of resilience to celebrate what they had done, she said, it would be good to ensure that they would not feel something had been taken from them. She stressed the importance for the communities to feel good, just as the service-learners should feel good when they leave.

During the work with the communities, our service-learners came to hear of people's complaints. For example, some of the people in the community expressed that their relocation away from the sea had taken them far from their source of livelihood (i.e., the sea). Some who were part of the home-build program shared that in the beginning they were informed that they would be given independent houses, but when the building started, they realized that their homes would be attached like the town-house model. In another site of the home-build program, questions were raised as to what criteria were used for the distribution of materials for repair of the typhoon-damaged homes. These people asked because

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2 Sharon Joy Berlin-Chao, manager of the Learning Management Office of SEAMEO Innotech and trained in Appreciative Inquiry, shared these comments with United Board staff at a dinner meeting with her in Manila on May 1, 2014. SEAMEO stands for Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), a regional intergovernmental organization established in 1965 among governments of Southeast Asian countries to promote regional cooperation in education, science and culture in the region.

they felt that some who deserved to get materials did not get any, while some of those whose homes were not hit by the typhoon were given some materials. Since our IS-L participants were only there for a day or two, it was not possible for us to fully deal with these highly sensitive issues. Conveying the people's complaints to the officials of the concerned organizations had to be done with a lot of care.

Another ethical issue came up during the IS-L conference—environmental or ecological ethics. In the *Glossary of Environment Statistics*, “Ecological ethics are moral principles governing the human attitude towards the environment, and rules of conduct for environmental care and preservation.”<sup>[3]</sup> Since the IS-L focused on the impact of Haiyan/Yolanda, discussion included ecological impacts and human responsibility. Part of the planned activities during the service with the communities was tree planting and mangrove planting. However, Dr. Jurgenne H. Primavera, a scientist from Iloilo, shared in her presentation at the ISL Conference that tree or mangrove planting should be based on careful and scientific assessment of the state of the mangroves. Co-chair of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature-Mangrove Specialist Group, Primavera warned that any mangrove planting and rehabilitation project could result in more damage owing to lack of science-based guidelines. She said that her four-month assessment, done with other scientists, showed that mangroves sustained only minimal damage or none at all and were in fact recovering. She also said it is not advisable to plant just any species of trees anywhere as certain species are fit only for certain locations. As a general rule, she said, native species should be preferred to foreign species that might even be invasive to other plants and organisms. She therefore advised that tree planting should be carefully planned with proper knowledge about tree species and their appropriate planting locations.

Some ethical issues also came up during the reflection of the IS-L experience. Having just tasted the hard labor of house building, two students shared their reflections with their team. One said, “Now I know that physical labor is so difficult. So I need to study hard so I won't end up doing this kind of work.” Another said, “I realized that I have to study well, so I can become a lawyer and help the poor people in my country.” Comments reflect a realization of class differences, with the first seemingly

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3 Glossary of Environment Statistics, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 67(United Nations, New York, 1997).

reinforcing a sense of privilege and a looking down on hard labor, and the second seemingly showing a commitment to help the less privileged. During the reflections, many students tended to compare themselves with the people in the communities and to feel so grateful for what they have, usually through their parents' provisions and which they had taken for granted. Comments like these reflect the service-learners' sense of privilege by virtue of their class and education. S-L advisors had to turn such reflection session into teaching moments to prevent the S-L experience from leading to complacency or a simple pat on one's back. The personal, academic and social connections that are shared during reflection should not lead to mere self-affirmation, or the simple questioning of whether theories from the book or classroom would work in the field, or to merely reaching out to the community. Reflections should lead to change and transformation—in one's thinking and perspective. They should lead to critical questioning of why some people are more privileged and why many are less privileged, and whether there is a way to address those root causes that breed inequality and injustice.

## **TOWARDS A SOCIAL-JUSTICE APPROACH IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

During the recent Program Committee meeting of the United Board's trustees, Fr. Bienvenido Nebres asked if S-L could be expanded from simply developing a heart for the poor to making a difference in the lives of the poor.<sup>[4]</sup> Sharing the experience of Ateneo de Manila University, Fr. Ben Nebres said this transformation in Ateneo's S-L focus came about because business management students asked how they could use their expertise for people in need. Now, he said, the S-L program in Ateneo seeks to go beyond helping students to develop as "persons for others" to being "professionals for others." He said this had moved S-L to a different level—i.e., from asking how to have a heart for the poor to asking how to transform the lives of the poor.

Based on a survey of a substantial body of literature, Tania D. Mitchell of Stanford University compared two models of S-L: the traditional model and the critical service-learning model. In her article titled, "Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning: Engaging the Literature to Differentiate Two

4 From the minutes of the meeting of the Program Committee of the United Board on July 28, 2014 in Hong Kong.

Models,” Mitchell cited three elements of critical S-L: a) working from a social change perspective; b) redistributing power among all participants in the S-L relationship; and, c) developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community.<sup>[5]</sup>

## **A Social Change Orientation**

According to Mitchell, while traditional S-L tends to emphasize student outcomes, critical S-L emphasizes social change, with a social justice orientation, which is more than citizenship orientation. While traditional S-L focuses on service to individuals, critical S-L focuses on service for an ideal. Taking on the role of change agents, students will develop critical consciousness as they examine the historical precedents of social problems and the impact of their action in either maintaining or transforming those problems. This calls for partnering with groups or organizations that are actively working to change systems and structures, rather than just with those that are simply offering services. This also calls for purposive classroom work, readings, and assignments that challenge students to analyze social, political and economic forces that shape their lives and those of others.

## **Working to Redistribute Power**

Since the goal of critical S-L is to “contribute to the creation of a just and equitable society,”<sup>[6]</sup> it must address issues of power undergirding the relationships of all involved. As the giver/provider of the service, S-L students have greater societal and personal privileges than those in the communities—e.g., in terms of resources, education level, ability, power. Being on the receiving end, the communities would not be as privileged but may even be disempowered, hence the need for service and help. While traditional S-L privileges the needs of students above those of community members, critical S-L seeks mutual benefit for all parties. While service should empower communities rather than create dependency, students should be able to confront their own biases, unearned privilege, and access to power.

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5 Tania D. Mitchell, “Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning: Engaging the Literature to Differentiate Two Models,” *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*(Spring 2008): 50.

6 Quoted from Cynthia Rosenberger in Tania D. Mitchell, 56.

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## Developing Authentic Relationships

Critical S-L recognizes the differences in service relationships that are often rooted in domination and subordination. This can mean the relationships between students and teachers; between the university and community; between the students and the people in the community, and so on. Authentic relationships are based on connection, which recognizes and works with difference—e.g., challenging the “self-other” binary and emphasizing reciprocity and interdependence. Authentic relationships need to be developed over a period of time—through dialogue and connection, developing a shared agenda, critiquing power relationships, recognizing the complexity of identity, and affirming reciprocity.

In order to affirm reciprocity, J Kendall warns against paternalism, thus:

...without an emphasis on the relationship between the server and “those served” as a reciprocal exchange between equals, that relationship can easily be broken down ... paternalism, unequal relationships between the parties involved and a tendency to focus only on charity – “doing for” or “helping others” – rather than on supporting others to meet their own needs all become gaping pitfalls...<sup>[7]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Critical Service-Learning builds on the traditional Service-Learning, with the following key components: a) working from a social change perspective; b) redistributing power among all participants in the service-learning relationship; and c) developing authentic relationships in the classroom and in the community. Critical Service-Learning therefore builds on the gains of traditional Service-Learning and pushes it further toward better practices that would create more impact and transformation.

In her book, *Service-Learning and Social Justice: Engaging Students in Social Change*, Susan Benigni Cipolle uses this illustration to show how

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7 Quoted from J. Kendall in Judy Bruce's *Conceptualizing Service-Learning in global times*, in *Critical Literary: Theories and Practices*, Vol. 4:1 (2010):

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Critical Service-Learning differs from service, learning, and traditional service-learning<sup>8</sup>:

- Cleaning up a riverbank is SERVICE.
- Sitting in a science classroom looking at water samples under a microscope is LEARNING.
- Science students taking samples from local water sources, then analyzing the samples, documenting the results and presenting the scientific information to a pollution control agency is SERVICE-LEARNING.
- Science students creating public service announcements to raise awareness of human impact on water quality in order to change community attitudes and behavior is CRITICAL SERVICE-LEARNING.

If we believe that Education is basically an act of social justice, then education should aim for more than the usual goal of education for citizenship. Critical Service-Learning supports education for social justice for it helps to re-imagine and transform the roles of students and faculty, the members of the community, and the government and non-government organizations serving in the communities. Critical Service-Learning aims at deconstructing systems of power that breed inequalities—and these are present in the classroom, in the communities, within persons, and between all those who are involved. Critical Service-Learning will impact and transform lives, not only of the service-learners but also of the communities—so that there will no longer be a need for service to address the resulting social problems.

However, while ethical and critical Service-Learning seem to be quite ideal, it was not easy to implement it at the International Service-Learning Program that involved so many institutions from many countries, with many students from different fields, levels and degree programs--but it can definitely be a model towards a more sustainable Service-Learning program. The United Board can help to engage its network in considering this more seriously for its own implementation.

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8 Susan BenigniCipolle, *Service-Learning and Social Justice: Engaging Students in Social Change* (Maryland: Rowman& Littlefield, Inc, 2010), 4-5.

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# From Good Intentions to Best Practices in Service-Learning

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## INTRODUCTION

**I**n this paper, I will present a brief introduction of the adoption of service-learning as a pedagogical strategy in the Philippines. Then I will try to answer three questions: 1) What are the good intentions of service-learning? Or, based on our experiences, what are the benefits of service-learning? 2) To further improve the practice of service-learning, what are some challenges to be addressed particularly in the realm of ethics and protection of human subjects? 3) To pursue the best that is to be in service-learning, how can we ensure ethical conduct in service-learning and guarantee protection of human subjects?

Let me begin with a story.

One of my pleasant tasks at the United Board was to get acquainted with eminent scholars in Asia. One such scholar is from India, Prof. C.T. Kurien, in the field of economics. In 2004, Madras Christian College hosted a conference where selected professors in Asia shared their best practice in the teaching of Economics. Professor Timothy Light, former chair of the Board of Trustees of the United Board, documented his experience in that gathering (Light, 2005):



There was a paper given on the teaching of basic economics which I thought was very good. I am not at all an economist but that paper seemed to me to exemplify an imaginative and effective way to present the standard principles of economics. I even said to myself, ‘Gosh, I wish Principles of Economics were taught that way in my institution.’

Just as soon as I had had that thought, however, the renowned economist Professor C.T. Kurien stood up to comment on the paper, and, a very important lesson came in what he then said. Professor Kurien praised the clear virtues of the paper on the teaching of economics. He then asked why did the authors begin the study of economics for new university students with introducing them to the terms and theories of formal academic economics? Why begin with the textbook at all? Why not begin instead by sending the students out to some real markets, where people buy and sell food, clothing, home repair materials, and so on? All of us, including students, are familiar with these real markets. Long before they come to college most students have learned how to deal with these markets, through comparing prices for similar goods, examining quality, vigorous bargaining, and so on. At the beginning of their courses, college students may not know the formal terms to call these practices, but their daily lives have taught them that these practices exist and that if they do not employ some strategies, they will pay more than they need to, may even be cheated. Professor Kurien suggested that the students themselves should come back to class and describe what they had seen in real markets. Then, and only then, should the teacher begin to introduce a more scientific way of describing and analyzing what the students already know from experience.

This story on what Professor Kurien calls a “pre-theoretic approach” to the teaching of Economics demonstrates how real-life experiences can be effective materials for learning, how instruction can profit from community exposure, and how applied research can be utilized in understanding theories and principles found in textbooks.

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## Service-Learning in Higher Education

Philippine higher education recognizes three pillars: instruction, research, and extension or community service. Oftentimes in our universities, these are worlds of their own—the world of instruction, the world of research, the world of community service—each world has its own head who devotes most of his/her time to matters purely of her/his own world's concerns. Rarely would there be occasions for them to sit down and strategize how they can attain the best from the three worlds.

Now, enters service-learning. As pedagogy, it is Instruction; as practice, it requires Community Service; as user and producer of knowledge, it demands Research. In the best possible scenario, service-learning unites the three worlds in higher education.

Community service is oftentimes mistaken for service-learning. As one realizes that service-learning is a teaching approach with its own methods and principles, one explores areas of cooperation with those in extension or community service as well as with those in research. At the level of a faculty member doing service-learning, the integrative power of teaching, service, and research could well be appreciated.

In 1999, service-learning was formally introduced in several universities in the Philippines via a training workshop conducted by the International Partnership for Service-Learning (IPSL). This was made possible by a grant from the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (United Board). Hosted by the then Trinity College of Quezon City (now Trinity University of Asia), three other UB partner institutions participated in the workshop—Silliman University, Central Philippine University, and Southern Christian College. Since then, the United Board has awarded grants for the development and institutionalization of service-learning in the Philippines.

Similar efforts can be observed in other institutions of higher learning in Asia, particularly among United Board-related colleges and universities in India, Indonesia, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and lately, in Vietnam, East Timor, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Initial grants invariably center on faculty training through seminars and workshops, site visits and faculty exchanges, attendance at national or regional conferences, and acquisition of resource materials for enhanced skills development. Initially, service-learning participation generally was at the level of faculty. As a core group of faculty members

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became adept at developing syllabi for service-based academic learning, their host institution would established a central unit to plan, implement and evaluate service-learning. The administration hoped this unit would become a means to a more efficient and effective delivery of an instructional methodology that combines teaching and community service with viable opportunities to do research.

## **Good Intentions in Service-Learning**

Much has been said about the merits of service-learning as a pedagogy (IPSL, 1999; Chithra & Jacqueline, 2010; Mayot, 2010; Powers, 2010; Yen & Yang, 2010). Service-learning is associated with acquiring ideas and skills beyond what can be taught in classroom (Lai, 2010; Mueller & Lee, 2010), in personal, character, and leadership development (Lee, 2010), and multi-cultural appreciation (Oracion, 2010). Earlier, in studies done in the US, service-learning is associated with positive learning outcomes as well as personal and social development in students (Eyler, et al., 2001). Studies also report that service-learning seems to produce positive institutional development measured in terms of increased donations and contributions to alma mater.

Yamamoto (2011) asserts that “service-learning is a powerful means of establishing credibility and leadership for students who will learn about the world’s realities, be motivated to solve problems, learn how to serve others, strengthen their sense of social responsibility, understand the nature of globalization, and become both more trusted by others and more self-confident.”

In 2002, the first all-Asian Christian Faculty Fellowship conference held in Thailand adopted the theme “Education of the Heart: The Heart of Higher Education in Asia.” This loose organization of Christian teachers in the tertiary level across Asia recognized service-learning as an appropriate methodology not only for the education of the mind but also for the education of the heart. James Laney (2003) explained the importance of service in education. He asserted:

All of our Christian colleges, of whatever denomination, were founded to serve the common good, to educate students for more than simply personal benefit... This makes it all the more essential

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for us to create an atmosphere where they are exposed to the needs of the world, where they can be involved in service learning and begin to understand what servant leadership is all about.

On another occasion, David Kwang-sun Suh (2002) advanced the notion of 3H in service-based academic learning, referring to an educational strategy that activates the Head, Heart, and Hand. Chithra and Jacqueline (2010) described how the 3H approach worked in their institution.

Service-learning as a teaching approach offers students opportunities to connect theories and principles discussed in class with real-life situations. Real-life situations as perceived by students could be occasions for wonder or awe, and in some cases, disbelief or disgust as they draw meaning from what they observe. Such an active observation could motivate learners to read beyond the text taught in classrooms and be actively engaged in their own learning through the insights gleaned from life experiences (McCann, 2014).

Academic instruction linked with community service actively leads classroom learners to encounters with individuals and groups in chosen human settings. In researches conducted with international donor agencies, a protocol on the protection of human subjects is strictly imposed such that data gathering activities observe the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. No such protocol is formally observed in the conduct of service-learning. Given the fact that service-learning programs are people-to-people interactions, it is about time to focus on the need and merits for the serious consideration and a conscious effort at observing ethical conduct and human protection issues.

## **Some Challenges**

At the second all-Asian Christian Faculty Fellowship held in India in 2005, Timothy Light gave a highly stimulating philosophical treatise on the challenges facing educators in Asia regarding the content of their teaching. The five questions he asked were meant to demonstrate that knowledge and ignorance are ethical matters in teaching the leaders of tomorrow. His questions can very well be considered in the practice of service-learning. Take the second question, for example, and recall the story about Kurien's pre-theoretic approach to the teaching of Economics. "How can we best

ensure that our students develop in college a strong habit of looking for reality with all of its ambiguity and messiness and use theory to analyze that confusing reality rather than changing reality to fit a pre-determined ideology?"

The question of how to ensure that service-learning remains reality based, rather than ideologically driven, demands that we address this challenge at various stages in the process of creating our programs and courses. I will be raising preliminary questions in the hope that we all will actively search for answers informed by our practice and experiences in service-learning. Here are some suggestions categorized into stages of planning, community engagement, and evaluation of service-learning.

**Planning stage.** Planning entails preparatory work on the part of the faculty in integrating the approach into the subjects taught. At the department level, this requires reviewing the curriculum and enhancing the department's mission of education through community service-oriented academic learning. As documented in other studies and as elucidated in at least one of the papers for presentation in this Forum, some degree of skepticism and resistance from faculty may be evident. Could this be possibly addressed by developing clear goals in the department and demonstrating the value of service-learning in meeting departmental objectives? What drives the teaching-learning objectives?

Another aspect in the planning stage is setting the ground for meaningful community partnerships. Who are the stakeholders in our partner community or agency? How is their consent obtained? How are needs verified? Where is the locus of learning? Are engagements and responsibilities set up in such a way that mutual interests are met?

**Engagement stage.** Bringle, Malloy, and Games (1999) observed, "Communities cannot be viewed as pockets of needs, laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise if the academy is to develop meaningful partnerships." When does one know that mutual learning and cooperative service have been attained? How is a relationship establishing a community of mutual learning honored and nurtured? How do we prepare our students for a situation that is different from their own social, economic, political, cultural, religious and personal orientation?

**Assessment stage.** Evaluation of learning outcomes and assessment of the service-learning program itself are key aspects in this stage. How are learning outcomes measured at the level of students as well as community

and the service-learning program itself of the university? Does the assessment of student performance measure learning outcomes? How can knowing about a specific learning environment be a goad towards doing good for many others in the family, school, community and society? How does the institutionalization of service learning ensure continuity in the university's service to the wider community as well as its students? How does service-learning further advance the mission of the college or university? How can we minimize risk and adopt the do-no-harm principle?

Special note has to be given to challenges involved in the "internationalization" of service-learning. What makes service-learning "international?" Is it simply a matter of accommodating foreign students into the ways and practices of local residents? How is cultural symbiosis facilitated? In terms of equity between sending and receiving or hosting institutions, how does one strike a balance between "us" and "them" in the preparation, execution, and monitoring of program outcomes? How is "global citizenship" promoted and from whose perspective? Within and between institutions, what strategies are in place for program continuity? How can long-term engagements be attained at the community such that projects initiated are assured momentum, given a chance to succeed and have tangible positive results?

In view of these challenges and as service-learning faculty and scholars, how do we arrive at adequate standards or parameters for the ethical conduct of service-learning? By responding to a number of these potential issues, we can elevate our good intentions in doing service-learning to best practices in this approach to teaching.

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR ACTION**

When scrutinized from the perspective of human subjects' protection, activities associated with service-learning classes can be highly problematic (Wendler, 2012). The papers in this Forum will likely be categorized along pre-identified ethical issues (Xing & Ma, 2010) of power, capacity, equity, and sustainability—issues that have to be tackled one by one and must also be viewed as interrelated.

Power-related issues could be in the matter of voluntary participation and informed consent. How do we guarantee absence of coercion in service-learning, particularly in dealing with a weak and vulnerable population with

diminished autonomy? A related issue is the principle of shared governance in the practice of service-learning. Are the communities our equal partners in the teaching-learning activities?

Capacity-related issues are evident in the concerns of each of the stakeholders in service-learning: faculty, students, community, and college or university. Are the faculty members well-prepared to execute service-learning from planning to implementation to evaluation? Do students have the readiness and maturity to handle raw experiences in the field? In the spirit of shared governance, do our community partners have the capacity and willingness to monitor and supervise our students? Does the college or university have the structure, policy framework, and resources to support a program in service-learning?

Equity-related issues are also associated with reciprocity. How is service-learning as a pedagogy a two-way street? What can the students and the community partners give to and receive from each other? How is respect for local wisdom fostered? How can a transfer of knowledge and skills serve as tools for community empowerment?

Finally, there are sustainability-related issues. What mechanism should be in place such that there is continuity in the service programs initiated in the community? How can community partnerships be maintained over a long period despite the continuous turnover of local students and, in some cases, students from other countries?

## **Possible Guides for Action**

How can we begin to handle concerns related to ethical conduct and human protection issues in service-learning?

One readily available guide comes from an international socio-civic organization, with many chapters in our country, the Rotary Club. The Rotary Four-Way Test is an ethical guide for use in Rotarians' personal and professional relationships. It states, "Of the things we think, say or do (1) Is it the TRUTH? (2) Is it FAIR to all concerned? (3) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? (4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?"

Another guide is the Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, published in 1979 by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. Although originally intended only for

research projects, a review of the ethical guidelines proposed in that report will show that they are applicable to any other activities involving persons or individuals that become subjects or objects of study in the course of providing community assistance—as in service-learning projects. Worthy of consideration, then, are the report's basic ethical principles of (1) respect for persons, (2) beneficence, and (3) justice. The application of the principles comes in the form of (1) informed consent, (2) assessment of risk and benefits, (3) selection of subjects, or if applied to service-learning, selection of partners.

By the very nature of service-learning engagements, partnerships tend to be personal (as opposed to impersonal), subjective (more than objective), relational (versus individualistic), and cooperative (as opposed to combative). Thus, while there may be value in acknowledging “universal” ethical standards, these must be interpreted in ways that respect the particularities of local communities or agencies. Only in this way will the standards of ethical conduct actually inform the development of context-specific rules of practice that are sensitive to the mores of the place.

In light of the complexities involved in applying the relevant ethical standards, it is incumbent upon the college or university through its service-learning center to consult with students, faculty members, and community partners to arrive at Rules of Practice in service-learning. Everyone must be committed to becoming the best that one can be in this area. Creation of institutional oversight committees or review boards governed by the agreed upon Rules of Practice are clearly in order. In some cases, peer reviews may be done, informed by the code of ethics in one's profession such as the Code of Ethics in the field of psychology.

## **CONCLUSION**

My concluding remarks will be framed by the three main questions posed at the start of this paper.

There are identified benefits of service-learning as reported by students, faculty, administrators, and community partners. In the conduct of service-learning there are also likely to be some harms to the parties involved, particularly in the protection of human subjects, their basic human dignity and their rights. From inception to execution, there has to be heightened awareness of likely breaches of ethical conduct. Rules of practice need to



be devised based on the experiences that will emerge in adopting service-learning as an approach to teaching. Serious attempts must be made to mitigate possible violations of ethical norms in the implementation of S-L. Connecting good intentions with sound service-learning practices makes for a highly commendable service-based academic learning.

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# **Agenda of Higher Education gets accomplished through Service-Learning: Lady Doak College experiences**

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Indian Higher Education has had an emphasis on inclusion of service in curriculum right from the 1960s. The National Service Scheme (NSS) launched in 1969 had one of its objectives as 'Utilizing the knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems'.

Lady Doak College founded in the year 1948 by the passionate service of Ms. Katie Wilcox, a Christian Missionary from the USA, has left a legacy where Higher Education, when interwoven with service, gears up students to become socially committed women leaders. The evaluative and non-evaluative service programs then offered became service-learning (SL) in some departments after 2003. From 2005, SL had been institutionalized when it became an integral part of the curriculum for extra credits. Hence, all 13 departments started offering SL programmes/courses as part of their curriculum. These departmental SL Programmes paved way for interdisciplinary community-based research, addressing some of the ethical concerns experienced when Service-Learning was practiced as pedagogy. Since 2013, the re-structured curriculum offered at undergraduate level had the mandatory component of 'Life Frontier Engagement' (LFE). The LFE has offered an academic experience enabling the student to create new knowledge as solution to a community based problem resulting in whole person development and consequently, the agenda of Higher Education is accomplished. This experience of Lady Doak College in evolving Service-Learning as pedagogy and subsequently the emergence of Life Frontier Engagement to address the ethical issues experienced in SL is presented in this paper.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Indian Higher Education system is the third largest in the world, next to United States and China. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the highest apex body that governs tertiary level education in India. The Education Commission was formed under D. S. Kothari, the then Chairman of UGC in 1964. This commission was tasked to advise the government on the pattern of education to be followed at the national level and to suggest policies for the development of education at all levels ranging from primary to tertiary levels. One of the recommendations proposed by this commission was that work experience become an integral part of all education and so all stages of education should be associated with some form of social service. In 1986, National Policy of education was formulated and then modified in 1992. This policy stipulated that higher education had to provide people an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral, and spiritual issues facing humanity. Hence, higher education institutions are expected to incorporate a service component in the curriculum itself.

## EVOLUTION OF SERVICE - LEARNING AT LADY DOAK COLLEGE

Lady Doak College, a premier Christian Institution founded in the year 1948 by an American missionary, Ms. Katie Wilcox, has had a service component in its curriculum, even before the college was conferred with a status of Autonomy in 1978. Raising up empowered women leaders being the purpose of the college, the curriculum was carefully designed not only for the acquisition of academic knowledge but also for the development of social responsibility. As an institution that had always striven for whole person development, the college had already been involved in various outreach programmes such as Social Service League, Student Christian Movement, National Service Scheme, and Population Education Club among others, even before the college was granted an autonomous status. The students registered in these programs on a voluntary basis.

Introduction of social service to students in tertiary education was seen as a measure to reform education and to enhance the quality of an educated person especially in the post-independent era. Hence, the nationally sponsored service programme called National Service Scheme (NSS) was

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launched in 1969, which was Mahatma Gandhi's centenary year. The motto of NSS is "Not Me but You". The broad objectives of NSS are as follows:

- to understand the community in which they work;
- to understand themselves in relation to their community;
- to identify the needs and problems of the community and involve them in problem-solving;
- to develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility;
- to utilise their knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems;
- to develop competence required for group-living and sharing of responsibilities;
- to gain skills in mobilising community participation;
- to acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes;
- to develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters; and
- to practice national integration and social harmony.

In spite of the objectives that included utilization of knowledge to find practical solutions to individual and community problems, NSS was used as a platform for doing physical labour and for personality development.

In 1970, one of the significant service programmes at the college was taking Science to villages. The laboratory science students went to a nearby village school that did not have laboratory facilities. The students performed demonstrations of simple science experiments and were taught science concepts (Table 1).

Another unique service program was the College Literacy Program. A village was adopted and the students were involved in adult education to make the villagers literate. All these extension activities were non-evaluatory. When the autonomous status was conferred by UGC in 1978, these service programs were made a mandatory component in the curriculum. Grades were awarded based on evaluating the students' involvement in service programmes and meritorious students were recognized with special certificates during Annual College Day celebrations.

In 2001, Choice Based Credit System was introduced for undergraduate students. More options were given under extension programmes, such as NSS, Ranging, Library Service Programme, Environmental Awareness

Programme, and so on. Project work was part of the curriculum and students worked on some applied projects (Table 2).

**Table 1. Service Program on Taking Science to the Villages**

<b>Title</b>	Extending Functional Science Education to the Village Chittampatti
<b>Departments</b>	Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and Physics
<b>Programme</b>	Science Education, Self-employment schemes and Health awareness
<b>Place</b>	Chittampatti Village (18 kms from Madurai City)
<b>Target Group</b>	School Children of Chittampatti
<b>Participants</b>	Interested Science students and Teachers
<b>Objective</b>	To provide better learning facilities and promote Science Education to rural school children
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of mobile laboratory and library</li> <li>• Tutoring school Children in Science subjects</li> <li>• Preparation of Audio visual aids (Charts, models &amp; Maps)</li> <li>• Talent show &amp; Science Exhibition for School children</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborating Community Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village Panchayat Union</li> <li>• School authorities of the village</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Choice-Based Credit System Program for Undergraduate Students**

<b>Department</b>	All Departments both Humanities and Sciences (Under Autonomy)
<b>Programme</b>	A few projects at undergraduate level which are application oriented
<b>Participants</b>	All students (Humanities and Sciences)
<b>Target Group</b>	Local community
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify a research problem in the major discipline applicable to the local community</li> <li>• To analyse the factors responsible for the problem in a systematic manner using scientific approach</li> <li>• To suggest remedial measures for solving the problem to the appropriate body for action</li> </ul>

Student involvement in service programmes was evaluated. In 2002-2003, the Department of Zoology introduced an extension program where classroom knowledge was also applied in serving the community (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Extension Program of the Department of Zoology

<b>Department</b>	Zoology
<b>Programme</b>	Health & Environment
<b>Participants</b>	17 interested undergraduate students and two teachers of Zoology
<b>Target Group</b>	Rural women and school children of Anaiyur Panchayat
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey on demographic profile</li> <li>• Health &amp; Environmental awareness programme</li> <li>• Survey of Dental, Communicable and Skin diseases</li> <li>• Analysis of Water sample and Quality assessment</li> <li>• Tailoring classes to village women</li> <li>• Free eye camp</li> <li>• Street cleaning with sanitary workers and school children</li> <li>• Competition on Environmental issues</li> <li>• Exhibition on Health and environmental awareness</li> <li>• Training – Preparation of low cost nutritious food items to mothers with young children</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborating Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apollo Hospital</li> <li>• Meenakshi Mission Hospital</li> <li>• Primary Health Centre and Local School Authorities</li> </ul>

These fruitful experiences of the College in the various services led to the introduction of SL in the regular academic chart. In 2003-2004, efforts were made to institutionalize SL, integrating the service component into each discipline thus facilitating education of the head, heart, and hand.

## **INSTITUTIONALIZING SERVICE - LEARNING AT LADY DOAK COLLEGE**

In the first phase of institutionalizing, a core team was constituted with faculty members drawn from all departments. A national consultation and periodical discussions were held for the core team to address the following questions related to service learning.

### **Ethical Challenges /Service Learning Dilemma**

- Academic Rigor: Will service-learning dilute the curriculum?
- In what way is service-learning different from community service / volunteerism / internship?
- Does service-learning fit into all courses?
- Should all service-learning be off-campus activity?
- How to find a service-learning site?



- How much can really be accomplished during a semester?
- Would it not become an additional responsibility for the faculty?

When the core team had internalized the significance of SL, the departments came forward with their own proposals for introduction of SL, the basic elements of SL where classroom learning was applied for service, and reflection when new learning happened—all given due importance while designing the models in LDC. The proposals given by the departments were categorized into the following models.

- Model 1: Discipline-Related – A Separate SL program of the Department
- Model 2: Course-Related – SL components incorporated in the existing courses
- Model 3: A created study – A separate SL course offered by the Department
- Model 4: Applied Projects – An independent applied project work in a specific community

The departments had the freedom to design different kinds of SL courses/programs with the basic focus on extending classroom knowledge to community service with a component on reflection to gain new learning.

Some departments also facilitated their students to undertake applied projects that had an application of their classroom learning. A few examples are as follows:

- Analysis of pesticide residue in fruits, vegetables, greens sold at vegetable market in PT Rajan Road;
- Monitoring of BOD and COD during sewage treatment process at Lady Doak College campus; and
- Analysis of the fine particulate matter and oxide sulphur, nitrogen in Air at B.B. Kulam and Lady Doak College campus.

**Table 4.** Profile of SL Courses/Programs Offered  
in the Odd Semester (June-October) in 2005

<b>Department</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
Tamil	Life Education in Villages
History	Citizenship training for Rural Women
Social Sciences	Child Development
Economics	Population Education to Rural Women
Commerce	Training in Self-Help Group
Mathematics	Maths for Competitive Exams
Physics	Motivating School children to learn Physics GIS Based Community Projects
Chemistry	Diagnostic Chemistry
Botany	Applied Botany
Zoology	Promotion of Environmental and Health Awareness
Business Administration	Entrepreneurship Development
Computer Applications/ Information Technology Management	Web Based Community Project

**Table 5.** Profile of Service-Learning Courses/Programs Offered in the  
Even semester (November 2005-April 2006)

<b>Department</b>	<b>Course Title</b>
Mathematics	Statistics
Chemistry	Environmental Chemistry Applied Projects
Zoology	Environmental Biology

## **ETHICAL ISSUES EXPERIENCED IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

The mandatory extension program offered for undergraduate program did not seem to impart social responsibility. The SL used as pedagogy in all the departments was revisited due to some ethical concerns.

- In all the departments, SL was offered as an optional course for extra credit only.
- Since completion of SL led to extra credit, it was not included in the faculty workload.

- Students went to the community outside class hours only and so faculty could not accompany them every time.
- After the completion of service in the community, the community was not able to enjoy the benefits of service because of time constraints. Hence, the community seems to have been used as laboratory for data collection.
- While planning for the service and when the students were evaluated, the community partners were not involved.

These experiences brought about the need to assess the sustainability of the service in the community. The difficulty faced in identifying the right problem in the right community was also realized.

In the year 2012-2013, when the college was involved in restructuring the Undergraduate curriculum, the following future plans were envisioned for life frontier engagement (LFE) based on the experience of SL programs offered so far:

- involving more faculty in SL;
- creating/Requiring a platform for all students to participate in SL;
- linking research with extension;
- introducing interdisciplinary community work;
- providing all students the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to community service—this then became an effort to achieve the mission of the college

### **Pilot Experiences on Life Frontier Engagement**

The United Board funds enabled us to have pilot experiences on Community Based Research from 2010. Below are a few of such experiences.

**Community based environmental health initiatives at Sellur.** Sellur was a highly polluted and deeply congested area with 13 streets consisting of 150 houses in each street. The different studies undertaken in Sellur included the following:

- the area chosen for community-based research was geo-mapped by the students from the Department of Physics;
- the water quality was studied by the students from the Department

of Chemistry;

- fecal contamination of drinking water was identified by the students from the department of Botany and microbiology; and
- the survey report showed the high prevalence of dental problems in Sellur because of poor water quality.

Based on the results of the community project, the students involved in SL organized awareness programs especially for the school children in that area, as it was believed that through the school children the awareness can be passed on to the adults in that area. Womenfolk were also given training on making paper bags in order to minimize the usage of plastic bags.

**Action frame work for parthenium control.** Parthenium is an herb; its pollens when inhaled leads to respiratory problems. Hence, it had to be eradicated in the residential areas. The students from the Department of Botany undertook a project for controlling Parthenium, and they promoted awareness among the students and public on the impact of this herb. The department selected Koozhapandi, a village near Madurai, and trained the village community on management of Parthenium. Recently, when the department visited the village, the village was completely free of Parthenium. This experience had also inspired one of the students in that department to undertake an academic project in creating new knowledge on control measures on Parthenium. The students who were involved in this SL activity organized an awareness exhibition especially on the identification of Parthenium, for the college community, and for the public.

## **GIS based community projects**

**Study on the traffic flow around Lady Doak College campus.** The students from the Department of Physics observed the vehicle movement at peak hours in hot spots using GIS tools. The hot spots were mapped. Results of this study were of help in the installation of traffic signals in specified spots as well as in rescheduling of time for colleges and schools.

**Geomapping of Civic condition in terms of solid waste around Meenakshi Amman temple.** Meenakshi Amman temple being a very famous tourist spot, the students of Physics department undertook a study of the surrounding area that is highly polluted by solid waste. The GIS

map was hosted as a documentary film in Youtube showing the extent of pollution by solid waste. This created considerable awareness among the public to become cautious of solid waste.

### **Web-based community projects**

- Web based projects were undertaken by the students of computer science department before 2010 itself.
- The women of Self-help group from Thiruppalai (~7 km from our campus) faced difficulty in marketing their products. Hence, the students of Computer Science department designed a webpage for promoting their marketing in the year 2005.
- In 2006, a web site was designed for the Panchayat Union office of Uthangudi village.
- Desktop publishing training was given by the students of computer Science department to the students of Bethshan, a special school in Madurai.

**Child development course.** Housed at the college campus, the students of social sciences were involved in the Crèche as this activity is an SL component of the course in Child development. On the completion of their course, the students decided to give a special training for the crèche care takers.

**Statistical analysis by department of mathematics.** The students from Mathematics department undertook a statistical analysis in Madurai—this was a feedback on the training programme organized by an NGO, SOCO trust. Based on the results presented by the students, the NGO was able to reorganize their training program.

All these success stories of the community-based research provided an impetus for the sustainability of SL which can be achieved through life frontier engagement that is another level of the SL program. Hence, a decision was made to incorporate life frontier engagement as part of the curriculum that uses the integrated curricular model for the undergraduate program.

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## EVOLVING LIFE FRONTIER ENGAGEMENT INN UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

The objectives of this LFE are to

- make LFE mandatory for final year undergraduate students which would be a stepping stone for interdisciplinary, community-based applied research, whereby students get an opportunity to appreciate their academic learning through community experiences and to suggest solutions to industrial and societal issues;
- facilitate faculty to frame an LFE curriculum suited to their discipline by consultation with experts in the field and to design the mode of implementation; and
- provide a framework for LFE by identifying collaborating agencies and facilitating tie ups with them, thereby generating a discipline-wise database.

The full-fledged LFE will be implemented in the year 2015 for all undergraduate students. Currently the college is involved in the preparatory phase for full-fledged LFE.

A core team of faculty members drawn from all departments had a brainstorming session on their SL experiences and how the ethical issues they faced in SL can be addressed when LFE becomes part of the regular curriculum.

**Phase I:** Capturing the right concept of LFE by the teachers involved in framing LFE

**Phase II:** Identifying the community issues jointly by the faculty, students, and community partners.

**Phase III:** Interacting with academic experts for framing the course that consist of learning outcomes, different units, and evaluation.

**Phase IV:** Evolving the curriculum with evaluation tools and assessment process

**Phase V:** Getting approval from the Academic Council, for the newly designed LFE before implementation in June 2015.

It is believed that LFE will be able to suitably address the ethical issues experienced in the earlier experience of SL when it was used only as pedagogy.

- Under LFE, this community-based research becomes part of the regular curriculum, and hence it becomes part of the faculty workload.
- LFE is not an extra credit programme, and so students and faculty are involved in community-based research during their regular working hours.
- The community involved will no longer be a laboratory or data providers; instead, the solution proposed by the students (the new knowledge created in their community-based research) will be disseminated in the community for implementation. Adequate time can be given for this process in LFE.
- Because every student is required to complete LFE, all undergraduate students get involved in community-based research and so the institutional mission of developing socially sensitive women leaders can be achieved.

We thankfully acknowledge the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA), which has been funding the college for various proposals related to SL.

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Service-Learning Projects funded by United Board</b>
2002-2003	Service-Learning and Extension Programmes
2003-2004	Institutionalizing Service-Learning
2004-2005	Establishing a Centre for Service – Learning Activities
2007-2008	Transferring Technology through Service-Learning Eco-conscious Service-Learning Education in Paper Waste Management
2008-2009	Qualitative Assessment of Energy Consumptions and Methods of Energy Conservation
2010-2011	Community Bases Health Initiatives Carbon Foot Printing and its impact on Public Health in selected areas of Thathaneri, Madurai
2011-2012	Action Framework for Parthenium Control
2014-2015	Initiation & Implementation of Life Frontier Engagement for Whole Person Development

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## CONCLUSION

Chan, Brown, and Ludlow (2014) undertook a comparative study on the perspectives of an institution and the students on the goals and purposes of completing a Bachelor's degree in the 21st century. Their study had shown contrasting emphasis between the perspectives of students and that of institutions, and there was a significant mismatch found. Advanced skills and generic competencies were the goals of institutions that could be achieved by means of LFE. It is also concluded in the said study that the institutional goals could be achieved by modifying the curriculum and pedagogy, and hence the faculty needed to be equipped with necessary skills. In LFE, the students were presented with a problem existing in a community, and they generated new knowledge by undertaking research and providing a solution that is workable and intellectually defensible. This outcome is possible when cognitive learning—recall of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—happens to an undergraduate student, which is the ultimate agenda of higher education.

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# Sustaining Service-Learning

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Social engagement in higher education institutions is seriously attempting to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This is now inescapable for educational institutions if they have to remain relevant. In the triumvirate of teaching, research and extension, the latter remains to be “less rewarded“ in the academic structure. The challenge is to broaden the scope of scholarship and pursue what Boyer called “scholarship of engagement” (Boyer, 1990 as cited in Lunsford & Omae, 2011). Scholarship of engagement is bridging the gap between community/societal needs and academic resources (Boyer, 1996).

The most essential and practical mode by which higher education can enrich civic responsibility is to find a way to connect learning and community via academic curriculum. The call is to align the perspectives of the academe to the “nature of community work and student’s learning methodology” as they realize the school’s mission to contribute to social transformation. One such learning methodology is service-learning (Bringle & Clayton, 2012). Service-learning may be construed as a “relatively recent phenomenon” but its elements and ingredients resulted from “almost 100 years of American history of educational reforms to connect schools and community” (Shannon, Rim, & Robinson, 2012).

Many leading universities and colleges across Asia have established service-learning centers or programs supporting a dedicated core of faculty and serving an increasingly larger student population (Xing & Ma, 2010).

Educators around the world cite various reasons or a combination of reasons for developing and supporting programs of service-learning. Overarching is their realization that colleges and universities must find means of reconnecting and connecting more fully with their communities, nations, and the world (Berry & Chisholm, 1999).

## WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Bringle, Phillips, and Hudson (2004), defined service-learning (SL) as a course-based, 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 the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. It is therefore an innovative strategy to improve students' learning such that they are able to thread personal, academic, and social connection through their educational experiences. The definition tells us that SL is experiential learning where students embark on community activities or projects anchored on the identified felt needs of people by the people themselves.

Grounded on the definitions of SL, there are three important stakeholders involved, namely the faculty, students, and community. The faculty ensures that the service activity meets the educational goals. The student undertakes service activities that meet the needs of the community. The community benefits from the service activity and assists in the students' implementation of service activities and provides input for reflection. SL is curriculum-based in that it is integrated in a course as a pedagogy of teaching. Careful planning is infused into the pedagogy as SL advocates dedicatedly apply the principles that undergird SL as a philosophy and as pedagogy. These principles (others refer to them as phases) include preparation, engagement, reciprocity, reflection, and dissemination/celebration. These are critical components to ensure that the experience provides a meaningful blend of both service and learning.

*Preparation* begins with selecting the appropriate course for SL integration and integrating SL in the curriculum. Once curriculum is in

place, the faculty identifies the best possible SL placement that links the educational objectives of the course to the needs of the community. The partnership starts with an orientation in the community about SL—the expectations, timelines, and possible service activities. When all these are in place, the teacher likewise conducts a thorough orientation about SL with students, so they would understand and appreciate SL's contribution to student learning and to the process of meeting/responding to community needs. Protocols in working communities as well as how the SL engagement will be graded and what the expected outputs are form part of this phase.

*Engagement* encompasses endorsing students to the partner agency and/or community based on a prior needs assessment. This phase marks the actual “service delivery” suited to the needs of people and the field and skills of students.

*Reciprocity* is another critical component of SL. SL takes place in communities, and thus collaborative community-academic partnerships are carefully established with consideration to the reciprocity of benefits. The purpose of SL is learning how to serve the community better and at the same time learning an academic subject better through providing services to the community (Xing & Ma, 2010). The goal is to achieve a balance between service rendered in the community and student learning.

*Reflection* is a key ingredient in SL. In fact, some experts claim that the hyphen in the word service-learning is “reflection” as it is the element that brings out meaning as well as personal and social significance from the experience. Reflection provides students a deeper appreciation and understanding of the relationship between the theories learned in the classroom and the realities in the communities; but more importantly, reflection an appreciation of the relationships students have established with people in the communities. It is for this reason that students are to keep a journal that reflects the actual experiences, observations, feelings, values learned, theory, reality discoveries/connection, challenges encountered, and the learning that comes from the experience.

*Dissemination/celebration* is the final phase that entails sharing of experiences and findings with the agency and/or community. It is a celebration of gratitude, partnership, collaboration, and friendship expressed through awarding of certificates/tokens to stakeholders. Where possible, local media may feature the community engagement for the promotion of the SL pedagogy. Other ways of promotion can be through newsletters, social

media, and streamers. The engagement experiences may likewise be shared during workshops and conferences and published in scholarly journals.

## SUSTAINING SERVICE-LEARNING

It is never easy to start or establish an SL program, but once it is initiated, the institution is faced with the big challenge of *sustainability*. The question, therefore, is how does a higher education institution sustain its SL program.

In 1997, the American Association of Community Colleges began a three-year grant project involving 14 colleges to increase the number, quality, and sustainability of SL programs in community colleges nationwide. The project was later evaluated. The objective was to overcome challenges and learn valuable lessons in developing and sustaining academically based SL programs (Robinson, 2000).

The following is a summary of strategies utilized by the schools included in that project to ensure institutional and community support for service learning.

***Administration involvement and support.*** This stresses the importance of getting all levels of administration to appreciate and get involved in SL. Inviting administrators during SL orientation for the faculty, reflection sessions, SL fora, and partners' meetings and submitting proposals on the benefits of utilizing SL as an innovative teaching methodology can help to heighten awareness and understanding of the SL methodology.

***Climate.*** Crucial to this task is recruitment and development of faculty to advocate and eventually become SL champions in the university to motivate and inspire their colleagues. They are the banner carriers of SL in campus. An SL champion is described by a respondent in a study as "somebody who eats, breathes, and sleeps SL. Somebody that's going to say, 'Ok, I can't get through the door so I'm going through the windows'" (Klentzin & Wierzbowski-Kwiatkow, 2013).

The university needs to invest in establishing a center that serves as the hub of all SL initiatives, activities, and engagements, thereby creating a secure niche for the SL program. The coordinator or director faces the gargantuan task of promoting the identity, presence, and visibility of the SL program within and outside the university. He/she helps the academic

units to craft high quality SL experiences and projects. Faculty advocates and champions serve as mentors to other instructors who are new to service-learning. Publicity can pave the way for keeping SL in the public eye through press releases, websites, newsletters, annual reports, and newspapers. SL programs are more successful on campuses where the climate is supportive, positive, and celebratory. Creating a positive climate is an important task vested on the SL coordinators and directors.

Conducting and creating events like community/service may be conducted to allow representative community members to be on campus for SL related activities. Somehow this gives the community partners a sense of belongingness for playing a key role in student education. SL activities afford the community heightened visibility and a voice in the university.

***Community collaboration.*** Effective SL cannot happen without well-designed community partnerships. Agency and community representatives appreciate the opportunity to be part of the teaching and learning process. To prepare them for this partnership, a training-orientation for agency and community representatives on the SL pedagogy is worthwhile. It is best to provide an orientation handbook that comes handy as a reference. Building and maintaining relationships as well as recognizing the partnership solidifies the trust that the stakeholders put on the collaboration. It should be emphasized that the nature of the SL projects is dependent on the needs of partner communities/agencies.

Partners' meetings provides an avenue for assessing past SL engagements and planning on how to move forward in improving existing practices, processes and procedures. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) may be inked by the partners to serve as reminder to all parties regarding agreements and respective functions in the SL community engagement.

***Curricular integration.*** SL is most effective when integrated into course objectives and learning outcomes. The implication is that SL is not just an add-on activity that has a semblance of civic engagement. The syllabi and modules shall already reflect SL as a methodology employed in the course. They should also indicate SL activities, projects, requirements, and the weight of these activities in the evaluation or grading. Eventually, SL can be featured in course descriptions in the college catalogue, class schedules, and so on to further give SL a public face. SL is not intended to be used in

every course, but it is possible to incorporate it into any discipline. It is not possible to design a single model that effectively integrates SL into academic study for all disciplines and institutions. Thus, SL must be contextualized and must be relevant to meet unique and evolving needs (Xing & Ma, 2012).

***Faculty development and involvement.*** There is a strong need to hone the skills of SL advocates and champions in order to implement a program that is socially relevant, educationally stimulating, and personally fulfilling (Smith, Cohen, Raybuck, n.d.). Not all of the faculty members are familiar with SL, and this is why training workshops and seminars are in order. This can be done by the college or academic unit. The university demonstrates its support by funding faculty members who give presentations during local and international seminars and workshops. This provides an avenue for honing the skills of the concerned faculty in order to “sharpen the saw” so to speak, according to Rick Warren. Publishing research and articles on SL by the faculty members is a way of sharing experiences that enhances learning.

***Program development and management.*** At the heart of this is the director or coordinator who is charge of managing the SL program. He/she takes care of internal and external marketing of the program and looks for means of expanding it. He/she formulates guidelines and refines policies and procedures prior to implementation. To ensure program sustainability, evaluating SL is in order. The results are shared with all stakeholders such as administrators, faculty, staff, students, partner agencies, and partner communities. These results can form the basis for improving, redirecting, or enhancing the SL program.

***Student participation and leadership.*** SL is intended to make an impact on the life of the student as an individual, future professional, and as a citizen. The way that SL is implemented should be in a way that makes opportunities are made accessible in order to maximize students’ participation, leadership, and sense of responsibility. Students’ achievements must be celebrated and recognized through certificates and awards (Smith, Cohen, Raybuck, n.d.).

***Sustainability and institutionalization.*** We would like to continue that which is worth sustaining and to keep on finding means to improve the program. We should include SL in long-range planning and mission, and

connect to institutional initiatives. A budget that includes an SL coordinator and/or physical space should be provided. For some higher education institutions, SL is a degree requirement. Academic integrity and rigor must be ensured in all aspects of the program.

Like most educational initiatives, SL achieves institutionalization when it becomes an ongoing, expected, valued, and legitimate part of the institution's intellectual core and organizational culture (Klentzin, & Kwiatkowak, 2013).

Sustainability is important to the efficiency, quality, and impact of SL. It ensures that front-loaded investments—including developing community-academic partnerships, incorporating service-learning into the curriculum, and training faculty and staff in skills for SL—are not unnecessarily replicated. Sustainability prevents challenges that may be caused by interruptions in SL engagement, including reductions in services or programs among community partners that have come to rely upon student and faculty participation (Cashman, Hale, Candib, Nimiroski, & Brookings, 2004; Kushto-Reese, Maguire, Silbert-Flagg, Immelt, & Shaefer, 2007 as cited in De Geest et al., 2010) and which may reduce willingness among community partners to participate in community-academic partnerships (Shediak-Rizkallah & Bone, 1998, as cited in Klentzin & Kwiatkowak, 2013).

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# Employing Typologies of Learning for a Holistic Evaluation of Service- Learning Students

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Service-learning as a teaching strategy is popular in the Philippines because it serves the instruction, research, and extension or community engagement functions of higher education institutions. But it is also controversial because it is too demanding to students in terms of time and effort given their other school activities and requirements. It is, therefore, unfair for students if they are not fairly or realistically evaluated commensurate to the resources they put into the service of the community and the corresponding learning they generated if no deliberate plan and systematic procedure are followed by teachers. The community engagement model of Butin (2007) that is linked to the typologies of learning goals which include technical, cultural, political and anti-foundational is relevant for this purpose. This paper recommends that these learning goals constitute what the teachers should consider for giving grades to students and the weight for each type to the total grade shall depend upon the nature of the courses or subjects where service-learning is employed. Holistic evaluation of service-learning students considers all types of learning they experience in community service which are not only evident in their activity reports but are made visible in the reflection sessions. The ten principles of service-learning by Howard (1993) are also excellent guides for appropriately, fairly and holistically evaluating service-learning students.

**Keywords:** community engagement, typologies of learning, holistic evaluation, service-learning students, reflection session

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## INTRODUCTION

Service-learning is getting popular in the Philippines because it satisfies the instruction, research, and extension or community engagement functions expected of higher education institutions (Cernol-McCann, 2013). In fact, these functions can be undertaken by one or a group of teachers through service-learning although there are personal and institutional issues that discouraged many to go into this pedagogy (Witmer, Silverman, & Gashen 2009). But this type of experiential learning is too demanding in terms of time and resources of students who are already pre-occupied with several course requirements. One can only imagine how to manage limited time to satisfactorily comply with what their teachers expect them to submit within a determined period if majority or all their enrolled subjects in a particular semester employ service-learning as a teaching strategy. Service-learning as a strategy is undeniably stressful due to the various tensions that make this teaching strategy somehow counter-productive to quality education (Shannon 2007). This is just one of the ethical issues that makes service-learning controversial despite the pedagogical benefits it offers (Howard, 1993; Martin, 2001; Gaster, 2011).

Moreover, the service-learning practice of requiring students to serve a particular community or group of people as one of the parameters in grading them becomes questionable when the course did not originally require service-learning when it was designed. This requirement, which is a major component of a direct service-learning, not virtual, as in an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tutorial, is to enhance classroom instruction even if community engagement is not inherent or natural to the course. However, not only might some students dislike the practice because they perceive that it is inappropriate to their courses and that it is a wasteful investment, but also because such practice can expose them to dangers due to security and safety problems when travelling to and from the community (Shannon, 2007). Also, there are some perceived bad health effects because of too much exposure of students to the natural elements. The induced burden and protection issues become critical concerns that need to be addressed.

Given the foregoing issues around service-learning, one of the questions being asked, which has ethical undertones, is whether or not the amount and quality of “learning” is worth the time and effort of students (Gaster 2011). Therefore, there is the urgency now to examine the worth of service-learning to students, but this requires a tool for clarifying the domains and relevance of

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what the students had expressed or demonstrated with regard to what and how much they had learned. The ethical consideration in evaluating the learning of students in service-learning has to be seriously examined in order to appreciate how the students are or should be justly given grades corresponding to the kind of expected learning outcomes laid before them by their teachers at the official start of classes (Howard, 1993). This is where I found the four modes of community engagement developed by Dan Butin (2007) useful, and I will show later how these can become tools in categorizing and distinguishing the dominant type of learning that students have experienced and in determining their level or extent of learning.

## **LOOKING AT SERVICE-LEARNING GOALS AS BASIS FOR EVALUATION**

Aside from the experience I had with my own service-learning students in Social Theory, Research Statistics, Environmental Anthropology, and Anthropology of Tourism, the data I refer to and analyze here also come from the past and recently published experiences of students from various disciplines. I will highlight the fact that the varied experiences that come out of service-learning engagement of students provide them more than technical learning. This is usually expected by teachers in courses that are more into psychomotor skills development, particularly in natural or health sciences where service-learning is adopted primarily for skills enhancement. The case is different with teachers in the social sciences who are interested in other learning domains that students experience in their direct engagement with the community.

I argue that the typologies of learning outcomes in service-learning based on the original concept of Butin (2007) can offer more systematic and broader ways of evaluating the performance of students that will ethically justify the investment they have in serving and learning with the community. The evaluation of students' learning has to be anchored on the goal of community engagement whether the service they will extend can enrich their knowledge and skills in a particular field, make them more sensitive and appreciative of human differences, propel their desire to assist in the pursuit of certain agenda that promote human well-being, and excite their ability to examine and critically question some taken for granted assumptions about certain phenomenon in life.

Thus, in this paper I will review service-learning practices of selected teachers of Silliman University in terms of evaluating the learning of students in their engagement with the community through the services they have extended given their skills and available resources. In so doing the ethical issues that are satisfactorily addressed or that are not highlighted, and corresponding implications on the protection of the welfare and interest of students and the community is opened up for more examination. This will also open up a broader treatment of service-learning not only as a strategy to promote certain skills among students but to develop them as whole persons who acquire high self-worth because they have realized that their achievement is not only measured by what this has brought them but what they have shared and how this has contributed to the well-being and empowerment of others.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODELS AND TYPOLOGIES OF LEARNING

Butin (2007) introduced the four models of community engagement with the aim that the diversity of goals associated with community engagement can be appreciated, cognizant of the fact that there are several ways by which these goals can be achieved depending on the creativity of teachers and the commitment of their students. I employed service-learning in my classes when this was first introduced in Silliman University in 2001 after my training in 1999 with the International Partnership in Service-Learning (IPSL) and I never fully realized the different dimensions and levels of learning that students wrote in their journals and reported at the end of their community engagement (Oracion 2002). What the students learned were lumped under skills and knowledge “gained from community service” that are expected of them. For example, they had applied reportedly what they learned in school and found it was not difficult working with community residents contrary to what they originally thought. More meaningful analysis could have been made if it was done with the community engagement model of Butin (2007) which was not yet published at the time.

The first typology of this model is *technical* which is primarily concerned with pedagogical effectiveness and emphasis on content that the students have to learn through servicing the community. Service-learning is considered as a better tool for teaching students certain skills. The second typology is *cultural*, emphasizing the meanings of service in terms of

promoting cultural sensitivity and competency as well as civic responsibility. This goes beyond the learning of technical skills which are of primary importance to service learners—because cultural skills are learned in the process of serving and relating with different people in the community. The focus of empowering communities that have been marginalized for a period of time is associated with the third model which is labeled *political* because this model promotes social and political activism. The fourth model is described as *anti-foundational* because the service-learning engagement of students open up new learning that drives them to question a priori truth that they learn from classroom instruction.

The article of Cernol-McCann (2013) demonstrated how teachers may design service-learning objectives based on the four community engagement models of Butin (2007). Her focus was for students to understand the phenomenon of poverty, as an example, in order to inspire them to get involved in addressing this issue. She demonstrated that students can learn all the goals associated with the four models in one service-learning engagement. There is only the need for teachers to carefully bring these out during the reflection session as part of the evaluation of the performance of students. Examining and comparing the discussion of poverty in the classroom from what they read in books and journals with what they observe in the community exemplifies technical learning. Empathizing with the poor households that have less access to social services is a form of cultural learning, which may lead to political learning when students propose ways to narrow down economic disparities. Meanwhile, questioning personal assumptions or stereotypes of poor households and communities after service-learning activities is a form of anti-foundational learning.

## **EXPECTED AND RANKED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Ten faculty members of Silliman University were interviewed about the learning outcomes that they expected from their students in the service-learning activities. They were first asked to identify the service activities of students which were then categorized into three general types to better appreciate the learning outcomes expected (Oracion & Ligutom 2013). The first reported activity was *research* (e.g., socioeconomic survey, social and natural monitoring, and needs assessment of a particular organization or community). Then, the data obtained were given to partner organizations

or local government units. The second activity was *capability-building* which came in the form of seminars, trainings, and lectures pertaining to the promotion of good health and quality environment; the third were *needs-specific services* such as tutorials, health care, and laboratory testing. The first two services had benefits intended for the entire community and the third was directly enjoyed by individuals or small groups in the host community (Oracion 2002).

I labeled the learning outcomes corresponding to the goals of the services extended by the students, as designed by the teachers according to the typologies of community engagement of Butin (2007). The teachers were asked to rank, from one (highest) to four (least), the type of learning or the combination of types they expected from their students from their service-learning activities. The data showed that *technical learning* ranked first (with an average rating of 1.55) as it was foremost in the category that teachers really wanted their students to gain from the courses or degree programs they were enrolled in. This was particularly noted by teachers in health sciences. They employed service-learning primarily as a tool to enhance classroom instruction and to provide students the venue and opportunity to practice and validate what they learned theoretically from real people and conditions outside of the university. For example, the teachers expected students to learn how to interview local people, to collect specimens for laboratory analysis, to provide lectures for mothers about health, to tutor children, and so on.

*Cultural learning* ranked second (with an average rating of 2.00), which expectedly followed technical learning, particularly as reported by teachers in the social sciences or service-oriented courses such as sociology, anthropology, and social work. This type of learning happens naturally when students interact with the residents of host communities or members of certain organizations. However, cultural learning was much more recognized and appreciated by social science students because they had the theories and concepts to explain certain cultural phenomenon which may not be explicit to natural science students. The social science students were taught the differences in the folkways between rural and urban people, the ways to approach the community without appearing aggressive, and so on, as they go by the principle that working with local community requires the establishment of rapport.

The third in rank was *political learning* (with an average rating of 2.73) and must be associated with the capability-building services extended by

students that require them to be persuasive in promoting certain practices for good health and quality environment. The teachers of nursing and public administration students, for example, were not only interested in enhancing students' ability to communicate certain best practices to community residents which they need in real life or work situation. However, such ability does not end with the act of communicating; it is also measured by how effective the students were in convincing a target population, as evident in these people's attitude and behavioral change. Such ability is, however, difficult to measure if done after each service-learning engagement of certain groups of students because such changes take time to manifest. The impact of certain advocacies needs to be considered with the accumulated results of the service-learning program of the university over a period of time.

Finally, fourth in rank was *anti-foundational learning* (with an average rating of 2.86), which was considered the as least important among the expectations of teachers because their primary focus was on skills development or enrichment from community engagement. In fact, three out of the ten teachers interviewed did not mind about this type of learning. There were five who rated this type of learning third and fourth, while two rated it first and second. However, four of those who reported to have observed anti-foundational learning did not consider this type of learning as part of the parameters for grading students— that is, it was, for them, an added value. Although such learning may not be part of the grades, the classroom learning the students had that contradicted the reality in the community had inspired them to modify their ways of dealing with or serving the community. For example, a teacher of physical therapy noted that students had encountered various modalities of treating health problems that were not taught in school. As a result, the students learned to modify their techniques. The same was reported by psychology students who discovered more effective methods of tutoring children. These methods were contrary to the principles and theories from books and repeatedly discussed inside the classroom.

## **BASES OF MEASURING LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The next issue in evaluating the performance of students in service-learning is how to measure how the extent of learning after a given period which may cover the whole or half of the semester. It may also simultaneously cover the whole course or a particular topic or unit reflected in the course syllabus. The



same group of teachers mentioned earlier was asked about their strategies and indicators as bases for evaluating the performance of students that were specific to their service-learning engagement. A comparison of strategies and indicators presented according to the number of teachers (n= 10) who reported them shows projects as foremost followed by reflection paper and reflection discussion. Behavior change and examinations were least used.

**Table 1.** Number of Teachers Reported Certain Strategies and Indicators for Evaluating Learning of Students per Learning Outcome (Multiple responses)

Strategies and Indicators	Learning Outcomes			
	Technical	Cultural	Political	Anti-foundational
Activity reports	10	10	8	8
Reflection paper	9	10	7	8
Reflection Discussion	8	9	7	8
Behavior change	6	7	5	5
Examinations	4	4	4	2

The activity reports that the teachers required from students included photo and narrative documentation, types of activities conducted, journals of field experiences, and project output presentation to the community. These did not only manifest the types of learning of students but also served as tangible indicators of the students' community engagement in terms of the types and extent of services and activities they had undertaken. These outcomes are also expected in evidence-based education that is being promoted at Silliman University as a measure of students' knowledge and skills in relation to the lessons covered and discussed in class. The integration or employment of service-learning as a teaching strategy is not incidental but planned as reflected in the course outline or syllabus prior to the start of the class, and corresponding expected learning output is disseminated to the students.

The requirement of a reflection paper and participation in the reflection session are unique features of service-learning because it is in the students' reflection of their experiences during community engagement that they can find more meaning and insights beyond technical learning. However, reflection sessions should not simply be a free-flowing sharing and discussion

of experiences; it is supposed to be guided by questions prepared by the teachers so that the students can focus on choosing what to share from among their experiences. Thus, in the conduct of reflection session with my students after every community engagement, I formulated questions guided by the four learning outcomes of Butin (2007).

In my case, I asked my students to share the knowledge and skills they experienced that were relevant to the course; the ways of perceiving and relating with other people that made them more considerate and compassionate; and the activities that they had or they wanted to do to influence others and that contributed to the well-being of the majority. I also asked theoretical or practical questions that bothered the students and that they wanted to be resolved or clarified with the class after community engagement. I grade my students according to the quality of their ideas and extent of participation in the reflection session, not according to what I expected them to answer which fit my own ideas and biases. No objective answers were expected in service-learning reflection but only sensible answers that demonstrated the seriousness and open-mindedness of students in their community engagement.

Meanwhile, behavioral change is one learning outcome that is really difficult to measure in the absence of certain criteria and objective indicators. Nevertheless, how the teachers concerned evaluate behavior change is implied in the results of the interview (as shown in Table 1). Behavioral change can be found across the four learning outcomes such as changes in skills, in relating with other people, in being empathic or sympathetic to the depressed conditions of host community, and in expressing counter-ideas during classroom discussion after the service-learning engagement of students (Oracion, 2002; Oracion, 2010). I observed that my students who were timid or not participative in class discussion became very eager to share their experiences after they had the opportunity to serve and learn from the community. However, only seven out of the 10 teachers interviewed earlier who cut across disciplines admitted to including behavior change as one parameter for giving grades to students (Oracion & Ligutom 2013). Therefore, the inclusion of change in behavior for grading cannot be associated with certainty with specific disciplines; it is relative to the preference of the teachers concerned.

The extent that service-learning performance has determined the final grades of students is discernible in the percentages these comprised in the total grade. On the average, the service-learning outputs of students is only

38% of their total grade for certain subjects, further suggesting that the community engagement of students do not eat up the whole course but only focus or relate to a particular topic and is done during a particular period in the whole semester. In my case, the service-learning engagement of my students usually takes place after I have given mid-term examination. This is the time that the students are already theoretically equipped with knowledge and skills that they can use in community service. I also integrate service-learning as a teaching strategy only in major subjects offered in upper academic levels because fewer students are enrolled in these classes. Service-learning grade is 50% of the final grade.

Meanwhile, the ten teachers were asked how the four learning outcomes were distributed in the total final service-learning grades of students, and the results show the following distribution: technical (11.92%), cultural (9.87%), political (8.33%), and anti-foundational (8.10%). The foregoing percentage distribution of the grades given by teachers is consistent with the ranking of the learning outcomes shown earlier which reveals the fact that technical learning is of primary importance to teachers which the students have to acquire in order to pass a course or to graduate from a degree program. The same observation is noted in the article of Werder and Strand (2011) where learning skills are of paramount importance because the effectiveness in a certain profession or work is measured by demonstrated skills. Examination is at the bottom of the list, suggesting that this is not popular among all teachers interviewed.

The use of service-learning as a teaching strategy by these teachers shows real cognizance of the principle of reciprocity wherein the services extended by students are not an end in and of themselves but are also for their academic advantage in terms of improved knowledge and skills gained. Community service as altruism in the spirit of volunteerism is another type of community engagement which the students may go into after service-learning (Oracion 2010).

## **HOLISTIC AND ADEQUATE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

The evaluation of the performance of students in their service-learning activities must be holistic as well as adequate to include all the learning experiences they have expressed and demonstrated corresponding to the efforts that they exerted during community engagement. This is not

only methodologically important in evaluating service-learning students, but it is also ethically sound because holistic evaluation ensures that the students are well-informed of what are expected of them and how they will be given grades. However, in the absence of a standard to evaluate the service-learning outcomes of students, I tried to derive some lessons from teachers of various disciplines who had employed this pedagogy in different modalities and conditions. The typologies of community engagement of Butin (2007) provided the framework for assessing how the teachers evaluate learning outcomes given the diversity of their disciplinary background.

Putting together the various pieces of information from service-learning teachers, I found a trend towards holistic and adequate evaluation of the performance of service-learning students of Silliman University. Even if not all the necessary aspects of evaluation were found in each of the teachers interviewed, each aspect had actually contributed to this attempt to create a template in evaluating service-learning performance relative to other parameters being employed by these teachers. The service-learning outcomes expected or observed by teachers fit well with the goals of community engagement as well as the hierarchy of importance when they constituted the final grade of students for activities related to service-learning.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING SERVICE-LEARNERS**

Let me reiterate here the ten principles of good practice in service-learning pedagogy that Howard (1993) introduced for the purpose of design and implementation. I found this relevant as guide in developing a system of evaluating the performance of service-learning students. I will discuss and illustrate in the succeeding sections these principles corresponding to the experiences of service-learning teachers of Silliman University.

**Academic credit is for learning not community service.** The grade given to students is a measure of the quality of their learning and not the type and impact of the services students extended to the community. It would be unfair for students to be graded based on how the services they have extended have changed or improved the conditions of a host community given their limited resources and time for the engagement.

Instead, the impact of the service-learning program on the community should be the target of evaluation while what the students learned in serving a community according to the typologies of learning should be the bases of students' individual grades. The percentage of the service-learning grade out of the total grade of the student should vary according to the nature and duration of community engagement as designed by the teacher. It may be about 25% or 50% of service-learning activities cover one-fourth or half of the semester, respectively, as suggested in Table 2.

**Academic rigor is a priority more than community service.**

Technical learning has to be given more weight in giving grades because this is foremost in service-learning goals. This is already evident in the practice among teachers of Silliman University. Unless stated otherwise in a particular course (i.e., that the other learning outcomes are likewise important such as cultural, political and anti-foundational), the extended services of students should promote the knowledge and skills required by the course they are enrolled and should not shortchange the students. Table 2 shows the suggested weights of the typologies of learning between more social and more technical subjects or courses with service-learning integration. The weight distribution should not be rigid but should be relative to the nature and expected learning outcomes of a course. What is important is that the areas or domains to be graded are made known to the students.

**Learning goals are clarified prior to community service.** The learning goals, indicators and weight of particular indicator for giving grades have to be made known to students at the start of the semester. The tangible learning outcomes (with their suggested weights) may include narrative report and photos of service-learning activities and journal of experiences while the intangible learning outcomes consist of the quality of students' participation in the reflection sessions. The suggested weights will vary relative to how "social" or "technical" the subject or course is. Meanwhile, this principle may allow students to negotiate with the teacher in case they are physically or psychologically handicapped in engaging community service. Alternative learning activities may be provided to them, leading to the realization of the same learning goals. Otherwise, the students who are uncomfortable with community engagement can enroll in other courses that do not employ the service-learning approach.

**Table 2.** Suggested Weights of Selected Parameters  
for Grading for Two Types of Courses

Parameters	More Social (%)	More Technical (%)
Sources of Learning of Students	100	100
Classroom learning	50	75
Community learning	50	25
Composition of Community Learning Grade	100	100
Technical	50	65
Cultural	25	20
Political	15	10
Anti-foundational	10	5
Weight of Learning Outcomes as Evidences for Grading	100	100
Narrative report of service-learning activities	40	60
Quality of participation in reflection sessions	40	30
Journal of service-learning experiences	20	10

**Community service placement follows selection criteria.** The identified host community must have learning opportunities consistent with the services students have to offer as well as with the expected learning outcomes. This is particularly important in courses that require mastery of psychomotor skills such as those in the natural and health sciences. The students need to serve host agencies that provide them with the venue where they can apply and enhance the knowledge and skills they learned in school. Any social science teacher can also link with local government units or organizations that have certain needs wherein they can customize their service-learning activities.

**Mechanism for bringing out community learning is available.** The mechanism for critical reflection on and analysis of community service based on learning goals is one of the necessary bases for giving grades. It is not enough that the students submit written reports or documentaries

as evidence of their service-learning activities. Although these projects may project what they learned from community engagement, there is a significant difference when these are verbally articulated in order that the typologies of learning can be brought out and given corresponding grades. The diversity of learning indicators can provide wider opportunity for students to get better grades.

**Students need assistance in determining community learning.** The students have to be taught the necessary skills and be guided to glean and learn from community service if written and oral reflections are to be part of their grades. Students should not be brought or sent to the community without being given an orientation on the principles of service-learning in order for them to become fully aware of what they have to do when they come into contact with their host community or agency. Part of the orientation is how to keep journals of their field experience and what to bring out during the reflection sessions. There are many things that students can cover but having a focus is very necessary.

**Classroom and community learning roles have to be consistent.** The students generally assume learning-follower role inside the classroom, but in the community they assume a learning-leader role when they are left to do what are expected of them. They have to be prepared by the teacher for the latter role while still in school in order for them to be effective in generating more community learning. This principle implies that students are expected to demonstrate relative independence in learning but within the sphere or domain of the learning goals of the course. This forms a basis for grading the students. Therefore, classroom and community learning is one area of behavior change that can be evaluated.

**Teacher instructional role needs reorientation.** Consistent with the changing learning role of students due to service-learning, the teachers likewise need to rethink and modify how their function changes from being information disseminators to learning facilitators. This role reorientation of teachers transforms their perspective of evaluating students from looking at what the students learned to looking at how they learned. This is related to the changing learning role of students from being followers to being leaders. How teachers give grades is presumed to be influenced by the type of role they assume.

**Community learning outcomes are unpredictable and heterogeneous.** There is variability in the community service placement of students or

the forms of service they extend. This results in the unpredictability and heterogeneity of learning every student encounters. Such variability must be provided space in the evaluation of students. Additional indicators or parameters have to be considered to cover learning experiences that are not technical yet relevant in the molding of culturally competent, sensibly persuasive, and critically-oriented students or future graduates. These characteristics cannot just be overlooked but instead should be given corresponding grades even if they are not equal to technical learning.

**Community responsibility orientation has to be maximized.** It is going to be ironic if service-learning students are allowed to do individual projects as products of their community engagement given that this pedagogy is employed as a tool to promote civic responsibility. The problem with group project is the possibility of social loafing or the dependency of some members on the efforts of one or some members of the group. These students become free loaders of the good marks given by the teacher. This potential problem, however, can be addressed if the teacher warns the class of this possibility and promotes individual responsibility over collective learning outcomes. Individual projects may also be allowed, but these have to be consolidated later as a collective project to encourage not only individual accountability but also cooperation. This is one area for grading behavior change.

## CONCLUSION

I have argued and demonstrated in this paper that how the service-learning students should be graded must not be haphazard but rather deliberate in order to give justice to the efforts and resources spent by students in community engagement. Butin's (2007) community engagement model that corresponds to the typologies of learning goals has proven useful as bases for the evaluation of the type and extent of the learning experiences of students. The data show that technical learning is the primary service-learning goal of selected faculty of Silliman University. This is followed by cultural, political, and anti-foundational learning that conforms to the hierarchy of learning goals (Butin, 2007).

There are tangible and intangible learning outcomes that are required of students as indicated in course outlines or syllabi in order to objectively evaluate their performance. The weight of service-learning grade or community learning in relation to classroom learning may



vary depending on the primary learning goal of a particular subject or course. Classroom learning may constitute higher percentage of the final grade of students in “more technical” subjects or courses as compared to those “more social”. Technical learning and narrative reports may also be given greater weight in the former than in the latter which is more interested in both technical and cultural learning derived during reflection sessions. But whatever the distributions would be, the most important consideration is that the parameters and process of evaluating service-learning students are made clear at the start of classes.

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# Literature and Service-Learning: Challenges in Reconciling Cultural Beliefs with Christian and Nationalist Values in the Context of Common Ghost and Malevolent Spirit Narratives

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## INTRODUCTION

As a Literature person, I initially thought that the Service-Learning Program was a domain of the Social Sciences particularly the disciplines of Social Work, Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology, which directly work with different communities of people. Not surprisingly, I also did not distinguish between outreach programs and service-learning. It was thus easy for me to agree with Dr. John Eby of Messiah College (2002) when he observed that the “[f]aculty in the humanities, particularly English and History and Philosophy seem to have some of the most difficulty seeing how service-learning might fit into their disciplines.” Erlich (1995; quoted in Zlotkowski, 1995) clarified the difficulty of integrating service-learning projects into the humanities, in general, and Literature, in particular:

Linking the humanities to service presents a special challenge because the humanities palette is the widest and most diffuse. The proposition that service enriches learning in all areas of the university finds its test case in literature. How can one “experience” Middlemarch as well as read it? (p. 7)

This notion of service-learning not suitable to the humanities is still persisting today; consequently, many in the field have been “slow adopters” (Barrow, 2011) like me who formally joined my institution’s Service-Learning Program only in SY2011-2012.

It is, however, worth noting here that there had been Literature professors who successfully incorporated service-learning in their selected classes. Among them was Prof. Cathy Comstock (1994) of the University of Colorado who neatly summed up her argument in her article title, “Literature and Service Learning: Not Strange Bedfellows”. Indeed, the service-learning projects successfully incorporated in certain literature courses over the years (for instance, Comstock’s Literature and Social Violence, and Discourse Analysis and Cultural Criticism - 1994; 1995; Rabin’s critical service-learning [studies on ideology] – 2008; and Barrow’s Sexual Violence in Western Cultures – 2011) demonstrate the endless and exciting possibilities for service-learning in Literature classes.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING IN LITERATURE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED**

For my first foray into service-learning, I asked my Children’s Literature class to mentor 7-10 pupils from each of the Dumaguete public elementary schools in Readers Theatre to increase the latter’s reading fluency. This service-learning project was in response to elementary English teachers’ request for help in teaching performance reading to selected pupils. The project was designed, among others reasons, to provide the university students first-hand experience in assessing the needs of pupils in terms of their reading skills, then proposing Children’s Literature materials to help address such needs and, afterwards, mentoring them to improve their reading fluency. In the next school years (2012-2013; 2013-2014), my Children’s Literature and Mythology classes had meaningful adequate engagements in service-learning as well. Reflecting on these past three schoolyears, I realize that I still need more grounding on service-learning both as teaching pedagogy and methodology, so all stakeholders can more fully benefit from it.

Aside from teacher limitations (and biases, for that matter), there are other issues and challenges accompanying the incorporation of service-learning in Literature classes based on first-hand experience. Foremost of these is the issue of Literature not being a legitimate “service” on its own;

that is, it is mainly a vehicle for Language learning as is still the prevailing notion among elementary English teachers (Various Public School Teachers, Personal communication, August 2012; February 2013). Be this as it may, this paper does not dwell on said issues, but instead, focuses on the challenges and issues that cropped up while my students were attempting to accomplish their service-learning project in oral storytelling, particularly how to reconcile their superstitious beliefs with their Christian/religious and/or nationalist values as they discussed the ghost and malevolent spirit narratives passed on to them by their local elders.

### **CONTEXTUALIZING SERVICE-LEARNING IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

For schoolyear 2012-2013, the service-learning project of my students in Children's Literature (ED 17 for 1<sup>st</sup> semester and Litt 48 for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester) was to mentor Grades 3-5 pupils from selected Dumaguete City Public Elementary Schools in oral storytelling in cooperation with the kids' respective homeroom advisers. Specifically, the children were being prepared for an interschool Oral Storytelling in Cebuano Contest to be held at the end of said schoolyear. This undertaking was designed to give the university students opportunities to apply the principles in oral storytelling and in data gathering they have learned in their Literature class. At the same time, it would let them and the elementary children discover common oral stories and narratives in the locality (i.e., Dumaguete City) suitable to children from whom they could draw traditional beliefs and practices for discussion in the context of Filipino identity, values, national pride, and relevance in their everyday realities. This service-learning focus further aimed to heighten both sets of participants' awareness and appreciation of their storytelling tradition as they told each other local folk stories and historical narratives passed on to them by their community elders. Each team (composed of two university students and three to four elementary school kids) was asked to gather three oral lores from acknowledged storytellers and/or historians in their respective communities to be shared in stylized oral storytelling during their service-learning sessions. For authenticity as well as ease of delivery, the language used during the sessions was Cebuano. All the excellent storytellers from each school would eventually be selected to join the planned inter-school oral storytelling contest.

In the observance of ethical standards in research, I would like to disclose that these service-learning sessions were conducted as well to help my colleagues and myself gather preliminary data (such as whether local storytellers still abound in Dumaguete City, and what kind of oral stories the children are interested in) needed in writing our proposal on the Institutionalization of Local Memory Project, which we hoped to begin the following year (2013).<sup>[1]</sup>

The wealth of local narratives shared by the elementary pupils was a pleasant surprise considering their young age (9-11 years old). They enthusiastically participated in the oral storytelling activity because they were unhampered by language limitations having been urged to speak in their mother tongue and because “*ganahan jud mi ug maminaw sa stories [we really like to listen to stories].*” More importantly, the children were able to engage their student-mentors in quite critical discussions of certain local and/or personal issues gleaned from their stories such as the prevalence of the “white lady” in local ghost stories and the feeling of shame and pain in having a womanizing father.

Based on the stories gathered and then retold by the two sets of learners (unfortunately, most of these were neither written down nor recorded in the spirit of oral storytelling), it was very clear that ghost stories and malevolent spirit narratives were the most favored by the data informants. These were followed by stories about how local places acquired their names or the legends attached to focal places in the community. Narratives about life in the old days also abounded such as when the Banica River was still very clean so it was the bathing place of most everyone in the area back then. The stories and narratives compiled, especially the supernatural ones, had all the right ingredients of good oral storytelling.

## **SITUATING SUPERSTITION WITHIN REVERED FILIPINO BELIEFS AND VALUES**

An important concept in service-learning involving learner-community partner relationship is cultural sensitivity. This concept, according to Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna, and Lopoies-De Fede (1997), means “being aware

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1 The significant local narratives since gathered by the local memory project team (A. Gomez-Soluta, J. C. Generoso, J.E. A. Solitana, and H. L. Gomonit) are now awaiting conversion to digital stories in Cebuano for use in Dumaguete City Grade Schools in adherence to DepED Order No. 74, s. 2009 known as Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, which mandates the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in the first three years of primary school.

that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior.” Based on such givens, my students were reminded repeatedly to be sensitive to the cultural or group particularities of their community partners (local elders and elementary pupils) as well as to be mindful of their own biases and prejudices while on site. Ignoring these would affect their dynamics with their partners that would surely impede their service and their learning. It turned out that gathering the stories from the community did not pose much of a problem for the two sets of learners because many of their local informants were either their own grandparents, parents, uncles, godmothers or some other relatives.

The issue on cultural sensitivity came up during one team’s discussion on the most popular Filipino superstitious beliefs when after a round of oral storytelling about the *wakwak* and the *tiktik*,<sup>[2]</sup> one of my students cautioned the children against believing too much in such creatures because these were “mostly from the storyteller’s imagination.” One girl was visibly disturbed about what was just said and with furrowed brows, she raised her hand to speak. She began telling us that her father was recently bitten by a *wakwak* on his ankle. That night, the father was already sleeping but was awakened when he heard scratching sounds from outside the window. He tried getting up in the dark to investigate but something impaled his legs. He struggled and tried to shout for help but his voice was gone. Fortunately, he was able to free his right foot and started kicking to free his other foot. All of a sudden he felt a cold sensation on his left ankle followed by a sharp pain. He heard a swishing movement and both his legs were free. The girl further revealed that she did see the swollen, red-purple area on his father’s ankle. Everyone in the room could not stop asking her for more details. The other pupils then started sharing about “actual encounters” between people they knew and a *wakwak* or a *tiktik* until the bell rang signalling the end of the period. My students were not able to formally end the discussion session that day.

Taking this particular discussion session into consideration, is it cultural insensitivity to continue talking about the pitfalls of superstitious beliefs to the pupils? Did they reject all the *wakwak* stories they heard for

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2 The learners commonly understood *wakwak* to mean *aswang* (she-vampire) and *tiktik* as a vampiric bird although both like to prey on children and pregnant women. However, A Dictionary of Cebuano Visayan (Volume II: L-Y) compiled by John Wolff (n.d.) does not include the term *tiktik* and defines *wakwak* as a “bird which comes out at night,.... Its call signifies the presence of a vampire (*unglu*) or in some beliefs, it is a form the vampire takes himself” (p.1121). On the other hand, *tiktik* is “one type of *aswang* which transforms into a huge bird at night and prowls” (Monstropedia, n.d.).



being totally untrue? How would they have ended that discussion session if they still had time? When I asked these questions to my students during our class reflection session, many felt conflicted about their answers considering one lesson they wanted to put across to the pupils, i.e., not to totally believe in superstitions as these are meant mainly for entertainment in the tradition of folk lore and tall tales (“Tall tale”, 2014). At the same time, they admitted that part of themselves actually still believed in *wakwak/tiktik* stories having heard about these constantly from their own families and relatives “*sa una pa* [long time ago].” It meant then that they would be challenging the words of the girl’s father as well as their own families or ancestors if they insisted on the untruthfulness of such stories. So as not to be insensitive, they therefore decided that “it was not the right time” to problematize the stories in that session; it was more prudent to just listen to the stories and afterwards comment on these only in terms of the technicalities of oral storytelling.

After further processing the issues that cropped up during their service-learning sessions, the students were able to conclude that superstitions are still firmly rooted in Philippine culture and that these are here to stay like other revered cultural beliefs as long as tradition lasts and respect for ancestors/elders remains one of the core Filipino values. Superstitions indeed have their own functions within a culture as Malinowski (1922) established in his ethnographic study of the life of the Trobrianders. In this light, one way of overcoming the “derogatory” tag attached to superstitions (Fox, 1991) is for the students to discover the meanings and roles of superstitions in Philippine society; then they can help enlighten their younger counterparts more thoroughly. Approaching the body of superstitions from the literary perspective can be helpful in this regard. Specifically, applying the different levels of interpretation can reveal the symbolic and/or allegorical meanings of these beliefs which may prove much easier to accept and adhere to than when stuck with their literal meanings.

## **RECONCILING SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS WITH CHRISTIAN OR RELIGIOUS VALUES**

The concept of cultural sensitivity in service-learning was further dwelt on by my students when they were asked whether they saw contradictions between their superstitious and Christian or religious beliefs; and if there

were, how then to reconcile these contradictions? During the class reflection on the *wakwak* and *tiktik* stories, one student shared that when she was in pre-school, her *lola* always made her wear a certain scapular, together with a small slice of ginger tied onto her shirt, for protection against the *wakwak*, any lurking mischevous spirit, or even the *nuno sa punso* (a mythological tiny creature living in an anthill) that might harm her or even take her away from her family. She added that thinking about her childhood experience made her realize that her family and many other Filipinos, actually see no contradiction between their religious and superstitious beliefs; in fact, they even complemented each other as exemplified by the scapular (representation of “Mama Mary”) and the ginger (or garlic) both protecting children from bad spirits and/or creatures. Such a notion is not really far-fetched, according to Fox (1991), because religion “is probably also, in its simplest manifestation, superstition, ‘within the meaning of the act’” [as related to the sacred, divine, social unity, and so on] (p. 242).

This connectedness between the two sets of beliefs was, however, rejected by another student who claimed that the veneration of the scapular is also superstition and not expressive of one’s Christian values. Christian values are, instead, those that “demonstrate God’s words,” according to what she learned from her parents and Church. She understood the logic behind not immediately commenting against the supernatural stories narrated by the children but she urged the class to incorporate Christian teachings in their discussion of said stories (e.g., if they have strong faith in God, then the bad spirits and creatures would not be going after them) so as to differentiate superstition from religion despite both operating on the basis of an individual’s faith.

Not surprisingly, the students declared that indeed most of them would choose to draw out Christian values from traditional stories/narratives instead of attempting to explain the superstitious beliefs found in these stories in as much as they believe they know more about the former than the latter. In which case, the challenge obviously would be for the students to avoid exalting one at the expense of the other. Striking a balance between the two in discussions with their young counterparts would demonstrate not just their Christian values but their cultural knowledge and sensitivity as well.

## **LOCATING GHOST STORIES WITHIN THE NARRATIVES OF FILIPINO PRIDE AND NATIONALISM**

As earlier mentioned, Filipinos seem to have a penchant for ghost stories and malevolent spirit narratives. Oral storytelling, particularly the informal, often gravitate around the enduring stories of ghosts and malevolent spirits. During the service-learning oral storytelling sessions with the elementary children, various versions of the “white lady” were narrated: woman with very pale face in black dress and veil getting on pedicabs in front of the Motong Cemetery; woman all in white and long black hair suddenly appearing to motorists at Cantil-e; and a woman on a big white stallion patrolling the Calindagan seashore. The ghost lady on a horse is believed to be St. Catherine still protecting the community against invaders.

Can these stories be put alongside the narratives on nationalism and Filipino pride to represent us as a people? Is it cultural insensitivity to discourage children in believing in these ghost stories? In our class reflection session, the students agreed that the ghost stories are a part of our cultural heritage and so we should live with them; this should even be a non-issue for Filipinos (seemingly, the students were more accepting of the ghost stories than the malevolent spirit/creature narratives). Our storytelling tradition would not be as exciting and entertaining without the ubiquitous “white lady.” Therefore, increasing the children’s cultural knowledge includes exposing them to the “white lady” narratives that are already an indelible part of our cultural fabric; these should be more thoroughly examined through the gender lens, however, to be made more relevant to the learners. Knowing and understanding these stories can develop their cultural sensitivity early on in life, which it is hoped will translate into having a strong sense of pride in being Filipino when they grow up.

## **CONCLUSION**

The nature of Literature as a discipline dictates that its service-learning projects should be connected with culture. Dealing with culture requires a special sensitivity or awareness on the part of student-participants. Cultural sensitivity does not only increase their knowledge

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of traditional practices and beliefs but also allows them to break and/or transcend cultural borders making their service-learning experience much more meaningful and satisfying. It is, obviously, the responsibility of teachers/mentors to help students cultivate and/or heighten such sensitivity by making them deal with pertinent issues and challenges and by guiding them to approach culture with an open mind and an empathetic heart. Culture in its totality is very complex and, often irrational; its comprehension cannot be achieved through reason alone but through feelings as well. In this sense, to be genuinely culturally sensitive, students should be adept at using both their hearts and minds when dealing with traditions and beliefs of people.

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# Becoming a Reading Teacher: Technical, Practical, and Critical Reflections on Service-learning in a Developmental Reading Course

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*Much has been hoped for and said about reflection as an essential attribute of effective literacy teaching. Equally as much remains muddled and confused, however, as to its purpose, development, and role in preparing new teachers of reading. How to help aspiring teachers become more reflective about their literacy teaching across the preparatory years is not clear, and proven strategies for improving reflection through professional education are lacking.*

**-Roskos, Vulelich, & Risko (2001)**

This study investigated the extent to which reflections done by pre-service teacher education students on a service-learning component of a Developmental Reading course demonstrated the technical, practical, and critical levels. Using axial coding, data from nineteen reading tutors' journals and responses to an open-ended questionnaire were analysed to determine the level of reflection used and the merits, limitations, and promise of using reflective journals for the improvement of reading instruction and teaching in general. Findings suggest that although reflection is a crucial component of service-learning, its potential may only be fully exploited if students are provided specific or focused stimuli for reflection. Explicit instruction on the three levels of reflection may also be necessary to ensure that students go beyond mere description of their experiences.

**Keywords:** Reflection in service-learning, Service-learning in pre-service teacher education

Reflection is critical to teaching practice. Educators have long been advocating teacher and student engagement in reflection as part of their practice. For example, Piaget (1972) posited that human beings engage in the process of interacting with the environment, interpreting it, and relating their interpretations to their internal schema or cognitive structures. Freire

(1973, 2000) posited that learning is a dynamic process of action-reflection-action, and change can only take place when there is dialogue and reflection on one's practice, and when students engage in transformative practices. In teacher education, Giroux (2009) challenged teacher preparation institutions to transcend the practice of developing teachers as technicians, expert at the craft of replicating supposed generic "best practices" instead of developing among them "a level of awareness that allows them to raise questions about the principles underlying different classroom methods, research techniques and theories of education." As transformative intellectuals, teachers critically reflect on and modify their practices since teachers shape the purposes and conditions of schooling (Giroux, 2009, p.3).

This paper describes my attempts as a teacher educator to engage first year pre-service teacher education students in the process of reflection on their practice through a service-learning activity. Moreover, I reflected on my own practice as a novice in facilitating a course with a service-learning component. Particularly, I was interested in seeking answers to the following questions: 1) What are the merits, limitations, and challenges of using reflective journals in pre-service education students' initiation to the practice of teaching through a service-learning activity? 2) How may I, as a pre-service teacher educator, improve my practice particularly in facilitating reflective thinking among pre-service education students who are engaged in service-learning activity?

My experience in incorporating service-learning in the teaching of reading came as response to an immediate need. I was teaching Developmental Reading classes for Bachelor in Elementary Education students in a Teacher Education Institution (TEI) in one of the Centers of Excellence in Teacher Education at a University in the southern Philippines. Although the university accreditation status granted it a level of autonomy from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the college had to meet CHED minimum requirements for all its programs. CHED mandated that for Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEEd), TEIs require 174 units of courses, of which 54 units comprise professional education subjects (CMO 30, s 2004). Among these are Developmental Reading 1, which focuses on the perspectives, principles, and stages of the reading process; and Developmental Reading 2, which emphasizes the approaches and methods of teaching reading (PAFTE VII Professional Education Curriculum Guide, 2007).

When I started the syllabus for these courses, I realized that the teaching of Developmental Reading 2 posed a challenge to both the students and the teacher. The subject was primarily an introductory course on methods of teaching reading in the early grades. Yet, the course was required of first year students, many of whom would have taken only two or three professional educational courses and no units in methods of teaching. Considering that all of the students in class majored in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEEd), I prepared a syllabus that emphasized the discussion and demonstration of various methods to develop children's Early Literacy Concepts (Oral language development, concepts about print, alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and beginning reading vocabulary). Moreover, I included some approaches to teaching reading in the Philippines such as the Four-pronged approach, content-based reading, and reading in the mother tongue, knowing well that the Department of Education, through DepEd Order 74 s 2009, has institutionalized Mother tongue multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in Kindergarten through Grade 3.

Considering the difficulty that many of the students may encounter in this methods course, I thought it would be best for them to observe classes and reflect on what they observe in relation to the class discussions. However, when arrangements were made for my students to observe reading classes in the early grades, I was informed that they could only observe 2-3 sessions because of the number of students in Field Education courses who were also observing the classes at the university's laboratory school. So, I made arrangements with a local foster home and a child-care center to allow the Developmental Reading 2 students to tutor children in their centers who may be at risk of failing in the reading classes. I modified the syllabus to incorporate the objectives and activities in my first attempt at formalizing the integration of service-learning in the Developmental Reading 2 class.

Although the initial reflection of the students indicated a development in their appreciation of teaching as a profession and deepened their commitment to literacy education, I was bothered by the journal entries that described the difficulty and risks involved in going to the foster home after school hours to meet the children for the reading tutorials. So, in the following year I decided to modify the service-learning component of the course. The students were allowed to tutor their sibling, relative, or neighbor whom they believe may be at risk of failing their reading class based on



information from their latest school report card. The students were required to show evidence that the child needed the tutorial based on their school performance and that the family could not afford to hire a reading tutor. The students were also required to 1) render at least 10 tutorial sessions; 2) compile a portfolio of their lesson guide and materials used as well as photos of some of the sessions; 3) submit a journal reflection after each of the tutorial sessions; and 4) write an evaluation of the activity at the end of the semester. The tutorials were conducted in September, after the University conducts its mid-term examination. By then, the class would have already discussed and demonstrated in class the strategies for teaching beginning reading skills. The objectives and activities in this service-learning component of the course was indicated in the course syllabus.

### **Service-Learning as a Form of Inquiry**

Service-Learning is a mutually beneficial teaching and learning strategy where students engage in purposeful and meaningful service to individuals and communities while critically reflecting on their practice, thereby deepening their understanding of the certain issues and processes embedded in the curriculum. According to Le Grange (2007), service learning is not only pedagogy; it is also “a philosophy and a form of inquiry that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities.” Thus, service-learning activities are planned and enacted based on clearly-defined learning objectives. It “addresses lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized critical reflection through a variety of modes such as structured writing” (Carrington & Iyer, 2011, p.1). Critical reflection is, therefore, an integral component of any service-learning activity. In fact, reflection is considered one of the four Rs in service-learning, namely respect, reciprocity, relevance, and reflection (Butin, 2003, pp. 1676-1677).

Berger-Kaye (2004) described four types of service-learning activities: direct, indirect, research-based, and advocacy service-learning. In Direct Service-Learning, the students engage in “person-to-person service projects in which the students’ service directly impacts individuals who receive the service.” An example of this would be reading tutorials for the purpose of assisting the children who are failing the subject. As tutors, the students constantly reflect on specific techniques and strategies that work best for particular groups of children. In Indirect service-learning, the students

investigate broad issues and engage in such projects such as community development, which not only impacts the individual but the larger community or the environment. An example of this would be the establishment of a children's library where students not only organize and mobilize the community and the local government unit to allocate space and build the structure, but also organize, train, and empower mothers to engage in periodic story-telling and story reading sessions in the mother tongue, Filipino, and English. Research-based Service learning involves "gathering and presenting information on areas of interest and need-projects." For example, the Direct service-learning where pre-service education students facilitate tutorial sessions with students at risk of failing their reading classes may also have a research-based service learning component. The students could investigate the phenomenon on reading anxiety, and conduct interviews or focus group discussions with the children as well their parents and teachers. Home visits and class observations may also be conducted for the students to further explore the social construction or the social conditions that relate to reading anxiety. This may contribute to local constructions of the phenomenon of reading anxiety and inform decisions on how to address this concern in the children's local contexts. The *Developmental Reading 2* class was engaged in Direct Service-Learning since the main purpose of tutoring the child was to help him/her develop reading skills necessary to improve his/her grade in the reading class. Thus, it is the individual beneficiary, not the community, who is impacted by the service.

On the part of the *Developmental Reading 2* students, the service-learning component of the course was also aimed at self-improvement. They would be able to practice strategies and techniques in teaching reading in the early grades and reflect on their teaching-learning experiences. At another layer, through the students' evaluation of the course and the service-learning engagement in particular, I am able to reflect on my practice as a teacher educator. Thus, the service-learning engagement primarily benefited the individuals concerned.

This investigation attempted to explore the extent to which students are able to reflect on their teaching practice as reading tutors. Moreover, it aimed to determine possibilities of improving such practice so that it can better serve future *Developmental Reading 2* classes. Finally, it aimed to provide a space where a teacher educator who was herself initiated into service-learning as a course component, is able to reflect on her practice as a facilitator of learning.

## Reflection as Lived Experience

Reflection is a phenomenon, “a lived experience with temporal qualities”. It is “a theory of professional practice” and an intellectual construct that involves “a complex array of cognitively and philosophically distinct methods and attitudes” (Schon, 1983, in Roskos, Vulelich, & Risko, 2011, p. 596). Reflection may be viewed as a way of thinking about educational matters that involves the ability to make rational choices and to assume responsibility for those choice (Galvez-Martin & Bowman, 1998).

Reflection is also a process. In 1933, John Dewey, in light of his “learning by doing” tenet, proposed that learning necessitated student engagement in reflection. This process consisted of several mental steps namely confusion, anticipation, analysis, elaboration, decision making, and action; and certain qualities of character such as open-mindedness, whole- heartedness, and responsibility (Roskos, Vulelich, & Risko, 2001). For Shulman (1987), the process involves reviewing, reconstructing, re-enacting, and critically analyzing one’s own and the class’s performance (Shulman, 1987), so that one sees not only what was done and why it was done but also what else could be done (Valverde, 1982 as cited in Martin & Bowman, 1998).

Schon (1987) introduced the term, reflection-on-action which occurs when one recalls an action or practice to “uncover” how his/her action brings about particular outcomes. In this process, the practitioner not only thinks back but also engages in a re-shaping of his/her actions to achieve an educational goal (Ayaji, 2011, p. 172). Such reflective practice allows the beginning teacher to think about the relationship between theory and practice, which is always a complex and interactive (Wenger, 2005, p.48). In this study, such educational end is the effective teaching of reading using pre-determined methods discussed in the Developmental Reading 2 class.

In an attempt to see the link between theoretical knowledge and teaching practice, Van Manen (1977) introduced the three “interrelated and intertwined hierarchical levels of reflection” namely technical, the practical, and the critical. The technical level of reflection focuses on one’s technical application of knowledge to achieve certain ends. For Hatton and Smith (1995), this refers to the effective means of achieving specific educational ends. In the context of this investigation, this happens when the student teacher recalls the process, input, and output of the reading tutorial session.

The second level, the practical, is higher in that the teacher not only recalls his/her actions to determine their contribution to the education goal but also re-examines, analyses, and interprets their actions and purposes. In the third level, the critical, the teacher examines and “critiques the social conditions of teaching by relating literacy instruction to the broader socio-political context of instruction” (Ayaji, 2011, p.173). In other words, in the technical level, the teacher asks **what** has been achieved and what actions contributed to the realization or failure in meeting the educational goal. In the second level, the teacher asks **why** his/her actions contribute to the achievement or failure to achieve the goal and **what could have been done** (Van Manen, 1991), while in the third level the teacher asks **how come?**

Moreover, in investigating how critical reflection may be developed and sustained in teacher education, Smyth (1989) proposed four forms of action that may be used when pre-service teachers engage in reflection: describing (what do I do?), informing (what does it mean?), confronting (how did I come to be like this?), and reconstructing (how might I do things differently?). “Such opportunities to engage in reflective thinking help pre-service teachers link theory to practice, allowing them to try to balance learning styles and teaching styles with content, and thus challenge their own practices and assumptions as they strive for improvement” (Galvez-Martin & Bowman, 1998).

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: REFLECTION IN LITERACY/READING TEACHER EDUCATION

Research on the role of reflection in teacher education started in the late 1970's. According to Ajayi (2001), such research were pioneered by Smyth (1989), Schon (1987), and Van Manen (1977). Current research on the subject focused on the levels of reflection that pre-service teachers engage in and how professors in teacher education institutions may provide the necessary scaffolding to raise the teachers' level of reflection so that the process could better inform their practice.

In their work, *Reflection and learning to teach reading: A critical review of literacy and general teacher education studies*, Roskos et al. (2001) conducted a comparative analysis of 54 reflection studies (18 literacy; 36 general teacher education) to clarify the concept of reflection as studied in the literacy field and for informing future research. An inductive paradigmatic analysis

produced descriptive observations that highlight similarities and differences between the two data sets and five interpretive patterns that characterize researchers' conceptualizations and problem solving.

Based on their findings, they proposed that a systematic investigation on the process of reflection among pre-service literacy teachers be conducted. Such studies must 1) focus on gathering evidence of reflection development in those learning to teach so that a developmental continuum that describes typical phases of cognitive and dispositional growth in relation to teaching work may be generated; 2) be conducted to identify and articulate proven strategies, sensitive to contextual factors, and responsive to students' individual approach to reflection must be conducted; 3) investigate how researchers in the literacy field design and validate instructional protocols that more deliberately scaffold reflective thinking to more critical levels since eliciting reflection is not enough to improve pre-service teachers' reflective abilities as future professionals; 4) employ various methods in their research designs to include not only baseline description but also more rigorous observational methods in order to establish and refine educational interventions that ultimately improve the teacher educators' practice; and 5) be longitudinal so that "a sense of historical continuity in reflection research work" may be achieved and so that "studies build on one another in ways that bring traditional wisdom and past gains forward into new research efforts."

L'Allier (2005) examined how a literacy educator used the reflections of 85 pre-service teachers to reflect on her own practice. Data sources included reflective responses regarding effective literacy practices and reflections written after the implementation of read-aloud and reading comprehension lessons. Responses regarding best practices indicated that pre-service teachers selected practices that were demonstrated in class and for which they were given guided practice, suggesting that instructors should carefully select those practices they highlight in class sessions. Identifying common themes regarding what went well and what might be changed in the implemented lessons provided support for continuing certain practices, such as requiring specific directions for tasks to be written within the lesson plans, and for revising other practices, such as providing more guidance as pre-service teachers select the books and strategies they plan to use for their lessons.

Gibson (2010) investigated the role of using reflective reading journey to inform teaching and learning among elementary and middle school

education students who were taking a course on children's literature and the role of literature in the classroom. Using the reflective essays on their reading journey, she investigated how pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own reading development and patterns have impacted on their future teaching practices. Based on her findings, Gibson concluded that reflection compels the pre-service teacher to more closely examine their experiences and see the important role they play in the teaching-learning process.

Galvez-Martin and Bowman (1998) analyzed 42 pre-service teachers' reflection levels during their Master of Education program. Participants completed three types of reflective journal writing (reflections on selected readings, class discussions, and early field and student teaching experiences). The 21 control students received a 30-minute orientation that provided guidelines for writing class journals. For the field journals, control students were told to reflect on any event and explain what had happened, how they handled it, and how it could have been improved. The 21 experimental students received a 3-hour orientation that included detailed discussion on reflective thinking and practice, cognitive processes, the importance of reflection, and reflective theory. They completed four reflective teaching lessons, received guided questions for their reflection in class journals, and were given guidelines for reflection in their field journals that were much more detailed than the guidelines given to the control students. All students handed in their class journals and reading journals weekly for 5 weeks and their field journals at several points in time. Researchers scored all journal entries for levels of reflection. Results indicated that when pre-service teachers engaged in reflective activities, their levels of reflection improved considerably. Moreover, participants who received specific training on reflective thinking were more reflective. The study also showed that even though pre-service teachers could achieve the higher levels of reflection, they still did not reach the highest level.

In examining the effectiveness of using explicit instruction in teaching methods courses to increase the capacity of Alternative Licensed Literacy Teachers (ALLTs) to develop critical reflective practice, Ajayi (2011) found that explicit instruction—videotaped reflections, discussions, modeling, feedback, and scaffolding can provide an effective conceptual framework for teaching critical reflection in literacy teacher education programs. Explicit instruction model provided the ALLTs the skill to describe specific teaching events, focus on meanings, and connect teaching to schools' social and

cultural contexts. The findings in this study suggest that professors can use critical reflection to prepare ALLTs to “challenge educational inequalities by culturally locating literacy teaching in the conditions and cultures of schools in which they are teaching.”

In sum, findings on the studies on the use of reflection in reading/literacy teacher education suggest that reflection of one’s learning history and reflection on one’s teaching experiences has positive impact a teacher’s teaching practices. However, for this process to be productive, there is a need to explicitly teach the process of reflection and to provide scaffolding on how to engage in critical reflection.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This investigation primarily falls into what Grotjahn (1987) classified as exploratory-interpretive study. The method of data collection is non-experimental; the type of data yielded is qualitative; and the analysis is interpretive. It is worth noting, however, that data from the survey and the journal entries were analyzed based on predetermined categories formulated by Van Manen (1977). This includes the three critical levels of reflection on literacy instruction namely the technical, the practical, and the critical. Descriptive statistics is used to quantify some observations, where necessary. Data from students’ evaluation of the Developmental Reading course at the end of the semester were analyzed to determine if these were consistent with students’ evaluation of the same from the survey that was conducted a year after they took the course. Taking data from different periods in the development of the pre-service teacher education students who were engaged in the study was part of the attempt to triangulate data sources.

### **Participants**

This study employed non-random, convenience sampling. However, only those who took Developmental Reading 2 in the second semester of school year 2012-2013 were invited to participate in the study. Only one of the two classes was included in the study because the University Office of Instruction, which facilitated the semester-end evaluation of classes, selected only one of

the two classes, and the researcher did not want to alter university evaluation procedures. Only nineteen of the 35 journals were analyzed for this study. These comprised those which were not retrieved by the students. Nineteen students participated in the survey.

## **Instruments**

In addition to the analysis of nineteen journal entries, two instruments were used in the study. The first was a researcher-made open-ended questionnaire and relevant portions of the University faculty evaluation.

The open-ended questionnaire sought answers to the questions: 1) What thoughts and realizations came to you as you wrote your reflections on your reading tutorial sessions? and 2) What specific insights about teaching and learning did you learn from the tutorial sessions you had with your tutee? The University faculty evaluation has two parts: the numeric and the qualitative evaluation. To generate students' qualitative comments on student's perception of the course, answers to two questions were analyzed. Since the focus of this study is the course itself, only the following questions were considered: 1) What do you like best about this subject? and 2) what do you like least about this subject?

## **Procedure**

To triangulate the data collection methods, the researcher conducted a survey with nineteen respondents; journal entry examination of the same participants, and a review of the open-ended ended questions of relevant to the research problem that were included in in the University student course evaluation. Only one of the two Developmental Reading 2 classes was evaluated the University Office of Instruction.

The researcher first sought the permission of the dean of the College of Education to conduct the study. She also sought the permission of the professional education teacher whose students took the Developmental Reading 2 classes in the preceding semester to allow the researcher to conduct the survey in his class.

To test if the research questions were clearly stated and that no statement nor questions was leading or ambiguous, two Developmental Reading 2 students who were in the class that was studied were asked to answer the



questionnaire. They were then interviewed to determine items that needed improvement or revisions. They were excluded in the final conduct of the interview.

Nineteen students were present during the survey. The researcher informed them that the survey was meant to improve the teaching of Developmental Reading 2 and that confidentiality of sources will be respected. They were also informed that the survey will be used for research purposes and that their responses will not affect their grades. Then, the researcher read the questions one by one, and asked the students if each question was clear to them.

For the examination of students' reflection on their practice, the researcher read the reflection of fifteen students. Their reflection was based on the question, *What did you learn from the reading tutorial sessions that you facilitated?* Statements were color coded based on the three levels of reflection proposed by Van Manen (1977). Statements indicting level one reflection were underlined with orange highlighter. Level 2 and 3 levels of reflection were underlined with purple and blue highlighters respectively.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

Axial coding using predetermined categories were used to analyze the data. Axial coding is a "set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories" (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). Moreover, Boeiji (2010), emphasized that in axial coding, the reasoning moves from codes to data, whereas in open coding, the reasoning moved from data to codes." In qualitative research, when predetermined categories are used to organize data, one is engaged in axial coding.

In this study, the predetermined data included the three "interrelated and intertwined hierarchical levels of reflection" proposed by Van Manen (1977). The first level, technical reflection, technical reflection included the recollection of one's actions and how these contributed to the realization of the lesson goals and objectives. In this study, this happened when the reading tutor recalls what transpired during the tutorial session and thinks about what actions and processes contributed to the success or failure of the lesson.

In the second level, practical reflection, the teacher "re-examines, analyses, and interprets" his or her actions and purposes. In this study, this included statements which demonstrate the participants ask not only why

certain actions and processes happen but also what could have been done to address the concern.

Finally, in the third level, critical reflection, the teacher examined and “[critiqued] the social conditions of teaching by relating literacy instruction to the broader socio-political context of instruction” (Ayaji, 2011, p.173). In this study, this included statements where the reading tutors reflect on the impact of the dearth of literacy materials at home to the child’s reading development.

Axial coding was employed in the analysis of the reading tutors’ level of reflection. Moreover, it facilitates the identification of recurrent themes related to the research questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in this section include the participants’ reflections in the journal entries and the survey conducted as well as the review of a segment of the University course evaluation questionnaire. Recurrent themes are discussed.

### The importance of providing focused stimulus for reflection

Each of the nineteen respondents wrote eight to ten journal entries in a span of two months. Of the nineteen participants, thirteen wrote primarily level one reflection, which means that they simply recalled and described what transpired during the tutorial sessions. Even when they described incidents that called for higher level, their tendency was to simply enumerate the steps involved or describe the strategy used. The entry below is typical of these pre-service teachers’ reflections:

*I showed him the book that we will be reading. The title was “Ang Kwento ni Langgam at Tipaklong.” The story was in Filipino, so I had to translate it to Bisaya. I wrote the translation on a construction paper.... I asked him what he saw on the cover of the book.... Then, I asked him what he thought would happen to the characters of the story based on the picture on the cover. After reading a few pages, I asked him questions to check if he understood.... I also asked him to predict what will happen next. This exercises his reading comprehension skill and makes him think what the story is about.*

The tutor is describing her attempt at employing the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA), which was discussed and demonstrated in class. Perhaps, the participants' reflections were limited to describing the teaching-learning procedure because this was the focus of the Developmental Reading class. The course aims to immerse students in the various ways of teaching beginning reading, and most of the time in class was spent on demonstrations of the steps employed in specific teaching methods.

Meanwhile, six of the participants had journal entries that were primarily level two reflections, where the pre-service teachers went beyond describing the experience and asked why it happened and what could be done to address the concern. Participant 1 wrote:

*I discovered that my tutee is always distracted by the television program at the time of the tutorial. He was asked to turn it off. He did not. Instead, he promised his mother that he would concentrate on the tutoring. Oftentimes, I would ask him a question and he would act as if he was thinking, but he was actually just watching the TV. I'm planning to make my next tutoring more exciting to get his attention and to stop him from watching the show he loved to watch.*

The other entries of the six participants who engaged in the second level of reflection also focused on the behaviour modification and management concerns. Participant 7 wrote about the importance of establishing rapport and focusing on the child rather than the teaching strategy, and planned on improving such area in future sessions. She concluded that

*teaching reading through phonics is effective for young children who have difficulty decoding. I don't think that the strategies were not effective. It is that my tutee is afraid of making mistakes. This is something that I need to work on. I need to make her more comfortable with me and more confident of what she can do.*

This was also reiterated by Participant 11, who emphasized that "closeness with my tutee is important. The strategies worked well because he was comfortable with me." Participant 9 said:

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*Even with the mother tongue, my tutee has a hard time reading. However, when her shyness disappeared, and she became more comfortable with me, she started participating fully in the discussion.*

That the reading tutors were concerned of their tutees' feedback was shown in comments such as the one articulated below:

*I was a time-centered tutor. One day, my tutee told me that he doesn't understand what I was saying because I was talking too fast. I realized that although time was important, what is more important is that the child learned from me. This is something I need to think about every time I teach.*

In the aforementioned journal entries the reading tutors went beyond describing what they did in the session, but reflected on what could be done in the upcoming sessions to improve the teaching-learning experience. The participants pondered on their experiences, critiqued the implementation of the methods in relation to their tutees' feedback or responses, contemplated on the possible reasons or causes of these concerns, and planned strategies to address the concern in upcoming sessions. None of the participants, however, engaged in the third level of reflection, where they think about the larger socio-political contexts of instruction. This was probably because the focus of the course is on executing specific techniques and implementing specific reading instruction methods. Also, the class was simply told to write their thoughts on their experiences as reading tutors.

The scenario differed when the participants were asked specific questions in the survey conducted. Since the stimulus questions specifically directed them to think about their realizations that came to mind while they were tutoring the children, more of the second and third level reflection was generated. In fact, a majority of the nineteen participants engaged in second level reflection, and several engaged in third level reflection, where they demonstrated a strong sense of awareness of the socio-economic aspect of literacy instruction and related their experiences and observations to the broader socio-political context of teaching and learning.

Participant 17 discussed the importance of using the mother tongue in teaching beginning reading because the children may have been considered at risk because the teachers were not sensitive to the local contexts of reading and learning to read. In one of her entries, she concluded:

*I realized that teaching reading is easy when using the first language. Although it is hard to find reading materials such as stories written in the mother tongue, I do it because it is a lot easier for my tutees to read in Bisaya. They are able to give lots of insights and reactions. They are even able to write their own stories. I feel sad for the many children who are forced to read in a language that is not their own. They may have ideas but they cannot express them freely. Children should be taught to read in the mother tongue and to enjoy reading and writing stories that are close to their experiences as Bisaya in a language that is truly theirs. I learn that teaching and learning reading should be fun, and I think that many children are considered at risk because we have not met them where they are.*

Here, the participant discussed the marginalization of children who had difficulty learning to read because of the language of instruction. Also, the teacher lamented the dearth of reading materials written in the mother tongue despite the institutionalization of Mother tongue-based multilingual education. Although the student has not discussed the economics of book writing and publication, she articulated the need for local authors to publish local stories in the local language.

Participant 13, who decided to tutor a deaf child in a public school and a regular pupil in a private school concluded that it was not only the disability that disadvantaged the child but also the poverty of resources provided to them and the seeming lack of concern for their interests and age in selecting texts used in special education classes in the public schools. She observed that “*strategies for teaching the deaf child are not similar to those that apply to the regular child. This may be OK, but why is it that the deaf child was treated like pre-school level and given pre-school reading materials even if she was already older? This is not good for the child’s emotions. The hearing child I tutored went to a private school, and her books were really appropriate for her age, interests, and reading level.*”

Participant 14 realized that children in many schools were struggling to read because of teachers' lack of creativity in teaching. She said that she was surprised that her tutee did not enjoy the word games that she prepared. Apparently, it was the first time for the tutee to see a word puzzle, and he thought it was one of those graded tests. The participant said:

*I thought that the Bingo games as discussed and demonstrated in our class would be exciting because we had fun when we played the game in class. Well, my tutee found it strange since it was his first time to play Bingo and other word games. Sadly, these fun games and activities that teach word recognition, phonemic awareness, and vocabulary have not been introduced in his class! What I also learned from the experience is that we should not assume that the games we play are also a reflection of our socio-economic condition.*

The question, what thoughts and realizations came to you as you were writing your journals also generated interesting second and third level reflections. Most of the participants contemplated on the path that they are taking as teachers. Some questioned if teaching was really for them; others were inspired to pursue to course. Most realized the impact this experience had on the child that they are tutoring and to them as future professional teachers. One said: Teaching is hard yet inspiring. When I started tutoring, I really hated my tutee because he could not understand and I felt disappointed, but later I realized how worthy this is. I learned how to teach this one child, and this child learned from me. Participant 18 had this realization: Teaching is really my passion, but while writing my reflections, I also realized that I can really be a good teacher. Participant 17 concluded that writing reflections is important because it pushes the thoughts out and makes you confront concerns and issues that you were too busy to attend to during the tutorial session. It provides opportunities to critically think about what transpired, why certain things happened, and how to improve one's teaching. This tutor realized that he "loves teaching despite the difficulties and challenges of becoming and being an effective mentor."

As their instructor, I should have provided specific stimulus questions that would allow them to critically think about their experiences as reading tutors. Moreover, I could have modelled the act of reflection and discussed

the various levels of reflection that they could engage in. This observation lends support to the conclusion in the Galvez-Martin and Bowman (1998) study that although pre-service teachers reflect on their practices, their level of reflection improved considerably when they are trained how to think and reflect critically. Participants who received training on reflective thinking were able to reach higher levels of reflection.

A review of the student evaluation of the course indicated answers that were mostly related to their service-learning experience. Most of the students found the activity “very interesting, enjoyable full of excitement, very useful, and teaches them which strategies work.” Students said that the course teaches them to become a better teacher, and the concepts and lessons that really work with kids. These comments indicated students’ satisfaction with the service-learning component of the course, which afforded opportunities to apply what they learned in the course while engaging in an enterprise that helped improve the reading ability of their tutees.

## REALIZATIONS

Incorporating service-learning in the course syllabus was the highlight of the Developmental Reading courses that I taught, and the source of inspiration for many of the students. Moreover, the reflective journaling component of the service-learning activity is crucial in service-learning because of its potential in enhancing students’ thought processes, for improving instruction, for critically considering the various aspects of literacy instruction, and in contemplating on pre-service teachers’ identity as literacy instructors and advocates. As transformative intellectuals, teachers must continually engage in critical reflection so that they may be able to modify their practices, knowing that they are responsible in “shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling” (Giroux, 2009, p.3). However, the potential of reflection as a means of improving one’s practices is dependent on the preparation and skill of the participants to think critically. There is therefore a need for teachers who incorporate service-learning in their courses to model the act of reflection through such activities as think aloud protocols and to explicitly teach the technical, practical, and critical levels of reflection.

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# The Promises and Pitfalls of Moral Formation in American Civil Religion

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Service-learning and community service seem like unambiguously positive things to do. This article argues that, while that is often the case, there can also be unintended consequences of service that may undermine the very goals that service intends to achieve. The article focuses on the United States and the role that service plays in American Civil Religion. The article traces out a short history of secular non-military history, its relationship to other aspects of US culture, and its emergence in recent years as a key part of character formation in American Civil Religion. The author suggests that traditional religions have avoided the pitfalls of an over emphasis on works with a parallel emphasis on spirituality, and the article asks whether such service in a secular context can avoid the unintended consequences associated with it.

**Keywords:** Service, service-learning, American Civil Religion, Bellah, character formation, spirituality

Several years ago I invited members of an Old Order Mennonite community to speak to an Introduction to Christianity class that I was teaching. During the question and answer period that followed the lecture, one student commented that he had never been proselytized by members of an Old Order community, and he asked why there was not much proselytizing from Old Order communities. One of the elders of the Mennonite group answered that they believed that God called everyone, that salvation was in God's hands, that they hoped to always be proselytizing by

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example, and that the individual's response to God's call was his or her own responsibility. Moreover, he added, their community was very sensitive to the risks of proselytizing: if in proselytizing one turned another person away from God, then one bore a certain responsibility oneself for that lost soul. To me, this elder's response displayed a profound humility and awareness of the risks of unintended consequences. It also showed very clearly this Mennonite community's deep seated faith in a God whose call and whose good manifested itself in God's own time and with an allure that could not be matched by the voices of humans.

Although the comments of this Mennonite elder were related to proselytization and this article is related to processes of "formation" in American Civil Religion, they share a common concern with unintended consequences. In this article, I argue that American Civil Religion, like all religions, seeks to form the character of its members (and, particularly, its youth). Further, I argue that over the last hundred years, and especially in the last thirty years, this process of character formation has increasingly promoted "service" to others as one of the means by which citizen formation is accomplished. I agree with many teachers and activists that a focus on service to others can be wonderful, but I worry that too great an emphasis on service, especially forced service (whether forced *de jure*, for example through curricular requirements, or *de facto*, as something everyone feels obliged to do to compete in the marketplace), without a reciprocal emphasis on spirituality, can have the unintended consequence of leaving some youth cynical, malformed, and less connected to the world around them.<sup>11</sup> This is, I think, a serious risk, especially in the United States.

To put this in Biblical terms, I think it is worthwhile to keep in mind that service in the absence of some form of spirituality quickly becomes the kind of "dead works" referred to in Hebrews 6: 1, and which tragically subvert the very goals they set out to achieve. For me, this undermining of the good is a classic example of the Christian notion of "sin" or, in Greek, *hamartia* (often translated as "missing the mark"). Service aims for the right thing, but when disconnected from spirituality, it "misses the mark." This notion of sin is not new to Christianity, and I think it is best expressed in one of my favorite passages from Paul (Romans 7:19) when he says, "For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing."

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11 To put this in more theological terms, "service" typically aims at con-version, or turning someone towards the face of the other and God. The risk I am mentioning is the risk of per-version, or turning someone away (even unintentionally) from the face of the other and God.

The question, of course, is what sort of spirituality refocuses us on the mark and sustains us in a world where everything can be corrupted. And even more practically, how can that spirituality be created and linked to service if the service one does is conducted in a formally secular environment such as the US, where the the notion of *sin* is not included in public discussion?

Service as I am thinking about it has a long and detailed history in the US that stretches back into the earliest years of the colonies and intersects with American ideas of volunteerism, notions of individual freedom, Calvinist verses Arminian construals of the will, the practical necessities of the early American frontier experience, and a sense of mission to others that gets filtered through notions of American exceptionalism. My interest here is specifically in the relationship of “service” as mission to “service” as exemplary of and formative of American character. I am using “service” here to refer service that is at least ostensibly secular. In this article I am focusing solely on four historical points in the development of what I think is a trend. Interestingly, three of these historical points directly involve the Philippines.

The first point is at the turn from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a set of concerns about the loss of American character combined with a sense of American exceptionalism and mission to promote a variety of calls for a particular kind of service. This moment coincides with a period of American expansion and imperialism, the culmination of which was the Philippine War. As various scholars have noted, the entire premise for the war with Spain and the subsequent war in the Philippines was framed in terms of American (and Anglo-Saxon) moral duty and service. The second historical point is the Thomasite mission, well-known in the Philippines for its role in Philippine education, but less known in the US. In terms of US history, as far as I can tell, the Thomasites are the first major non-military overseas mission run by the US government. Again, while the Thomasites individually participated for a variety of reasons, the mission itself seems to have been framed in terms of patriotic duty and service. The third historical point, sixty years later but directly linked to and partially modeled on the Thomasite mission, is the US Peace Corps and the plethora of secular service and voluntary organizations that followed from it, many linked directly to the first director of the Peace Corps (and architect of President Johnson’s War on Poverty, Sargent Shriver). These include the wide range of “corps” that we find in the USA today such as the Peace Corps, Job Corps,

Senior Corps, Freedom Corps, Citizen Corps, and AmericCorps, among many others. Finally, and as a further development of service as a part of American Civil Religion, over the past 30 years, politicians and educators in the United States have turned to voluntary service, more recently through community engagement and service-learning programs, as an important part of education. These programs all have a central focus on providing assistance to others; but beyond that, they are also programs through which we train or form our youth to a particular type of citizenship and character.

At its best, service focuses on others, creates new relationships with others, forces those who serve to witness, learn about, and address some of the deep social and structural failures of our society, and provides positive practical benefits, including characterological benefits, to those who serve and are served. However, while these positive benefits can be recognized, this trend towards character formation through service in American Civil Religion also has an ironic dimension that exploration with a religious studies lens, or more specifically a theological lens, can help point out and perhaps address. The ironic dimension that I am referring to presents a risk to American Civil Religion that has been pointed to before, most directly by Reinhold Niebuhr (1973) in his classic, *The Irony of American History*. For Niebuhr, tragedy defines the situation we face when we consciously embrace evil in order to achieve a greater good (he cites as an example the development of nuclear weapons to halt the spread of communism). Irony, in contrast, defines the situation we are in when an unconscious weakness undermines our goals (for example, when a naïve belief in our own pure motives blinds us to the harm we might inflict on others). Of course, if irony implies responsibility for some unconscious weakness, then the more aware of that weakness we become, the more our responsibility becomes manifest and the more the ironic dimension of our history devolves into tragedy. Similarly, the choice to believe oneself innocent or to remain unconscious in the face of overwhelming evidence is its own tragic embrace of evil. Unless we address the risks inherent in the choices we make about how to promote service, we risk shifting our situation from an ironic one, in which our culpability is mitigated by hope, into a tragic or even cynical responsibility.<sup>[2]</sup> And the problem with tragic (or cynical) responsibility is that it offers little opportunity for growth or hope, and thus it undermines the very purpose of what we have set out to do.

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2 While tragedy embraces a known evil for the sake of what is perceived to be a larger good, cynicism is not even certain of the value of the good.

For example, I would caution that the more recent turn to service in the US risks undermining itself through its very breadth and in its slow shift from a voluntary to a required endeavor. When service is required, *de jure* or *de facto*, a dimension of coercion is introduced to service which may undermine its goals (see, for example, several chapters in Rimmerman (ed.) 2009, in which some students, albeit a minority, have negative reactions to required service). Or, again, when service is required in a formally secular place like the US, it is impossible to embed or splice a serious historically informed or communally developed spiritual dimension into it; thus, required service includes too few moments of sustained reflection or questioning, or the type of reflection and questioning that are included are limited to the individualistic sorts of reflection that a secular and consumer society promotes. It is only fair for me to point out that proponents of service-learning are aware of this difficulty, and they are often quite intentional about including self-reflection and questioning as part of service. However, the very nature of the way service is broadening limits how students reflect and question.

At its worst, the US can substitute for serious spirituality, which always includes moments of doubt and pain, a falsely optimistic sense of mission that is rooted in American exceptionalism and power. It is precisely this exceptionalism and power that Reinhold Niebuhr cautioned us about. Always justifying ourselves by our intended aim for the good, we often undermine our own goals and, worse, fail to recognize our faults and complicity in unjust situations. For him, America's sense of innocence and persistent focus on good intentions had the potential to be the very definition of tragedy: a recognized evil that is embraced for a larger good. Niebuhr cautioned us to view America ironically rather than tragically insofar as irony recognized points beyond itself to a greater truth than the failure of tragedy; yet, these moments of ironic revelation are not apparent without a lens through which to see them, a lens which American Civil Religion on its own does not provide.

In other words, without moments of deep reflection, and especially reflection that goes beyond what an individual might do on his/her own and additionally taps into historical and communal insights, I think the opportunities that open with service are severely diminished. In the past, such lack of spirituality was less important insofar as people had other resources, including specifically religious resources, available to them in their private lives; but with secularization and decreasing participation in

organized religions, these sources are no longer attractive to our students. Thus, while the short term goals of making our youth help others and engaging with our community are admirable, in the long term I think we need to be on guard to ensure that the secular and pragmatic logic of the US does not transform the promise of voluntary service into a requirement for service and, from there, an affirmation of the status quo or a cynical way to gain credentials for oneself. The great German sociologist Max Weber famously wrote in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* that the inner worldly asceticism of the calvinist, worn as a “light cloak” to stave off doubts about salvation, was transformed in competitive capitalism into an “iron cage” that required everyone to work in the same way or perish. Similarly, I am afraid that the call to service, originally a “light cloak” meant to help others and to enrich and deepen a young person destined for citizenship, might become an “iron cage,” necessary for admission to college, for graduation, and for future employment, but now undertaken for purely pragmatic reasons. Without a link to spirituality in some form, my fear is that service will be done for cynical reasons and reinforce our inability to see the face of God in others and in ourselves.

In a sense I want to warn you in advance that this article is incomplete, for I do not have a solution. One of my research interests is what sorts of solutions might be possible. I have a strong conviction that the only guard against a parsimonious sort of pragmatic service is to ground service in a kind of spirituality. But I am not sure what sort of spirituality is possible for a secular world. Gustavo Gutierrez (1995), the great Peruvian Liberation Theologian, titled his most famous book on spirituality *We drink from our own wells*. In that book he was addressing the spirituality of a theology of liberation which starts with an active commitment to the poor, but which also recognizes that commitment is not done either in isolation from a community, nor without the difficulty of dark nights of the soul in solitude, in the desert, in the wilderness. The Christian community has resources for this passage through the wilderness and even thrives on it; insofar as God is for Christians decisively revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, it is clear that trial in the wilderness, dread in Gesthemane, doubt on the cross, and lack of recognition on the way to Emmaus must be included in Christian spirituality. But American Civil Religion leaves spirituality to individuals to find, if they want it, like a pair of shoes, selected according to style and fit, among hundreds of other shoes available. And yet it is

precisely this sort of individualistic spirituality that creates the sorts of problems I want to point out.

Perhaps in the United States the only option is for Civil Religion to take other religious traditions more seriously. Some US scholars, such as Stephen Prothero (2008) in his book *Religious Literacy*, have proposed integrating religion into US curricula so that the link to a religious past and “communities of memory” will not be broken. His proposal is to treat religions in school just as any other cultural, literary, or historical phenomena are treated. He proposes a required curriculum that includes one semester of comparative religious education and one semester of Bible as literature. However, I do not think his approach will work precisely because secular courses about religion strip religion of its spiritual dimension; in his approach, it would be forbidden to talk about meaning or doctrine in the texts in the classroom, to question contradictions in the text, or to use critical scholarship in reading. Thus, exploration and discovery, doubt and risk, all of which are key parts of spirituality, would be forbidden.

Still, at this point I do not have any other solution. Perhaps for Silliman University my message is simply not to lose the relationship of your university and religion. Maintain its spiritual foundation.

## **CIVIL RELIGION**

Before turning to the four historical points I mentioned, I need to say a few words about Civil Religion in general and American Civil Religion in particular. My point here is not only to describe what I mean by civil religion but also to suggest that in exploring American Civil Religion we should attend also to the practices associated with it, not just with its beliefs or other formal components. I think that when we recognize that civil religion is comprised not only of beliefs and rituals but also other practices, a door opens which allows us to see the production of civil religion in the US in much more subtle ways.

The theory of civil religion goes back at least to Plato's *Republic* (1980). In practical terms, civil religion is much older, with origins shrouded in the original unity of religion and politics in the ancient history of early city-states. It was Jean Jaques Rousseau (1782)--in book 4, chapter 8, of *The Social Contract*--who gave us the term “civil religion.” For Rousseau,



civil religion was simply a loose set of beliefs which it would be beneficial for the state if citizens were to hold in order to form a dedicated social body. These doctrines were loose and were explicitly not to conflict with other privately held religions, which Rousseau thought that the state should leave strictly to individual belief. Among the dogmas Rousseau saw as necessary were “The existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, foresighted and providential divinity; the afterlife; the happiness of the just; the punishment of the wicked; [and,] the sanctity of the social contract and the laws.” For Rousseau, civil religion could be constructed intentionally, as an ideological glue that reinforced the structural integrity of a society.

Formally speaking, then, civil religion is the religion of a civic body that functions to give unity to that body. Thus, the term civil religion has close ties with one of the etymological roots of the word religion: *religare* or, to bind together. The specific content of any civil religion depends on where it is found and what, exactly, binds people together. Like most foundational terms in the study of religion, the precise dimensions of civil religion are something that people disagree about, and even the best-known scholars of civil religion, like Robert Bellah, have used the term in different senses and with different purposes.

For example, in his 1967 *Daedalus* article, “Civil Religion in America,” Bellah contrasted private religious beliefs with a parallel set of common religious orientations shared by a majority of Americans. Bellah wrote:

Although matters of personal religious belief, worship, and association are considered to be strictly private affairs [in the United States], there are, at the same time, certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share. These have played a crucial role in the development of American institutions and still provide a religious dimension for the whole fabric of American life, including the political sphere. This public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals that I am calling the American civil religion. (Bellah 1967: 100)

He continued to say that this religious dimension has its own seriousness and integrity, and that it requires the same care in understanding as any other religion does.

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In his book, *The Broken Covenant*, Bellah (1975) provided a more concise, though perhaps more widely applicable and thus controversial definition: civil religion is “that religious dimension, found I think in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality” (p.3) In this definition, Bellah shifted from highlighting the formal qualities of civil religion, like rituals and other practices, beliefs, myths, and symbols, and instead emphasized civil religion as a meaning-making process. That is, according to the latter definition, civil religion includes the process by which a nation reflects on transcendent foundations in order to make sense of its historical reality. This latter definition implicitly considers civil religion to be a changing reality in the life of a nation. Its focus will change as a society changes the way it makes sense of itself and the issues it must grapple with. In the US, for example, Civil Religion has changed dramatically in the last 150 years as the nation has had to make sense of what it means to shift from relative isolation to being a superpower. Other nations, such as the Philippines, have to deal with other issues such as how to unify a variety of islands, languages and cultures, and how to make sense of independence, the lack of hope that might come from poverty, or even issues like corruption which threaten to undermine faith in the civic project.

For Bellah, all people and all nations have a sacred dimension. I think in this sense he is just affirming what Emile Durkheim had said about religion as a society’s projection of itself made sacred. I know next to nothing about the history and culture of the Philippines, but even a quick glance tells me that there are shared elements of culture that, if not viewed as sacred, are treated as if they are sacred. Whereas the United States might see a figure such as Abraham Lincoln or John F. Kennedy are in some way sacred, in the Philippines the figure of José Rizal, Manuel Roxas, or Benigno Aquino might be considered parallel figures. In the US, documents, such as the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, or the Gettysburg Address, or even literature like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, convey a sense of what is considered sacred in the nation. Perhaps *Noli me Tangere* is such a text here. Even the meanings which we attribute to historical events, such as Martin Luther King, Jr.’s March on Washington or the People Power Revolution in the Philippines, contribute to the way we make meaningful and sacred the civic institutions in which we participate. Civil religion, then, is meant to be a term with very wide applicability but which takes on its specific characteristics in particular places.

As I read Bellah, the term civil religion can be used both descriptively and normatively, and the relationship between the descriptive sense and the normative sense is fluid. When I say that the term civil religion can be used descriptively, I mean that the term can be used to describe the sacred dimensions of social and political bodies. When I say that the term can be used normatively, I mean that civil religion not only describes what people perceive to be sacred dimension of civic bodies, but it is also something that can be used to form and shape civil bodies by creating a shared sense of the sacred. And when I say that the relationship between the descriptive and normative sense of the term is fluid, I mean that describing what people perceive to be a sacred dimension of something frequently slides into proclaiming the sacred dimension of something. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz articulates this idea in his seminal article, *Religion as a Cultural System*, in which he clarifies that symbols can be models of a social reality (that is reflective of it), but also models for a social reality (that is blueprints for how a reality should be). In his book *Discourse and the Construction of Society*, Bruce Lincoln (1989), borrows from and builds on Geertz (1973) by showing us that models of reality as expressed in forms of discourse like narratives, actions or taxonomic schemes compete with one another to construct, maintain, or reconstruct particular versions of the world. That is, he explains and provides examples of how discourse can traverse the descriptive/normative boundary. Ultimately, I am most interested in civil religion in its normative dimension, as a set of ideas and practices that are used as part of a civic project that articulates a shared sacred dimension of collective identity.

As Bellah articulated it in *The Broken Covenant*, the transcendent reality through which Americans interpret their historical experience is constituted by a tense relationship between conceptions of individual freedom, on the one hand, and concepts of the public good, on the other. Beyond this tension of individual and public good lies a foundational sense of “internal covenant,” or shared commitment and purpose that appears throughout American history, a sense of mission which Bellah finds embedded in public documents such as the Inaugural Address of President Kennedy:

The whole address can be understood as only the most recent statement of a theme that lies very deep in the American tradition, namely the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out

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God's will on earth. This was the motivating spirit of those who founded America, and it has been present in every generation since. (Bellah 1975: 101)

In other words, for better or worse, American Civil Religion presents America as a chosen nation: chosen sometimes in the sense of being elected for special benefits but also elected for special purposes and thus carrying special responsibilities. It is for this reason that America's wars, for example, are so often understood internally as redemptive missions.

In *The Broken Covenant* Bellah argues that the American notion of the public good, and the covenant that binds us to the public good, is broken, and the individualistic stream of American Civil Religion has come to dominate our lives to the detriment of our common project as a nation. In other words, as a nation we no longer seek to carry out God's will on earth, but rather, we simply pursue our own individual ends. As Bellah (1975) put it, "Today the American civil religion is an empty and broken shell" (p. 142). The task before us, he wrote, was to create a new civil religion, something which he thought Americans had done at certain key moments in the past.

Writing in the 1970s, I think Bellah was too close to the transformation that was taking place in American Civil Religion to be able to see it. What he saw was the cynicism that was emerging from a faltering belief in American ideology after a rise in consciousness about race and class in the US, the death of important political and civil rights leaders like John and Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr, the failing war in Vietnam, and the Presidential scandal of Watergate. From where we stand now, however, I would argue that there were even then emerging dimensions of civil religion focusing on the public good that have now come to prominence and are mainstream.

My colleague at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Craig Rimmerman (2009), had dealt with this change from the perspective of political science in his book *The New Citizenship*. Against those who saw our political landscape as a field of growing political apathy because of declining rates of voter participation and declining activity in formal political parties, he saw student involvement in social activism as a new way of being a citizen. He saw the growth of courses in "civil engagement" and "service-learning" as a reflection of this new citizenship. From the perspective of civil religion, I saw this increase in social involvement as a rejection of the old way of

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“thinking” about American Civil Religion and the embrace of new way of “doing” American civil religion, and I would suggest that the activities of service and civil engagement about which he spoke can also be seen as a practical dimension of American Civil Religion, dedicated to what we could equally call “citizenship formation,” or in religious terms, moral formation for the role of being a good citizen.

In order to see how this formative aspect of Civil Religion works, I think we need an additional approach. Bellah showed us how to read critical texts as sources for an American civil religion that reflects and conveyed a metahistorical sense of the nation (see also Cherry, 1998); other scholars of civil religion, such as Conrad Cherry (1969), had focused on the ritual dimension of Civil religion, demonstrating how civic life like institutional religions has its ritual behaviors (for example, pledging allegiance to the flag), sacred sense of time (e.g., national holidays), sacred spaces (e.g., national memorials), rites of passage (e.g., secular pilgrimages in schools), and even its own aesthetics. Still others, such as Ernest Lee Tuveson (1980) or Richard T. Hughes (2004) might point to the narrative dimensions of American Civil Religion that are not only taught as authoritative discourses in history or in civic classes but are also taught unofficially, as Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence (1958) pointed out, through television shows, movies, books, art, and other cultural artifacts.

These are all important dimensions of Civil Religion, but one dimension of American Civil Religion that I think has been left unexplored by scholars is the dimension in which ideas are translated into practical activities meant to shape character. In theology we would say that this is the dimension of “practical theology”. Drawing on practical theology as an analogy, I am suggesting that we attend not only to beliefs or rituals in American Civil Religion, but also to those practical activities and strategies which are undertaken to form those who participate in a religion.

In order to explore this practical dimension of American Civil Religion, I propose a turn to an archeology of the practice of non-military secular service. In other words, for the remainder of this article, I want to look not at speeches or rituals or stories, but rather at some of the places where the conception of what America is has been inscribed in practices of secular service. I want to emphasize that I am not being naïve here: I know very well that I am looking at a very small slice of US history and that what I am describing here is historically subordinate to, for example, the military role

of the US. However, I think this emphasis on service as a reflection of and model for a particular kind of American character is growing in importance.

Some scholars might say that this strand of practical activity is a relatively recent phenomenon, but I would suggest that its roots go back far into American history. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century essay by William James (1990), *The Moral Equivalent of War*, is often understood as the foundational essay arguing that Americans should inculcate virtues through a national service work program. In that essay, James, a pacifist who was both an anti-imperialist specifically with regard to the Philippine war, argued that for all of its bad characteristics, war did inculcate valuable virtues, including courage and bravery, self-sacrifice, teamwork, ingenuity and resilience. The national service program he proposed was to be a morally formative experience equivalent to war; in other words, James rejected the idea of war as immoral, but he thought we still needed a functional equivalent of war to form youth that have the positive moral qualities inspired by war. His essay is widely regarded as the touchstone for many future service programs, including the US Peace Corps.

James may have been the most well-known person to propose a national service program, but I think the timing and impetus for his suggestion can be traced back to four strands of history that come together at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: in one way or another, all of these strands emphasized either the need to form, through particular activities, an American youth that was losing its character, OR the value of extending American values through practical work in the world that would also create a wholesome American character.

The first strand can be found in a religious and theological movement generally known as the Social Gospel movement or alternatively as the Third Great Awakening. Led by leaders like Josiah Strong, Walter Rauschenbusch and Charles Monroe Sheldon, this group sought to enact the Gospel message in service to others, particularly in America's growing cities and particularly with regard to social issues like education, urban decay and alcoholism. The Social Gospel movement was a progressive movement in the sense that it sought a cure to social ills through activity in the name of Jesus, and it believed that human beings were empowered to do so. Sheldon (2009), for example, coined the phrase "What would Jesus do?" in his book, *In His Steps*, where the phrase was meant as a prompt for Christians to use in thinking about social issues. Although the movement was not at its core bellicose or

imperialistic, some of the key promoters of the movement, such as Josiah Strong and Senator Albert Beveridge, did promote the social gospel in racial and ethnocentric terms. When it came to American activity abroad, Strong and his supporters advocated something akin to a “white man’s burden” to spread what they understood to be Anglo-Saxon values and democracy to the rest of the world.

At roughly the same time as the Social Gospel, a related strand, known as muscular Christianity, sought to rescue Christianity from what it perceived to be an over-sentimentalized and feminized Victorian Christianity. Since at least the time of Schleiermacher at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant Christianity had focused on feeling and emotion as the core of the Christian connection to God. In reaction, Muscular Christianity (Putney, 2001) sought the connection to God in an active life, and as part of that active life subscribers to muscular Christianity sought to inculcate in individuals what they understood to be the Christian notions of virtue, including the idea of sportsmanship and fair play, through gender specific physical activity. It is to this movement that we owe the widespread growth and popularity of the YMCA organization, not to mention the engineered sports which made that growth possible such as basketball and volleyball. While the YMCA too is a movement that brought many benefits, it is important to note that it also emerged from a milieu particularly concerned with the loss of American vitality that it saw taking place in American cities. Not only was life in the cities understood to limit physically the activity and growth of children, and thus leave them physically and morally stunted, but cities were also the location of immigrant groups, Roman Catholics in particular, that were perceived to threaten the Protestant foundations of America. Insofar as mainline American Protestantism at this time saw Roman Catholicism as corrupt and over-sentimentalized, muscular Christianity sought to advance what they understood to be countervailing virtues of strength, self-reliance, honesty and toughness.

A third strand is found in the notion of the Strenuous Life (Roosevelt, 1998), as promulgated by the President of the US, Theodore Roosevelt. Along with muscular Christianity, the Strenuous Life put forth the idea that hard work, especially physical work, was the foundation for a good life. In the US we owe our wonderful national parks to this idea, for Roosevelt specifically wanted to preserve wilderness as a place where the American identity was formed. But the Strenuous Life had its negative consequences

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too. The *Strenuous Life* argued that what was true for the individual life was also especially true for the national life. In his collection of essays titled *The Strenuous Life*, Roosevelt (1998) singles out the role of US in the Philippines for special consideration. For him, it would have been a sign of cowardice, weakness and infirmity of the US had shrunk from involvement in the Philippines, and instead he argued for a full engagement, starting with establishing the sovereignty of the American flag on Philippine territory.

A fourth strand that contributes to the emergence of secular voluntary service at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which lies behind the other strands, is best represented in the famous Turner Thesis articulated by Fredrick Jackson Turner (1893). The Turner thesis famously announced the American frontier was closed. Turner argued that the American character was formed in large part through encounter with the frontier, thus the closing of the frontier meant that a new American Character would come forth. Many scholars have pointed out that with the end of the continental frontier, America increasingly saw its mission abroad.

These strands all contribute to a growing importance being placed on practical activity as a way of forming youth, projecting and articulating a sense of Americanness. Clearly there is no one single instant when service comes to the fore as part of the American Civil religion, but here I want to turn to the three points which I think are indicative of how service has functioned: the Thomasites, the Peace Corps, and the growth of the service-learning movement.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the midst of the Philippine-American War, and even before James' essay, the United States sponsored what, as far as I can tell, was the first US non-military service mission abroad. I am sure that the history of the Thomasites is well-known to you. Named after the USS Thomas, the transport ship on which the majority of the Thomasites arrived, the Thomasites were a group of US educators recruited by the US government to implement the ideal of the American public education and American virtues in the Philippines. The commissioner of the Islands, and future President of the United States, William Henry Taft, was clear that the educational mission was an extension of the military mission, and in fact, the first teachers were soldiers. However, conquest was not the sole goal of the mission. The goal was to civilize through education.

The Thomasites were recruited from over a hundred colleges in the United States, and at their peak there were over 1,000 Thomasites in the



Philippines. Part of the mission of the Thomasites was to “work themselves out of a job” by training Filipino teachers, and to a large extent they were successful. The Thomasites had a formal curriculum and formal duties, though the curriculum changed dramatically as the education system was modified to local needs, but perhaps more important than the classes that the Thomasites taught were the values that they were supposed to display and model. Thomasites were not supposed to respect the status system that had grown during Spanish occupation, and equality, through shared work in projects like school gardens, was also one of the virtues that Thomasites were supposed to display. It has been interesting to me as I have travelled past many schools in the Philippines to see that these values are still prominent in Philippine education: often schools have sayings and slogans written into their mission statements that make clear that education is not just about knowledge, but is also about inculcating moral values such as thrift, honesty, and hard work.

Officially speaking, the Thomasites were part of the civil service, but I am including them as a moment in American voluntary service for two reasons. First, they received low pay, were expected to live with the people whom they served, and were often alone in their posts. The Thomasites’ main duty was teaching, but given the circumstances in the provinces, their duties also extended to areas like health care and sanitation especially in the smallpox and cholera outbreaks at the turn of the century. They were encouraged to volunteer their services as needed. Many of the Thomasites were profoundly religious, and some even had missionary ambitions, but as a work of the US government, proselytization was strictly forbidden; thus, whatever missionary activity that they did had to be done through modeling. Secondly, the Thomasites are generally understood to be forerunners of the main 1960s US overseas voluntary service, the Peace Corps. Interestingly, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative book of US Peace Corps in the Philippines even starts with a chapter on the Thomasites and the legacy they left for the Peace Corps.

Other service opportunities followed the Thomasites, though most foreign programs, such as the American Red Cross and the American Field Service were associated with war, and domestic programs were tied to jobs programs during the Great Depression. The 1940s became an interruption to the growth of non-military and non-war related service opportunities largely because of the Second World War which mobilized the entire country.

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The next major growth in non-military service in the US happened in 1960, when Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy picked up on a proposal that had been circulating for several years and, at an impromptu speech at the University of Michigan proposed the creation of a volunteer corps to serve overseas as part of his New Frontier program. The Peace Corps was founded fewer than 100 days into John F. Kennedy's presidency. By 1963, only two years into the program, there were 7,300 volunteers which rose to 15,000 in 1966, the high-water mark for volunteers in the field. Since that time the numbers have varied from 5,380 in 1982 to about 8,000 today. At this point nearly one quarter of a million Americans have served in the Peace Corps.

The official mission of the Peace Corps was articulated in three goals which have guided the program from its start. These goals are as follows:

1. To help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower;
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Although it has always been important for Peace Corps volunteers to provide technical assistance where they serve, the last two goals make it clear that the Peace Corps was also a sort of cultural exchange program, attempting to introduce other peoples to Americans who were not part of the official diplomatic corps. In this sense, the Peace Corps marked a sharp shift from the diplomacy of the 1950s and earlier, which shocked and horrified the nation when it was presented in the extremely popular 1958 novel *The Ugly American*. Perhaps more significantly, the Peace Corps marked a generational shift from the World War Two generation into Kennedy's vision of the "New Frontier," a frontier beyond the American West and into which America would push in an effort to spread its wealth and well-being. The new Peace Corps volunteers were the new pioneers, not intending to conquer the rest of the world but intending to serve it by bringing American ingenuity and practical know-how and showing the world the pragmatic pioneer spirit of the real America. The early Peace Corps training reflected the clean-cut rugged individualism that the government wanted in volunteers: extensive

psychological testing to eliminate volunteers with communist tendencies, hands on technical training to augment the volunteer's practical skills, rigorous physical training and survival training, including solo survival expeditions, to make sure volunteers could be independent, and the most thorough language training programs that had existed up to that time in the US.

As I wrote at the start of this article, I think it would be a mistake to see programs like the Thomasite program and the Peace Corps cynically as simple attempts to curry domestic and international favor or to push forward American influence. They are complicated endeavors, reflections of their time and efforts to create a particular sort of America, and we can certainly criticize them for being narrowly conceived or inadequate to the tasks set for them. But precisely because of what they attempt to do, they show us something about American Civil Religion that we do not see when we look at speeches or national rituals: in an effort to introduce others to American values and so-called real Americans, these programs must articulate a sense of what a real American is. Even more importantly, in describing what a real American is, they also proclaim and then create Americans in that same image.

Before turning to the last historical point in the development of service as a dimension of American Civil Religion, I want to point out two common traits that the Thomasites and Peace Corps volunteers share. First, both groups serve voluntarily. Second, both required relatively long-term commitments (3 years for Thomasites, 2 years minimum for Peace Corps volunteers). Those long-term commitments meant that the volunteers were ready from the start for difficulties and for working through them. When one reads the first person narratives produced by the volunteers, one is impressed with how quickly those who came to serve are receiving aid from others. In the course of living in a new place for an extended period of time, they became vulnerable and needed help from others. Thomasites and Peace Corps volunteers both became sick; both found themselves at the mercy of those around them, for housing, for food, for local-knowledge, for credit, for health care, for companionship. This moment, in which the server is served and in which the supposedly more powerful finds him or herself needing the help of the supposedly less powerful, is one of the distinctive traits of these sorts of long term service programs. Ironically, then, the very traits of intrepid and rugged individualism, mission to others, and know-how,

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are what got overturned in these service experiences. Yes, the Thomasites and the Peace Corps Volunteers brought (and bring) assistance and help to others, but they were also helped and cared for by others, and in both cases soon learned that on their own, they could accomplish nothing. With Reinhold Niebuhr, I would call this an ironic moment because, unlike the tragic moment, where the server's conscious embrace of power becomes the source of problems (for example, in conscious adoption of force to impose a notion of civilization), the revelation of irony temporary weakness provokes a wry smile, as the one there to serve gets served and thus sees the deeper truth that is included in mutuality. As I will mention again below, I think this ironic moment in service is at risk of being lost in some of the current service programs that are used in American higher education. Instead of irony, these sometimes produce cynicism, the most bitter form of tragedy.

If the Thomasites and the Peace Corps are two of the historical points through which we can see the development of this sacred sense of character in things like an intrepid spirit, physical vigor, and a sense of American mission, then I think it has reached a new level in the current service and service-learning movement in American education. Not surprisingly, some of the key founders the service-learning movement in the United States were returned Peace Corps volunteers or VISTA volunteers (VISTA is a domestic version of Peace Corps) who were motivated by their own service experience to include service oriented activities in their own classrooms (see Stanton, Giles, Jr., & Cruz 1999). An even greater number of the leaders of service-learning became interested in the movement after already having strong religious commitments to service.

Presently, service-learning in the United States has grown in leaps and bounds to be de rigor in many schools. The idea behind it is that by asking students to conduct service as part of the educational experience, students can gain practical experience that they would not gain in the usual classroom setting and at the same time help others who can benefit from their assistance. Sometimes the service activities are clearly related to economic or political issues, such as poverty or unequal access to health care. In my university, where many students are from a more privileged background, the hope is that by serving in an impoverished community, they will become connected to and concerned with issues of poverty at a real level rather than just through textbook examples. To give a less political example, we have in my department a course called Death and Dying which explores end of life

issues as they are considered in multiple religious traditions. In that class, students are simply asked to spend a couple of hours each week visiting the elderly at a local home for the elderly. Since many of the students do not know anyone who has been seriously ill or who has died – not even members of their family – this is an opportunity for them to see aging and the end of life process. And, of course, whatever the students are asked to do in the community that they are serving is meant to be helpful (even if it is as simple as providing companionship and engaging people socially).

This call to service in the classroom setting follows a call to service in other educational arenas also. I would agree with Adams (1987) that this proliferation of educational service experiences in the US began in the 1980s, was made more visible with Ronald Reagan's call to service and has been institutionalized in groups such as Campus Compact, a national organization of College and University presidents dedicated to bringing the resources of University campuses to bear on local communities through service activities. Speaking of my university, our students arrive having completed many hours of required service in order to graduate from their secondary schools; furthermore, they are told that a record of service is necessary for admission to top universities; they know that a record of service helps gain internships and employment. A record of service is so much a part of a successful high school and college career, that it has become obligatory. The vast majority of my students have multiple experiences of service, including short term service abroad. Herein lies the biggest potential pitfall of service, for when I ask my students to think deeply about service, they are often either at a loss or they answer with memorized answers that they have been told in school. Some see service as a hoop to jump through on the way to personal success. Others become cynical about service and alienated by an experience which they feel is forced on them or designed to make them feel guilty for the circumstances of their own lives.

Here again I think a turn to theological language can be helpful in both describing the problem and suggesting avenues to explore to maintain moral virtues of service.

First, I think it is fair to describe what has happened to service, when it is at its worst, as a perversion. That is, in the technical sense, when service becomes obligatory, or is done by rote, and then even more when service becomes something that is done because of the status or material benefits it brings to the person who does it, the ends of service become twisted. Instead

of allowing people to see one another more fully, as what service is supposed to do, service becomes a means/end to a relationship.

I certainly do not want to say that service or service-learning is universally a bad thing. It clearly helps many people, and it can often be a transformative experience. But looking at service theologically, I am aware that it can be perverted or twisted from its original ends. This is the pitfall of moral formation through service in American Civil Religion--that transformative experience, or what might be called in theology as "conversion" experience insofar as service turns us towards others, towards our true selves, and towards God, is not substantially nurtured or sustained by American Civil Religion. In fact, American Civil Religion can augment alienation. If some of the virtues that American Civil Religion seeks to inscribe are qualities of independence and self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and rugged individualism. Then, when these are the lenses through which students see the Other, they sometimes ask "Why don't these people help themselves?" or "What is wrong with these people?" or "Why do they never change?" Worse again, students can be led to a sort of moral and material superiority in which they think that the privilege they hold is a prerequisite to service, or even worse, that privilege is deserved on merit. And, worst of all, since service has become obligatory, forced upon students by those who are in positions of power over them (and we must remember that professors are in positions of power over students), the moments of doubt, the outrageous statements of privilege, the secret thoughts of moral superiority cannot be voiced by these students (or, therefore, engaged by others). In religious terms, there is no moment of confession available, so the thoughts fester, or they are voiced in secret to other cynical students who affirm them. Again, as a Christian and as a scholar of Christianity, I see these as a manifestation of sin insofar as it separates people from one another, from themselves, and from God. There is no moment of reversal here: superiority is affirmed. Students who dip into service are free to return to their everyday lives with a confirmation of what they thought before.

I do not think it would be fair to end my article here without suggesting at least some options to explore so that we may avoid this pitfall. One option is to look to other religious traditions to see how they handle cynicism.

I think that when we see Christianity in its proper light, it not only deals with the problem of cynicism but makes the problem of cynicism one of its central concerns. All too often people think of Christianity as a set of

propositions believed, but as we know, it is meant as “a way”. Conversion, marked initially by baptism, is an entry into “the way,” but the “way” is, as hymn after hymn tells us, a journey that we walk as a people, as a church or, in Greek, as an *ecclesia*. We draw each other along, open in our doubts and fears, exploring, chastising, questioning. Beliefs may be part of that way, but they are secondary to the way itself. To quote in a different context: *Lex orendi, lex credendi* --- worship and prayer come first, and doctrines emerge to help us make sense of our experience of the way.

Let me make my point very clear here at the end: to avoid the pitfalls of service in American Civil Religion, we need a spirituality that allows for doubt, for exploration, and for the ironic dimension of service to be made clear. Christianity might help, but unlike Stephen Prothero, I do not think that a historical view of Christianity or a view of the Bible as literature will do much to introduce students to Christianity. Instead, students need exposure to something like the spiritual dimension of Christianity.

Now, there are two obvious questions here. First, is Christianity the only spirituality that will work? I do not think so. Christianity is the tradition with which I am familiar; it is the language of spirituality that I speak; and, it opens doors for me--but I certainly see the deep spirituality of other religious traditions. When I think, for example, of the intersection of the Christian spirituality of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Buddhist spirituality, rooted in mindfulness, of Thich Nat Hahn, I certainly think there is a deep well-spring of spirituality to be gained. Dr. King took found tremendous insight from Gandhi, and Gandhi was profoundly moved by Tolstoy's Russian Orthodox. BUT, I say this with a caution: in a market-driven world, we must be on guard against the danger of spiritual dabbling. What I mean is that spirituality is not a buffet in which we can choose bits and pieces that we like. Yet, a market-driven world tells us precisely that we should choose our spirituality based on immediate desires. I have not worked this out fully, but my intuition is that spirituality requires a certain commitment to a way, and that commitment means that we commit to what we do not like either. We can ask about what we do not like, we can question it, we can even change it slowly and with others, but commitment requires that we face it and not simply ignore it or turn away from it.

The second obvious question has to do on the one hand with secularization and on the other hand, with the law in the US: how can spirituality be inculcated among secular people and in a country that has



strong laws against state involvement with religion? Here again I do not have any answers. However, for several years I have been intrigued by the work of the Argentinian Rabbi, Sergio Bergman, who has sought to develop not a civil religion but a civic spirituality. His book, *Ciudadania Argentina*, uses Biblical texts as sources for thinking about the moral growth of the nation. Specifically, he uses the texts to provoke questions and discussion about “the way” by which inhabitants of a territory become a people. For example, Exodus is a profound text telling the story of the powerful brought low by hubris and released slaves who must be formed into a people before reaching a promised land. The stories allow us to think about why people might choose idols, what it means to live under law for the first time, why some people might want to reject freedom and uncertainty and return to the absolute certainty of slavery, and the benefits of a bureaucracy of judges rather than one autocratic ruler. I think Bergman’s approach has promise insofar as it recognizes shared religious traditions as sources for extended thought and civil formation but does not require any specific confession of faith. However, I do not think it could be taught in the US because of concerns about separation of Church and state.

To elaborate on what this civil spirituality might look like and how it might collaborate with Christian and other spiritualities would require an entirely new article. In fact, this is one question I hope to explore in future work. For now I will close, simply enjoining you to what I said earlier: Silliman University embraces its Christian heritage--keep this connection, drink from it, renew yourself in it, and allow it to provide some sustenance for your life.

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# Information and Communication Technology in Service-Learning: Some Ethical Issues and Concerns

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Information and communication technology (ICT) provides pedagogical benefits in teaching and learning. Likewise, it supports innovative service-learning (SL) as a teaching pedagogy. However, the use of ICT as a support tool in any pedagogical approach poses some ethical issues. This paper explores some ethical issues in the integration of ICT in SL activities. Specifically, this paper describes the ethical issues in using the Internet as a tool in writing SL reflection. This article also explains the ethical concerns in using the web as a tool in SL evaluation. The study employs a review of related literature and a personal interview among service-learners. The ethical issues discussed in this paper include privacy, authenticity of reflection, technology acceptance, reciprocity, informed consent, administration, and methodological alternative. It is concluded that there is a need to seriously address the ICT ethical issues in SL integration.

**Keywords:** Computer Ethics, ICT in Education, ICT Service-learning

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) refers to information-handling tools used to generate, store, process, spread, and share information (United Nations Development Programme, 2001). UNDP defines ICT as the fundamentally diverse set of applications, goods, and services. ICT refers to the totality of electronic means for end-users such

as computer systems, office systems, and consumer electronics, as well as networked information infrastructure, the components of which include the telephone system, the Internet, fax machines, and computers (Commission on Information and Communications Technology, n.d.).

“ICT is a powerful resource that affects and enhances the quality of education” (Johnson, 2001). Johnson also added that “ICT equalizes education.” ICT allows teachers and students to create, share, connect and reflect on their learning and that of others (UNESCO, 2011). Moreover, ICT is a support tool for an innovative teaching pedagogy like service-learning (SL). SL is a teaching pedagogy that combines trifocal functions in education—instruction, research, and community extension. “It involves the interplay of the acquisition of knowledge through research or instruction in the classroom, the application of this knowledge through service to the community, the internationalization of the value of service through reflections, and the appreciation of practical learning which the students bring back to the classroom for discussion” (Oracion, 2002). The Silliman experience of SL proves that SL is indeed an effective pedagogy in teaching.

However, few have known about the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in SL. As of this writing, there is no available literature in the Philippines that provides substantive information on the use of ICT in SL activities. The website of the National Service Knowledge Network posted a list of different ways on how ICT can be integrated with SL activities. These methods include integration in terms of program management, community partner participation, curricular tools, community service, reflection, and program evaluation. Table 1 shows the S-L components and their corresponding tools as well as the methods of integration.

On the website was also a listing of successful ICT service-learning among the network members. For example, the following schools use ICT as a tool for SL program management: Boise State University’s Service-Learning Program, California State University at Monterey Bay’s Service-Learning Institute, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Central Washington University’s Center for Leadership and Community Engagement, and The Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service at Georgetown University. The website also enumerated several projects that demonstrate the use of ICT as a tool for SL. It also posted several resources on how to integrate ICT in service-learning as a teaching pedagogy.

**Table 1. Uses of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Service-Learning (S-L)**

SL Components	ICT Tools	Methods
Program Management	Databases	can help program staff to track student placements, community partner contact information, and the academic calendar partner experiences.
Community partner participation	Websites	can describe the SL programs, provide easy access to forms for registering a community project, and highlight stories of active community partner experiences.
Curricular tools	Online References	can enhance classroom and community-based learning
Community service	Virtual Space and Communication Support Systems	enables meaningful community service that does not necessarily involve regular or ongoing face-to-face contact between student and community partner (e.g., after meeting with community students in a web design course with a service-learning component).
Reflection	Web Blogs, Discussion Forums	enables students across different SL sites to communicate regularly, share their experiences, and respond to reflective questions posed by faculty and one another.
Program evaluation	Online Survey, Databases	enables students and community partners to respond to questions about their experiences and the impact of the program. Databases can facilitate the tracking and storage of program evaluation information.

**Adapted from National Service Knowledge Network**

Amidst the many positive pedagogical benefits that ICT offers, are also ethical issues that must be considered. ICT is coupled with risks that affect stakeholders. Technological innovations bring benefits and new possibilities as well as risks and new problems (Johnson, 2001). Everyone must take into consideration the ethical concerns and issues tied to any technological advancement. ICT creates ethical issues because “it changes the instrumentation of human action” (Johnson, 2001). Computer ethics is unique. It is unique because computers have certain features that raise unique issues and these properties include logical malleability, impact on society, and invisibility factor, according to Moor (cited by Duquenoy, Jones, & Blundell, 2008). Likewise, Johnson (2001) explains that the ICT ethical issue is unique as it provides “new species of traditional moral issues.”

Moreover, the web is a democratic publishing medium where there are a few restrictions (Duquenoy *et al.*, 2008). Johnson (2001) says that the Internet has three distinctive features that may trigger some ethical concerns: a) the many-to-many communication on a global scale, b) anonymity, and c) reproducibility features. The Internet poses several ethical challenges, and these challenges are mainly the results of its characteristics (Duquenoy *et al.*, 2008). According to Quinn (2004, cited by Duquenoy *et al.*, 2008), these characteristics consist of many-to-many communication, dynamic, scale and size of the Internet, global, and users—adults and children. Likewise, the Internet detaches users from the consequences of their doings that may result in the deterioration of the sense of responsibility for actions (Johnson, 2001). Further, Johnson (2001) states that violations of Internet rules are unethical. These informal rules or simply Internet do’s and don’ts are referred to as netiquette that all SL practitioners must know and observe.

This paper presents some ethical issues and concerns about the use of ICT in SL. Specifically, this paper describes the ethical issues in the integration of ICT. The ethical issues were identified based on three views: 1) ICT as a content of SL, 2) the use of the web as a tool in writing SL reflection, and 3) the use of online surveys as tool in the program evaluation. Identification of issues is limited only to the three SL activities conducted in the college.

Data collection in the study was done through review of related literature and one-on-one personal interviews with selected service-learners. The review of related literature emphasizes on computer ethics that has direct or indirect bearing on the three views mentioned. A one-time personal interview was conducted one at a time to two service-learners to

gather qualitative supports of the ethical concerns raised in this paper. These service-learners, both graduate students of ED 145, were randomly selected. The interviews were digitally recorded for an average of 24 minutes.

## **INTEGRATION OF ICT IN SERVICE-LEARNING AT THE COLLEGE OF COMPUTER STUDIES**

### **A Literacy Training for the Community**

In 2013, the College of Computer Studies had its first SL integration. It was successfully implemented in three subjects: Computer Fundamentals (CFUND-1), Internship (IT 41), and ICT in Education (ED 145). CFUND-1 is a subject for non-ICT students such as medical technology students, physical therapy, and arts and sciences students. IT 41 is an on-the-job training and internship class of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Bachelor of Science in Information Systems. ED 145 is a graduate class of the Master of Arts in Education.

As of this writing, the SL in the College of Computer Studies focuses on the ICT literacy training among different community partners. Specifically, the ICT literacy training focuses on literacy in such advanced topics as an introduction to computer, file management and organization, MS Office, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Communication Tools, and the World Wide Web. The SL process at the College of Computer Studies includes community identification, needs assessment, teaching-learning materials, designing, training delivery, training evaluation, reflection posting, reflection sharing, and continuing community relationships using the online platform.

### **E-Reflection: Writing Reflection on the Web**

Reflection is one of the SL components that can be integrated with ICT (Table 1). ICT such as the forum and blogscan enables students across different SL sites to regularly communicate, share their experiences, and respond to reflective questions posed by faculty and one another. Similarly, Warschauer and Cook (n.d.) suggested a computer-assisted discussion in order to facilitate reflective interaction about SL experiences. They assert that computer-mediated reflection offers the



“permanence of writing wherein students can read, and reread, and reflect on the written comments, both during the conversation itself, or for post-hoc analysis.”

The two common ICT tools that can be used during SL reflection are blog and forum. “As the Internet becomes an increasingly pervasive and persistent influence in people’s lives, the phenomenon of the blog stands out as an excellent example of the way in which the Web enables individual participation in the marketplace of ideas” (Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 2006). A blog (a truncation of the expression *web log*) is a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of “posts” typically displayed in reverse chronological order (Blood, 2000). Basic functions of a blog include classroom management, collaboration, discussions, and student portfolios. Some free hosted blogging platforms are Edublogs, Blogger, WordPress.org, and Blogmeister. Facebook and Weebly can also be used for blogging. Posted in the blog by Morris (2013), benefits of classroom blogging include improved literacy skills, authentic audience, sense of classroom community, global connections, ICT skills, homeschool partnerships, appropriate online behavior, and confidence. Moreover, blog promotes authentic learning opportunities in the classroom that translate into challenged, engaged, and invested learners (Tolisano, n.d.). A blog (sample screenshot, Figure 1) was developed using the free blogging tool, Weebly (i.e., [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)).

On the other hand, “online discussion forum allows students to work together on projects in small groups, participate in ongoing discussions focused on course content, and to ‘present’ group project products to the rest of the class” (Markel, 2001). According to Sheri Cyprus (2010, as cited in Kaur 2011), an online forum is also known as a message board, online discussion group, bulletin board or web forum. It differs from a blog. An online forum is a discussion area on a website whereby members can post discussions and read and respond to posts by other forum members. A forum can revolve around any subject in an online community (Kaur, 2011). Among the pedagogical implications of online discussion forums are constructivism, Piaget’s developmental theory of learning, communities of practice approach, and critical thinking (Akers n.d.). A forum (screenshot, Figure 2) was also developed using Weebly.

### S-L Reflection

06/23/2013

9 Comments



This blog publishes all reflection by the Interns of the College of Computer Studies Batch 2014 during the conduct of the Service-Learning program entitled "ICT in the Community"

from July 1 - September 30, 2013 at UCS Building, Silliman University. Read more about this program at this [link](#). | Download [Reflection Format](#)

### Comments

**L. M. L. T. B** 07/14/2013 8:42pm

I spent almost five hours teaching computer basics to our university protectors - security guards - and not just that, they were elderly security guards.

Our goal was to introduce to them technology since it has been very prominent part of our lives today.

We didn't taught anything too fancy, just basics: (1) What is a Computer; (2) What are the parts of a computer; (3) and how does a

**Figure 1.** Screenshot of a Blog

Note: For privacy purposes, the student's name, course and email address are partially erased.

## E-Evaluation: Assessing S-L Program Using Online Surveys

ICT such as online survey and databases can enable students and community partners to respond to questions about their experiences and the impact of the program (Table 1). Databases can facilitate the tracking and storage of program evaluation information. Online surveys are part of the broader family of self-administered surveys using the Internet either offline or real-time ("Online Survey Jobs," n.d.). Among the standard online survey tools applicable in schools is Survey Monkey, Google Forms, Poll Everywhere, among others (Robertson, 2011). Robertson asserts that the online survey provides a positive impact on the learning, planning, feedback, and information among students and teachers. Online surveys offer several benefits in the academe,

as follows: administration speed, lower cost, flexibility, accuracy, anonymity and easier access to particular respondents (University of Exeter, n.d.). Furthermore, Archer (2003) asserts that web surveys can display the response data simultaneously with completion of surveys. He also adds that data from Web-based surveys are available in real time either graphical or numerical format. Reminders and follow-up on non-respondents are relatively easy, and data from Web-based surveys can be easily imported into data analysis programs (Archer, 2003).

On the college level, the community partners were requested to take the daily and the final evaluation of the training. Both evaluation forms were done online using Google Form. See figure 3 for the screenshot of the survey form.

**Service-Learning Reflection (February 2014)**  
posted Feb 18, 2014 by DaveEMarcial

Dear Students,  
Please post your reflection here! Please don't forget to write your complete name, course, and your email address.  
[Last edited Feb 18, 2014]

Dave E. Marcial, Ph.D.  
Silliman University  
Negros Oriental, Philippines

Like 0 Share

53 replies page 1 2 3 4 next last

K g r i s fort said Feb 18, 2014

K...ig A hur T... af... t BSF... - I  
Cfund 1 -E

Time passes by so fast, faster than I could even count the strand of my hair. As time flies human seek greater knowledge to make their life on this earth easier. Without even noticing here we are now. Technologies continued to improve in a pace so fast that the older generations can't even fathom. As a result the new generations need to educate those who are left behind. The service learning-activity is one of those programs. I am glad to be an instrument to those people and let them gain knowledge about computers and stuff. Honestly I find it kind a fun being with them it was like teaching a three year old. No offense though. It's a great privilege being the master lecturer at that time. Though it's a pain having to study those entire assigned topic but in the end there is no greater happiness than helping others. While my Co-reporter was doing their reports I've realize that it was not just them who were able to learn something but us also. There is just some part of Microsoft word that confuses me. So, thank you reporters. 2 hours and 30 minutes is a think not enough for them. You can't completely understand something that's new to you in one day much more in a 2 hours and 30 minutes lecture. Well maybe the point there is that they at least know the basics.

**Figure 2.** Screenshot of a Forum

Note: For privacy purposes, the student's name, course and email address are partially erased.

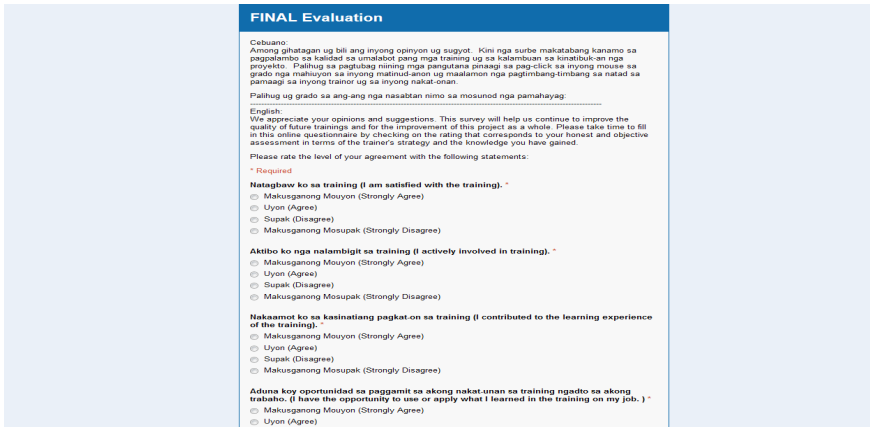


Figure 3. Screenshot of an Online Evaluation

### Some Ethical Issues and Concerns

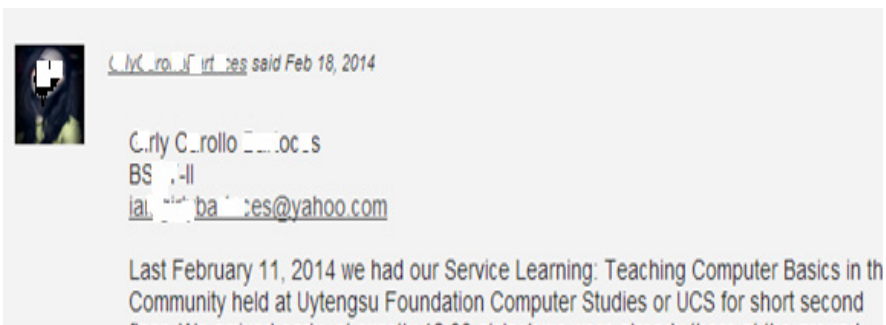
**On privacy.** What measures should be taken in order to protect the participants’ online identities?

Privacy is the most important of the ethical issues in ICT (Johnson, 2001). Duquenoy *et al.* (2008) explain: “Internet and web make the collection, searching, analysis, access to, and distribution of, large amounts of information easier, cheaper and faster than before”, adding that “our communications by discussion groups can all be recorded, logged, distributed and read by others—even years later.” Baase (2013) summarizes the risks of uploading personal information on the web that may affect any stakeholders such as the government, education, businesses, and other forms of organization. Below are excerpts of the risks mentioned by Baase (2013):

1. Anything we do in cyberspace is recorded, at least briefly, and linked to our computer or phone, and possibly our name.
2. If information is on a public website, people other than those for whom it was intended will find it. It is available to everyone.
3. Once information goes on the Internet or into a database, it seems to last forever. People (and automated software) quickly make and distribute copies. It is almost impossible to remove released information from circulation.
4. We often cannot directly protect information about ourselves.

We depend on the business and organizations that manage it to protect it from thieves, accidental collection, leaks and the like.

During the conduct of the e-reflection, students were required to write their complete name, course, year, and email address for identification purposes (Figure 4). The primary intention was for the teacher-in-charge to know who owned and published the reflection that would help him/her in the scoring process. In short, it was a requirement to post necessary student information on the web. This information can be described as personal information. “In the context of privacy issues, personal information refers to any information relating to, or traceable to, a person (Baase 2013).” Examples include those being required during the posting of S-L reflection (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Screenshot of a reflection post

Note: For privacy purposes, the student’s name, course and email address are partially erased.

During the interview, the risks mentioned by Baase (2013) were presented to the service-learners. The two interviewees revealed that they did not know about the four risks. Hence, the risks presented did cross their mind when they wrote their reflection on the web. However, service-learner A was very much aware of the issue of plagiarism, which is not being contested in this paper.

**On authenticity of the reflection.** How can the originality, uniqueness, and genuineness of the work can be checked if students can view others’ (previous) posts?

“A blog post goes public, in other words, it can be accessed and read by almost everyone who have an access to the Internet” (Sandlar, 2009). Most

importantly, writing a reflection on the web provides an opportunity for students to access and read other postings as a way of sharing. However, Sandlar (2009) also explains that “the moment students open to the web; it is not just a blogging site that they can have access to. A whole world of information is before them. Hence, there is every chance that students’ attention will get diverted from the discussion.” Further, blogs create a sense of competition among students (Sandlar, 2009).

During the interview, service-learner A admitted that she first read the posting of others before she posted her reflection. The service-learner said that she read the last post to check if her reflection was correct. She also tried to compare her work. She also admitted that she ran some edits on her reflection before making it available online. She said that she added some parts in the reflection based on what she knew from a previous posting. On the other hand, service-learner B, who was the first to post, admitted that she might have also read other postings out of curiosity and check on the format.

***On technology acceptance.*** What are the performance and effort expectancies, attitudes, and anxiety levels during the e-reflection and the e-evaluation?

The usual claim that Web surveys are much cheaper than mail surveys is not necessarily right (Fricker & Matthias, 2002). The implementation of Web surveys is technically more involved than mail or phone surveys. Likewise, online surveys have technical problems that may affect the reliability of the evaluation; these are freezes and crashes and error messages and double entry, posted on the website of Information Technology Services at The University of Texas at Austin.

During the interview, both service-learners said that it needs more effort to make reflections on the web compared to paper-based reflections. “*I like the traditional; there is something with pencils that I like,*” service-learner B said. “I do not like the screen” and “*I spend effort in motivating myself to type and to open the computer,*” she added. On a positive note, service-learner B finds the paper-based reflection more productive in terms of the content. On the other hand, service-learner A said that it is quite difficult to write a reflection on the web. She experienced a little pressure and felt intimidated after reading the post of service-learner B.

Fortunately, both have skills in writing reflections on the web because they experienced writing reflections. Service-learner A maintained a blog site while service-learner B wrote her blogs to any free and available blog platforms.

***On reciprocity.*** How can reciprocity be achieved in web-based reflections and evaluation?

Writing online, similar to blogging, promotes interactivity (Kuhn, 2005). Kuhn suggests that to be ethical, among others, a person who posts must visit and post on other postings in order to achieve interactivity. In the same manner, teachers should promote human element in writing reflections such as blogging (Kuhn, 2005). Kuhn suggests, in his code of blogging ethics, minimizing harm to others when posting information, promoting community by linking to other blogs and keeping a blogroll, and building relationships by responding to emails and comments regularly. Further, another significant impact of using the Web as a tool for SL reflection is its permanency. Writing reflection online allows the students and teachers to respond and interact outside the laboratory. Teachers can give comments and feedback to the reflection and evaluation for the students and community partner to respond. Sandlar (2009) says that web-based writing such as reflection provides a space for “students and individuals to share their articles and opinions with people outside their community.” In short, the Web connects students and teachers (Baase, 2013).

However, due to the digital divide, interactivity and connectivity are hard to achieve. Unfortunately, not all students have constant access to the Internet. Moreover, the majority of the community partners do not have the necessary learning technologies. For example, during the SL among security personnel, only 22.73% had personal computers; 22.73% had Smartphones; 13.64% had a tablet computers; and 13.64 % had laptop computers. The data implied that not all community partners had access to the technology. The principle of equal access to ICT is based on the claim that all people have a right to access this technology. As cited by Duquenoey, *et al.* (2008), Moss (2002) indicates that “people without access to technology are disadvantaged because their access to knowledge is significantly limited” (i.e., their participation and involvement are hindered).

In the same manner, motivation is also a factor in any web-based reflection and surveys. Archer (2003) reveals that in conducting web surveys the “decision not to respond is likely to be made more quickly.” This claim is supported by the two service-learners who revealed that after posting their reflection, they no longer visited the web blog site. Both of them said that they did not dare to read other postings after the subject ended.



On the other hand, Marra and Bogue (2006) claims “Online survey tools help bring assessment activities more within the reach of organizations.” They caution the users “to understand that proper assessment requires careful definition of objectives and likewise careful development of reliable and valid items to measure those objectives.”

**On informed consent.** To what extent is informed consent established during e-evaluation (online surveys) among the community partners?

O’Neill (2004) stresses “Electronic surveys must contain a description about the purpose and methodology of the study, including samples of the online research instruments.” He also highlights that informed consent instructions must be provided. One way to ensure that informed consent is established is by providing an “I accept” [terms and conditions] box (O’Neill, 2004). On the website of Survey Gizmo, a survey web tool, posted easy steps in creating a survey with informed consent. The first page of the survey must only include one question asking for the survey taker’s consent using any buttons (Heidtke, 2008). For example, a “Checkbox Question” with the option as, “Yes, I consent” (or something along those lines) can be used. This question must be “Required.” Another way is to use a “Radio Button Question” with the answers Yes or No.

**On administration.** Who will take charge of the cost? It should be noted that the SL activities at the College of Computer Studies are not field-based academic learning. The partner communities are brought inside the premises of the school, particularly inside the computer laboratory. The uniqueness of this integration entails that the activity provides less harm and risk to students and faculty as opposed to many field-based SL practitioners. On the other hand, the conduct of the training inside the campus entails administrative cost to the university. This cost may include the cost of the maintenance of computers, electricity consumption, and other operating expenses.

**On methodological alternative.** Can we compel the students to write reflections on the web (instead of the paper-based reflections)?

In a blog post, Vee (n.d.) suggests ways for teachers to help students mitigate some of the risks in writing online. First, teachers should raise their students’ awareness on the potential dangers of writing in the public sphere. It must emphasize that future employers, their families, or complete strangers can read their posts possibly for years in the future. This suggestion is supported in websites (“Blogs, Twitter, wikis”, n.d.) that say, “Don’t put



online anything that might embarrass you later or cause another person embarrassment, commercial loss or distress.” Second, teachers should encourage their students to post on their blogs with only their first name or a pseudonym known to the class. Without a last name attached to the blog, much of the danger of public writing is allayed. Third, teachers should make blogs optional. Teachers must offer specific alternatives in using blogs. Teachers must give options for students to find an alternative to blogs. Students should not be forced to post a reflection into the public sphere especially if they are comfortable. Lastly, students must be encouraged to approach their teacher if they are uncomfortable posting their reflections.

In addition, teachers must conduct a thorough orientation about the risks of writing reflections online. The accountability, accuracy, independence, and tone of the write-ups (ICFJ Anywhere, 2012) must be emphasized. Similarly, Upstart listed three ethical practices on writing online such as blogging that can serve as guide for teachers. First, one has to take full responsibility of anything he/she posts; 2) one should consider the possible effects of every post he/she writes; and 3) one should attempt to foster a sense of online community (“Ethical Blogging,” 2014).

When asked if they would recommend the use of the web as a tool in writing SL reflections, service-learner A said it would depend on the students and teachers. Service-learner B said that she would recommend SL. However, service-learner B suggested some precautionary measures for students such as ensuring objectivity in their reflections and focusing more on the content. She also added that using the web for SL reflection is a good and interesting idea.

## CONCLUSIONS

In today’s digital knowledge economy, it is high time that ICT can be integrated with SL especially in Silliman University and in the Philippines. The use of the Web as a tool in reflection and evaluation may be replicated with the other SL practitioners. A comprehensive software that will handle all the SL activities listed in table 1 should be developed.

The ethical issues that emerge in ICT SL must be addressed and must be taken seriously by all SL practitioners. SL practitioners must always be reminded that people are morally responsible, but computers are not (Ermann, Williams, & Shauf, 1997). There is a need to develop ICT-related

protocols in SL. An ICT usage policy must be institutionalized “defining appropriate and inappropriate ICT user behavior” (Reynolds, 2003). A thorough orientation about computer ethics must be conducted and learned before any ICT integrated SL. Moreover, ICT ethics is a concern that needs human vigilance in using and integrating it (Johnson, 2001) especially in innovative SL. Finally, it is recommended that a thorough qualitative and quantitative study be employed to evaluate the ethical issues and concerns during ICT SL integration.

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## APPENDIX

### A. Sample Training Outline

#### Day 1

8:00 – 10:00 - *Computer Hardware*

- What is a Computer?
- Basic Parts of a Desktop Computer
- Connecting Computer Peripherals

10:00 – 12:00 - *File Management*

- Parts of the Desktop
- Understanding Directory, Folder and File
- Creating, Renaming, Deleting and Moving a Folder
- Saving, Renaming, Moving a File
- Searching a file

1:00 – 2:30 - *MS Word Basics (Part I)*

- Getting Started with Word
- Text Basics
- Formatting Text
- Saving
- Modifying Page Layout

2:30 – 5:00

- Checking Spelling and Grammar
- Using Indents and Tabs
- Line and Paragraph Spacing
- Working with Lists

#### Day 2

8:00 – 12:00 - *MS Word Basics (Part II)*

- Working with Columns
  - Working with Shapes
  - Text Boxes and WordArt
  - Inserting Clip Art and Pictures
  - Formatting Pictures
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- Working with Tables
  - SmartArt Graphics

1:00 – 4:00 - *MS Excel Basics*

- Getting Started with Excel
- Cell Basics
- Modifying Columns, Rows, and Cells
- Formatting Cells

4:00 – 6:00

- Sorting Data
- Creating Simple Formulas
- Worksheet Basics
- Working with Charts

### **Day 3**

8:00 – 10:00 - *The Basics*

- Getting Started
- Slide Basics
- Text Basics
- Applying a Theme
- Inserting Images
- Applying Transitions
- Checking Spelling
- Presenting Slide Show
- Saving and Printing

10:00 – 12:00 - *Common Tasks*

- Modifying Lists
- Indents and Line Spacing
- WordArt and Shapes
- Modifying Themes
- Formatting Pictures
- Arranging Objects
- Animating Text and Objects
- Inserting Videos
- Inserting Audio

*1:00 – 3:00 - Doing More*

- SmartArt Illustrations
- Hyperlinks and Action Buttons
- Working with Tables
- Working with Charts
- Reviewing Presentations
- Advanced Presentation Options

*3:00 – 5:00 – Closing Ceremonies*

Awarding of Certificates

Awarding of Token and Prizes

Reference: <http://www.gcflearnfree>

# Ethical Challenges in Multidisciplinary Approach to Service-Learning

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Service Learning (SL) responds to one of the domains in the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards which is to establish learning environments that respond to the aspiration of the community. Thus, in Pilgrim Christian College, SL was integrated with NSTP, Practice Teaching, and Entrepreneurship / Franchising Classes. Different communities were identified as partners in SL. These communities were groups of people with common characteristics such as parents of children at a Day Care Center and the survivors of Sendong. Memoranda of Agreement were formulated to protect both parties--the program implementors and the partner communities.

Positive outcomes were objectively observed but limited to written and verbal testimonies among the students, members of the partner communities, and the faculty. Practical application of concepts from the classroom to the field was highly appreciated.

In the implementation of SL, PCC tried to address the domain of the learning environment. Being fair and making sure that the physical environment was safe and conducive to learning were among the ethical and human protection issues considered for dissection. A formal construct focused on consent, confidentiality, competence, and conflict of interest. Since PCC is a UCCP and bible-based institution, and the students' parents or families come from different religious orientations, a written consent/ informed decision from the parents has become a challenge, especially in getting their consent for the inculcation of biblical values among the students, as an add-on in the literacy program. With implementors overwhelmed with the program, confidentiality should have been emphasized especially among the students and community partners. In terms of competence, selection of cooperators, entry issues, and sustainability were the essence. For the partner communities, conflict



of interest may have taken place especially when required to attend the worship services of the Pilgrim Christian Community Fellowship (PCCF); however, the judgment may have been ethical itself with regard to culture and situations.

Sustainability in implementing SL, while considering ethical and human protection issues, is PCC's goal. Respecting people as ends, not means, being listened to, is ensured.

## INTRODUCTION

**E**thics is a code of thinking and behavior governed by a combination of personal, moral, legal, and social standards of what is right although the definition of "right" varies with situations and cultures (Kansas University, 2014). Ethics is also taken to mean as a philosophical science that deals with the morality of human conduct or human acts (Babor, 2006). Ethics is further categorized under normative philosophy that poses what is good and what is bad, or what is the right action or wrong action. Ethics as a science establishes standards or norms of human conduct. Ethics, therefore, requires a person to act properly as a human being and, ideally, to do what is good and what is right. Pilgrim Christian College, being a church and bible-based institution, abides by absolute ethics which Jesus taught and which a Christian entity should advocate. However, when a person knows what is good and what is right, it is not automatic that he/she executes what he/she knows. Thus, challenges arise.

Meanwhile, operationally, multidisciplinary approach in the implementation of SL at PCC refers to the different subjects where the program was integrated. At the same time, this approach includes the different dimensions each subject may cover. As mentioned earlier, SL was integrated in three (3) subjects and in each subject, spiritual, leadership, environmental, agricultural, and livelihood dimensions were covered.

In this paper, Pilgrim Christian College uses the lenses of the multidisciplinary approach to determine ethical challenges encountered in SL.

## APPLICATION OF SL IN THE COURSE

One of the domains in the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards is to establish learning environments that respond to the aspiration of the community (Bilbao, Corbuz, Llagas, & Salandanan, 2012). SL responds to such. Thus, when Silliman University (SU) paved the way for the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA) to support SL,

Pilgrim Christian College embraced the program in 2010.

SL was integrated in NSTP, Education, and Business Courses. Foci were on spiritual, leadership, environmental, health, literacy, and livelihood pursuits. Moreover, literacy services were offered. Literacy activities with inculcation of biblical values continued even during summer through the vacation bible school. Tree growing and solid waste management were monitored. Parents were taught the FAITH Basket which stands for Food Always in the Home. Health dimensions were integrated in NSTP and Practice Teaching. Livelihood dimensions were integrated in Practice Teaching and Entrepreneurship/Franchising. Then, journal entry forms were prepared. The service and learning components were the criteria used to assess learning for the purpose of academic credit. The celebrations were done through public presentations which gave due recognition to all parents and students involved. Awareness, proactive partnership, and consistency were key.

## **COLLEGE-COMMUNITY TIE UP**

After a series of seminars, workshops, and creation of a core group, formulation of policies and guidelines in the conduct of activities, benchmarking activity, and coming up with plan of action, profiling of communities in Cagayan de Oro City took place to determine community needs and possible intervention programs. As operationally defined in this program, community refers to a group of people with shared characteristics. These communities consisted of parents and children of the Day Care Center of Sitio Midkiwan of Barangay Bayanga, the HUGpong PArA SA KAugmaran (HUPASAKA) people's group of Barangay FS Catanico, and women survivors of Sendong (Washi) at Barangay 17. Memoranda of Agreement were signed between PCC and the Barangay through the Barangay Captains and the individual adult participants. Witnesses were barangay officials and residents, and school officials and students of NSTP, education, and business courses.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES MATCHED WITH STUDENTS' SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

“The school and the community are the mainsprings of effective and powerful forces that can create a wholesome climate for mutual gains and betterment.

They can forge a kind of partnership where both are willing to share information as well as responsibilities to the best interest of the children while in school, likewise when dealing with members of the community” (Bilbao *et al.*, 2012). Participatory planning with the community and students took place. Thus, as it is ideal, learning objectives of the course and the needs of the community were matched.

For NSTP, learning objectives and needs were matched focusing on leadership and environment. Tree Growing and Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) were identified both by the students, PCC, and people in the community. Learning objectives were the following: 1) to shift paradigm from the traditional tree planting to the sustainable tree growing; and 2) to promote SWMP by actual participation at home, in school, and in the community.

For education students, the community identified was a barangay which is about a 45-minute-ride away from the heart of Cagayan de Oro City. During the assessment, the students themselves were the ones who identified the parents and children from the Day Care Center due to the distance and the need for follow-up on the education and health of the children. The parents themselves verbalized their need for assistance because they worried that their children would have lesser chances to have classes every day due to the lack of permanent teachers. The parents could not sustain having a permanent teacher for their children because they did not have regular jobs, a condition that has led to poor income and failure to live up to the daily cost of living. This condition also caused impediments on the children’s health. The learning objectives were as follows: 1) to develop a conducive learning environment for children, focusing on literacy and biblical virtues; and 2) to partner with parents in the FAITH Basket program.

For the business students, the community identified was composed of women survivors of Typhoon Sendong (Washi). These women already had skills in handling *sari-sari* stores (i.e., small stores with miscellaneous items). The women came from a neighboring barangay of PCC. Learning objectives were as follows: 1) to establish a symbiotic learning relationship between the students and the community; and 2) to apply theories from the classroom to the community or field.

What the students learned were evaluated based on the aforementioned objectives through journal writing, verbal expression of values appreciated, picture documentation, and observations of the teacher and the community. Not including the rubrics, below were the criteria for grading.

**Service Component : 50%**

Activity Preparation: Team Involvement and Attendance	20%
Actual Conduct of Activity: Community Involvement	30%

**Learning Component : 50%**

Quality of Output (Documentation, Journal, Posters, etc.)	20%
Evidence of expressed positive self-development	15%
Evidence of values expressed concern for others	15%

**Total : 100%**

During the celebration, the students gave a positive feedback while the community commended the students and, at the same time, shared words to live by. In the NSTP group, the students wrote, in their respective journals, about the sense of fulfillment in getting involved in the tree-growing program and the solid waste management program with and for the people in the community. There was this sense of contribution to a healthy environment among the participants as they also looked forward to more opportunities of doing the mentioned activities. Above all, the participants acknowledged their stewardship over God's creation.

As for the education group, the practice-teachers who partnered with the parents restructured Day Care Centers and refurbished instructional materials. The literacy program focused on reading and sharing of bible stories. There was also launching of the FAITH (Food Always In The Home) Basket program.

For the business group, the students hosted a mini-workshop on bookkeeping with the women who were rebuilding their respective sari-sari stores. After the workshop, a no-interest loan was granted with corresponding agreement on the payments. The students checked the entries in the ledgers while PCC supervised the payments. Those who did not follow the policies paid the interests per the provision in the agreement. However, the names of those who did not pay were endorsed to the Barangay Captain, and they were no longer included in the next series of loans and activities.

On the part of the faculty, the above-mentioned outcomes were considered accomplishments. In spite of paradigm shift, the extra time rendered both in the classroom and community settings, and the necessary adjustments to individual partners/beneficiaries especially to those who

refused to understand the main purpose of the partnership and anticipated receiving dole outs without obligation, it was observed that the students themselves learned to adjust to the community partners.

**Areas of concern identified.** A multidisciplinary approach was used in implementing Service Learning at PCC. As PCC is a Christian institution, application of the theories was not only limited to specific area of discipline such as literacy and livelihood but also included spiritual, leadership, environmental, health, and agricultural dimensions. In all these, ethical concerns emerged and needed further dissection.

In relation to the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards, the learning environment should promote fairness and should make the physical environment safe and conducive to learning. In the context of implementing SL at PCC, observation of fairness, and provision of safe and conducive learning environment are among the guiding principles which need further understanding. The ethical challenges related to the guiding principles focused on consent, competence, confidentiality, and conflict of interest.

**Consent.** This is about consent to apply a concept or ideology, during a program implementation. Consent can also refer to permission to share information, and in the context of a community, this can refer to consent on involvement of the people. Consent may also refer to informed decision among the members of the community. However, if written, is consent limited to an MOA between the community and PCC or will each member be asked to make a written consent? During the planning session, that is, before the engagement or action part, is consent taken into consideration?

If students go to the community, parents are asked to sign a waiver interpreted as the written consent. It is a waiver related to an issue on fairness and protection from harm among the students. However, the waiver may sound beneficial only to PCC. But with the latest Bulacan incident, CHED is making the waiver null and void.

PCC is an institution of the UCCP. Students and the community belong to different religious orientations. The parents of the children who went through the literacy program with inculcation of biblical values embraced the activities. There had been an assumption that because the school is known to be a Christian school, biblical integration was always part of many activities. However, was there fairness on the part of the parents in the absence of a written consent/informed decision? Was written consent/informed decision from the parents necessary prior to the inculcation of biblical values that go

with the teaching of basic literacy to the children, even if the parents had already given verbal consent? The partners on livelihood were asked to attend the newly formed Pilgrim Christian Community Fellowship. Did they accept the program because of PCC's generosity to them as they may be lacking a regular income? Moreover, eventually, they no longer joined the worship services because they were not required.

The resolution to this issue is to determine a future action. The planning process has to include written consent or informed decision from the partners and parents in close coordination with the offices of Spiritual Formation, Community Extension, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs for more administrative support.

**Competence.** Accordingly, by offering services, PCC tried to make a contract with participants to do the job they said they would do. This implied that the ones who were actually working and the institution as a whole are competent to accomplish their goals under reasonable circumstances.

In the planning stage, did the community and the students fully understand service-learning? Was PCC competently fair in the selection process of cooperators? How about in regard to entry to the community, did PCC take the opportunity knowing that the community was in need? Or did PCC do it because SU introduced SL and to a certain extent PCC needed the community as well? Did PCC go to the communities because of the people or because of SL? Was the selection process sufficient to determine the chosen community of the class per the learning objectives? Through NSTP was in communities where the students brought to the field the concepts related to leadership and environment. Moreover, the practice-teachers and the business students were in communities where they brought the concepts of literacy and health, and livelihood, respectively. Did PCC reach out just because of Sendong? Was it right that the school extended assistance because the partners were Sendong survivors?

How about the transfer of technology – when is this apt without jeopardizing book knowledge and cultural considerations? The practice teachers were confident that they could deliver concepts on literacy. They were oriented about cultural and local knowledge, and thus examples were based on the culture of the community.

On the other hand, was PCC competent in the avoidance of physical and emotional harm to the students and the community? Were spoken words appropriate? Was subjectivity set aside and objectivity properly observed?

Lastly, how capable was PCC in sustaining what it had started with SL? The resolution is that PCC can be a catalyst. The school does not have a course on agriculture; however, the teaching dimension was emphasized using innovative information on biblical virtues--as PCC is a Christian School-- and on agriculture and health concepts from the FAITH Basket Program. For the input on biblical virtues, the help of the Spiritual Formation Department was sought. For the input on agriculture and health, the consultant was the Dean of the School of Education who happens to be a graduate of Agricultural Education and who used to be the President of the Misamis Oriental State College of Agriculture and Technology. Moreover, the heads of the community such as the barangay council, purok head, and indigenous people group leader were consulted before action was done. However, as early as the planning stage of future projects, SL implementors have to do more examination on areas which have to be brought. As for sustainability, though the partners are benefitting from the program, the program itself needs follow up from the extension office, considering that students come and go every semester. Close coordination between the faculty and the extension office is very necessary.

**Confidentiality.** Probably the most familiar of ethical issues—perhaps because it is the one most often violated— is the expectation that communications and information from participants in the course of a community intervention or program (including conversations, written or taped records, notes, etc.) will be kept confidential. As a general rule, confidentiality is the best policy. Practicing confidentiality protects both the participants and the organization from invasion of privacy and establishes a bond of trust between the participants and the implementors. However, in the course of engagement between PCC and its partners in the community, breach of confidentiality took place. The implementers were surprised that the non-members of the community knew about the members who failed to comply with requirements such as loan payments. Resolution to this challenge includes thorough orientation among the implementors/students and the members of the community on this ethical issue. Orientation should emphasize the importance of reporting accurate results as observed and as told or narrated. Interview responses are not to be taken out of context. Observations should not be discussed without putting them into the appropriate context.

**Conflict of interest.** A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone's personal (e.g., financial, political, professional, social, sexual, family, etc.) interests could influence his/her judgment or actions in a financial decision or other decisions made when carrying out his/her job or in relating with participants. In community interventions, conflicts of interest may change— to the community's disadvantage--how a program is run or how money is spent.

Moreover, partner communities have internal concerns affecting proactive cooperation and the attainment of learning objectives. There is also dependence. In the case of SL at PCC, the criteria of the women were established, but some barangay officials still explored possibilities of benefitting from the program. There was an assumption that barangay officials tended to grab more opportunities because they could receive information first hand when programs of different organizations were first introduced at the barangay hall; thus, PCC exempted barangay officials.

Resolution on this area goes back to well contemplated plans as well as to the community heads, partners, and the implementors. Attending to the concern on conflict of interest addresses emotionally-Do-No-Harm issues.

## **OTHER CHALLENGES**

Considering that service-learning is an explicit goal of the curriculum and that it implies increased workload and responsibilities for faculty, how does the administration manifest support and recognition of its teachers, students, and partner community?

The administration manifests support and recognition of its faculty, students, and partner community through special honoraria, permission to go to the field, provision of vehicle with fuel allowance, safety and security provided to students, and opportunities for better partnerships.

Do the SL implementors see the community as a laboratory where people may become the subjects of study (as opposed to people as the focus of development efforts)?

From the perspective of the SL implementors, the community was not seen as a laboratory but was defined as the field where learners could implement what they had learned from the classroom. The members of the community were partners in meeting the learning objectives. Furthermore, the people were the focus of development efforts, and thus, their suggestions were heard.



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## LESSONS LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTING SL

1. Full engagement of school leaders is ensured if they understand the meaning and significance of SL as a pedagogical method.
2. Partner community leaders must be approached because they are the “gatekeepers” who give the “green light” before implementing SL.
3. A memorandum of agreement signed publicly by PCC administrators and barangay officials is necessary to ensure the success of the endeavor.
4. Program implementers specifically the teachers must be given a thorough orientation regarding SL before commencing the engagement.
5. The participants must signify their voluntary participation and cooperation in SL because they want to learn and improve their lives holistically.
6. Values are either “taught” or “caught” depending on the situation.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Ethics can be specific in the implementation of SL. The challenges start from seemingly scattered ethical concepts unique to the program, thereby needing formal constructs to arrive at an ethically-sound SL. With PCC as a church institution, disciplines in implementing SL do not just focus on the subject matter of the course. The focus includes a spiritual dimension which is the main guiding principle when examining ethical concerns on consent, competence, confidentiality, and conflict of interest. Resolutions should be part of future considerations and the bulk of work is on the planning stage. Moreover, there is good motivation for students, faculty, and the community to get involved in SL, and people are seen as partners in meeting the learning objectives.

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# Glimpses of Medical technology Students: The Realities of Service- Learning

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This study sought to determine the effects of service-learning among students enrolled in Community and Public Health. Employing content analysis, reflections of students from 2009 to 2013 were analyzed by looking at their journal entries during their community immersion. Learning experiences were grouped according to similarities, but unique recording of reflections written by a few were also included and analyzed. Reflections of the majority of students were full of positive outlook at the start of their encounter with the community, looked at their task with excitement and had willingness in their hearts to serve. Their reflections were about the joys of serving and an appreciation of whatever little they had as an individual and as a family. They realized that they had no reason to be discontented with what they had in life because they saw with their very eyes how families in the community lived with almost nothing at all. A number expressed ambivalence helping others because they too felt that they had unmet needs. In this group, a few admitted that their attitude towards the community members was wrong, and they hoped that if given another opportunity to serve, they would be kinder and less judgmental. However, the rest of those who entered the community with ambivalence indicated a change in their attitude towards the families they were serving.

**Keywords:** content analysis, service-learning, reflections, community service

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## INTRODUCTION

Community and Public Health is a 5-unit course of a BS Medical Technology student. It has a 3-hour lecture component that is classroom-based and a 6-hour community immersion component where small groups of 15 or 20 students are accompanied by their instructor to needy communities identified by the Institute of Service-Learning of Silliman University. The students are tasked to assess the health status of the members based on existing data obtained by barangay health workers or rural health units and results from laboratory tests that they conduct among the members. The immersion may run for three (3) months, and each week the students are required to write entries in their reflection journal about the learnings and realizations as they interacted with their classmates, their instructor, and more importantly, their assigned community.

McDonald and Kunard (2008), in their book *Reflection Guide: Making Sense of the Service Learning Experience* notes that service-learning makes experiences in the community better as students engage in experiences that help them learn while also helping the community meet its needs. This experiential education is made possible by integrating the learning experiences through reflections (McDonald & Kunard, 2008). The University of Minnesota Community Service-Learning Center (n.d.) identifies reflections as one of the most rigorous components of service-learning. The exercise, however, allows the students to thoughtfully process their community work and critically reflect upon their experience.

Oftentimes, student reflections talk about victories and the joy they attain from serving others. The reason why students would rather write about positive feelings is because they truly feel fulfilled in community work or because writing only about the good stuff is the safest place to go especially as they know that their reflections will be discussed and processed by their facilitator (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). Usually, students who come from stable and loving family backgrounds and who have parents who can provide them with their basic needs and wants, or who come families that are very supportive of their endeavors find it easy to write about the positive impact the community experience has taught them. However, a few who belong to families who have to struggle for their basic needs write entries in their reflection journal about their ambivalence when they enroll in the course (Putnam, n.d.).

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## METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was obtained from reflection journals of students enrolled in Community and Public Health of the Institute of Clinical Laboratory Sciences in Silliman University. Using content analysis, reflection journals from 2009 to 2013 were examined and analyzed for similarities or differences. The process involved an understanding of the reflections and thematic narrative analysis of the retrospective data (Ogden, 2014). According to Kohlbacher (2006), qualitative content analysis is a method of examination of data material. It focuses on interpretation rather than quantification and on subjectivity rather than objectivity.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Barbara Jacoby in *Service-Learning in Higher Education* (1996), noted that “Service-learning is a form of experiential education where students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes.” This principle goes very well with the mindset to serve and learn from the process. However, students with unresolved issues about who they are or what their purpose in life is engage in service-learning activities bring to the community a spirit of resentment and pretentious service because deep in their hearts, they are still ambivalent about the very essence of service-learning. They may enter the community with insensitive hearts and judgmental spirits who want to get away from people as soon as possible. These are students who go through the process of community immersion but without enthusiasm, no joy in the things that they do.

## AMBIGUITY AND INDIFFERENCE IN STUDENT REFLECTIONS

A journal entry of a student who found it very difficult to appreciate what she was doing for the families assigned to her group at the very beginning of her community immersion narrates:

When I started this course in Community and Public Health, I was reluctant and I did not want to serve others in the community.

I did not like the idea of helping people who did not even want to help themselves. I entered the community not with a merry and cheerful heart because I myself had so many needs in my life that were not met. I was a whiny kid who complained about wanting to acquire the newest iPhone not recognizing that others do not even have the simplest of mobile phones.

Such were the strong words in the journal entry of one student assigned in a depressed community in Dauin, Negros Oriental. Indeed, a few of the students entered the community with a skeptic mindset. They hated the idea of helping people who do not like to help themselves. They were cautious, and they shunned mingling with other people because of their pre-conceived idea that people in the community often pretended to be socially-acceptable. The students admitted that they just went through the process of listening to the stories of the people in the community despite the fact that they had already dismissed the stories of the wives or husbands as exaggerated. They believed that people would tend to concoct stories about their life in order to cover up something that they did not want others to know. They listened to the stories believing that these people may opt to omit some facts and add a few to their life story so that they may seem like better people to the listener. One noted in her reflection a very poignant comment: “They would say they eat vegetables when actually they were not eating them at all.”

## **STRUGGLES AND SACRIFICES OF STUDENTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

The life of Medical Technology students in the community can be likened to a medical mission. After organizing the community and engaging them through public health awareness, the students, through Service-Learning and Community Participatory Action Research, worked with the household members to identify the top three health problems they believed was affecting their members and to determine solutions that address the problems and help improve their health. This was achieved first of all by getting the demographic profile of the household members and assessing their health through laboratory tests. The activity was a daunting task for very busy students who have almost 27 units of course work for the entire semester. Doing the activity means staying in the

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community for long periods to assess the people's baseline health status, testing drinking water supplies of each household, examining the feces of adults and children for intestinal parasites, and examining their urine samples to obtain presumptive indicators for urinary tract infection, diabetes or kidney damage. The students examined blood samples to rule out anemia and diabetes, and determine the community member's blood type, blood pressure, and body mass index (BMI) especially if they appeared to be malnourished and financially-challenged.

After meeting with the community, health challenges revolved around the areas of waste management to eradicate dengue infection, provision of clean drinking water, and lifestyle changes to correct anemia, diabetes, parasitism, hypertension, or malnutrition. Students provided tips to household members through health education sessions and lifestyle intervention activities. The community was organized in a way that they could appoint among themselves leaders who could do the supervision so that no one in the community would be left behind. Towards the end of the community immersion, a closing program was conducted to celebrate the learning of the people in the community.

If the community assigned to the students was not within the city but was 20 kilometers away, they had to wake up at 4AM during a regular school day so they could catch the school bus that would leave at exactly 5 AM. Sometimes, the students would skip lunch because by the time they got back to their school, it was almost 1PM, and they had another classroom-based subject to attend. In one journal entry, the student wrote:

Service-learning is exhausting. It involves a lot of sacrifices. You give time, effort and money. It consumes your energy—but it is fun. When you are in the community, you cannot think about the grades you get on exams but you become more concerned about how you make a community member happy.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING GAVE STUDENTS A SENSE OF FULFILLMENT**

To most students, the community experience was one of the most memorable moments of their lives. It gave them a feeling of being useful.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” One student noted:

As a student I felt useful because I experienced what it is to be a health worker. In the community assigned to us, some families were not warm, hospitable and welcoming, and we had to be very patient. I know it was hard for them to spare some time for us because they have a family to attend to but they still come to our lectures and I felt honored that they cooperated. I had compassion for them because although some families could eat three times a day, others could not. And even though I had to wake up early just to reach their place on time, and even though we almost could not spend our weekends with our family and friends because we had to do overtime work, the community was worth sacrificing for. (Emerson, n.d.)

Another student shared that the course in Community and Public Health changed his perspective as a person. He wrote:

Service-learning taught me to stay grounded though we were surrounded with the power and potential to be a good leader and speaker. We were in the community to teach them about improving their health. Instead the community members whom I have dealt with were the ones teaching me lessons—not about academic stuff but life lessons that I will never forget. It gave me a better view and closer look of the realities of those who are challenged in all aspects of their lives.

Institute of Clinical Laboratory Sciences aims to produce globally competent graduates who are well immersed in the community. It is believed that learning cannot be gained solely within the confines of classrooms. Learning should foster community building by promoting health and uplifting the environment. When student groups were assigned to the community with health needs, they are never assigned to communities that were affluent. In a journal entry of one student, he clearly noted this observation:

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The community we served never knew what it is to be prosperous. They live in very simple settings as tenants of the land. Most of the time their expenses are greater than their income and it is too difficult for them to maintain a healthy physical body. When we came to their community they had no sanitary practices. They hardly bathed, they threw garbage anywhere and did not appreciate the eating of vegetables. So we taught them about the food pyramid and the importance of sanitation. We showed them how to wash their hands and bathe their children. We provided seedlings for them to start a community vegetable garden. Towards the end of our stay in the community, we checked their garden and it was well-tended and watered. And when we offered them food to eat, it was wonderful to hear one resident declining and saying “manghinaw sa ko” (I will wash my hands first). It was an overwhelming feeling to see lifestyle change even in a community who had almost nothing.

A relatively well-off student wrote:

Service-learning developed in me patience. I learned to live out of my comfort zone and stay under the heat of the sun for long periods alongside bushes. Now I can say that I can do this again without getting affected anymore. I saw that life is never fair, that problems can come and go but it is always up to us to crumble with the difficulties or choose to rise up to the challenges. If God will allow me to finish my course, I will not forget to give back to the less privileged even in my own simple ways.

Echoing Gordon B. Hinckley’s (2014) words, “One of the great ironies of life is this: he or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served.” A student also wrote: “my perspective about people and things around me changed and made a big impact in my life. The unwashed and dust-covered bodies of children in shirts almost likened to rags made me think of what I have right now: ‘I had enough and they had very little of that which is necessary.’”



## **SERVICE-LEARNING FOSTERED A SENSE OF SECURITY**

Another aspect that community work through service-learning did to the lives of others was to make classmates who used to be strangers become partners, allies, and friends. They felt secure to speak out and share their fears with each other. A classmate could share personal woes like the following: “I was shocked that condoms were given for free by the City Health Office. The idea seem to encourage people to have sex even without marriage. I understand that one’s sexual desire is difficult to control but I do not think that this should be done.” This sense of being accepted by one’s teammates in service-learning also gave them the feeling of security. One said, “Service-learning is not about being acknowledged for the work you have done. It is about loving your work and being able to bless others even in small ways. Their happiness brings joy to my heart. Their smiles are enough reward for the time and effort I placed for them. We are not ‘magical genies’ who can grant their wishes but at least we tried to help them in simple ways.”

## **SERVICE-LEARNING RESULTED IN CHANGED LIVES**

Going back to how the story ended for the student who found it difficult to serve others, towards the end of her community work, her entries slowly demonstrated positive changes in her outlook. She wrote:

But as my meetings with the community progressed, I was able to inch closer into their lives and I felt grateful that I live the life I have right now. I always whined because of the things I don’t have but when I see Ate Norma, struggling to feed her big family, Criselda who married at such a young age, Ate Mercedita who barely spoke of her hardships, I had to be thankful to God for what I have. These people do not even know what the food pyramid is much less eat a balanced diet with their current budget. Our group could not help them financially but we could give them the knowledge for their daily undertakings. To be able to help others, you don’t have to have something grand. We could not give them a few hundred pesos—we couldn’t do that because we were just students ourselves. We helped them pick themselves up by giving them knowledge. But if I will be given another chance to serve

I would be more enthusiastic next time. I will stop myself from flinching or making hideous faces when I see things I do not like. I find myself doing this all the time and it is very insulting to other people. Years from now, I will look back and think about what made me behave badly in the community. I would not want to be selfish to others but help them the best I could. Ghandi once said that “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”. Now I thank my teachers, my classmates especially the people in the community who changed a lot about me and how I viewed life. Much like what Ghandi said, it is in serving others that I found my true self.

It is a joy that in the Institute of Clinical Laboratory Sciences students become better persons and learn to empathize with those in need. It is this life-changing experience that makes students feel that they are agents in redirecting the lives of community members. The privilege of assisting them in prioritizing community health problems, implementing healthy lifestyles, and empowering the community to take actions to improve their health redefined students’ perception of looking at the welfare of others—they learned that the true value of service to others is not to consider only those who are close to a person but also “the others” who need utmost services. One student, while performing laboratory tests for a community member, noted: “Performing lab tests for those in need and who might be truly sick made me nervous. I decided to perform the test accurately because if I don’t, the inaccurate results I give might affect his life. I was already sad that in the registration table for Sitio Hawa-hawa, purok Bandera Espanola, Dauin, Negros Oriental some people could not read or write or even spell out their names correctly. They say to me ‘ikaw na lang bahala day.’ Some come with deformed hands and feet—lacking three fingers or toes. I said to myself ‘if they cannot read or write and lacked fingers as well...the least I can do for them is provide them with an excellent community health service. Putting smiles on their faces, giving them courage and knowledge about health and life makes me happy inside—I am a better person now and I now appreciate the things I have.”

Service-learning allowed our students to gain from the engagement. One student during a reflection session noted: “It has blessed me to know that I have shared my knowledge in improving one’s quality of life. I never

valued my education before but listening to them made me appreciate the privilege given to me to go to school and learn. Listening to their knowledge based only in oral tradition and beliefs showed me that the task ahead of us is difficult—it is hard to change attitudes and to remove belief systems from the minds of the uneducated. I realized that transporting my learnings from the four corners of my classroom helped me to inspire others in improving their quality of life, promote health and prevent diseases.” Another said that “service-learning gave memories and learnings that money cannot buy. Lessons that one can only glean from the community and not from classrooms. I realized that mingling with the people makes them feel comfortable by the simple act of listening and talking to them. When I asked the members of the community about their monthly income, I felt so guilty because my parents support me and provided for all my needs. There wasn’t anything that I needed that they couldn’t give. I was able to think of how much hardship they have gone through and the efforts they exerted so they can provide all our needs in the family. I learned from the community members how to value budgeting my money and saving for the future because we will never know what our future holds for us, to avoid getting things which I don’t need. My experience made me thrifty and more practical when acquiring things.”

“If only we had a longer time in the community,” lamented one student, “I think that we could have done more for them; more projects, better programs that will prevent disease occurrence. Saying goodbye was never an easy thing especially when they said ‘balik-balik ra nya mo.’ These people have caught my heart and I will treasure my community hours with them in my heart.” These were the most common words students wrote as they closed their journal entries. “We wanted to build healthier communities for them yet in return they have given us something bigger than all the services we have put together for them: the community has made a better and renewed version of myself”.

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Health Diagnosis in the Community begins with understanding what they need. Nutritionally-deficient communities are encouraged to help themselves using whatever resources they have.







As part of their approach to community organizing, community members are provided with free laboratory procedures for water, urine, blood and fecal analysis.



Community members are encouraged to maintain healthy lifestyles and clean their environment.



The road to service-learning may be difficult but students do not mind the sacrifice.

# Ensuring Safety and Fairness: Reflections on Fellowship Baptist College Service-Learning Program

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*This paper provides relevant information regarding the service-learning program implemented at Fellowship Baptist College. Issues on ensuring safety of participants, utilizing fair assessment of learning and valuing the community in relation to the service-learning activities are discussed anchored on actual practices. Recommendations are provided to further improve the school's service-learning program.*

As service-learning gains popularity among academic institutions around the world (Eby, 1998; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011) more and more colleges and universities are seeing its benefits. Service-learning has been found to be effective in forming positive values, attitudes, and social behavior (Buch & Harden, 2011; Celio *et al.*, 2011), changing negative perceptions and stereotypes and creating a better understanding of people (Seider, Rabinowicz, & Gillmor, 2010). The results of service-learning do not only pertain to value-formation but has also been found to improve academic performance (Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006) and develop professional skills and competencies (Buch & Harden, 2011). Besides these noted benefits to the students, service-learning has also been beneficial to recipient communities



as service-learning activities were focused to address identified needs (Eby, 1998; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Chupp & Joseph 2010). More so, the proper implementation of service-learning program will not only profit the students and the community in particular but in the long run will have positive returns for the school or university in general as a positive image of that of a helping institution will be projected (Chupp & Joseph, 2010).

However, as academic institutions may be so engrossed in the adoption of service-learning, some very relevant issues in relation to ethical practice, understanding community needs and ensuring stakeholders' welfare are neglected. Should this be the case, according to Eby (1998), service-learning may cause more harm than good. Fair practices, human safety, and protection must be taken into consideration.

It is on the above premises that this paper is realized. Basing on actual experiences from the incorporation and institutionalization of service-learning in Fellowship Baptist College, it is hoped that this paper will provide inputs for a more holistic approach to the application and utilization of service-learning.

## **FBC SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM**

Fellowship Baptist College (FBC) Service-Learning Program was a project undertaken with the Silliman University (SU) and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA) which formally commenced in June 2011. This project was the off-shoot of the UBCHEA Project, "*Building Institutional Ties: Academic Networking for Sustainable Professional and Leadership Development*" which facilitated the formation of a network of selected member schools under the Association of Christian Schools, Colleges, and Universities (ACSCU) that were then recipients of the SU-UBCHEA Scholarship Program for Small Schools and Colleges. As service-learning was the chosen area of interest, service-learning activities were integrated in selected courses in the college. Because of the positive results after the initial networking project, FBC Service-Learning Program was proposed as the succeeding undertaking which aimed at the institutionalization of service-learning. As the new project began, the service-learning program focused on the environment and health promotion agenda. The areas of integration broaden in the following year of implementation, incorporating service learning in professional education courses as well as in the social sciences.

The framework of service-learning which was adopted in FBC was patterned after Swierk (1997). Using the acronym PARCA, she proposed five (5) main steps in the conduct of service-learning, indicating the important elements of service-learning. These steps are *preparation*, *action*, *reflection*, *celebration*, and *assessment*. *Preparation* is laying the groundwork which may involve briefings, orientations, other planning activities for service-learning. *Action* signifies the actual conduct of the service-learning activity. This stage is followed by the process of *reflection* where students are asked to reflect on their experiences and gain lessons. *Celebration* serves as an avenue where learning experiences and benefits of the service-learning activities are presented whether informally through debriefing or post-activity class sessions or in a more formally one such as recognition programs. Finally, learning is *assessed* and students are given academic credit based on the agreed upon criteria.

The initial steps of the project include the formation of the service-learning core group composed of program coordinators and faculty implementers. Capacity-building activities such as seminars and learning sessions, benchmarking trips, and meetings were conducted for the group. As part of the preparation, the service-learning core group focused on the following concerns: (a) selection of courses and topics where service-learning can be integrated; (b) preparation of modules; (c) student orientation; and (d) identification of the community and needs assessment. Noted concerns were addressed to prepare students and faculty to conduct service-learning activities.

As the approach was theme-based and was primarily focused on the environment and health agenda, service-learning was integrated in courses on environmental education, community health and the National Service Training Program (NSTP). On the succeeding years, upon its formal institutionalization, service-learning was integrated in other courses such as English, professional education, and Economics. Upon its initial implementation, service-learning activities were structured similarly. Students were provided inputs in the class and then were required to facilitate community service activities and projects in FBC's partner communities. To note a few, students facilitated seminars on first-aid, herbal medicine preparation, waste segregation, disaster preparedness, drug abuse education, and other issues related to health and environment. Herbal gardening and waste segregation projects were joint undertakings by the students and

the community. As service-learning expanded and was integrated to other disciplines, it took on a different approach. Tutorial programs and coin drives were projects incorporated in professional education and economics courses respectively. Specialized communities were identified as recipients of these new service-learning activities.

Upon completion of the service-learning activities, students were required outputs which included their personal reflections. Through journaling, portfolios, and/or reflection papers, students were able to indicate their experiences as well as the lessons they learned. Concern for others, empathy, generosity, developing self-confidence, gratitude and environmental concern were recurring themes reflected in the said student outputs.

To complete the process, *celebration* activities were conducted at the end of the school year to highlight accomplishments in service-learning. The program was attended by the College officers and department heads, faculty, staff, and the students who conducted service-learning as well as the community people who were recipients of the service-learning efforts. Stakeholders share their respective learning experiences and the benefits they have gained through the program. It was clear from the sharing of experiences that service-learning was truly beneficial.

## **REFLECTIONS ON ETHICS AND HUMAN PROTECTION**

The succeeding section looks into the different steps undertaken in the program to make certain that ethics and human protection were considered in the conduct of service-learning activities. The rationale and the implications for these actions are discussed.

## **PRIORITIZING SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

A primary consideration even from the start of preparation to the implementation of service-learning activities is the assurance of student safety. As the chief stakeholder, students' welfare and wellbeing must be the priority of any academic institutions. This responsibility emanates from both the institution's constitutional mandate and moral obligations to its students. Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution stipulates the

schools responsibility to uphold individual's rights. Articles 218, 220 and 233 of the Family Code of the Philippines authorizes academic institutions to act as special '*parents*' that will exercise proper care and authority to the students. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued CMO No. 21 s. 2006 (*Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services Program*) and CMO No 9 s. 2013 (*Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services*) both of which safeguard the carrying out of student-related activities. The most recent directive provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) reiterated in the recent DepEd Order No. 40 s. 2012 known as the DepEd Child Protection Policy states that "*the best interest of the child shall be the paramount considerations in all decisions and actions involving children*" (p. 2). With all these, neglect of student welfare and wellbeing have legal implications.

To make sure that all these mandates are carried out, the school formulated and utilized policies ensuring student safety in the conduct of service-learning activities. These policies were enforced by the Student Affairs and Services Office of the college and were directly related to provisions on the conduct of off-campus activities. These policies required that the activities conducted have clearance and approval from respective school authorities, that parents were informed and asked of their consent, and that other safety measures were undertaken by everyone concerned.

In relation to securing approval for the conduct of a service-learning activity, the faculty must include service-learning as an appropriate teaching method reflected in the course syllabus. The Academic Affairs Office reviewed and approved the syllabuses.

Since service-learning is an institutional undertaking, the Extension Office was also utilized. Other than the profiling and briefing activities which included the orientation of students on proper decorum and the nature of the community, the extension personnel took charge of preparing the recipients in the community as well.

The faculty adopting service-learning also had briefing sessions with the students and ensured that everyone had obtained the necessary waivers and clearances for the conduct of the off-campus activities. Furthermore, the faculty were required to look after their students while they engaged in community service. These were ensured because protection of participants of service-learning remains to be of prime importance. Building on the Belmont report and three research perspectives, namely the decolonial, feminist, and

participatory, Wendler (2012) noted that this care for the service-learning participants emanates from their rights to respect and informed consent which does not just conclude in the agreement on service-learning policies but must be an on on-going process of establishing a “*genuine relationship*” (p. 32) with the community. She further noted that clearly disclosing to the students and parents the risks of service-learning along with its benefits must not be undermined.

The school’s observance of the formulated policies provided protection to students in response to its legal mandate and morale obligations. While it is true that students are the top priority, policies related to protecting the welfare of faculty and the community partners were not very clear and specific as the program was implemented. It was assumed that providing the faculty travel and food allowances during the conduct of service-learning activities would address this issue. There were still underlying concerns about the activities as regards being truly ethical. *How were the faculty adopting service-learning to be compensated if they were to be compensated? Was the school working on the principle of equal pay for equal work in this respect? How could the administration ensure that from the faculty’s perspective, the returns of service-learning were worth the risks?* These were just few of the questions that needed to be addressed in the program. Thus, precise guidelines must be set in any service-learning activity. This is so because the welfare not only of the students but all of the stakeholders should be a prime consideration for any academic institution advocating service-learning (Eby, 1998).

## **Utilizing Fair Assessment of Learning**

Assessment was primarily done by the faculty through direct observations and through the evaluation of student’s outputs. As recipients of the service-learning activities, the community people were also asked to appraise how the students performed by accomplishing the set evaluation forms.

Due to the nature of the service-learning pedagogy, assessment of the student outputs may not be the same with traditional methods. With this concern, the service-learning core group formulated a different assessment tool anchored on the service-learning components. This provided students and the faculty ready criteria for assessment. The tools helped guarantee that students would be rightly assessed and given credits in relation to their involvement in service-learning. A rubric was constructed to give justice to

the students' efforts as they developed the different competencies and fulfill the objectives required and formed through the service-learning (see Table 1).

The evaluation tool was divided into two components: the service and the learning components. The service component emphasizes the delivery of services to the recipients. In this specific context, the service component included the preparations done by the students, their attendance and contribution to the team, the level of engagement portrayed, and the manner students interacted with the community. The learning component put a premium on the students' output and learnings which consisted of promptness, creativity, and organization of work output and evidence or proof of positive values learned. This approach is deemed to be performance-based which is very fitting with regards to service-learning activities (Davis, Miller, & Corbett, 1998).

From the various performance indicators included in the noted rubric, it can be gleaned that students were given a fair appraisal of their performances and given credit since the different aspects of their involvement were considered in the tool.

Insofar as these were in place, some aspects posed as challenges with regards to assessment of learning. The effectiveness of the assessment rubric needs to be reviewed and evaluated further to determine if all components are truly covered. This will require a more intensive study. Furthermore, the assessment of the community's *learnings* remains to be untapped. *Did the community people truly learn along the process? Since the element of reciprocity requires that values, both for the students and community, should be strengthened, how are the desired values evident in the community life? Are the community folks just passive recipients or are they truly empowered?* These are some questions that need consideration in order create an experience that is truly fair to all involved in service-learning endeavors. Consideration of these questions will also warrant a more thorough investigation.

## **Valuing the Community**

Service-learning was conducted in two partner communities of FBC. As noted, *specialized communities* or a sector of people identified based on a specific need (e.g., public school pupils) were also utilized. It was ensured that the recipients of the service-learning activities were properly prepared. Specifically, with regards to the partner communities, this preparation

was done by the college community and extension office; in relation to the specialized communities, the faculty concerned did most of the legwork, such as identifying needs and coordinating with partners. Both formal and social preparations were undertaken. Launching programs were conducted, serving as venue where school and local government officials signed an agreement on the conduct of community extension activities as well as service-learning. Through this launching program, the audience, mainly the community people, were informed of the conduct of service-learning and were oriented of the program's benefits. Profiling of these communities was conducted by the Research and Extension Office to determine community needs and possible intervention programs. Through these assessments, the community needs were identified. Moreover, as the faculty in charge conducted ocular visits to the community site, the community folks were again provided with specific details on the actual service-learning activity or program. Formal letters were also sent to community leaders to inform them of important details before a specific service-learning activity was conducted. These things were done so that the community people could prepare and would not be burdened by the need to be accommodating to students. The school must see to it that community life is respected and not intruded.

Another ethical issue in relation to valuing the community partners is confidentiality. As students interacted with the community, it could not be avoided that the community people may share some sensitive information. Students were briefed to handle these confidences properly and not to gossip them.

All these actions were seen necessary in order to ensure that the community was valued along the process as Eby (1998) noted. Eby (1998) also attested that for service-learning to truly be beneficial, it must take into consideration "*the perspectives of all of its stakeholders*" (p. 5), and this includes the community. Wendler (2012) noted that this may require a consideration of the true benefits of the partnership, not plainly "[assuming] that the service is inherently good" (p. 33). This was also the point stressed by Chupp and Joseph (2010), reiterating that maximizing benefits of the service-learning program will considerably depend on how well the school gives importance to the community they serve by truly understanding what is needs are. While these aspects of preparation and engagement are necessary, it is deemed that these are not the only things to consider with regards to truly valuing partner communities. As stated earlier, service-



learning activities in FBC are theme-based. In addition, almost all these activities are conducted on a short-term basis. Although based on the needs of the communities concerned, the service-learning activities conducted seem to take the palliative stance rather than a developmental perspective. Hammersley (2013) noted that service-learning must take on the palliative perspective in order to maximize mutual benefits. Hammersley (2013) stressed that service-learning must not only focus on “developing socially and environmentally conscious students, but the overall well-being of people and the planet” (p. 180). This may be a tall order, but only when this is achieved that the community will cease from being a laboratory and become a mutually benefited partner.

Achieving such goal was a real challenge for the program since the focus was more on immediate interventions rather than long-term community development. While inherent to service-learning is a specific time-frame with respect to a student’s coursework and desired learning outcomes, attaining these objectives must not be at the expense of the community people who can be easily exploited along the process. It was seen that aligning of service-learning initiatives to long-term development was deemed as something that needed to be improved. In line with this concern, planning sessions that involve the faculty implementers, the community extension office, the community partners, and other stakeholders may be carried out to address this concern. Newman (2008) concluded that key to this end is the sustainability of the service-program that must be an “*intentional choice*” (p.21) and is enforced by the commitment set by an educational institution.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the implementation of the service-learning program of FBC and in line with the issues noted, the following serve as recommendations.

As noted, in order to ensure that students are safe in the conduct of service-learning activities, guidelines related to off-campus activities were set. While service-learning activities are conducted off-campus and should be covered by such policies, some specific concerns may not be considered in relation to these general policies. A manual of clear-cut guidelines for the conduct of service-learning may prove necessary. This way will guarantee that the faculty, students, as well as and the community partners will be guided accordingly as they engage in service-learning programs.



The assessment criteria and the designed rubrics need further study. There may be areas lightly considered if not totally left out. A formal review and evaluation with regards to service-learning assessment used is necessary to ensure that students are indeed given fair academic credits for their efforts in service-learning.

Lastly, a formal study on the impact of service-learning to the community is necessary in order to know how positively or negatively the community is affected by the program (Holland, 2001). As this aspect is very much contextual in nature, the FBC Service-learning Program must ascertain that the community continues to benefit in the real sense. Only until this issue is squarely addressed that one can truly say the community is developed and is not merely a laboratory for students to learn from and sometimes exploit. Should the case be the latter, then the reciprocity element of service-learning is undermined, benefiting only one party.

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**Table 1. FBC Service-Learning Assessment Rubric**

Criteria	Performance Indicators					Points
	5	4	3	2	1	
<b>I. Service Components</b>						
a. Preparation	The group is 100% prepared with all the materials/ requirements	The group is 80% prepared with all the materials/ requirements	The group is 50% prepared with all the materials/ requirements	The group is 30% prepared with all the materials/ requirements	The group is not prepared with all the materials/ requirements	
b. Attendance	100% attendance and participation of members	80% attendance and participation of members	50% attendance and participation of members	30% attendance and participation of members	No attendance and participation	
c. Cooperation/ Teamwork	100% of members cooperated in the assigned tasks	80% of members cooperated in the assigned tasks	50% of members cooperated in the assigned tasks	30% of members cooperated in the assigned tasks	No evidence of group work seen	
d. Positive attitude	Student outputs/ reflections excellently show proof of the respective value learned	Student outputs/ reflections satisfactorily show proof of the respective value learned	Student outputs/ reflections fairly show proof of the respective value learned	Student outputs/ reflections show minimal proof of the respective value learned	No evident proof of the respective value learned	
e. Punctuality in submitting group report	Submits the group report three (3) days before the deadline	Submits the group report two (2) days before the deadline	Submits the group report on the deadline	Submits the group report a day after the deadline	Submits group report two (2) days after the deadline	
<b>Total Number of Points</b>						

# **Ethical Issues in Community Health Engagement of Silliman University College of Nursing Students**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**E**thics has been defined as a branch of philosophy that deals with what is morally right and wrong. It deals with what is deemed as good and bad behavior or action. Understanding what is good or bad, or what is morally right or wrong guides people's actions and behavior and helps promote societal order; otherwise, there would be chaos and conflict. Everything should be guided by a set of ethical standards. This includes service-learning engagements of nursing students in the communities.

Service-learning is believed to be inherent in the lives of nursing students, especially those who are in Community Health Nursing, although it has been referred to with a different label which is related-learning experience (RLE). The basic steps in the nursing process, namely assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation, are very much similar to that of service-learning. The reflection and celebration that are spelled out in service-learning belong to the implementation phase. There is always a conference after every duty or engagement to discuss the student's experiences and learning during the day that could be equated to reflection as well as a culmination, where the students and the community together celebrate the termination of the engagement.

When Silliman University adopted service-learning and Silliman University College of Nursing (SUCN) integrated it into the curriculum, specifically in Community Health Nursing (CHN), the application of the nursing process was enriched. Now, the students and the clinical instructors as facilitators of learning look deeper not only into the technical and cultural but also the political and anti-foundational aspects of learning.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES IN COMMUNITY HEALTH ENGAGEMENT OF SUCN STUDENTS**

In the engagement of SUCN students in different communities for their Community Health Nursing rotation, several issues had been identified about which there is often no clear delineation between the ethical or unethical. Out of those many issues, few had been identified as something that could be considered as priority issues, given that they are encountered almost every day as different groups of students go to the community for service-learning engagement. These priority issues are the following: 1) the belief that they, the nursing students, are experts and therefore are there to teach and not to learn; 2) students' initiative to shell out personal money to extend financial help to very poor clients who need to meet very important immediate needs; 3) continuity and sustainability of health services; 4) health professionals, especially nurses, that students encounter in the community who may not be living up to their ideals of what a professional nurse should be; 5) the tendency to lead the community to meet the students' needs and not the community's actual needs; 6) the need to adjust to the priorities of the local leaders in order to maintain a harmonious relationship; and 7) the need to give affiliation fee to agencies involved in the engagement.

## **STUDENTS' BELIEF THAT THEY ARE EXPERTS AND ARE THEREFORE THERE TO TEACH AND NOT TO LEARN**

Thinking that the community clients have not even completed elementary education, SUCN nursing students often believes that they had become experts in the field of health care after two or three years of nursing education. So, when they go to the community, driven by their eagerness to share what they have learned in the classroom, nursing students oftentimes carry the idea that they are there to teach and not to learn.

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One of the important realities that each and every person should bear in mind is that everything could not be taught and learned in the classroom, but knowledge and skills could be enhanced through application and through experience in the community setting. In addition, attitudes and values are developed and enhanced through practice when students actually interact with their clients, applying and testing the theories and concepts learned in the classroom.

As a pedagogy of teaching, service-learning is very important in developing the understanding that knowledge is not exclusive to those who study in the classroom setting in colleges and universities. Service-learning is facilitated by an orientation before the actual community engagement, by actual provision of community service, and through the regular reflection sessions done at least once a week. Through these steps, the students' perception and actual experience are discussed and processed to facilitate and enhance learning. The following are examples of student reflections on their realization that indeed the community is one of the very rich avenues for learning:

*...being in the community taught me about the reality of life. The interaction with the people in the community made me realize that as a nurse I must possess the following qualities: patient, flexible, open-minded, respectful and humble. These qualities help in gaining trust and facilitate in building rapport. Humility is also important because we are no better than the people in the community. We should treat them as equals. (J. Gatuteo, August 2014)*

*Experience is a great teacher. I realized that I was privileged to render my service to the community. My skills, knowledge and attitudes were developed. (R. A. K. Sibug, August, 2014)*

*Getting to know our clients made me and my partner be more aware of ourselves, considering how life was tough for them – not being able to eat three square meals a day and not having money for their basic needs. I could feel how lucky I am for all the blessings that I have in my life, which at times I tend to take for granted. (J. GN Sampiton, April, 2007)*

*I have never thought how much they believed in God. They advised us to keep on holding on to God, no matter what we do, especially in our line of profession. Though we have not truly known them, they have contributed in our spiritual life. (V. L. Ligaria, August 2008)*

### **STUDENTS' PERSONAL INITIATIVE TO EXTEND FINANCIAL HELP TO VERY POOR CLIENTS WHO NEED TO MEET VERY IMPORTANT IMMEDIATE NEEDS**

Often times, students were tempted to extend help to clients in the community especially if it was their first time to witness the misery of other people, particularly the clients with whom they had established a working relationship. Generally, SUCN students are discouraged from doing this because it can develop dependency and raise expectations for other groups to be assigned in those communities in the future. However, there were situations when students just had to extend help especially when the patient/client was confronted with a life-threatening situation. They just had to do everything they could to save the life of the patient/client.

The Bible verse, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow' – when you now have it with you" in Proverbs 3:27-28, supports the idea that it is ethical to give to others in emergency situations. It is emphasized to the students that help should be given "in emergency situations only," not on a regular basis, to prevent dependency from developing among patients/clients in the community setting. This is consonant with the goal of community organization participatory action research (COPAR): promotion of self-reliance especially in health care.

To be able to respond to this issue, the students were oriented on the agencies available where patients/clients could be referred to in times of need. The reasons for not giving financial and material assistance to patients/clients anytime is included in the orientation and in COPAR as one of the major topics in CHN. One of the principles of COPAR is to promote self-reliance and active involvement rather than dependency. These concepts are discussed in CHN before the actual community engagement and concerns regarding this issue are discussed during the reflection sessions.

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## MAINTAINING CONTINUITY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY OF HEALTH SERVICES RENDERED

This is considered as one of the issues because of the drop in SUCN enrollment, a national phenomenon resulting from the decrease in the work opportunities for Filipino nurses abroad, especially in the United States of America. Having less students enrolled implies having less student groups fielded to different partner communities. This means that some communities may not have student nurses every semester or in all the months of the school year because each rotation has its own time frame as to when a group of students will be in the community. The duration of community rotation is six (6) weeks for level 2, eight (8) weeks for level 4, and 16 weeks for level 3; in between these periods there would be no students in the community.

On the issue of whether the rotation is ethical or not, such rotation can be considered unethical in the sense that the community could be reduced into a laboratory for students where activities would commence when they come, and end when they terminate their duty. This comes with a greater possibility that students would be repeating almost the same activity when each new group would come to the area. Personnel who could bridge the gap between rotations should have been made available.

Even students had recognized the need to give equal amount of attention to continuity and sustainability of service. One of the students said:

*Changes don't happen over a short period of time. It should be constantly and regularly . . . each has a role to help each other.* (R. A. K. Sibug, August 2014)

The SUCN in its effort to minimize the impact of the issue of continuity and sustainability of health care services, implemented the following measures: a) making sure that communities which have had SUCN students should have a new group of students in the succeeding semesters; b) sourcing out funding for projects/programs in the communities utilized for CHN engagement; and c) requesting the administration to restore the Community Liaison Officer position--which has been taken out from the line-up of positions for about two years now--in order to help in closing the gap between rotations or student engagements.



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## HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND NURSES WHO WERE NOT LIVING UP TO THE STUDENTS' IDEALS OF WHAT PROFESSIONAL NURSES SHOULD BE

Student nurses had been taught about the important qualities that a Community Health Nurse must possess and that nurses who graduated from Silliman University should be modeling these ideals. When the students go to the community, they could not observe what was taught in the classroom. This situation oftentimes makes it hard for them to pass judgment as to how and what value system to follow. According to a group of students who visited a health facility in the community, the health workers assigned did not manifest a value of discipline, did not have the initiative to follow up patients/clients and to tell the students that they were busy, and worst of all, they showed a lack of respect for clients by talking and giving negative comments in front of SUCN students. These were also audible to the other clients around.

It is extremely unethical to neglect one's role and functions as a community health nurse; after all, nurses exist for their patients/clients, and these clients come from different work settings, either from institutions or from communities. On the other hand, professional health workers, especially nurses are expected to become role models to the students, who are still in the process of becoming nurses. As it is written in I Corinthians chapter 10, verses 31-32 “. . . whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it is all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble . . .” Furthermore, the Florence Nightingale pledge, which serves as the ethical guide for the practice of the nursing profession states:

*“. . . To pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous . . . will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. . . with loyalty will I endeavor . . . to devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.”*

Therefore, it is the role and responsibility of nurses to take care of their clients, keep any information concerning their clients with confidentiality and protect their clients' interest.

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## **LEADING THE COMMUNITY TO MEET THE STUDENTS' NEEDS AND NOT THE COMMUNITY'S ACTUAL NEEDS**

Students come to the community to accomplish certain school or academic requirements, but ideally, they also need to look into the welfare of the community. While students learn from the experience, they also need to render services to the community based on their identified needs, whether health or other related issues. However, in many instances, because of the very limited time that students spend in the community, oftentimes they would focus more on meeting their own needs. It has become unethical because as mentioned earlier, the community should not be reduced into a laboratory for students but rather, both students and community should benefit from the engagement. It has been one of the recommendations of students in the past years to increase the amount of time that they spend in the communities to make the engagement more meaningful and fulfilling; however, the nursing program has also changed over the years. With the addition of more subjects into the same four-year curriculum, the number of hours is all the more shortened. It is hoped that with the changes in the K to 12 program and with some general education subjects moved to the high school level, community engagement will be longer.

## **ADJUSTING TO THE PRIORITIES OF THE LOCAL LEADERS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP**

Basically, it is unethical to give in to the priorities of the local leaders just to maintain a harmonious relationship with the community. This issue is often encountered during community engagements; that is why the facilitators of learning—the clinical instructors—should be skillful and knowledgeable enough in dealing with this issue while still maintaining a good working relationship with the community officials. But if this is not possible, it is but prudent to leave and find another community where students could have better learning.

## **GIVING AFFILIATION FEES TO AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE ENGAGEMENT**

To some disciplines, it is considered unethical to pay an affiliation fee to partner communities for the purpose of student engagement. For nursing

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students, however, this is ethical as it is stipulated in the Department of Health Administrative Order No. 5 series of 1996 that medical and other health professionals are entitled to give an affiliation fee to agencies/institutions involved in the engagement of students. The fee is used in improving the facility(ies) where the students are assigned and in giving incentives to personnel who are involved in facilitating the student's learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

With a lot of negative forces present in the different work settings, reflection, as one of the very basic components of service-learning, is a very important tool in processing observations that may bring a negative impact in their personal and professional life. Through the sharing and discussion, wrong perceptions can be corrected. This positively contributes to the students' development into becoming well-rounded, client-centered, and competent nurses.

Somehow, the SUCN may have been successful to some extent in molding the students to become well-rounded, client-centered, and competent individual and professional nurses as can be observed in some of the feedback written in their learning feedback diaries:

*“ . . . when you fulfill your promises to the people, they will eagerly and positively accept the care that you gave because they have developed their trust in you and for me it's not the hard work that matters, but the fruit of the hard work, which is happiness at the end of everything that you've done. (G. Pelegrino, October 2006)*

*Through service-learning . . . I was able to feel what it is to serve the people with one thing in mind: to learn at the same time. The experience taught me well . . . I was able to refresh the previous and learn new knowledge, skills, values and attitude that is required of a competent Community Health Nurse. (M. M. Roa, August 2006)*

*I especially felt tired this day as I felt energy draining every time I exerted effort in performing procedures for my clients.*

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*But again, the expressions of gratitude were more than enough to compensate for the services we gave them. (J. GN Sampiton, March 2007)*

To God be the glory.

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# **Ethical Issues and Challenges in Pursuing Service-Learning Pedagogy in the Silliman University College of Mass Communication**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**E**thics is invariably defined by various sources in many ways. The New International Webster's Dictionary of the English Language (2008) defines it as "the basic principles of right action, especially with reference to a particular person, profession, and the like."

Other sources define it as "the rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession." Some dictionaries define it simply as "moral principles and rules of conduct" (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 19<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005). It should be noted, however, that ethics often has a specific application to professions such as medicine, law, and business, thus, the frequent reference to these professions as points of comparison.

At no other time in the history of Philippine mass media and journalism has it been evident that ethics is a major concern than it is today. Given the capacity of news reports and commentaries, whether written, broadcast, or uploaded online in the Internet, these affect the lives of their subjects, information sources, and the public as a whole.

Whether journalism is called a profession, craft, or trade, it needs to concern itself with ethics because of its potential for either harm or good. It can profoundly influence entire societies and the lives of millions of people. These are immense powers inherent in journalism's functions of information and comment or opinion. They require the temperance and discipline only ethical knowledge, understanding, and compliance can provide.

To discuss ethics for the mass media vis-à-vis service-learning as a pedagogy in the teaching-learning process, specifically in the Silliman University College of Mass Communication, is to view journalism as a profession which, incidentally, still needs to be settled in lengthier and separate discussions. There is a need to review some aspects of journalism in its conduct and practice to understand the context in which service-learning has been developed.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIALS FOR SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE MASS COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

There are characteristics journalism shares with the professions. Journalism is, without doubt, as demanding in time and dedication just like other fields of endeavor. It is certainly a livelihood, a job that pays a salary because it produces both product and service. Compensation levels are comparable with other jobs, such as the civil service and teaching. In the broadcast industry, the most successful are quite highly paid, commensurate to the commercial draw of their news programs. Moreover, media enterprises today have earned impressive fortunes for their owners and managers.

Journalism is also like other professions in that it provides service to society. It is in this aspect of journalism that opportunities and potentials for service-learning can be incorporated, as well as applied critically in the rationale for journalism ethics. The establishment of standards or rules of practice is designed primarily to assure the quality of the service.

The need for quality is obvious as the press is regarded in democratic states as the "Fourth Estate," an institution related to governance as it ensures a check to those in power through scrutiny of possible abuse and misuse of the powers of public office as well as corporate conduct. On another level, quality news media help to inform citizens about their obligations and responsibilities, and as to know who can choose their representatives in government wisely.

The essential character of journalism is its autonomy so that it can provide an honest check on political power. It is precisely for this reason that the journalism sector in the country should be engaged in the visible and articulate expression of the principles and values that govern its conduct and performance.

The ethics scholar, Edmund Lambeth (1992), uses the term “profession” to refer to journalism in the subtitle of his book on press ethics, *Committed Journalism: An Ethic for the Profession*. Lambeth acknowledged that while journalism is not a profession, it is “in some respects . . . becoming professionalized.” This is true in the Philippines where print and broadcast journalism-based communities have formed associations (the Philippine Press Institute and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas) to protect their common interests as well as to police their own ranks. Consequently, media advocacy groups (Probe Media Foundation, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility) have dedicated their energies to encouraging ethical compliance among journalists and providing continuing education training in journalism skills.

Ethical journalism cannot be dissociated from competent journalism. The standards of competence and ethics are not in conflict but should support each other. Ethics promotes all basic human values. The requirement of speed as journalists continuously beat deadlines or, as the journalistic parlance goes, “outscoop” their fellow journalists, has to be balanced by the more important need for accuracy. Thus, journalists very often have to contend with the dilemma of “scoop versus accuracy” because ethical practice means journalists need to get it right and to deliver the news on time.

Various situations pose different dilemmas for journalists that involve public safety, national security, privacy and the rights of children, women, and other minority groups. The late Raul Locsin, a Ramon Magsaysay Awardee and founder-publisher of *Business Day* and later, *Business World*, enforced the ethics of journalism in his news organization as an employer’s requirement. Locsin realized that codes of ethics are meaningless when the staff sees these observed more in the breach than their observance. He said he simply made it a matter for management to require adherence to the ethical norms of practice just like company rules and regulations. The failure to observe these were met with company sanctions, including termination.



If the public or the community understands journalism and the press and how it works, people can then evaluate and check the practice of the press as well as demand press adherence to its established values. The quality of the press requires as much consumer vigilance as other professional services for it to develop and mature. The consumer of news cannot be vigilant without knowing the values, norms, and issues of press conduct.

Human values and human protection are the foundation of all human conduct, including journalism. These values as applied in the practice of journalism are universal, easily understood, and appreciated. The practice of journalism gives life to values that are often proclaimed but ignored in real life. It demonstrates the link between principle and practice, giving reason and meaning to both prescription and prohibition.

## FIVE BASIC HUMAN VALUES

The Mass Communication program of Silliman University follows essentially five principles identified by Edmund Lambeth as basic and fundamental in journalism practice. They constitute the responsibilities that guide ethical journalism although they apply as well in other areas of human life. In a way, these five basic human values provide the core by which service-learning can be instituted as a pedagogy in the Silliman University College of Mass Communication.

**Truth-telling.** At its most fundamental, truth-telling requires factual accuracy in terms of getting the basic information – names, dates, places, and the exact event – right by consulting multiple sources when necessary. This is especially urgent in the case of events that are part of a long and complex process, the exact nature of which may be difficult to determine.

In addition to factual accuracy is the need for contextual accuracy, which refers to providing readers or viewers the background information they need to understand an event. The background provided can range in complexity from a few sentences informing the reader or viewer what has transpired before, to a separate article or sidebar based on documentary or human sources. Meeting this responsibility requires certain skills – an indication of the intimate ties between skills and ethics, such as interviewing and research, as well as the capacity to evaluate and interpret the information uncovered.

The need for contextualization goes hand in hand with the need for completeness which, admittedly, can never be totally achieved. However, the journalist must strive to provide completeness to the extent that it is possible at a given time. Other issues of relevance to truth-telling are the need for multi-sourcing or consulting several sources rather than only one. Multi-sourcing is necessary as a matter of course but is especially needed when the journalist has grounds to suspect that one of the sources is biased or is deliberately misleading the media for one's personal gain or benefit.

Proper attribution which, ideally, must consist of naming the source, is another issue critical to truth-telling. In cases where the source may say that he or she must not be named, the journalist can describe the source at length in order to show to the readers or viewers that the information is authentic and authentically sourced. For sources who specify that a piece of information is "off the record," meaning it should not see print or be broadcast or aired or shown, then, the journalist should honor such classified information.

Follow-up stories fulfill the truth requirement as these provide information about continuing processes reported only as events in the news.

**Justice.** The operational application of this principle is impartiality or fairness. This means airing or writing about both sides or every side involved in an issue. Fair treatment requires that the side of a public official accused of wrong-doing be presented together with the accusation itself, usually following information to that effect. Fairness also demands that "the other side" be presented immediately after the accusation is reported, instead of at the end of several paragraphs containing a litany of charges.

Balance should also be practiced to achieve fairness, providing equal space to all sides involved in a controversy in the case of print and equal time in the case of broadcast. Also known as objectivity or neutrality, balance is needed to avoid bias either for or against one side. Facts should likewise be reported in a straightforward manner without any attempt at interpreting it.

**Freedom.** Press freedom in the Philippines enjoys a constitutional protection through Article III, Section 4, which states: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances." This is premised on the recognition that freedom is necessary for the press to adequately and competently perform its functions of citizen advocates and critics of government.

In the Philippine setting, this principle requires the journalist's commitment to the freedom to report events and to comment on them to the best of the journalist's abilities and knowledge in recognition of the role information plays in the making of an informed citizenry and better governance.

Freedom is one of the most critical of journalism's values, and the threats to it can be covert or overt, subtle or brazen, open or concealed. The journalist must, thus, be sensitive to anything that can compromise either his or her own autonomy or that of colleagues, whether it be at the workplace or in society as a whole, through laws and practices that suppress such freedom.

**Humaneness.** Not doing anyone harm in the sense of physical harm is a principle journalists must assume to be absolute. Public issues must be resolved through debates or spirited discussions. Physical acts to express such views, which may harm people, have no place in democratic societies.

Some instances where this principle can be put into practice are, for example, not naming a minor involved in a crime story whether as victim or as accessory to the crime; presuming persons to be innocent of a crime until they are proven guilty; not intruding into the grief of relatives of crime victims; or, not reporting the conduct of war when such reports could jeopardize military operations and, thus, risk the safety of troops on either side.

**Stewardship.** The concept of stewardship requires an individual to take care of, and to preserve that with which he or she has been entrusted. This principle of stewardship or responsibility accepts that the media are not the possessions of journalists or practitioners, but that they have only been entrusted with them for the sake of public interest.

It implies respect for the rights of others in the exercise of one's profession, as well as discharging one's responsibility with the awareness that irresponsibility—such as when a journalist twists a story, pads the facts, or uses or abuses the power of media to destroy or malign certain people's reputations—can have harmful and far-reaching consequences on the rest of society.

Responsible journalism involves keeping the public forum or public discourse free from contamination and corruption so that these can be turned over to a new generation of citizens and practitioners.

These five basic and fundamental principles are values which govern all human conduct. They are applied with judgment as needed in the course of journalistic practice.

Lambeth (1992) asserts that truth-telling and humaneness are *prima facie* or self-evident obligations. Truth-telling is at the heart of journalism and is linked to all the other values. To be humane is another assumed obligation for all human beings. In journalism, this means checking out the story or the text for the harm this can cause and evaluating whether such harm can and should be avoided.

It is well to note that the above five principles, when put into practice, often overlap. For one, stewardship compels the journalist to be humane and just, even as truth-telling is often the surest way to being fair. The other values, in fact, flow from the first two. Journalists can protest and say they cannot worry about all the possible harm that a story can cause. The application of these principles is not set in absolute terms, and journalists need to gain practice in being able to discern the need on a case-to-case basis.

The US Poynter Institute's Steele and Thompkins (n.d.) also listed the same principles, though as direct instructions condensed into three: "Seek truth and report it as fully as possible;" "Act independently;" and "Minimize harm."

The basic agreement between the five principles listed by Lambeth (1992) and these instructions to the journalist or media practitioner from the Institute is clear and evident. In seeking the truth, says the Institute, one must develop one's knowledge and skills, be honest, fair, and courageous, and hold the powerful accountable. In acting independently, one must see to it that one's stewardship is not compromised by irresponsible practice, that one remains free of associations that can compromise one's autonomy and that one seeks out competing perspectives. In minimizing harm, the media practitioner is urged to be compassionate, to treat sources, subjects, and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect and to recognize that while reporting and gathering information may cause harm, this must be balanced by scrupulously truthful reporting.

## **CHALLENGES IN PURSUING SERVICE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY**

After a number of attempts to "launch" service-learning as a pedagogy in the Silliman University College of Mass Communication, it was in the second semester of school year 2013-2014 that it was finally realized.

The pilot classes, which were handled by this presenter, were Communication 32 (Opinion Writing) and Communication 88R (Internship),

both upper class sections. The activity came about after a series of lecture-orientations to the members of the faculty and later, to the students, facilitated by service-learning experts from Silliman University through the newly established Institute of Service-Learning (formerly Service-Learning Center), as well as after sharing in the notable service-learning experiences of the Mass Communication Department of the University of St. La Salle, Bacolod City.

To underscore the significance of service-learning in journalism, the theme, “Developing Citizen Journalists Through Service-Learning,” was adopted to guide the celebration of the 46<sup>th</sup> Mass Communication Week in 2012 with the current Program Officer of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, Dr. Hope S. Antone, herself a Mass Communication alumna, as speaker in an academic convocation.

The implementation, however, was not devoid of difficulties and challenges. These are, among others, the following:

1. Veiled threat of encroachment into one’s so-called “comfort zone,” in effect, sort of “rocking the boat” or disturbing the “status quo;”
2. Reluctance, as against resistance, to adapt to change or a new mandate in whatever manner or form;
3. Seeming inability to establish a “connect” between a service-oriented profession (journalism) and service-learning, in contrast to certain disciplines where service-learning is somehow “built-in” in their curriculum (e. g., Social Work, Psychology, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Medical Technology, and others);
4. Apprehensions on what and how activities should be done or executed;
5. “It [service-learning] is something that we are already doing, so what is new?”
6. Expectations that may be unmet, like journal-writing and processing of field experiences in the classroom;
7. Managing resources of students, such as time and other school demands;
8. Priority-placing in the course syllabus (journalistic article-writing as against journal-writing);
9. Mismatch between service-learning identified activities and the traditional concept of mass media coverage and reportage;

10. Exposure to risks of limb and property if students go on service-learning activities unsupervised;
11. Skepticism over the expertise of [otherwise highly qualified and competent] individuals identified to guide the College in the initial implementation;
12. Demand for clear-cut instructions (through memoranda or letters) and “guidelines” from university administration that service-learning is mandated as a teaching-learning pedagogy for faculty members; and
13. Defiance of character, bull-headedness, and non-conformist or non-cooperative attitude due to deep-seated, unresolved personal issues.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social responsibility is the sum total of adherence to, respect for, and observance of the preceding values as discussed earlier. Journalists become responsible stewards of the media when they value and observe the basic responsibilities of their craft. The concept of stewardship evolved from the awareness that the media industry is more than a commercial or business enterprise.

Practitioners who have chosen journalism as their profession/calling/career will do well to remember that service to humanity is a lofty goal and that our first loyalty is to the public who being serve. Unless these are inculcated through the exposure in service-learning activities, the essence of professional and ethical standards would not enable journalists to responsibly perform their duty to society.

Ethics has been regarded as integral to the competent and meaningful practice of journalism. Ethics should not make a journalist less of a journalist, but rather, values do make a journalist a better one. The five basic principles and the three ethical commands expand the understanding of purposeful and meaningful journalism as one that submits to the intrinsic discipline of the calling itself.

A report that is done quickly, relying only on selected facts or quotes without the larger context or perspective, can be misleading. In this age of 24-hour or round-the-clock news and with the proliferation of various platforms of news media, most reports tend to be incomplete, or tend to

show only a small part of the truth. The five principles compel journalists to return to the story so that other aspects and developments can keep the public better informed. Journalism becomes more difficult to do, but the news product is almost always a better one as a result.

Unfortunately, some of the conventions of journalism often keep the practice at a rather shallow level, content with the first sketch of the situation and only the barest minimum of facts about a certain event. Thus, journalists tend to short-change the public with a limited sense of what is going on.

News values are the characteristics of an event that make it newsworthy. News values are the criteria a journalist applies to an event in evaluating its worthiness for dissemination to the public. They are the standards that guide reporters and editors in deciding whether a story should be written about something that has happened or is happening. These values are conventional in that they have been around for some time, having been found useful as guides in determining newsworthiness.

There have been criticisms, though, of some of these values. For one, proximity has been said to be limiting reporting to what is close and familiar to audiences and ignoring events that are physically or psychologically distant despite their possible significance to people's lives. Prominence, on the other hand, gives the antics of the famous and even the notorious the precious time and space in the news that could have been better used to reporting events important to large numbers of people. Moreover, human interest is seen as wasting newspaper space and broadcast time on trivial events that provoke an emotional response that too often is limited to the satisfaction of idle curiosity or on violence and sex.

Generally, journalists are warned that using some of the conventional news values in writing about an event could compromise the public's need to information that matters or that is significant.

In the Philippines, such types of journalism as they apply to service-learning are teeming. A case in point is the principle of proximity which often results in a focus on events and developments in the immediate environment of the news medium. The "Imperial Manila focus" of most broadsheets, in which even relatively insignificant events such as a neighborhood brawl, reaches the front page of some tabloids while the efforts of a town mayor in Mindanao to address the town's environmental problems are ignored, is fairly evident in these newspapers' daily coverage.

Journalists need to be critical of the conventional news values and to be especially careful that they do not fail in the basic duty to provide information on matters of public interest and relevance. They should not end up filling the news pages or the air lanes with news of little value or news accounts that contain details that have not been verified.

While the news values are based on years of experience and provide journalists with the standards with which to determine the newsworthiness of an event, journalists must remember that next to accuracy, relevance is at the heart of the basic responsibility of truth-telling. In anything that the journalist does, ethical principles must be applied to practice. These principles should spur the journalist to provide not just any information, but relevant, accurate, fair, humane, and complete information that is, at the same time, recent or current and of interest to most readers, viewers, or listeners.

Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian media guru who became internationally famous during the 1960s and the 1970s for his studies of the effects of mass media on thought and social behavior, put it succinctly when he said: “Radical changes of identity, happening suddenly and in very brief intervals of time, have proved more deadly and destructive of human values than wars fought with hardware weapons.”

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# Ensuring the Safety of Students, Faculty and Community During Service-Learning: The Silliman University Experience

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Service-Learning at Silliman University began in year 2000 with the approval of a Service-Learning proposal written by Dr. Enrique G. Oracion submitted to the United Board of Christian Higher Education in Asia (UBCHEA) through the International Partnership for Service-Learning (IPSL) and the formation of Silliman University Center for Extension and Development (SUCED). The initial service-learning had a multidisciplinary approach conducted at Maluay, Zamboanguita. This was participated in by Social Work and Sociology-Anthropology Departments of the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business Administration, and the College of Nursing (Delfin, 2002). Currently, more academic units of the university have become actively involved in service-learning. Their activities are coordinated by the Institute of Service-Learning with its director Prof. Emervencia L. Ligutom.

Having more academic units involved in service-learning means more students and teachers are going out to the community to serve and learn, and more communities in Dumaguete City and in the province of Negros Oriental are getting involved in hosting these students. To add to this growing number of Silliman University students are international students coming in from various universities in Asia and America. The number of international students is growing as more and more universities are partnering with Silliman University in service-learning.

The need to ensure the safety of the students and their teachers as well as the communities where they serve and learn is a priority of the units involved in the program. This paper presents some of the best practices of some service-learning units in the university.

**Keywords:** Risks, Risk management, Safety

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## INTRODUCTION

Service-learning as a pedagogy is known to positively impact students exposed to it. Some positive impacts are on the area of personal, social growth of students, academic performance, sense of social responsibility, and commitment to service (Eyler & Giles, 2001; Berle, 2006). Because of the benefits of service-learning to the learner, more and more schools are using this pedagogy as evidenced by the 2012-2013 Annual report of Campus Compact. Dr. James B. Dworkin Chancellor of Purdue University North Central and Chair, Campus Compact wrote:

Dear Friends, Campus Compact forged ahead with an exceptionally busy agenda in 2012-2013. Our network of more than 1,110 college and university presidents and chancellors along with our 34 network affiliate offices worked together to create lasting impact on campuses and in communities through innovative programs and initiatives centered on civic engagement. Campus Compact had a membership of more than 900 colleges and universities in 2002.

In the Silliman context, growth of service-learning is evidenced by the number of academic units employing service-learning as a pedagogy.

## SERVICE-LEARNING AT SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY

In 2002, the first service-learning activity was conducted in Maluay, Zamboanguita. The service-learning activity was multi-disciplinary and was participated in by five academic units of the university namely: Social Work Department, Sociology – Anthropology Department, Medical Department of the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business Administration, and College of Nursing.

Today, there are about 18 academic units in Silliman that field their students in the community to serve and learn. In addition to these students are the international students from different universities in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the United States. These students chose to do their service-learning in the communities of Dumaguete City and Negros Oriental under the supervision of Silliman's Institute of Service-Learning.

As the number of students going to the community to serve and learn increased, the the responsibility to ensure the safety of the students and other stakeholders, the faculty, and the community also increased. One has to only scan through different schools' service-learning manuals to appreciate how the issue of risk management is addressed as a priority, to ensure the safety of those involved. According to Joyce and Ikeda (2002), while risks cannot be totally eliminated, having a clear understanding of potential risks and liabilities is a first in developing safe service programs.

Applying to this paper are the definitions of risk management and risks from Risk Management Guidelines for Community Interaction of Stellenbosch University, South Africa (2009):

- Risk Management is “the process whereby an organization (HEI) establishes its risk management goals and objectives, identifies and analyses its risks, and selects and implements measures to address its risks in an organized fashion;”
- Risks are “the possibility of loss, injury, disadvantage or destruction” categorized at different type or level: people, property, income, and goodwill;
- Safety is ensured when risks are eliminated or minimized. The following are practices of some units of Silliman University to ensure the safety of their students, faculty, and the community where the students serve and learn.

## **Ensuring Safety for International Service-Learners**

**Student profile.** Prior to coming to Silliman, the international students submitted a personal profile to the Institute of Service-Learning. The profile included the students' area of interest, health issues if any, and dietary restrictions. Knowing some important information about the student made it possible for all involved to take proper measures to ensure the students' safety. For example, a student from Bangkok University student was not any ordinary student as she was the wife of the Timor Leste ambassador to Thailand.

Matching students and partner agencies enables the students to be in a community that suits their area of interest. The time spent in commuting is also reduced, thus providing the student more safety.

Moreover, there are pre-arranged sites where safety is a consideration and where supervisors are assigned.

**Host families.** Site supervisors pick out the potential host families since they are more familiar to the people in the community. The service-learning team evaluates the location and the family, assessing for potential risks. Once approved, the family, if new to the program, is given an orientation about the program and corresponding expectations.

In the article, *Internationalization of the Higher Education Classroom: Strategies to Facilitate Intercultural Learning and Academic Success* (as cited in Crose, 2011), Summers and Violet (2008) suggested creating peer-pairing programs with international students and host students, to assist and help the international students become familiar with the campus environment.

In Silliman University, we call it the buddy system where a Silliman student who is also a service-learner acts as a buddy to one or more international students. He/she accompanies the international student throughout the duration of his/her stay. The buddy acts as an interpreter, cultural guide, and a co service-learner. Currently, buddies come from the social work and psychology department.

**Pre-community orientation.** When the international students arrive on campus, they go through a pre-community engagement orientation. The pre-community engagement orientation includes a courtesy call to the University President or Vice-President for Academic Affairs; identification card application; campus tour; and an orientation program where the students meet with the service-learning core team who will act as facilitators during the reflection sessions. The students are also introduced to agency representatives, host families, and their Silliman buddies. It is during the orientation program that expectations and community activities are discussed.

**Service-learning kit.** Each international service-learner is provided with a kit which contains orientation materials, basic Cebuano terms and greetings, write-up of the different agencies, maps of Dumaguete and Negros Oriental, and important telephone numbers.

**Field monitoring.** On a set date, the service-learning core team visits the service-learners in the field. This allows the team to check on the students, and address issues and problems students have to deal with.

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## Ensuring Safety for Silliman University Service-Learners

Orientation to service-learning is done at the start of the semester along with the orientation to the course. Discussed during the orientation are the expectations, requirements, activities, and rules to be followed and different agency sites.

**Contact information sheet.** Some units require students to fill out this sheet which draws out important information about the students, their course advisers, and their site supervisors. This form also contains information such as contact numbers, email addresses, and ways of reaching them when the need arises.

Students going to the communities should go in pairs or in small groups and never alone. Advisers and site supervisors are aware of the schedules when students are expected to be in the communities. Some units require the faculty advisers to be with the students every time they go to the community. Examples of these units are the College of Nursing, Institute of Clinical Laboratories, and Socio-Anthropology Department. On the other hand, some units allow their students to go the field in pairs or groups without the adviser on their re-arranged time. A previously arranged site supervisor looks into the activities with the adviser who conducts spot checks. The units that follow this scheme are Departments of Social Work and Department of Psychology. These units field service-learners in different sites simultaneously, hence the need for the advisers to rotate spot checks.

**Transportation.** Although some schools with service-learning program stress in their reminders to teachers not to arrange travel for students (California State University, 2002; Suffolk University, 2008; Weber State University, n.d.), practices of some units in Silliman University require all students and their advisers to travel together in a transport arranged by the adviser. No student travels in their private vehicles. This may be due to the collectivist orientation of Filipino teachers, which brings about the need to take care of the students and travel with them in the same vehicle to and from the community. On the other hand, some units allow their students to travel in groups without their teachers to the service-learning sites. A recent memo from the university administration states that vehicles that transport students to off-campus activity sites have to be approved by the Buildings and Ground supervisor. This measure is to further ensure that students travel on road-worthy transportation to the communities.

**Introduction to the agency and community.** Students are introduced to the agency and to the community before the commencement of service-learning. Courtesy calls to town and barangay officials are done every time a new batch of service-learners are introduced to the community. This standard procedure, while it strengthens the relationship of the community and the Institution, helps ensure the safety of service-learners in the community since local officials and residents are aware of the service-learners' presence in the community.

**Presence of faculty adviser /clinical instructor.** There is no doubt that the presence of a faculty adviser/clinical instructor in the field with the students help ensure the students safety. When service-learners perform a procedure as part of the program for the community, the supervision of a clinical instructor assures the accuracy of the procedure, thus protecting the student and members of the community. The presence of the faculty adviser also ensures that potential problems are immediately addressed. In Silliman another scheme is also applied by some units. Service-learners are fielded simultaneously in different communities and are supervised by a previously identified site supervisor, quite often but not always, the head of the agency. The service-learners are able to implement planned activities under their supervision while the faculty adviser conducts spot checks, covering as many communities as possible. Under this scheme, the site supervisor and the faculty adviser have to be in close coordination with each other through regular conferences to ensure the success of the program.

## **Ensuring the Safety of the Faculty**

A successful service-learning program would require thorough understanding and preparation of service-learning on the part of the faculty. When a service-learning activity is prepared well, not only would it assure success but also the safety of the faculty adviser as well.

At Silliman, there may be a variety of ways in doing service-learning, but despite variety, all units have to accomplish prerequisites to implementing this pedagogy in the course. The following are prerequisites.

First, the course outline/syllabus should reflect that the course has a service-learning component. It should also be indicated whether the service-learning component is required or voluntary. To be able to avail

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of the fund from the university, a service-learning module has to be submitted to the Institute of Service-Learning also prior to initiating the activity.

Second, the students are oriented to the service-learning pedagogy at the start of the semester. As some units practice, having a service-learning handout to serve as guide is very helpful to the students as they go through the experience. The handout should contain important information about the service-learning component such as the objectives, number of hours, activities, service-learning sites, academic requirements, behavioral expectations in the field, grading system, and weight of this component in the overall grading or assessment of the course.

Third, students should submit a filled out and signed parents' consent form, and an off-campus activity permit before commencing service-learning activities. The off-campus activity permit is accomplished by the faculty adviser.

Fourth, service-learning sites have to be pre-arranged by the faculty adviser, and there should be an agreement with the community or agency and the unit fielding the students. One of the important considerations for choosing a site is the safety of the students who will be serving there. For some units, should a student wish to do service-learning in an agency and not in the pre-determined sites on the list, the agency must first be approved by the faculty adviser. Only then can a student serve and learn in the new site.

Fifth, while service-learning engagement is on-going, the faculty adviser holds regular reflection sessions with students. These regular reflection sessions help the faculty adviser to evaluate students' progress, address issues, and guide students with decisions they need to make. The reflection sessions enable the students to make sense of their experience and learn from it.

Sixth, students are required to submit reflection activities such as journals and term papers. Conferencing and journal writing are forms of reflection activities. One cannot overlook the importance of reflection activities in service-learning. As Dwight Giles and Janet Eyster stated "Reflection is... 'the hyphen between service-learning'" (as cited in Rice, n. d.). Educator, Paulo Friere also stated, "...Reflection without action is verbalism, action without reflection is activism" (as cited in Rice, n. d.).



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## Ensuring Safety of the Community

The last stakeholder of the service-learning activities are the communities where the students serve and learn. The communities vary depending on the nature of the service-learning and the course of the service-learners. Some communities include rural areas or barangays, urban poor communities, and government or non-government institutions to name some. Wherever the students serve and learn, the people they come in contact with provide vital learning experiences, and the welfare of these people have to be protected. The following are some measures implemented by units conducting service-learning to ensure the safety of the community.

Prior to the engagement, the faculty adviser makes arrangements with communities where students will conduct service-learning activities. A needs analysis is conducted, and activities to meet the needs are discussed and agreed upon. The time frame is laid out so the communities will be aware of the beginning and end of such engagement. For some units a memorandum of agreement with the community is drafted.

Students are then oriented to the community and behavior expectations are articulated in the classroom before the students go out to the sites. If the class size is large, there may be a need to have several service-learning sites to control the number of students going to a specific community and avoid flooding the community with service-learners. The faculty adviser has the discretion regarding the the number of students assigned in each community; in some cases, the limit is stipulated by the community or agency.

Sensitivity to the uniqueness of the community is also very important and the choice of students have to be considered. A case in point is the Casa Esperanza. Casa Esperanza is a facility that houses sexually abused women and children. It does not allow male service-learners. Therefore, the faculty adviser has to provide other communities for the male service-learners while allowing female service-learners interested in working with these women and children to be fielded in this community.

Getting feedback from community is done during the course of the service-learning engagement. The faculty adviser has to monitor the development of the engagement, and assess the relationship of the service-learners and the community. Reciprocity should be assured in any community engagement.

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At the end of each community engagement, all stakeholders come together to evaluate the activity. Have the objectives of the engagement been met? Are all stakeholders satisfied with the outcome of the engagement? Are there new needs identified? Is there a need for further engagement? Planning for the succeeding exposures, should there be any, must integrate what was brought up in the evaluation. The end of a community engagement is a time to celebrate what has been accomplished. A time for celebration brings the stakeholder closer as they celebrate the joint effort towards the goal that has been accomplished.

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED**

Service-Learning at Silliman is gaining momentum and will continue to do so as more units in the university appreciate the merits of the pedagogy and use it in their courses, and as more International institutions link with the university for this engagement.

To be more effective, challenges have to be identified and addressed. Thus, the following are challenges that have been identified.

1. While the buddy system works very effectively for international service-learning, changes in the Social Work curriculum has made it difficult to develop a pool of buddies to accompany the growing number of international service-learners coming in for engagement. This school year, Psychology students enrolled in the Certificate in Service-Learning have joined the pool of buddies, but there is still a need to increase this pool as more and more international service-learners are coming in for the experience. There is also a constant need for a new supply of buddies as the older ones would complete their education and graduate. Increasing the pool of buddies protect the buddies from getting overwhelmed by the number of engagements since having a pool gives them a choice on which group or groups of international students to assist. Increasing the pool of buddies would also mean that more Silliman University students will be able to have this rich cultural experience. As noted in the experience of previous buddies, friendships formed last even beyond their college days.

2. Service-learning practices are not uniform throughout the units implementing the pedagogy. Should there be uniform implementation of the pedagogy? Or should there only be an orientation manual to articulate the guiding principles of service-learning that all units could adhere to while maintaining their uniqueness? The Institute of Service-Learning coordinates all the field activities of students in the university. The institute should make sure that all units operate within the articulated guiding principles. An example of this coordination is the Post Typhoon Sendong service-learning conducted in a severely affected barangay in Valencia. The affected barangay was Palinpinon. A multi-disciplinary service-learning was coordinated by the Institute of Service-Learning. The participating units were identified based on the need of the barangay. The entrance and exit of the units were coordinated by the institute to protect the community from being overwhelmed by the students' presence.
3. With the growing number of service-learners going to the communities, more communities have to be identified.
4. While partner fora allow the communities and partner agencies to articulate their involvement/contribution to the program, how else can they be made more involved? More involvement by the community would add to the enrichment of the engagement.

The challenge to ensure the safety of the stakeholders of service-learning will always be there and should always be addressed. Only when risks are eliminated or minimized can the stakeholders have a sense of safety, allowing interaction and relationship to deepen and creating a healthy environment to serve and learn.

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# Optimizing Reciprocity as a Process and a Result of Service-Learning Partnership

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Reciprocity is a very important issue in service-learning. Service-learning involves humans—whether they be provider or recipient of service. Students are taught valuable knowledge, fundamental skills, and essential values to survive the real world; thus, a reflection on how both parties could gain equitably from service-learning should be strongly thought of. This is an issue of human protection, where the interest of all humans involved should be put into main consideration. Service-learning should be designed foremost to bring about positive change in the lives of both the learners and the community. Generation of new knowledge through hands-on community engagement could only be meaningful if there is an assurance that the initiative will bring no harm and that there is a just and equitable sharing of gains and benefits.

This paper is written to expound on the optimization of reciprocity and human protection in service-learning and how the traditional informed consent should be elevated a step higher to informed decision to signify the value for respect and people's self-determination.

## **CONCEPTION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**

Service-learning (SL) has been a buzzword in Southern Christian College since it was introduced by its former president, Erlinda N. Senturias, in 2002. Several faculty members tried to utilize the learning pedagogy in their respective courses then, but it was only later that service-learning was institutionalized and popularized in the school by assigning a person who coordinates all initiatives of faculty.

Although there is an acceptance of service-learning as an effective pedagogy for academic instruction, not all courses integrate it in their curriculum. There are only several colleges that have tried and succeeded in adopting it. The College of Arts and Sciences does SL in their natural science department and major courses in English. The College of Extension and Community Development took the challenge in seeing that “thin” difference between pure extension and SL. In the College of Theology, SL is integrated in subjects on evangelism and developing Sunday school materials and made struggling local churches as their partners. The College of Agriculture, with a very strong leadership of their dean, establishes partnership with schools in this particular process of learning in their extension and project development classes. And lastly, the practices of College of Social Work are given more elaboration in succeeding paragraphs.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING AT THE HEART OF THE SCC VISION-MISSION**

The vision statement of Southern Christian College is expressive of its desire to contribute to the transformation of communities. As an academic institution, it recognizes that students are its main vehicle towards achieving this through the provision of a whole-person education that is grounded on faith, character, and service. The commitment of SCC is geared towards a caring and sharing society. Hence, the pedagogy of SL is seen as most appropriate to achieve the integration of “the town and the gown” and the creation of a transformed communities through a transformed education.

The College of Social Work (CSW) draws its objectives from the institution’s vision and mission statements. As SCC emphasizes service as fundamental to the kind of education that it hopes to provide, CSW calls faculty and students to PERForM. This is an acronym of the objectives of the college as presented below which was crafted to set the direction in the provision of a wholistic education to its students.

### **Respond to Pressing Needs**

The needs of communities are not separate from that of students, for they themselves come from these communities— natural and human-made disasters which have indeed become “natural” unpredictably happen; effects

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of structural violence manifest various faces which in turn affect people in communities; social ills and problems are explicitly seen everywhere. And so, as an academic institution which exists with and for people in the community, SCC-CSW sees the need to engage and contribute to change by responding, in its own capacity, to pressing issues and concerns.

### **Provide Excellent Educational Foundation for Graduates**

Wholistic education is a need of the time. The competition for scarce job opportunities after graduation is growing. Only those who are equipped with knowledge, values, and skills have the high probability of landing a good job or getting the job they desire. Though social workers are still few in number in the country up to the present compared to other professions, SCC-CSW sees the call to produce professional practitioners who are competent and skilled yet grounded on the commitment to serve emphatically for social work is a helping profession.

### **Foster Result-Oriented Attitude to Faculty Members and Students**

Classroom teaching is very important, but evaluating what students learn and how they apply their learning is equally important as well. The results of teachers' effort to facilitate learning can be best seen when students are placed in an environment where they can apply what they learned. The application of knowledge through demonstration of skills and values are results of a successful teaching-learning process. The four walls of the classroom may be a conducive space to listen and talk but beyond the portals of the institution is a much more ideal place to measure results.

### **Value Forward-Looking and Proactive Decisions and Plans**

Being proactive is looking at the positive side of things. It is foreseeing events before it happens and doing something to minimize negative results. Decisions and plans are best laid during best times when there is no need to cram and panic. Facilitating realization of dreams of a better future should be started within one's reach. Social work students in SCC-CSW are taught to create their own visions and make decisions and plans on how to reach them from where the students are.



## **Exercise Mindfulness in Knowing Students' Needs and in Recognizing Capacities**

Not all learners have the same capacity for learning and understanding. Some students are visual, who learn better when they see illustrations. Some others are auditory, who simply want to listen all the time to what the teacher says. However, many of the younger generations are tactile-kinaesthetic learners who can learn best by doing it themselves what has been taught to them.

Looking at how the aforementioned objectives could be addressed, it is recognized that there is a strong need to teach students inside the classroom, discover their potentials by giving them the chance to exercise their learning, inculcate necessary values and practical skills to help them survive the real world of practitioners, and evaluate actual experiences to pave way for new learning.

## **INTEGRATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK COURSES**

The integration of SL in social work courses started in 2011 when students gave positive responses and feedback from their community exposure and extension activities during debriefing sessions. This was seen as an opportunity to adopt SL as a teaching methodology because students seemed to appreciate it more when they went beyond the classroom to serve.

As stipulated in the book "Social Work and Service Learning: Partnerships for Social Justice" (Nadel, Majewski, & Cosetti, 2007), social work education is a relative "latecomer" to SL methodology. One of the speculated reasons (George 1982, as cited in Knee, 2002) is that social work education relied heavily on its field practicum as the SL component.

Despite "coming in late" in the adoption of the SL pedagogy, social work education readily yields to easier planning for the integration and choosing courses to pilot service-learning since social work is actually a helping profession that normally deals with individuals, groups, and/or communities. Two courses in the junior year were chosen by faculty members: *Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management* on the first semester, and *Social Work Community Education and Training* on the second semester.

There had been some important points that were considered in the selection of subjects for SL. The first consideration is the **sufficiency of knowledge** that students have to engage in the community. The freshmen and sophomore years in college are composed of general education subjects with minimal social work major courses. Students are still on the process of adjusting from less taxing high school life to a more complicated and totally different college education. Thus, community engagement is deemed inappropriate, for it may result to a more stressful situation on the part of students and frustration on the teacher's end. Hence, SL integration is done during the students' junior year when adjustments have already been made, and enough knowledge has already been gained.

Secondly, do students have **enough time to spare** outside of their school hours? The amount of time that is required is also closely examined. For effective learning, time should be properly managed. The teacher has to divide the time for both classroom sessions and community service without sacrificing one.

The third consideration revolves around the **matter of finances**. This asks the following question: What will it entail the students to engage in service-learning? How about the faculty teaching the subject? It is already a given fact that going to the community is much more expensive than just staying inside the classroom. Students have to spend for transportation, food allowance, logistics, needed materials, and sometimes even for food for community members. This is not to mention the outputs that they have to submit to monitor and evaluate the application of learning as well as new knowledge gained.

Fourth, the needs of the community are matched with students' capacities and skills as well as the **scope and scale** of what they can do. There is a usual misconception that academic institutions are "rich" and that they can provide the needs of the community if they want to. However, SL is totally different from extension. No large funding is available at hand and most of the time it is entirely the students' efforts and resources that cover for all expenses for the duration of the engagement.

Lastly, an **opportunity for partnership** has to be considered. SL should be a two-way give-and-take process between students and the community. The latter should not only be willing to take in SL and accept the services extended, but more so, they should also be willing to provide

an opportunity for partnership that will benefit both parties, thereby paving the way for a more meaningful academe-community integration.

## **GAINS AND BENEFITS OF STUDENTS FROM SERVICE-LEARNING**

To reiterate, SCC is still very young in the practice of SL, especially the College of Social Work, which is still striving to improve and if possible to perfect the process. It recognizes that learning, even for faculty, is a continuous process of evaluation and making modifications towards the betterment of the program. On the SL journey of the college, there are things which students commonly say they gain from community engagements.

**Discovery of once unknown capacities.** In SL, students are given the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned from lectures and classroom activities outside the portals of the institution. And most often, situations require service-learners to perform tasks aside from what they have learned. Instead of taking this as a drawback, students take this as a challenge to measure what they know and what else they can do. Under normal circumstances, their potentials would have been latent, but because of SL, they discover capacities beyond their awareness.

**Inculcation and clarification of values.** Students' values differ because of their different backgrounds including family, social environment, economic status, and religious and ethnic orientation. For social workers, there are values that must be placed in primacy— human rights, social justice, and people's participation. These values could not be easily inculcated if purely said, but students realize that in the process of extending service, due respect for one's rights should be given, social justice should be shown rather than uttered, and meaningful participation should be solicited for all these values are key to successful community engagement.

**Learning skills in human relations.** Involvement of all stakeholders is very important in carrying out SL initiatives. SL requires faculty and students to interact with the community's political structure in following normal protocols. There is also the need to speak with informal leaders and target partners to explain the objectives of the S-L comprehensively. Only through successful interactions can partnership be fostered. And so, in all interactions, students relayed in their journals and write-ups that they had

to relate with people with genuineness, empathy, and warmth to be able to convey their desire to establish meaningful partnership. All in all, what students learn from this particular process is the skill in building human relationships.

**Increase in self-confidence and esteem.** This benefit derives from engaging with the community through SL is very common among service-learners. This is the sense of capability of doing something to develop the community when all the while service-learners thought that they could not do anything to create change. In a journal of one service-learner, student wrote, *“I didn’t realize that I have the confidence to speak with the mayor and the municipal officials as well until such time that I was already in front of them together with other stakeholders, explaining the rationale and objectives of our service-learning project. Everything just sank in when I heard their agreements and expression of support followed by the clapping of hands.”*

**Better understanding of academic lessons.** It would be worthy of noting that many students are tactile-kinesthetic in their style of learning as revealed in the learning style test given to them at the start of the class. This means that most of them can only fully comprehend the lesson once they do it themselves. In the topic on making and implementing a social welfare project, students were able to come up with their own project proposal. However, after the SL experience, they expressed in their group reflection session documentation: *“not only can we write, but more so, we now know what to write.”* Through SL, students were able to see the reality which makes them rooted, hence totally understanding the theories and concepts that they had learned from the class through actual application.

The research conducted by Hurd (2006) revealed several evidence that SL enhanced academic learning. Some of what he posited fits in with the results manifested by social work students i.e., growth in writing and critical thinking skills, gains in basic thinking processes, enhancement of creativity, and positive impact on cognitive moral development.

**Development of cooperation rather than competition.** It was observed that after every SL engagement, students became more cohesive and cooperative. They learned how to be team-players, complementing each other’s work. Many students also opened up new friendships and established close ties with both their fellow students and the community people as well.

With all the gains and benefits derived by students from SL, not to mention professional growth and exercise of civic responsibility of teachers, it is most appropriate to re-examine and recheck the praxis to look for opportunities and ways to further develop a core of more conscientious advocates and practitioners of SL.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

In the preceding points, SL proves to be a very effective teaching-learning pedagogy. However, it is not free of ethical issues and human protection concerns such as the following.

1. How beneficial is SL to students vis-à-vis the additional expenses they incur in the process?
2. How does the school, particularly the faculty, ensure that “no harm” is brought to the community?
3. What gains will the community generate from SL?
4. What protocols are followed prior to SL activities? What is more appropriate – informed consent or informed decision?
5. How can the implementing faculty optimize reciprocity in the process as well as in the results of SL?

To dissect further the questions raised, the following topics are substantiated with vignettes from actual hands-on experiences supported by citations from the writer’s readings.

### **Expenses vs. Gains**

Vignette 1:

*The BS Social Work junior students enrolled in SW 11n (Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management), after discussing with the group, decided that the project they want to implement for their service-learning is “Improving the Social Skills of Day Care Children in Sitio Taguan, San Mateo, Aleosan, Cotabato”. This community is part of the neighboring town of Midsayap where SCC is located. Because the identified partners are day care children,*

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*and because the group wanted to show a good result, they really had to prepare for logistics and food for the feeding activities.*

*The group is composed of five (5) students. According to the budget that they prepared in their proposal each one has to contribute three thousand pesos (PhP3, 000.00) to finish the project. The amount covered their transportation every Friday for one and a half months, food for the feeding activity of around 25 children (and their mothers who are with them in the center), logistics and materials for the activity, tarpaulin printing, culmination activity and S-L outputs.*

*It should be noted that though SCC is a private school, it caters mainly the low to middle income families of farmers and professionals, hence the P3, 000.00 contribution is taking a big chunk from the budget of the student's family.*

In the teacher's intention to provide the best experience to students in relation to lessons in the classroom, there is this strong urge to adopt and integrate S-L in the syllabus or the course outline. In the vignette presented, the depicted issue on SL was on the financial aspect which was a serious concern for the service-learners. Going outside of the classroom entails additional expenses on the part of the students as well as the teacher to cover the transportation in going to the community, food allowances for the students and the community participants, and logistical requirements needed in planned activities, not to mention incidental expenses.

The question that has to be answered now is "Are the expenses incurred by the students commensurate with the learning and experiences they gained from the SL activity? Did they learn helpful values and skills which make them more prepared for actual practice? Will exposure to SL help them land a better job or if not hired, will they be able to create their own jobs compared to those without service-learning?"

### **"Do No Harm"**

There is an unspoken ethical obligation among service-learners (both faculty and students) to avoid doing harm to lives, community, or environment. Means of avoiding harm may include avoiding direct and immediate

harm. Avoiding harm may imply an obligation to weigh very carefully the consequences and results of the intervention in the future. The vignette that follows exemplifies the issue of considering this principle in the practice of SL.

Vignette 2:

*The service-learning partner identified by a group of social work students for their service-learning activity is the street children of Midsayap. These children are specifically called as “children in the streets” which means that these children have families but they spend most of their time hanging in the streets to beg for food or money as well as to play.*

*The more or less 20 children were Moro kids from Poblacions 3 and 7, Midsayap and some from Moro-dominated barangays who have relatives in the poblacion area. The project was dubbed as “Creating a Psychosocial Niche for Street Children of Midsayap”. Students met the kids either in the plaza, in the municipal hall or in the multi-purpose hall of Poblacion 3, which officials of the said barangay were very supportive of the program.*

*Within two months, the students were able to establish rapport with the street children by doing things together - tell stories, listen to the children’s stories, play games, practice dances and songs for the culmination and eat what the students had prepared. Because of the relationship, the closing program held at the rooftop of the municipal hall was filled with mixed emotions of enjoyment and sadness due to impending separation.*

“Primum non nocere” or “first, do no harm” is the first thing that has to be considered even in the earliest stage of planning in SL. From the aforementioned vignette, it can be gleaned that being on the street, being resented by people who consider them nuisance, and exposing themselves to risks and dangers from the environments were “normal situations” for the students. They were used to being independent— that is, no one was taking care of them and that others did not really mind them. However,

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in the field of social work, the street children phenomenon is of primary concern, and therefore, the problem has to be addressed. Given the existing problem, would it have been better if students did not do anything or just did nothing rather and just merely observed the street children get hurt and feel neglected in the end?

In this principle, the institution, the faculty, and the service-learners should make sure that their presence in the community would bring no adverse effects. So now, considering this ethical issue, if the one engaged in SL is not sure of the results, would it be better not to do anything at all?

The primary obligation of “doing no harm” may supersede the goal of seeking hands-on knowledge and experiences which may lead to the decision not to undergo SL at all. Avoiding “harm” is of primal significance, but doing so or being able to determine harm may be more complex than what one can imagine.

### **Too Much Expectations or Mismatched Expectations?**

The “Messianic Syndrome” is a term coined to describe a person’s behavior of showing that he/she knows everything and can “provide anything,” and therefore has the power to change and solve problems of the community. Since students’ identities when getting into the community are attached to the name of the institution where they study, the common impression (or misconception) of people is that they have money and they have come to help them with their needs or problems.

#### Vignette 3:

*Another group of service-learners adopted a newly-established high school as partner in their “Creative Children’s Rights Education”. This project was decided by the group because one of the members was a sponsored child of an NGO and she was trained very well on the topic of children’s rights.*

*Anonang High School had started operating only two years ago. They lack basic facilities such as classrooms, computers, chairs and tables, and school signage to mention some. The teacher-in-charge had a very welcoming attitude towards the service-learners with*



*recognition of their limitations. The series of training on the topic, with input on leadership skills and teambuilding, were conducted every Saturday for five weeks.*

*When the project was almost at its end, there were concerns raised from students of the partner school that maybe SCC can donate something for the improvement of their school. There was also a query from a barangay official during the culmination activity of how can the Barangay be a partner of the school and be given assistance in its needs.*

SCC's reputation in communities is that of being a service-provider that extends capacity-building and training, engages in enterprise development, gives livelihood, initiates food or cash for work, and distributes goods to evacuees, to mention a few. Hence, when students go into communities for SL, there is the usual perception that SCC is "rich" because it has funding.

Looking deeply into this concern, one can also see that this is an issue of protection of service-learners vis-à-vis dealing with community expectations that is beyond the scope and scale of their capacity. In understanding this, there is a need to consider the question of how to respond to community "requests" without disappointing them. On the other hand, there is also a need to protect community people from having too much expectations from the students so as not to raise false hopes. In brief, the question is on how to do the levelling off and the expectation check to ensure that needs of the host community and capacities of service-learners are properly matched?

## **Going Out and Beyond the Plan**

To reiterate, SL is integrated in the course Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management. Students are guided from the process of community assessment, planning, and conception of the project proposal to the implementation of the approved project and monitoring and evaluation. In the following vignette, the dilemma revolves around the question of whether or not to distort the plan to cater to the expressed needs of the community people.

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#### Vignette 4:

*The community of Barangay Milaya is home to Christian migrants and indigenous peoples who live harmoniously with each other. The main source of families is farming so there is an abundant supply of agricultural products. “Nito” which is woven into baskets, plates, fruit trays and other crafts by the IPs, are also abundant in forest areas. Most of the women are only staying at their homes growing vegetables in the backyard and accompanying their small children to day cares.*

*During the area visitation of social work students from SCC, they were able to talk to a woman who engages herself to handicraft production using “nito” and who also expressed her willingness to teach the skill to others who are interested if there is a chance. This gave them the idea of pursuing a project which they dubbed as “Karagdagang Kita Para sa Pamilya”.*

*Eventually, the service-learners opened up this opportunity to senior social work students who are assigned in the place for their field practice who in turn helped them to talk to the women. They right away embraced the idea saying that “if possible, we also want to organize a cooperative and have it registered”. They also asked if the service-learners can also teach them food processing and preservation using the agricultural products which they produce so that they can maximize their income from it.*

The students’ approved project proposal only allowed them to facilitate skills transfer of “nito” handicraft to interested members of the community, but their capacity can actually accommodate the request. In this case, would going beyond what had been planned be allowed if both parties agreed? If yes, what would be the possible implications to students’ resources? What are the implications on students’ grades given that they will be doing more? How can the enthusiasm of the community be responded with a “no”?

The SL project of the junior social work students was implemented by tapping the field work students, the college student council, the social work

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students' organization, the barangay council, and the Department of Trade and Industry. Particularly, the DTI was requested by the group to check the quality of the handicraft to increase its marketability.

### **Going Beyond Usual Protocols**

The context of North Cotabato, like most parts of Mindanao, is a little different from that of Luzon and the Visayas. Most places are inhabited by tri-people – the migrants and descendants, the Moro people, and the indigenous peoples (IPs) or the Lumads. Both the Moros and the IPs have their own system of governance apart from that of the mainstream barangay structure.

In following courtesy calls and usual protocols prior to SL, it is but normal to go through the process of asking permission and seeking approval from the barangay council and solicit acceptance of informal community leaders. But in communities where there are Moros and IPs, going beyond usual protocols is very important. Before entering an IP community and engaging with indigenous peoples, there is a need for a free prior and informed consent (FPIC) as stipulated in RA 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. Rituals are done to seek the guidance of the ancestral spirits and the gods of specific creation in their decision-making whether or not to accept the intervention.

In one of the community exposures of my students in History 39 (Mindanao and Sulu Culture and Heritage), the students were brought to a Matigsalug community in Bukidnon to document the specific traditional cultural practices of the tribe which they were still practicing. Courtesy calls were done with the municipal officials through the mayor. But more so, prior approval of the visit was sought from the council of elders of the tribe. During the first night, a ritual was held by butchering three chickens. That ritual repulsed some students who were not used to the sight of how the act was performed.

This is protocol for the Matigsalug which is almost the same with other indigenous tribes. Now, should SL be mindful of going through these processes of paying courtesy to show respect to communities even if students feel uncomfortable in a sense? Or should consensus have been gathered first, prior to making a decision on where to conduct the exposure?

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## Informed Consent or Informed Decision

This issue has been an emerging one among indigenous peoples or indigenous cultural communities in relation to interventions introduced by external agencies and organizations. SCC is dealing with ICCs in many of its endeavours including SL, but there is also a need to reconsider the use of the term “informed consent” and change it to “informed decision.”

Informed consent is usually taken by service-providers as “we have informed you of everything that you need to know so give us your consent.” If this is the case in SL, then one could not say that reciprocity is started rightly. Informed decision on the other hand, means “we have told you everything that you have to know about us and we are willing to respect your decision whether it is a ‘yes’ or a ‘no.’”

The emphasis of informed decision in civic engagements particularly in SL is giving importance to respect to self-determined decisions. This is also parallel to the social work principles stated in the book of Hancock (1997) entitled, *Principles of Social Work Practice: A Generic Practice Approach*. These principles include respect for human worth and dignity, acceptance, self-determination, and involvement in the helping process and empowerment.

## Optimizing Reciprocity

As suggested by the title of this paper, “Optimizing Reciprocity and Informed Decision in Service-Learning Partnership”, the writer would like to highlight from the context of the experience the means to get the optimum reciprocal or mutual gains from established partnerships.

Social work is known as a profession that gives ultimate importance to relationships—the kind of engagement that is established based on mutual consent with due recognition that every human being has inherent worth and dignity and that individuals, families, groups and/or communities have the capacity to change their social realities if helped.

SL, even if done by social work students, is still in a way an intrusion into the normal lives of people. Before the quality of learning provided to the students is considered, there is also an equally important need to be relatively certain that the SL intervention will leave people better off in development terms than before, no matter how small that change is.

But how can reciprocity be optimized in SL? I would like to highlight four points: 1) “keeping the cup half full”; 2) reconsidering empathy rather than sympathy; 3) establishing sustainable relationships; and 4) utilizing linkages.

*Keeping one’s cup half full* means leaving some space for something new. Teachers involved in SL should not consider themselves as experts but rather as life-long learners who constantly and continuously seek for new knowledge and innovations in the process of knowledge transfer. Speaking from the context of students, it should always be emphasized that there is a wide variety of experiences that await them in the real world. Classroom learning could not “fill their cups”; therefore, students have to go out and match their classroom with community experience through service. This keeps the students’ hunger for new learning continuously ablaze. From such perspective, service-learners will not see themselves as experts or as people who know everything when they go to the community. Rather, their mindset is that they are learners, and the community provides a wide array of resources to learn new things as well as to validate theories they learned from the classroom.

The second way to optimize reciprocity is to inculcate the feeling of empathy rather than sympathy. Simply said, sympathy is “feeling with”; it can also be feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. Empathy on the other hand has a deeper meaning grounded on respect and genuineness. As defined in the Meriam-Webster’s Dictionary, empathy means “feeling into” or the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Service grounded on empathy is service that is grounded on the needs of the people. Dewey (1938, as cited in Ver Beek, 2006) wrote, “Genuine learning only occurs when human beings focus their attention, energies and abilities in solving genuine dilemmas and perplexities.”

The next point—establishing sustainable relationships—goes beyond formal partnerships that are signified by Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement. Even after SL, the relationship between the community and the teacher, students, and the institution should be continued. The praxis should bring about relationship more than just mere result, emphasize people instead of the project, and focus on building social infrastructure rather than physical infrastructure.

In the absence or shortcoming of resources, capacities or scope and scale of responsibilities of service-learners, the utilization of linkages comes

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in. Recognizing limitations in service-learning is not a sin. It is, on the other hand, paving way for an opportunity to extend inclusive service that mobilizes existing resources from both government and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

## CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Relative freedom is enjoyed by many SL practitioners especially those who have already established prior connections. SL practitioners are even viewed sometimes as part of the community's "normal life" and work. Service-learners are a welcome interference amidst community people's usual and routine activities. This may not only be true to community people but also to teachers who have made SL as a regular teaching strategy in courses they handle.

Because of this, ethical concerns that come into the surface are just taken for granted. Mutual gain and benefit is already considered as achieved when the community agreed to take in service-learners thinking that "they have benefited from it anyway." To optimize the results of reciprocity then, we need to "start from where the people are."

Despite ethical issues and concerns, practitioners of SL have no reason to be discouraged. Service has to be done to foster dynamic process of learning. Definitely, the goal is to create positive change—both in the lives of our students and in the lives of the community. As written by Paulo Coelho (2014), "*El mundo cambia con tu ejemplo; no con tu opinion*" ("The world will change by your example and not by your opinion").

Lastly, why then do ethical issues and concerns have to be discussed? We need to discuss it because in facilitating learning through the rendering of service, human beings are involved. Therefore, where humans are involved, no harm should be done, and service-learners are urged to "do it right the first time, and all the time".

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# **Food Myths and Fallacies in the Community: The SUND Service-Learning Experience**

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**I**n this day and age, we live in an era where the world has become borderless, and people have set aside their nationalities to become global citizens. Each and every nation is reaching out to each other, working hand in hand to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. All these efforts are for progress and for humanity to move forward towards living life in a better, more peaceful, and more prosperous world. With the onset of such thirst for development, service has become the universal language. Mother Teresa set one of the perfect examples service as the utmost expression of love, respect, compassion and being human.

Indeed, humanity is characterized by each of our innate instincts to care for one another. To protect and defend, to reach out and educate, and to relate and empathize with each other is the very essence of humanity. And because of this, the value of service has become the cornerstone of almost all dimensions of life. It has become part and parcel of the operations of the academe, corporations, and political institutions, and has been at the fore front of the church ministry.

This paper seeks to put greater emphasis on the integration of service in the academic sphere. This integration of service is the training ground for future leaders, business persons, doctors, nurses, journalists, nutritionists, social workers, and global citizens. Service plays a vital role in inculcating



the value of service through learning, hence the concept of service learning. Service learning is defined by many scholars as an act of reaching out to the community in need and catering to these needs, but in the eyes of the people in the community, service is manifested in their fellows' act of giving a part of themselves to help them. This is a priceless value taught to students who, in their youth, will already be able to speak this language of love.

In molding our students towards becoming global citizens, they must be immersed in civic engagement and social responsibility. The first step towards achieving this is service-learning, for its foremost frontier involves acting at a local level to help resolve global issues. The Nutrition and Dietetics Department is proud to be a vessel of this kind of learning that currently allows us to experience a lot of benefits and rewards, and overcome numerous challenges.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING AS PEDAGOGY**

Service-learning is a pedagogy that integrates community service within the realm of academics, thus enabling students to experience and appreciate the value of serving people who are in need. Service-learning is a way of empowering people to become self-sufficient, and it is a powerful tool to alleviate the lives of people most especially those who are disadvantaged (Oracion, 2006). Service-learning as a pedagogy encourages students to listen and learn from their community partners, respond to the felt needs of the community, and be involved and work towards meaningful action. It is an educational activity that provides opportunities for teachers to help students learn (Dubinsky, 2006).

The Nutrition and Dietetics Department of Silliman University is a neophyte in Service-Learning. Since its implementation, the faculty and students encountered numerous challenges in the context of local food culture. Public health nutrition is also one of the areas of the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSND) program that deals with community work. Public health nutrition is primarily concerned with maintaining the nutritional status of groups that are at-risk—particularly pregnant and lactating mothers and children who are vulnerable to malnutrition—through nutrition education. In this class, the Nutrition and Dietetics (ND) students are given the opportunity to interact with the community.

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According to World Food Program, malnutrition in the form of undernutrition among children is a state in which the physical function of a child is hampered to the point where he or she can no longer maintain natural bodily capacities such as growth, learning abilities, physical work and resisting or recovering from disease. The term includes problems such as being underweight, stunting, or being deficient in vitamins and minerals. Malnutrition is a consequence of lack of sufficient food in terms of quantity and quality. Even if people have enough to eat, they will become malnourished if the food they eat does not provide the required amounts of vitamins and minerals to meet daily nutritional requirements ("Malnutrition," n.d.). In populations where undernutrition is a chronic problem, the vicious cycle of malnutrition prevents the development of a healthy and productive population (Smolin & Grosvenor, 2000).

The 7<sup>th</sup> National Nutrition Survey (NNS) in the Philippines showed empirical evidence of the poor and deteriorating nutritional status of children in the country and that undernutrition remains a public health problem, affecting nearly three out of 10 children (Capanza, 2010). Of the nearly 12 million children under five years old who die each year in developing countries, 55% of the deaths are attributable to undernutrition. Throughout the world the problem of undernutrition is prevalent and increasing (Wardlaw & Kessel, 2002). In the Regional Summary Report on Operation Timbang, dated March 2010, which was made by the National Nutrition Council Region VII, the Province of Negros Oriental ranked first, having the highest prevalence rate of malnutrition with 8.37 prevalence rate. Among the 16 cities included in the survey, Dumaguete City ranked 8<sup>th</sup> with a 4.40 prevalence rate.

To address the malnutrition problem of the country and to promote good nutrition (PGN), the government developed a module for hunger mitigation to improve the food and nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the families in the Barangays thru Pabasa sa Nutrisyon, Promotion of Egg and Vegetables ("Campaign on," 2011).

The faculty members, after having been trained on the module, deliberately shared the same training to the junior and senior students. The training was done during weekends out of dedication and commitment and in response to the challenge to involve students in alleviating the malnutrition problem not only in Dumaguete City but also in the entire country. The department was challenged to reduce child malnutrition in Dumaguete City

more so because Silliman University is at the heart of the city that produces Nutrition and Dietetics professionals.

Malnutrition in its various forms still continues to plague the world and the country, despite the many efforts of government agencies and private institutions (Cañares, 2011). There are several factors influencing the nutritional status of children. Our service-learning activities highlighted one of these factors. We focused on the knowledge and education of mothers in the community. A study done by Africa et al. (2005) showed that the mother's education is a contributory factor to malnutrition among children as evident in growth stunting. Mothers or housewives, who have traditionally been regarded as the family gatekeeper, regulate the availability of food to their family (Webb, 2002) based on their cultural orientation or food knowledge handed down by foreparents. Mothers who are malnourished as well may be too frail to give proper attention and care to their children; this may increase the risk of malnutrition among children (Africa et al, 2005).

## **SERVICE-LEARNING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

Upon close examination we found that the same situation also existed in our localities. The same framework applies in Filipino families, to be more specific in Dumaguete households, where the mother plays the vital role of choosing the nourishment of the family. In our local *barangays* the mothers' knowledge about food and nutrients greatly determines the health of her children. Her state of health may also mirror the state of health of her children, or in some cases where the mother is too young, not educated enough, or malnourished, the health of the children tend to be worse than hers.

Through the service-learning program, the ND student gave a holistic treatment to the needs of the community by means of human and technical resources made available (Oracion, 2002) by the ND students themselves. The trained students along with the faculty members were able to facilitate training among the Barangay Nutrition Workers (BNW) of Dumaguete City who are the front line workers in their respective *barangays*. During community immersion, with collaborative efforts, the BNW gathered all the mothers of malnourished children, and together with the students, facilitated the training and nutrition education classes.

It was through this activity that students taught the mothers and housewives the basic concepts of nutrition, the essentials of proper feeding of their children, and the prevention of malnutrition. Cooking demonstrations were also done to show the mothers that getting nutritious food is not expensive for as long as the food choices are correct. Supplementary feeding was also given to selected malnourished children. This service-learning was a forum for practical application of theories learned in the classroom to the community. For the students it was a face-to-face encounter with concrete social realities. This earnest service and effective learning are both desirable outcomes of an experience shared by the academe and the community. Thus, such learning occurs when students genuinely serve the people (Apla-on, 2002).

Through this activity that aimed to make mothers in our local communities become more aware of their responsibility, the lives of the members of the family had change for the better. It was a trickledown effect. We educated the mother with the knowledge she was deprived of due to certain circumstances such as poverty, cultural difference, beliefs and personal family practices. In relation to what Webb (2002) stated, some mothers who were not privileged enough to go to school based their way of taking care of their children on what they had learned from their own mothers. It is a natural impulse to bring up a child the way one was brought up as a child. Trainings like these break the chain of popular belief and uneducated premonition as to what to feed one's child. Trainings may also help enlighten the mothers on the proper health and feeding practices to be carried out. The end goal of the training we provided was to be able to correct the false practices naively handed down by previous generations who were not exposed to what is right. In return, there was a chance that this new-found knowledge and techniques shared by the BNWs, the students, and teachers would be passed on to the members of the family, most especially to the children. These children would have their own families in the future, and such knowledge and information may already be part of their upbringing.

## **COMMUNITY FOOD MYTHS AND FALLACIES: CHALLENGES VS. REWARDS**

Tradition is the most influential aspect that molds people's food choices. Every city and country has its own signature food and methods of preparation. Thus, people get used to eating the foods they grew up with. When it comes

to food, a young individual follows the values that were taught him or her—how one feels about it or which is acceptable or not. This is proof that life indeed is enveloped by culture (Ruiz & Claudio, 2010).

One of the issues that most of our students encountered during the community engagement was the belief of many people in food myths and fallacies that were somehow transmitted to their own culture after these myths have been handed down to several generations. It is also important for nutrition educators to be aware of the cultural characteristics of their participants knowing that such beliefs can cause nutritional problems (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 1997). Looking closer at the definition of myths in the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, one can realize that these are traditional stories accepted as history that serve to explain the world view of a people. Fallacies, however, pertain to false beliefs. It is therefore essential to find out what nutrition-related myths or beliefs are still being practiced, knowing that these can strongly influence their food behavior and nutritional status. These myths might not be true but are nonetheless perceived as facts by families. Additionally, the demography of the community must also be noted, including such characteristics as age, sex, race, ethnic affiliation, educational attainment, income, employment, household composition, and religious affiliation (Terry, 1993).

The BSND students who were the nutrition educators asked the participants (mostly mothers) if they knew and practice some myths or beliefs. It did not come as a surprise that many of the participants raised their hands to give their answers that were eagerly noted for later discussion. After that, a list of food and nutrition-related myths were presented to the participants, and they were asked to agree or to disagree with each myth and explain why they answered so. The myths included the following:

- Eating *ampalaya* can cause high blood pressure;
  - Do not eat squash or camote especially when taking examinations;
  - *Patola* lowers blood pressure;
  - Eating squash cooked with chicken causes leprosy and makes a person dull;
  - Pregnant women should not eat eggplants as this may result in a baby with dark skin or birthmark;
  - Children with fever who eat *gabi*, stringbeans, squash, eggplant, and *alughati* will have chicken pox;
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- Pregnant women who eat bamboo shoots can have babies who are hairy;
- Eating vegetables cooked with coconut milk helps increase breast milk;
- Vegetables cooked in coconut milk when eaten at night will cause stomachache;
- People with arthritis should avoid eating beans;
- Eating eggplant and string beans can cause itching among those with measles;
- Eating too much tomato or guava causes appendicitis;
- The first milk is not good for a baby. Most mothers opt not to breastfeed until it is gone.
- Some mothers claim: “I have not been able to breastfeed for two days, so my milk is sour.”
- Some mothers think: “I don’t have enough milk because my breasts are so small.”

Most participants agreed that they held such beliefs as true. They just continued to believe them as these beliefs were taught by their elders. This was an issue that the nutrition educators had to address. This was the reason why, at first, some mothers were resistant to change or to the new information presented to them. The beliefs had become deeply rooted in their mindset and lifestyle; they had a hard time forgoing such practices.

However, the way their culture describes their diets and food uses was useful information for the nutrition educator. These descriptions helped them resolve the group’s nutritional status and allowed them to give the most effective and appropriate dietary advice and guidance. Therefore, the nutrition educators must be sensitive enough so as not to offend the group or else new ideas would not be taken seriously. People also tended to classify which food should be eaten or not; if the nutrition educators were successful in teaching them to how distinguish what was good from what was bad, then the training may have yielded positive results.

The myths and fallacies that people in the community believed in was a great challenge to the nutrition educators. They perceived this as a problem of the community, and they believed that it was their duty to address such problem. Because of this, the nutrition educators had to be mindful of what they were to teach or inform the participants about, so that they could avoid

misunderstanding and misconceptions of ideas. The thought of spreading wrong information would present like a virus--when it spreads, it infects the community practices.

According to students, during discussions, after every myth statement was explained, the program participants would tend to say “Ahhhh” as an expression of amazement or agreement to the statement. The students made an effort telling the participants that not all myths or practices were correct according to scientifically researched data. In explaining, the lecturers had to make sure that they were using simple terms to explain the scientific answers to participants’ questions. Aside from this, students were trained how to answer modestly and respectfully and not to sound imposing or offending to the participants. In the end, they were mostly convinced and would respond, “*Dili to tinuod sa?*” (It is not correct, right?) or would simply give a nod at every idea. Some were even be prompted to share more examples and ask more questions. The students or nutrition educators were glad to welcome such queries because these gave them the impression that the participants were doing their best to understand and further clarify the information presented to them. The participants’ questions also served as a test to the nutrition educator’s knowledge; these ideas stimulated their minds and gave a logical response to the questions. This scenario gave the nutrition educators the impression that the participants had learned to embrace the ideas they were taught and that they were willing to adapt and change.

Once the misunderstanding of these beliefs was clarified and the participants had comprehended the new information, there was a need for them to realize how these problems related to real life situations. The nutrition educators had to assess the participants to find out how their answers compared to norms. This made the program more relevant to them as it motivated the participants to consider change (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 1997). The assessment, when carried out completely, was expected to benefit the participants who would then be aware of the identified problem. The assessment also provided essential information to the nutrition educators. In addition, there was another assessment that could aid the nutrition educators. They had to determine the attitude of the participants towards health concerns or other problems that were tackled in the lecture. The assessment aimed to answer the following questions: What value do the program participants put on health? Did the participants learn and acquire the skills and behavior needed to address the concern or problem? Are they

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ready for a change? The answers to these questions served as a guide to nutrition educators to create and design proper intervention (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 1997)

All the myths and fallacies served as a challenge to students because correcting a wrong notion was very hard to do. The teacher's presence during service-learning classes had a big impact on the learning process because they were credible and mothers tended to believe or accept new information if a professional backed up the students' presented data.

In the end, despite these challenges, more benefits were reaped. Several fallacies had been debunked through this effort. In this exposure, young mothers had acquired new information or facts about breastfeeding. Breastfeeding for the first six months of life and until two years had proven to decrease the morbidity and mortality rate and malnutrition cases in the Philippines. Furthermore, the participants realized that it is not true that the breast and nipple size influenced milk production. Second, the challenge was to correct the belief that fruits and vegetables could cause diseases because the reality is that these can contribute to good nutritional health. One rewarding fruit of the training was that mothers accepted the challenge to do bio-intensive gardening or build backyard gardens. They also started serving vegetables to their young children. A plus factor was that the country had an abundant supply of vegetables.

But perhaps the greatest reward from this effort was the promise of having new generations who can pass on scientifically sound information. It is hoped that the goal of food security and nutritional health in the hands of the Filipino people could be achieved.

## **SERVICE LEARNING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE STUDENTS**

Being a public health nutrition teacher, I have come to appreciate service-learning after every students' field exposure. After every outreach, the students are asked to write a reflection and I get to read what they have written. The students' reflection papers intensely expressed their appreciation of reaching out to the mothers of the community despite the resistance to change. Conducting nutrition education classes under the coconut tree or a make shift canopy under the heat of the sun was no longer a barrier to their efforts to share the importance of nutrition as framework to good health. Doing traditional cooking using firewood and stone was not viewed by



the students as a hindrance to giving supplementary food to malnourished children as they had articulated their fulfillment in doing quality service to unfortunate children. A student, in his reflection wrote:

It is an honor for me to be one of the representatives of the school in teaching the importance of nutrition to the town folks in Dauin. It really feels good to share what I have learned in school through books, papers, manuals, and classes to these people. It's as if giving off a part of me for their sake and for the greater good. For me, I am always beyond happy and content having been able to do something that a lot of people will benefit from. We prepare every day, gather fire woods, make "haling", cook, teach feed., etc. these things I hope they see and appreciate as much as we do. It is a great fulfillment in my heart.

This is just one of the reflections that further propelled the students' appreciation of their present socio-economic condition as compared to the community they were working with.

Research suggests that service-learning is an effective pedagogy at academic institutions because in most situations the benefits outweigh the challenges and problems encountered. Service-learning is an effective tool in education because it assists students in understanding, applying, appreciating, and retaining course concepts and skills. Studies have also shown that students become more motivated and do better when exposed to service learning than when given assignments (Madsen, 2004). Moreover, service-learning provides the students with meaningful learning through actual community service activity. In reality, there is a win-win situation for everyone because the students are able to apply theories and principles learned in the classroom while the clients get assistance, a benefit that is free of charge (Mennen, 2006). The rewards of service-learning in public health nutrition was well-appreciated by the faculty members as teaching becomes easy and actual hands-on experience drew the teachers closer to their respective students. Students showed positive changes and perception towards community work as they displayed a change of character favorable to that of a public health nutritionist. To the community, as they became recipients of Silliman University human and material resources, they not only opened their homes to the students, but their lives also became a blessing to so many students.

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Among the student reflections were the following:

There are few things I learned; first is that being a public health worker is difficult but a fun thing to experience because I have to deal with different kinds of personalities in the community and I have the chance to observe other people. I learned to be more responsible in everything I do and learned to be more compassionate to other people I am dealing with. I have also learned that mothers and children in the community have many cultural fallacies about nutrition. As a group of students, we have to do something to help them and teach them the correct nutrition concepts. In the process, they learn from us and we also learned from them.

Such realizations showed that this experience greatly impacted the student's interpersonal skills and further developed their sense of social responsibility. In the classroom, students were only made to relate and communicate with their classmates and teachers, but in community activities, they were able to talk to different kinds of people with different stories to tell. The experience allowed them to relate to people from a different socio-economic standing. Moreover, the students were able to empathize with them— something that a lecture or a presentation in the classroom cannot facilitate.

Furthermore service-learning instilled in the students a deeper understanding of the concept of genuine moral and social responsibility that each and every person should have towards others—that apart from studying to advance their own careers and pursue their own dreams in life, they must not forget to look back to where they came from, and look around them and be sensitive to the needs of others as well.

Another student stated:

I have gained new experiences and most of all I have learned to work well and communicate well with other people and also with my group mates. It's overwhelming on my part to see happy faces whenever we arrived at the site. The mothers and kids were very attentive and cooperative. They're willing to learn new things, and

new information. I am grateful to be able to teach them new facts about nutrition that can help them improve their way of living and correct their food fallacies with the right ones.

A lesson can be learned through frequent reading and memorization, but learning while at the same time touching the hearts of people is something that will last for a lifetime. In activities like these, knowledge and information are shared and passed on. Whatever the student learns in the classroom is reinforced and mastered through the community immersion because the students have to echo what they have learned from the teacher. If a student is able to teach another person what he/she learned from a lecture, that means the lesson has made its way not only into the notebooks of these students but also into their mind and heart. That feeling of fulfillment in being able to serve others is also priceless; such feeling boosts the students' morale and further strengthens their desire to learn more as they can already feel the pleasant burden of helping others through their knowledge.

More student reflections were as follows:

The world reflects what you need to see, not only what you want to see. My duty in Dauin opened my eyes and made me see clearer. I had a glimpse of how folks run their lives and their current situation. I thought that being in the community is just a completion of service learning duty but as I stepped out from my duty in Dauin, I suddenly realized that I have made myself see a clearer picture of what the people need to have and really should have. It wasn't that hard yet it wasn't easy either to do those things. And I said to myself that I should take my heart closer towards the people there for them to understand and absorb more of what, why and how things are done.

I realized that service learning is a teaching strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich learning experiences, teach civic responsibilities, and strengthen communities. My character was built up and I became an active participant as I work with others in the community.

Each person I have encountered in the community had different types of situations and I am able to put myself in their shoes, and I was able to learn the circumstances they face in life. I have learned that I can choose my friends but I can never choose the people I work with and much more that I cannot choose the type of people to serve.

Truly, these were words written out of the fullness of the students' heart, proving that such service-learning activity impacted not only the lives of those being helped but also the lives of the students and everyone involved in the outreach. As an anonymous writer wrote and I quote, "Our finger prints do not fade from the lives we touch." Indeed, such experience has become a memory that will transcend time.

## **GAUGING THE EFFICACY OF SERVICE-LEARNING THROUGH THE ACADEME**

Lastly, the nature of the academe, being a corrective yet nurturing institution, is a perfect avenue to gauge the efficacy of service-learning. Each time the students immerse themselves in community work, certain mechanisms are involved to check the results of the activity. Part of this mechanism involves the creation of journals, reaction papers, panel discussions, and even tests to gauge the experience of the students. Through these mechanisms the teachers are able to evaluate the learning of their students. These mechanisms also gives teachers a glimpse of the students' personal realizations; these mechanisms provide them a way to find out whether or not the activity has an impact on the student.

It is important to measure the efficacy of service-learning so that the efforts put into it will not be in vain. Service-learning as a pedagogy is indeed an indispensable avenue for learning not just facts and scientific data but life lessons as well.

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# Motivations of the Students: Challenges and Celebrations of S-L in Trinity University Asia

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Miguel Tanghal is currently a senior AB Communication student at Trinity University of Asia (TUA). He came from a middle-income family in Zambales Province and decided to pursue higher education in Metro Manila, just like most of the young people in Philippine provinces who wish to have *better* opportunities after graduation. Just a typical teenager, he plays DoTA and other on-line games during his free time and spends most of his time with his girlfriend on weekends when not in the province.

Miguel was my student in Development Communication, a core course of AB Communication program, last semester. During the course of his studies, he showed diligence in learning and demonstrated hard work in complying with the course's requirements. In fact, he was considered as one of the *de facto* leaders of his class when they organized disaster awareness and prevention seminar for the residents of Bgy. Roxas, Quezon City, as their final requirement in my subject. I gave him 1.50 (equivalent to 92 – 94%) as his final rating.

Miguel is a representation of the present generation today – the generation that has been and is constantly being bugged by a lot of distractions. They are the *young, wild, and free* as one song puts it. They



enjoy the technological advancements and global interconnectivity. They are prone to temptations that are now considered as socially acceptable such as smoking, partying, having sex at a very young age, and drinking. They have so many choices that everything comes in an instant, without even having to work for it.

With all these things that influence the younger generation, educators particularly of service-learning (S-L) courses like mine, are challenged. How do we make and keep our younger generation motivated to genuinely help the community and learn from the experiences they will make?

I have been teaching Development Communication (DevComm) in Trinity University since 2006 when the original faculty who teaches it resigned from her teaching stint. The method that I inherited is the usual lecture and discussion of the theories that prove how communication can be used as a tool for development, particularly in the countryside. There were a lot of readings, from the time of Daniel Lerner to Nora Quebral to more contemporary ones. In short, DevComm, as it is fondly called, is a *boring* lecture course.

In 2008, with the initiative of the late Dr. Cesar Orsal, the SL coordinator of TUA and then Dean of College of Arts and Sciences, the university decided to institutionalize SL. Some subjects were identified as implementers of service-learning pedagogy, and one of these courses was DevComm. From a *boring* lecture subject, DevComm became an interesting practical course.

The first few years of implementing SL as pedagogy were a struggle. Adjustments, grading system, communicating with partner communities, and degree of success of services rendered were some of the problems that we encountered. But eventually, we were able to iron out the glitches, and in 2011, I could say that we have somehow perfected the service component of the course, based on the degree of success of the students. The class organized Camp Kalikasan, a two-day camp for the youth of partner communities that aimed to empower them in initiating projects in their areas that would help preserve the nearby river and the environment as a whole.

Last semester, with Miguel's class, I could also say that it was successful. I am basing my judgment on the degree of achievement of course goals. Among these goals that were constantly met at least in the last three years (DevComm is offered only once in a school year) by the students were to (1) formulate and implement programs that use communication to foster development in partner communities; (2) manifest learning from the service they have made; and (3) reflect on their own personal development through journal writing.

While these goals may be achieved in one way or another, I still have doubts on the authenticity of the intentions of the students to serve. Are they just doing it because it is a requirement to pass in my course? Are they just after getting high grades to maintain their academic standing?

I had the courage to ask Miguel these questions for this paper. His answers proved my worries right. He said that his biggest motivation for doing the service is the grade, first and foremost. Quoting him verbatim, *Hypocrisy aside, why would I exert much effort for nothing?*

True enough, why would a “busy” junior college student exert much effort doing service in the community and not get credits from it when he can devote his precious time complying with requirements from other production courses. DevComm is taken in the second semester of third year in college, together with Communication Research, Television Production, and Integrated Marketing Communication—courses that require bulky assignments.

Experience and learning are his secondary motivators.

I consider his answer a natural reaction of any student of his age who is *forced* to do something that they do not usually do every day. Grade could really be a great motivator for complying with the service requirement of the course. The credits that they get is what makes SL different from voluntary work. But what does the literature say about the students’ motivation?

In the paper written by Hug and Haefliger (2009), they said that there are six dimensions of motivations among young people.

The six dimensions in the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) are values, protection, career, social, understanding, and enhancement. The value motive focuses on the welfare of others and can be regarded as the most altruistic motive. The protection motive wants to deflect from negative aspects of the personality, such as guilt, boredom, and the like, and this can be regarded as a predominantly an egoistic motive. The career motive is a utilitarian motive concerned with furthering one’s own career prospects. The social motive reacts to social expectations of an individual’s environment and is probably closer to altruism, as it is other-focused. The understanding motive is concerned with learning new information or skills and is an egotistical motive. Lastly, the enhancement motive, unlike the protection motive, is concerned with enhancing the positive aspects of one’s personality. This can be self-realization, social relations, and so on. This motive is also considered an egotistical type of motive.

While Miguel's initial answer revealed that grade was his motivation, based on Hug and Haefliger's model, Miguel's motivation can be considered incentive. In the same paper mentioned above, the researchers discussed how incentives affected the length of service given by the volunteer and how incentives affected satisfaction and performance of the doer of the service:

As the basic premises of motives for volunteering have been tested and developed further the importance of the congruence of motives and incentives was confirmed, at least for organizations with a fairly homogenous membership base. Differences in members across hierarchical levels of the organization or simply the heterogeneity of base members have not been taken into account much though and therefore creating a gap in systematic findings. Clark & Wilson (1961), proposed a much referred to threefold categorization of incentives of organizations to appeal to their members: material incentives, solidary incentives, and purposive incentives...

The duration of volunteering (length of service) was found to be positively related to the Enhancement and Understanding motive by Omoto & Snyder (1995) and Finkelstein (2008a), but related to the Value motive in Penner and Finkelstein (1998). A possible reason for this difference could be the cash incentive (to benefit the organization) offered to respondents in this last study which may be responsible for a selection bias. Other-oriented (altruistic) individuals may be more inclined to respond than self-oriented individuals if there is some benefit for the organization by responding. Another important determinant of volunteer duration was found to be satisfaction (Penner & Finkelstein 1998), which may be related to motive fulfilment, however. (Hug & Haefliger, 2009)

Miguel's motivation, or in this case an *incentive*, can be classified both as egoistic (Career motive) and egoistic (Social motive).

The second motivator for Miguel was experience. He said that when we were about to implement their project proposal for Barangay Roxas, he got excited because it was the first time that he would do something that he

and his classmates had solely prepared for. I did not meddle with their plans; I just guided them on what to do, particularly on the legal works, security, and safety of the entire class, as well as the coordination with the partner community. Miguel said that he was not really new in doing voluntary service since his grandfather was a politician in the province and they were doing charity works for less-fortunate constituents. He, however, admitted that their DevComm service was different because it came from them and they were credited for their work.

The third and last motivator that Miguel mentioned was learning. While he did not state that the learning came from his interaction with the residents of the community, he did mention the things that he learned from the speaker that they tapped for the seminar that they organized.

I browsed the journals that they submitted last semester and here's a part of what he wrote:

*I've learned a lot in our Final Requirement (Exam) in Development Communication because our class conducted a seminar on Disaster Awareness and Prevention. It will truly help people from Bgy. Roxas to practice awareness and safety. Our speaker taught them different ways on how to deal with each emergency circumstances that may happen. I have noticed that people were really interested in listening and understanding what the speaker is sharing and it really showed that they are all participating in the said seminar.*

*Though the class was not able to launch the program perfectly, [but] I can say that all of us made our different duties and it happened very smoothly and it was successful. We helped them and they helped us too because without the people from Bgy. Roxas, we will not be able to pass our Final Exam. For me, this is not just about completing school requirements, but it is an opportunity to help the community.*

While Miguel, in our casual conversation for this paper, suggested that his biggest motivation was the grade that he would get, it was not reflected, in any way, in the reflection that he has submitted as part of final requirements in my class. This also gave me doubts whether he learned something from the service that he did last semester. Of course, it is already impossible for me to retract the high grade I gave him last semester even if I discovered that he just faked his reflections to get high grades.

Trying to get a different perspective for this paper, I also casually interviewed Theodore James Domingo, fourth year AB Broadcasting student who also took DevComm last semester. Just like Miguel's group, Theodore and his classmates proposed a First Aid Training project as community service component of their requirements, in Bgy. Tatalon, also in Quezon City.

I asked Theodore the same questions I asked Miguel. But this time I got a different reply. Theodore said that he really wanted to do community service that even without credits, he would still be happy and willing to serve the people of Bgy. Tatalon.

It is worthy to note that Theodore suffered from mild retardation during his younger years but was able to catch up and was immersed in the regular classes. I consider his past contributory to his present views, not only with the questions I asked him and Miguel but also with life in general. Unlike the "regular" and "normal" youth, Theodore was not exposed to vices, parties, and even love life. His parents were closely supervising his development. Though he was given relative degree of freedom, the parents still maintained close distance to monitor him. Thus, his answers were somewhat "pure" and truthful.

Chancing a free time, I also had a tete-a-tete with Joyce Felipe, also a senior AB Broadcasting student and took DevComm last semester under my instruction. I asked Joyce of the same questions I asked to Miguel and Theodore.

Just like Miguel, Joyce's biggest motivator was the completion of the requirement in my subject. She said at first, she really thought that my requirement (community service) was burdensome as they had to go out of the campus and organize the project from planning to implementation while they were also busy doing audiovisual production for other major subjects. But when they were already doing service, it was then when she realized the joy of being of help to others. She said she learned a lot from the attendees of their seminar in Barangay Tatalon, particularly in terms of dealing with people who came from a different social status as her. Joyce is the eldest daughter of the chairman of Quezon City Barangay Operations Center, the little mayor of the city.

Joyce's sharing is an example of how motives change during the course of community service, when students realize the beauty and importance of being of service to other people who need you.

With three different responses from three different individuals, I am compelled to go back to the questions I posed earlier: What and how do we keep our college students motivated to do community service?

Tobi Johnson (2012), in his blogsite [tobijohnson.typepad.com](http://tobijohnson.typepad.com), suggested ways on how to get busy college students involved in service:

1. build a volunteer program (which is different from Service-Learning);
2. involve the students in planning;
3. tap directly into what motivates students;
4. get social;
5. give schwag (or rewards); and
6. make a heart-to-heart connection.

Johnson's first suggestion is somehow different from what I do in DevComm. As mentioned above, volunteerism is different from SL because we give credits in the latter. I particularly like the second suggestion which involved the students in planning. The projects that Miguel, Theodore, and Joyce implemented in their respective communities were all products of careful planning processes. I admit that I had to guide them thoroughly because there were some project proposals that were beyond their capacities as students such as organizing fun run for environmental awareness (which would entail a lot of legal works and permission from local government) and concert-for-a-cause— where there's a big amount of money involved and students entering hundred-thousand pesos contracts with performers. I advised them in the planning process to think of projects that were doable and that involved lesser risks both for the community and themselves.

Johnson's third suggestion explored the fun side of community service. Some students, for example, had passion for teaching children how to read or do simple mathematics, or some in the AB Broadcasting and AB Communication programs would like to use their expertise (making video documentary programs, or puppet shows, or colourful magazines and pamphlets), which are all opportunities for the instructor to motivate the students and get the involved in service.

The fourth suggestion (getting social) is about how one can use social media to boost motivation and celebrate their success. In my three DevComm SL classes, we also created Facebook groups which serve as

sharing sites for their achievements, although it was visible only to the members of the group.

Freebies like t-shirt, button pins, and even food were considered motivators. If students knew they would get something from doing service in the community, they became more enthusiastic in participating.

And of course, sharing of success stories or exposing them to documented changes in the community gave sparks for them to realize the potentials that they had inside. That was my way of connecting to their hearts.

So what can we derive from the answers of these three students of DevComm last semester? I came up with the following generalizations although I do not claim that they are definite. There is still a need to have a formal study on this matter before conclusions can be drawn:

1. Students came from different family, religious, ethnicity, geographical, and socio-economic backgrounds, and they also have different values which affect the way they view service as learning methodology;
2. Egoistic motivators (such as grades) seem to overpower altruistic reasons for giving service to partner communities;
3. There is a need to assess individual development of students as manifested in their actions, not just in their journals and reflections. It also follows that the achievement of course objectives (at least in my case) does not guarantee learning unless such learning is explicitly stated in the objectives.
4. There are various ways on how to make the students like community service.

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# **Gray Matters: Some Ethical Issues in the Practice of Dissemination as a Principle in Service Learning**

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**T**o speak of the Principle of Dissemination in Service-Learning, just like in the various forms of media, is to focus on the process and act of spreading something, especially information, that is of public interest or concern.

We are familiar with the methods of dissemination that include the following:

1. Inter-personal and group communication media, fora, and occasions of ‘celebration’;
2. Internal Communication Media;
3. Mass Media; and
4. Social media.

In the context of the application of the Principle of Dissemination, the following questions need to be asked?

1. What do service-learning (S-L) advocates disseminate?
2. To whom? And who disseminates?
3. How is dissemination done?
4. Why disseminate?



To look into certain ethical issues in the practice of Service-Learning, a common set of answers to these questions are needed.

## **What?**

In an information-conscious society, events comprise the common fare in the media menu. Activities done by classes in the community can be interesting items in the internal and external avenues of the university. In many cases, S-L groups facilitate or implement impact projects in the community, like the construction of homes, or turnover of chairs and tables for community classroom.

Research findings are also shared with the community, such as when a group of marine biology and biology students conduct a coastal assessment – including mangroves, seagrasses, and coral resources.

Who does it? For whom?

Dissemination may be done in two general ways usually by designation of persons or units in an academic institution:

1. Internal – university community in general, and academic officials, faculty, and staff as well as students, including prospective enrollees of S-L-focused classes in particular;
2. External – these may include partners, the local communities and mass and social media subscribers in general.

## **How?**

The manner of disseminating information can be done using common and emergent ways of information sharing:

1. Inter-personal and group communication media – S-L participants can personally share experiences through individual interaction with peers, classmates, friends, family, and other contacts;
2. Small and large-group communications are also channels by which S-L related experiences and be shared – through classroom reports, fora, and celebration programs;

3. In-house publications – reports can be written either by students and coordinators of partner organizations;
4. Mass media – radio and television clips and reports as well as news and feature articles can be released to newspapers and magazines;
5. Social media – messages, photos and video clips easily find their way into Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, mobile phones, and other electronic media accounts of institutions, groups, and individual students.

## **Why?**

The value and significance of dissemination cannot be overemphasized. In this age of information technology institutions, organizations, and individuals, information have become a daily, if not an hourly commodity. Access to information does not end in knowing events and situations of the day. Such access also offers media audiences the opportunity to use these information and data as inputs to their daily decision – making – at home, in the workplace and outside these personal and official domains.

## **SOME SITUATIONS**

The process of dissemination involves a variety of phases, many of which have implications on practices that are right or otherwise.

Interestingly, while codes of ethics are common among organizations and industries, like the mass media, many institutions do not have explicit guidelines (Regan, 2009). A similar newsroom situation has been found out by the author in his graduate school Media Ethics report more than two ago. Interestingly, Regan’s “Ethics Survey of Ohio News Managers” relived that observation.

While ethics and other forms of human behavior are traditionally viewed from a black-or-white, or wrong-or-right point of view or perspective, gray areas do exist according to Frank Bucaro, advocate for ethics and values. He expounded the idea that ethical problems in an industry are not exactly black or white “Some fall into gray areas,” he wrote.

Some editors, as Regan also pointed out, make decisions on their “gut feel”, instead of absolute ethical standards” which, they said, often leads to justifiable outcomes.

In the course of the author's experiences in service-learning activities, particularly in peace-building and literacy programs involving Muslim communities and other recent information and education advocacies in different communities in Negros Occidental, the following "gray matters" either continued as points of concern or had emerged in the use and process of dissemination involving articles, photos, video and other promotional materials used in internal mass and social media avenues. The following are some of the here-and-now concerns.

1. Dissemination of materials involving children and women and right to privacy
2. Copyright laws
3. Online issues
4. Cultural concerns
5. Labeling of beneficiaries
6. Empowerment vs. charity, at time bordering on condescension
7. Internal procedures in public dissemination
8. Protocol and politics

**Children, women, and right to privacy.** With the growing consciousness of individual and human rights in various platforms, guidelines have been issued by various organizations. Interestingly, many photos and information of community folk appear to have media public appeal: a malnourished and dirty child, a breastfeeding woman in a nutrition education community program, people in awkward or compromising positions, and scantily clad children enjoying a swim in the river that is a subject of a waterway conservation and cleanliness advocacy.

UNICEF, in its guidelines, is clear in its guidelines about non-publication of a story or image that might put a child, siblings, and peers at risk even when identities are not revealed or are obscured. UNICEF also requires that permission should be obtained from the child or guardian for all interviews, videotaping, and even in documentary photographs. When possible, permission must be done in writing. The way a child is interviewed must also be a matter of concern – that is, the interviewer has to ensure comfort and eliminate stress, fear, or confusion.

Clearly, the right to privacy of an individual, much more of minors, is a matter of concern, and this is often disregarded in favor of the reader or audience appeal and curiosity.

As regards breastfeeding women, exposing them while nursing their babies is a nagging concern up to this day. A post of a young mother breastfeeding her baby in a graduation ceremony went viral last June, prompting a thread of netizens' question on public breastfeeding (Lewis, 2014). Facebook has a policy on the prohibition of the showing of nipples while breastfeeding--an act justified by certain sectors, including celebrities, as a way of popularizing breastfeeding.

The Photojournalists' Center of the Philippines is also conscious of ethical concerns. It urges members to respect the integrity of the photographic moment and resist participation in staged photo opportunities as well as avoid stereotyping and represent reality without personal bias to race, creed, sex and religious, political, and cultural beliefs.

**Copyright.** In various phases of dissemination, from pre-event to post-event activities, violation does occur. Violation can be in the form of photos and videos used and even music and design of materials that are not properly credited or acknowledged.

With easy access to the information media, people can now use anyone's intellectual work, modify it by applying online applications or techniques and, presto, the work appears to be authentic and original. Music videos used for promotional activities often use copyrighted compositions with the producers of these video. Is acknowledgement of the music, if ever mentioned in the credits, enough when laws require permission for use of copyrighted materials?

Copyright requires a process, thereby discouraging many creators including information technology users, unfortunately, from seeking legal ownership for their works.

Can one just grab anybody's photo for a material and indicate "All Rights Reserve" anytime? This is, indeed, a thin, gray line that is often occurring in the process of information dissemination that involve the use of intellectual property.

Indeed, S-L mentors have a key role in making students more aware of thus legal-ethical issue.

**Online issues.** In addition to rights of privacy, which covers the online exposure of innocent individuals to a mass audience, other issues have surfaced in internet-related concerns. The following gives a closer look at the more recent-technology-focused concerns.

The mother with an exposed breast is seen far and wide, even by people who have no stake on her. Thus, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy has included "alienation" as a consideration in its Social Networking and Ethics

discussion. As defined in the online reference, alienation is the exploitation of information for purposes not intended by and for the relevant community. Does the online user really need that information or does the information unnecessarily posted take much of one's time as he or she has no stake on it in the first place?

Stanford, in the process, warned of a potential subversion of what it calls the emergent "digital totalitarianism" that uses the power of information as a political control mechanism or the context of the social hyper-reality that may be created in a platform shrouded in many cases by anonymity and lack of familiarity with sources of information.

As it recognized the strong sphere of influence of online networking, the philosopher Albert Borgmann viewed online connection as a "technologically-driven tendency to conform our interactions with the world to a model of easy consumption."

At the same time, the dictionary quoted another philosopher, Hubert Dreyfus as calling social networking "an impoverished substitute for the real thing", which intrinsically lacks exposure to risk. He argued that without risk, the meaning of commitment is shaded, and thus people are drawn to the online social environment "because it allows [them] to play with notions of identity, commitment, and meaning without risking the irrevocable consequences that ground real identities and relationships."

Another point which overlaps with the concern on the copyright issue is articulated by Chesler and Mushtare (2012) in the online article, "Collaborative Media Production, Authorship and Distribution," a portion of the volume, "Ethics and Service-Learning: Best Practices for Empowering Community Partners and Educating Students". The article points out that there is a need for institutions to find ways to keep up with the ease of self-publishing through digital media.

Such self-publication through social media tools, has stepped into the domain once exclusively held by publishers, authors, journalists and other professionals who are anchored on copyright law. Consequently, a large part of the digital media public becomes vulnerable to ethical considerations like accuracy, validity, and reliability of information and scholarship (Chesler & Mushtare, 2012).

**Cultural or indigenous matters.** Participants in service-oriented activities need to be familiar and sensitive with local practices. In coastal communities, city beach-wear may not be ideal. A big part of the whole

community would line up at a beach to ogle at international foreign students enjoying the pristine waters of their engagement area.

Students had to be made aware that shaking hands between opposite sexes, or touching the head of persons, including children, is avoided in Muslim communities. Pep-up or unfreezing activities must be limited to restrained singing, dancing, and other movements as excesses in these forms of human activities are not considered part of their way of life.

Eventually, students' awareness on sensitivity was heightened in that they had to devise ways for the exercise of moderation in the activities, observe dress code on site, and remove the wraps of December Christmas gifts donated by a corporate sponsor in a year-end distribution program. The wraps had the words 'Merry Christmas' printed on them.

**Labeling.** The naming of ethnic groups has long been a concern and issue in the media. Why is one referred to as an Indian money lender or a Muslim mother while there is no such term for locals as Filipino lender or a Christian mother? Mass labeling according to social scientists has led to wider gaps in society, particularly when a label generates a not-so-positive connotation, as in the use of the word 'Muslim'.

The Yazidis in northern Iraq are current examples of this mass labeling practice that has made them targets for execution by Islamic State operatives. In another region of Northern Iraq, Christians are also suffering the same fate from the hands of Islamic militants. A continuing peace-and-order concern has rocked the town of Ferguson, Missouri over the shooting to death of a black teenager, Michael Brown, by a white policeman early last month. Down south, people have been regularly treated to a dose of media reports about violence and crime by suspected Muslim instigators and separatists.

In 2005, two researchers— Marcello Maneri and Jessika ter Wal even went to the extent of titling their paper "The Criminalisation of Ethnic Groups: An Issue for Media Analysis" in the Forum QS - Qualitative Social Research" to show, among other reasons, the impact of labels on a demographic group.

In our S-L activities with the Muslims, a community minority, the issue has been a matter of nagging concern. Should the people be called "Muslims" in written articles and reports, or should they be referred to as residents of a community as others are called? In a number of cases, however, calling them the latter apparently blurs the substance and 'impact' of peace-building initiatives and commitment (Del Carmen, 2014).

**Empowerment vs. charity.** Despite popularizing the nature and mechanisms of service-learning, notions of charity work continue to prevail. Apparently, these notions stem from the lack of understanding and wholistic view of service-learning by participants, who identify community engagement with previous outreach and volunteerism work they had engaged in.

Consequently, traces of condescension appear in reflection papers, captions, reports, and articles. Students, at times, write about realizations that people served are so poor and uneducated that service-learners must be reminded to expand their views beyond dole outs and that their perspectives must be anchored on the concepts of empowerment of people, especially those in marginalized communities such perspective should not be tinged with traces of condescension or pity.

Kahne and Westheimer (1996) offered a dose of academic distinction when they shared the perspective that charity work has to do with 'giving' which must be distinguished from the act of deepening relationships and forging new connections--they call as "caring" which apparently form part of the context of service-learning goals. In caring, one attempts to "apprehend the reality of the other" and struggle for progress together, thereby creating opportunities for changing his/her understanding of others and of the context within which he or she lives.

**Internal SOPs on information sharing.** With service-learning growing in many institutions, a newsworthy academic initiative requires a strengthened means of information dissemination, especially through mass and social media.

In a number of cases, the angle of reports has shown the standard fare of who did what in a community, when and how. There may be something more significant, like findings of a study conducted by the students or assessment of target receivers of the service on what the service meant to them. The qualitative effect or impact of the overall engagement must be given focus. Who will circulate the information in such a way that, beyond creating goodwill for a university because of its commitment to social responsibility and engagement, the messages will focus on community impact more than a favorable image, empowerment over student involvement, and citizenship over charity?

As service-learning is an institutionalized initiative, it becomes incumbent therefore that information dissemination must be systematized

in such a way that dissemination is timely, accurate, responsible, and well-executed; after all, such information speaks of the institution, and thus quality and professionalism must not be sacrificed.

Many institutions today are still struggling with their information dissemination systems. While most may have their own public relations and external relations offices, the matter of information sharing has been concentrated on facts about everyday events, focusing on the 'whats' and 'whens' over the 'hows' and 'whys' of events.

Information dissemination policies appear to be piece-meal matters instead of an organized and standardized procedure anchored on the vision, mission, and goals of educational institutions.

A positive development in the implementation of IRBs, or institutional review boards, or similar units in universities are noted, which put in place the mechanisms to ensure observance of ethical and legal responsibilities as exercised, for example, by Muhlenberg College. The private educational institution, while not requiring the board's approval for service and community-based learning courses, is explicit in its policy that certain projects involving special sectors in the community, like youth and children, persons with disabilities, economically or educationally handicapped persons and pregnant women, among others, have measures that serve as moral and legal safeguards ("IRB, Frequently, n.d.).

Furthermore, the IRB serves as the college's formal mechanism for the evaluation of ethical considerations, especially in community-based studies and activities for minimizing risks to already burdened or vulnerable groups, among other reasons.

**Protocol and politics.** Community service is often linked to development work, and development is often the priority agenda of any incumbent leader or politician. The status quo, the politician and its administration are often the recognized engineers of development plans and programs. This calls to mind the Maoist slogan, "serve the people" that, despite its rhetorical appeal and context, was intended more as a political tool.

Kahne and Westheimer (1996), in the paper, "In the Service of What: The Politics of Service-Learning," recommended that ideological and political perspectives need to be clarified amid the rising interest of service-learning as an academic experience for students. The article states the need for a distinction among the moral, political, and intellectual domains of service-learning as they tend to have overlapping motivations.



It appears that the development agenda, which service-learners hope to utilize, is the same blueprint that politicians and officials have drawn for the benefit of the communities they serve. To focus on their contribution to the attainment of the development goal in the dissemination aspect of service-learning may be tantamount to students becoming associated with the politicians and having goals for the community, thereby giving the public the impression that service-learners are agents of local politicians and even ideologues.

Ignoring local leadership, not only in the pursuance of the development agenda, but also in the observance of protocols in engagement— courtesy visits, i.e., to local leaders— however, may jeopardize the whole program as acknowledging leadership is a protocol in development work in communities. Consequently, a moral concern emerges, and this must be dealt with sensitivity and prudence.

Kahne and Westheimer subsequently emphasized that service-learning— to be free from the fringes of politics—must be construed more from its political socialization context and not from pure politics as the former promotes the conduct of civic duty and addresses the requirements of citizenship with the hope of moving students toward participation for ‘a strong democracy’. Service-learning makes students undergo experiences that expand their view from self-interest to altruism and civic duty. In the process, they undergo what they call as a “transformative educational experience” that allows them to engage in analytical thinking of “the strong” over “the weak” sense.

How can these gray matters be addressed?

One way is to understand that there are issues, including our moral dilemmas, which are not purely black and white problems that need black and white solutions.

It pays to go back to Bucaro’s (2013) contention that not all ethical problems fit neatly into a black-or-white category as some problems fall into a the so-called ‘gray area’.

Bucaro presented the optimistic and pragmatic thought that “gray area issues may not only be a right vs. wrong situation alone but could also possibly be a right vs. right situation, or even right vs. ‘more’ right.” Hence, the gray area issues, he said, can be positively taken as an opportunity for those focused on ethics and morality to pro-actively deal with issues before the issues become full-blown problem of ethics. These gray areas can help point the way to gaps in ethics education and training.

Specifically, institutions must come up with a well-studied manual and guidelines to concretize procedures and system that will ensure a systematic service-learning implementation with protocol, ethics, and other administrative issues considered.

On a broader scale, we look into philosophical concepts to address these specifically ethical and generally philosophical concerns.

Gene Gilmore, with Mark Ludwig (2005), in “Modern News Editing, offers three philosophical concepts to serve as foundation in media decision-making, and consequently, dissemination-related functions.

### 1. Utilitarianism

Social reformers John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham contended that “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.” One’s actions are right when they maximize the good. One is said to act within the bounds of ethics when he/she aims and does the greatest good for the greatest number. Service-learning is within the social and moral boundaries set by Mills and Bentham.

### 2. The Golden Mean

This refers to the act of taking the desirable middle between two extremes where on one side is that of excess and on the other is that of deficiency. This philosophy of moderation has never been outdated since the days of its thinker, Aristotle, and other philosophers later, including Gautama Buddha.

### 3. The Golden Rule, devoting oneself to serving others is basically an act of serving God.

At least three verses reminds one of this thought.

- John 13:1: *If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet”.*
- Matthew 7:12: *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.*
- Matthew 25:45: *I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.* (NLT)

A final thought in addressing confusion that may arise from the concern on gray areas in information dissemination may be extracted from the write-up, “Journalism Ethics Are Rooted in Humanity, Not Technology”. The writer recommended that messengers and disseminators for that matter must encode the element of humanity in what they do. They should not only aim for accuracy but also for the values of honesty, fairness, empathy, and vulnerability (Silverman, 2012). The writer postulated that the disseminators’ goal goes beyond information and now includes connection with the public through stories, shared experiences, and important developments in the world.

For disseminators to attain such goal, they “must act with humanity and with values and emotions that inspire human connection.” What the writer emphasized should be strongly noted and that is professional ethics is more significant and effective when it flows from human emotions, values, and actions.

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# Sustaining Service-Learning in the Community

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Trinity University of Asia has been called a “College with a heart” because the institution reaches out to the poor and underprivileged among its students in the surrounding communities and among the cultural minorities in the mountains of Luzon and Mindanao.

One of the outreach communities of the University is Barangay Roxas, which is located in DISTRICT 1V Area 19 of Quezon City. It is bounded on the north by Scout Chuatoco Street, on the South by the Diliman Creek; on the East by Scout Tobias Street; and on the West by Quezon Avenue. There are several sitios within the jurisdiction of the *barangay*, namely Sitio Gumamela East; Sitio of Violeta including Umbel and Sitio of Campupot. It has total population of 13,307 with 2,820 households as of 2010. It is composed of perplexed land structures that are high and low in nature.

There were three main concerns which the university tried to address in its goal to help the community of Barangay Roxas and they are as follows.

## 1. Poor Education

Most of the families living in this area dreamed of giving good quality education to their children. Since their children were studying in the public school, the parents complained about the poor quality of education given by the school. Their kids who were enrolled in the preparatory grade did not know how to write their names even if it was already half-way through the school year. Some of the kids who were in Grades 2 and 3 did not know

how to read a simple word. The parents of these slow learners sought the assistance of the university to help their children in their academic subject.

## 2. Environmental concern

Waling-Waling St., Umbel St., and Gumamela St. are the low lying areas which are usually prone to flooding and other disasters. These were the places where the “poorest of the poor” can be found. Sadly, the residences in these areas were not fit to withstand flood and other curses of nature. These places were also the dirtiest because of poor sewage system. Since the residents were exposed to all kinds of pollution, they usually fell ill. Common illnesses such as dengue and leptospirosis always occurred. In the congested areas, some houses did not have their own sewage system, and their main pipe went directly to the creek near the area. Garbage was also a serious problem. The houses near the creek threw garbage at the creek. Some of the places turned into swamps whenever there was heavy rain.

## 3. Livelihood program

Most of the parents in the community were unemployed because they themselves lacked proper education. They would rather spend their time chatting, gossiping, and even playing bingo and cards with each other than think of how to earn a living. According to these parents, they really wanted to have a job, but they did not have skills and abilities to start even a small business.

## **HOW THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESSED THE MAIN CONCERN**

The Association of SAMAGKA wrote a letter address to the Director of Trinity Center for Community Development, asking for assistance for their children because some of them were illiterate and did not have any idea in handling kids especially in terms teaching them different lessons in their subjects. The Director handed over the letter to the community coordinator of the College of Arts and Sciences whose expertise is education service.

To establish a harmonious working relationship with the partner community, a memorandum of agreement was given and signed by both parties which indicated the following: a) rendering health service, literacy

program, livelihood program, spiritual nurturance, sports activities and wellness programs, and capability- building activities subject to policies, procedures, and guidelines governing volunteer services; b) assisting in the design of the community vision, mission, and goals for self-empowerment; c) assisting the leaders in their continuing capability especially in their leadership formation; and d) allowing students, as volunteers, to render services through the different outreach programs of the university and community immersion as part of their academic requirements mandated by the CHED.

The Project ASPIRE (Arts and Sciences Program for Inspired and Responsive Education) started in the school year 1990 to provide reading and writing enhancement to grade school children in public school. The project also provided workshops and seminars on parenting to enhance parent-child relationships and encourage moral support, and to inspire children in their studies.

To provide a holistic service to the recipients, Project ASPIRE coordinated with other projects and programs that provided services and assistance to both the children and the parents in order to develop self-improvement such as personal health, hygiene and sanitation, and moral, spiritual, and social values. These activities were coordinated with other units and programs.

In order to help the community the ASPIRE conducted the following.

## Education

**Tutorials.** Students were assigned conduct tutorials every Wednesday from 9:00-11:00am and 2:00-4:00pm. Students from the College of Arts and Sciences offered their services as tutors. The following was the regular schedule for the tutorial class:

- Every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month- CAS Student Council
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month- Psychology students
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month- Mass Communication students
- 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month- Biology students

The students taught writing, reading, math, and English conversation to kids from kinder to Grade 2. The parents were so grateful with the help extended by the university.



**Swimming lessons.** The area had always been prone to flooding and people lived beside the creek. The community coordinator therefore suggested that children in the community who were between 8-15 years old and were 4 ft. tall should have basic swimming lessons in order to prepare them for emergency situations. The President of the university approved the suggestion and immediately ordered the scheduling of the said swimming lessons every Friday from 3:00-6:00 p.m. for a duration of four months. The President also required participants to have their parents accompany them when going to the University. Many children immediately attended the said basic swimming lessons and successfully finished it. Students from the College of Education who were P.E. majors were the ones who handled the basic swimming lesson for the kids from Barangay Roxas.

**Computer literacy.** Computer literacy was offered to selected individuals in the community. Classes were scheduled every Tuesday and Friday from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Ten (10) mothers and five (5) youth immediately availed the three-month basic computer literacy program.

The BS in Computer students were the ones who trained the community in computer literacy. Theoretical lessons were given at the barangay hall for a period of one (1) month; then, hands-on training were conducted at the university computer laboratory. Participants studied different computer programs. At first, the parents were hesitant to operate the computer. They were afraid that some programs installed in the computer may be deleted, but as the lessons proceeded, they learned to appreciate the training.

Every month, the faculty took turns in engaging in service-learning pedagogy with the partner barangay by advocating the following.

**Environmental awareness.** The community was encouraged to participate in various seminars given to them.

**Seminar on climate change.** Since the BS Biology students were knowledgeable about the environment, they conducted a climate change seminar in the community with the supervision of their teacher. They discussed the impact of climate change on the Philippines, specifically on the ecosystems, water, food, and health. Videos were shown to the participants, and they interacted with the students and teachers by asking many questions and sharing their experiences especially during typhoon seasons.

*Seminar on waste management.* The waste management seminar was given by the Mass Communication students. One strategy that the students used to attract the attention of the community a puppet show. The students chose this strategy to instill in the mind of the participants the do's and the don'ts of managing waste. Although the presentation was very simple, the participants easily learned waste segregation and were motivated to implement the said program.

*Seminar/Workshop for urban gardening.* The Psychology students through the NSTP class took the seminar on Urban Gardening given by the Bureau of Plants and Industries. They introduced what they learned from the seminar to the community. The seminar was about planting and taking care of seeds, using recycled materials as pots, and making different kinds of pots out of pep bottles. With this new-found knowledge, the community responded positively by planting different kinds of seeds provided by the Bureau of Plants and Industry.

**An activity for the cleanliness drive 'sa estero'.** One of the activities of the Trinity University of Asia during the foundation day was the campaign for the cleanliness drive in the *estero* (estuary). Participants were the faculties, employees, students, and alumni. Local officials from the barangay and the people living near the *estero* joined the said campaign. Although the task was so hard, the participants gamely attacked and removed the debris from the *estero*. Some of them cleaned the streets and canals beside the creek. Even though it was a sunny day, all of the participants were in high spirits to do the job at hand and were even singing while working.

## **Livelihood program**

*Massage therapy course.* Selected female participants in each barangay attended a six (6) months Massage Therapy Course sponsored by the College of Business Administration. Incidentally, the invited resource speaker also came from a poor barangay and also underwent the same program and became an expert and licensed massage therapists.

*Dish washing liquid and soap making.* For six (6) consecutive Saturdays, the chemistry students, with the supervision of their teacher, held a seminar on dishwashing liquid and soap making for the participants from different barangays. A simple method and unique process of making soap and dishwashing liquid was introduced to them.

**Sustainability Education.** Today, there is already a transformation in the tutorial services that are offered. Some of the children who underwent the tutorial services were the ones who taught the children from Kinder to Grade 2 in the morning. And sometimes, on afternoons, the kid-tutors themselves attended tutorial classes in Science and Math handled by the students from the university.

The tutorial classes in the community especially those with the kids were continually monitored. Their records such as quizzes and major exams were verified through their teachers to determine if there was an improvement in their studies. The team is still searching for a group of kids that has the ability to teach and lead, in order to ensure the continuity of the program. The swimming lesson is conducted every year and is also offered to different barangays. Computer literacy is also offered to different barangays.

**Environment.** *Purok* leaders were trained to be a competent, so they can effectively monitor the waste segregation practices and the cleanliness of the surroundings.

The cleanliness drive in *estero* was done every first Saturday of the month with the MMDA and other barangay brigade or *tanod*. Some household volunteered themselves to clean the creek on specific schedule.

Twice a year, the school hosts a breakfast or lunch with the partner community to nurture relationships with the people and to brainstorm other projects with them.

**Livelihood program.** Other beneficial livelihood programs will be introduced to the community such as store retailing, *espaynada* making, and cosmetology. There are plans to build a massage parlor near the community.

The program is not yet perfect, but the team works hard to maintain and sustain the program with the help of the administration and some support groups.

# The Principle of Engagement and Ethical Consideration in Service-Learning: The Case of De La Salle University

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Educational institutions play a significant role in social development and nation building. To realize this, the schools, especially universities and colleges must engage actively in community development and in contributing to civic growth. There is a challenge to move towards a collaborative endeavour between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for social progress. De La Salle University (DLSU), being an advocate of transformative learning, espouses Service Learning (SL). It is offered as a response of the University to engage the academic community in addressing social disarticulations. This academic process aims to contribute to the formation of socially aware and active Lasallians and the development of future transformative leaders. This intervention compels the academic community to utilize knowledge and skills in helping the least, the lost and the last and move towards community progress and nation building. SL has five important components: academic preparation, engagement with the community, reflection on their service, reciprocity between and among the academic participants, and partner community and appreciation of the discipline. This paper focuses primarily on the principle of engagement. It aims to define engagement in view of SL and present De La Salle University's practices and ethical considerations in the area of engagement.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, Engagement, Service Learning, Ethical, Community, Nation Building

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## INTRODUCTION

Societies of the world have become much more complex and demand accountability from educational institutions. Traditionally, the role of higher education is to provide knowledge through teaching and research. But such function is restrictive. Educational institutions are thus challenged to respond beyond their traditional role. Gill (2012), in her article on “Institutionalizing Industry and Community Engagement in Higher Education: Challenges and Recommendations across Asean and Asia,” cited that the 2010 OECD General Conference on “Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly: Doing More with Less” underscored that “Social engagement has moved beyond institutional outreach to address the challenges of the 21st century. Engagement is now a mind-set ensuring that tertiary education can meet its multiple responsibilities... creating a culture of learning, directing research and teaching to sustainable development, and strengthening links with social partners are now inescapable obligation for educational institutions” (p. 30). Universities and colleges therefore play a significant role in social development and nation building. They have begun to give attention to social responsibility. There has been a recognition that higher educational institutions must engage actively in community development and in contributing to civic growth and social progress.

Today, community engagement is considered as a salient part of higher education. The call is to align the perspectives of the universities and colleges to the nature of community work, student’s learning methodology as they fulfil school mission and contribute in social transformation. As highlighted by Boyer, (1996) “Colleges and universities are one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress... I am convinced that for this hope to be fulfilled, the academy must become a vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historic commitment to what I call the scholarship of engagement” (p.11). One method for intervention is SL.

DLSU, being an advocate of transformative learning, espouses SL. It is offered as a response of the University to engage the academic community in addressing social disarticulations. This academic process, likewise, aims to contribute in the formation of socially aware and active Lasallians and the development of future transformative leaders. This intervention compels the academic community to utilize academic knowledge and skills in helping

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the least, the lost and the last and move towards community progress and nation building. SL is consistent with DLSU's vision-mission: "a leading learner-centered research University, bridging faith and scholarship in the service of society, especially the poor."

SL is a "course-based and credit-bearing educational experience by which students a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and, an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995 p.112). Based on this definition, five important components can be derived: academic preparation, engagement with the community, reflection on their service, reciprocity between and among the academic participants and partner community, and appreciation of the discipline.

This paper focuses primarily on the principle of engagement. It aims to develop an engagement framework in view of SL and present De La Salle University's SL practices in the area of engagement using the said engagement framework University.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Evidently, engagement is one of the key principles in SL. Engagement theory, according to Gearsly and Shneiderman (1998), is premised on the idea that students must be "meaningfully engaged in learning activities through interaction with others and worthwhile tasks" (p.22). It denotes the relationships which universities and colleges have with the wider society. The idea focuses on engaged learning which refers to an educational methodology in which either part or all of the class objectives are learned by working on projects with a community partner; SL is type of education that puts classroom skills and knowledge into practice while serving the community. SL combines civic involvement with academic coursework in a way that benefits both the student and the community. Moreover, SL provides an arena where students work in a professional capacity with community members, their peers, and the instructor of their course, and relies heavily on teamwork and the skills that promote effective team-building towards social transformation. Thus, engagement is not just a spill-over from the traditional university function such as teaching and research, but progressively, it is more of a mission.

The term engagement is theoretically linked with different concepts in various contexts. Among these concepts are civic engagement, engaged scholarship, community engaged-scholarship, and community engagement. Common among these concepts are the engagement between the academe and community in the areas of teaching, research, and service to improve community life and advance university mission. According to Gill (2012), “engagement implies working together with shared understanding to develop shared solutions, through shared governance and shared assets, with the ultimate aim of gaining shared advantages for all stakeholders” (p.35). Moreover, Seifer SD (1998) emphasized that “students are engaged in community service that responds to community-identified concerns and learn about the context in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic courses, and their roles as citizens” (p.273).

Gill (2012) quoted an inclusive definition and description of engagement which was developed by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). UKM defined engagement:

a purposive, considerate and productive interaction with both internal (academia, administrative & professional staff, and students) and external stakeholders (industry, government agencies, NGOs, and communities) for the establishment of a mutually beneficial partnerships. All of these engagement initiatives aim to enhance and enrich the core areas of the university – education, research and service – and facilitate a two-way flow of expertise and resources through knowledge exchange partnerships that benefit all stakeholders – academia, industry and community – and ultimately the cities, nation and region. (p.35)

Another framework for engagement has been crafted by the International Association of Public Participation (IAPP). The framework actually provides five levels of engagement which are as follows:

Level I: Inform – The public is provided with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the opportunities, problems, alternatives, and/or solutions;

Level II: Consult – Public feedback, alternatives, and/or decisions are obtained;

Level III: Involve – Working directly with the public is necessary throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered;

Level IV: Collaborate –Partnering with the public is necessary in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution;

Level V: Empower – Final decision making is placed in the hands of the public; this requires investment of time and resources and community capacity building. This would involve participatory decision making and community development trust (IAPP, “n.d.” as cited in “Toolkit-community-engagement,” n.d.).

Bringle and Hatcher (2004, cited by Bringle, 2012) have quoted Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Center for Service and Learning’s four-part definition of CE, which DLSU-COSCA agrees with. IUPUI defined CE as: “an (a) active collaboration (b) that builds on the resources, skills, and expertise, and knowledge of the campus and community (c) to improve the quality of life in communities (d) in a manner that is consistent with the campus mission” (p. 51).

SL provides the most important vehicle of community engagement. According to Bringle *et al.* (2001), “when service learning is institutionalized, then it is part of the academic culture of the institution, aligns with the mission, becomes an enduring aspect of the curriculum that is supported by more than a few faculty, improves other forms of pedagogy, leads to other forms of civic scholarship, influences faculty roles and rewards, is part of the experience of most students, and has widespread support, understanding and involvement of students, faculty, administration and the community” (p. 93) (as cited in Bringle & Hatcher, 2004, p. 39). Therefore, manifestations of university’s openness to engagement include institutionalization of structures to support the development of SL and participation of university stakeholders such as the faculty and students in community engagement. Openness to engagement may also be demonstrated by the extent to which SL is integrated to degree programs, faculty work, student learning outcomes, institutional mission, and partnerships with organizations that respond to community needs.

In SL, university-community engagement is a major area for consideration. Implementation of SL will be critical and unsustainable without an ethically sensitive partnership. Ethics is the process of



determining right or wrong. Important ethical concepts are on virtue and action. The virtue ethics accentuates “what we should *be*, whereas action ethics emphasizes what we should *do*” ([http://www.ethicsscoreboard.com/rb\\_definitions.html](http://www.ethicsscoreboard.com/rb_definitions.html)). The virtues and actions are interrelated.

Social development and SL practitioners, in partnering with communities, commonly observe general principles which are also considered as ethical principles. Some of these principles include justice, human dignity, respect for others, common good, and subsidiarity. Jacoby (1996), indicated that the principles and practices laid out in the SL partnerships of the faculty, students, and community are chiefly molded by the view on the authenticity of the collaboration, reciprocity, and diversity (p. 34). Collaboration is defined as “mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties who work towards common goals by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability” (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, as cited in Jacoby, 1996). The challenge centers on the two partners’ ability to create an environment that is trusting and respects common goals and shared responsibility. Reciprocity suggests that the partners involved are both “a teacher and student. It is recognized that the partners are learning from and serving each other” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 36). As pointed out by Jacoby (1996), diversity brings to fore varied resources, talents, and skills. Thus, operating in a diverse situation necessitates consideration of cultural differences, power relations, and other realities community engagement work.

The ethics principles in the SL community engagement work are consistent with requirements to make the partnership of the university and community in the SL engagement process sustainable. Melegrito (2013) in her study on DLSU-Community Partnership identifies university-community partnership sustainability factors, which are as follows.

### **Shared Vision-Mission, Values, and Principles**

DLSU-COSCA and its partners strive to help the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of the community and the society as a whole. COSCA and the partner organizations believe that there are structural problems in the Philippine society which continually hamper community development. They share a common vision of having a just, peaceful, and equitable community. They both operate valuing and respecting social development principles, such as respect of human rights, integrity of creation, cultural diversity, and gender

sensitivity. They are also one in their belief that the people in the community must be empowered to participate in resolving these problems. Having a shared vision-mission, values, and principles paves the way for a smoother conceptual discussion and understanding of organizational considerations.

### **Common and Integrated Goal**

The University through COSCA and the partner organizations one in their CWTS implementation goals. The contextual considerations and project requirements of both partners are integrated in the CWTS program goals.

### **Strategic Partnerships with Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities**

DLSU-COSCA and its partners have mutually determined goals. Their thrusts and goals are aligned with the contexts and realities of participating organizations. Even students' projects are conceptualized based on the needs of the partner communities and members of partner organizations. Partner organizations adjust to the capacities and the realities of the students. The university's partnerships are translated into a mutually agreed upon and well-defined roles and responsibilities, which are sealed in a so called Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA contains the goals and the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders. The working parameters are clearly defined in this MOA.

### **Mutual Process Ownership and Mutually Agreed and Observed Management Systems**

The processes and systems in the implementation of CWTS at the community level are decided upon by COSCA and the partner organization representatives. Both COSCA and community partners are considered process owners. DLSU-COSCA and its partners have a Manual of Operation. This Manual is a product of consultation and workshops. It contains processes, systems, and mechanisms in implementing the CWTS Program. The policies and procedures in CWTS Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation are clearly identified and described in the Manual. More importantly, these are being observed diligently by COSCA and its partners.

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## Built Social Capital

DLSU-COSCA and its partners through almost seven years of partnership has built a social capital. There is mutual respect and trust with each other. Constant dialogue and transparency in its operations facilitated the enhancement of social capital. COSCA initiated community building activities and sustained communication likewise strengthened the bond and relationships among them.

## Mutual Benefit

DLSU-COSCA and its partners mutually benefited from the partnership. The partners provide the students of DLSU a venue to learn more about community and societal issues and concerns. Through their interaction with the poorer sectors of the society their hearts and minds are transformed from apathy to sympathy. The partners, on the other hand, gain from the services and resources, which the University offers through the students.

It can be gleaned from the abovementioned characteristics that COSCA and the partner organizations have a shared partnership. The directions and processes are discussed and agreed upon as partners. The major strategies applied in the implementation of the CWTS programs, which are from the perception of both COSCA and the partners, facilitated the growth and development of a good partnership are as follows.

**Institutionalization of internal support system.** In order to institutionalize support system within DLSU, COSCA solicits full support from the school administration by involving them in key policy decisions and in the major activities of CWTS. COSCA has also instituted regular meetings and consultations with the administrative academic services in order to align program concerns with that of administrative policies.

To have a smoother implementation of the program, a good relationship with the officers of the Parents of the University Students Organization (PUSO) and parents of the CWTS students was also built. Regular consultation and orientation are being conducted for the parents to understand better why their sons/daughters need to undergo community service. Another intervention is the building and formation of student volunteers who assist COSCA in the deployment of students.

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**Strategic partnership with development oriented and community-based organization.** For a more strategic community intervention, COSCA decided to form and sustain partnership with non-government organizations, people's organizations, and local government units working with and for marginalized and disadvantaged communities. COSCA, as a university-based development organization, does not undertake direct community organizing. It acts more as a bridge between the University and the community. As such, it is more strategic to work with organizations directly working or based in the community. To make the system efficient, COSCA established a set of criteria and a process of selecting community partner organizations. It also created a partnership policy in the area of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluations of projects. Regular meetings were likewise established. The major financial requirement of program implementation was shouldered by COSCA but the partner organizations also had counterparts in some program activities.

**Consideration of both the partner organization needs and the capacity of the students.** It is inherent in the system of COSCA and its partners to conduct a community assessment before any project intervention. Projects of the students were actually based on the identified needs of the community. Once the community needs were identified, needs were matched with the resources or capacities of the students. The facilitators and Area Coordinators made sure that the students projects responded to the community needs that are within the capacity of the students.

**Shared responsibilities.** To have a sense of ownership and in the name of genuine partnership, even the partner organizations and the beneficiaries in the community contributed in financial, material and service cost of project implementation. The partnership believes in shared responsibility. There is no such thing as free lunch (pp. 23-27).

The literature review presents a perspective on the definition and description of engagement as an important component of SL. Engagement is discussed in terms of processes of the extent of communicative interaction of universities with communities which is derived from the desire to address community problems by the academics while learning. Engagement signifies that there is a purposive and productive interaction with university stakeholders, both internal and external, for the establishment of mutually beneficial partnerships. The engaged universities and colleges require establishing enabling mechanisms to coordinate initiatives in campus on

community engagement. The extent of engagement between the university and the community depends on the social contract between them and the social contract rests upon the institutionalization of structures required in the engagement program such as SL.

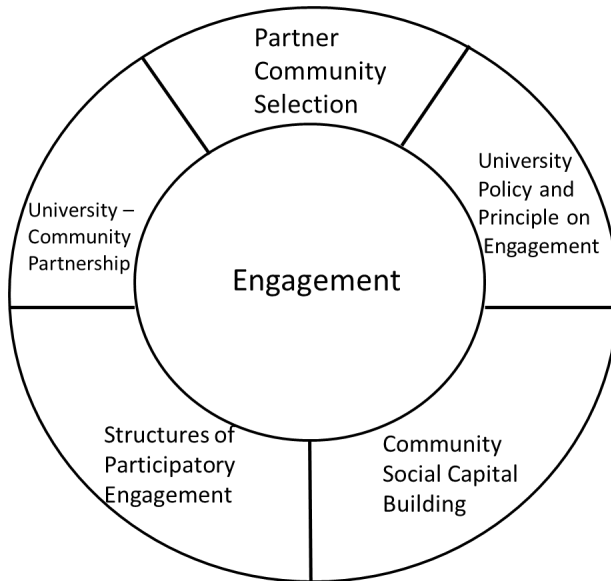
More importantly, the University sets out engagement as an integral and core part of higher education. It makes specific reference to the role engagement can play in transforming the higher education system as it commits and promotes social responsibility. It is clear from the literature that engagement is a powerful way of giving content to the transformation agenda in higher education. This leads to the conclusion that SL is, thus, a necessary component of effective civic engagement. The partnerships being established between institutions of higher education and their communities through SL become an essential component of engagement. The literature likewise establishes that there are ethical principles that need to be considered for SL implementation to succeed and partnership to be sustained.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of engagement, as derived and distilled by the author from the literature review, has five important elements, namely University Policy and Principle on Community Engagement, Community Partner Selection, University-Community Partnership, Structures of Participatory Engagement and Social Capital Building (Figure 1).

The first element is on the university policy and principle on community engagement. The policies and principles serve as the implementer's source of mandate and parameter of action. Policies are concise formal statement of principles which indicate how the University will act in a particular area of its operation and provides the SL implementers with the approved way of operating in relation to a particular matter (Newcastle University, 2012,). Policy is crucial as it provides the principles which prescribe how the implementers will act. The policies are shaped by the University vision-mission and core values. As defined by Newcastle University (2012), "The policies a) are the translation of values into operations, b) ensure compliance with legal and statutory, c) guide the University implementers towards the achievement of its strategic plan, d) set standards, and e) improve management of risk."

The second element is on Partner Community Identification. It is the process of a) identifying partner communities that match the needs of the academic programs in terms of service learning and b) determining the openness and commitment of the partner non-government organizations, people's organizations, local government units, and church social action units.



**Figure 1**

The third element is on University-Community Partnership (UCP). The UCP describes the collaboration between higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. This involves the understanding and agreement of both parties. According to David Cox (2000), there are six dimensions of the community that where a great variety of activities can be identified: “a) Human Capital, by improving the assets of individuals within a neighborhood, such as skill or knowledge through social services, education, training, and leadership development, b) Social Capital, through improved interpersonal networks, trust, coordination, and cooperation for mutual benefit, c) Physical Infrastructure, through improved housing, transportation, and recreational and open space, d) Economic Infrastructure in the

form of how goods and services are distributed and how capital flows within the community and between the community and the larger environment, e) Institutional Infrastructure by improving the scope, depth, leadership and interrelationship of community institutions including public services, and f) Political by increasing the ability to exert a legitimate and effective voice” (pp. 10-11). The fourth element is on Structures of Participatory Engagement. This would include the practices and procedures in the project conceptualization, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. According to Jones (2002), “Participatory engagement requires the active engagement of members of a community in its governance. It demands that members or citizens share ideas, commit time and resources, and take action to bring about the desired objectives” (para.8). Jones (2002) further added that participatory engagement necessitates form of governance and practices that encourage the people to participate in making decisions regarding community objectives and activities (para.9). As emphasized by Jones (2002), the core values of participatory engagement are: “(1) people focus and (2) collaboration” (para.7). Based on the participatory engagement framework, community priorities are developed in collaboration with the key stakeholders.

The last element is on Social Capital Building. According to Fukuyama (1995), social capital is the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations (p. 10). In addition, Putnam (1993) has defined social capital as the features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Relationship building and community preparation are emphasized. From the perspective of community development, this requires community organizing (CO). CO as a methodology follows key processes, namely a) integration with the community which involves immersion to gain familiarity with their culture and language; b) social investigation which means a thorough study and understanding of the community; c) problem identification which refers to analysis of the social concerns in the community; d) groundwork which includes talking and getting the trust and commitment of the key stakeholders; e) preparation for a meeting which means mobilizing the key stakeholders for a meeting and getting their recommendation regarding the agenda of the meeting; f) meeting involves presentation of the objective, determine

mutual agreement and partnership; g) project implementation and evaluation and reflection (Dionisio, 1985, p.10).

**Table 1. Engagement Indicators**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
University Policy and Principle on Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- University Mandate on Community Engagement</li> <li>- Statement of Principles</li> <li>- Implementing Guidelines</li> <li>- A Process of Matching University Policies with Community Situation</li> </ul>
Community Partner Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criteria and Process of Identification</li> <li>- Community Profiling Tool</li> <li>- A Process for Review of Academic Requirements</li> <li>- A Process of Matching Academic Requirements with the Community Requirements</li> </ul>
University-Community Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common Purpose</li> <li>- Understanding and Agreement between University and Community</li> <li>- Partnership Development</li> <li>- Sustainability Mechanisms</li> </ul>
Structures of Participatory Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participatory Planning Process</li> <li>- Joint Discussion and Approval of Implementing Guidelines</li> <li>- Participatory Monitoring System</li> <li>- Participatory Evaluation System</li> </ul>
Social Capital Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation for Mutual Benefit</li> <li>- University-Community Integration Process (culture and language)</li> <li>- University-Community Relationship Building</li> <li>- Presence of Incentives</li> </ul>

## **METHODOLOGY**

The first step undertaken was archival research and document analysis. The framework development built on the literature reviewed on service learning and engagement, COSCA community engagement materials, COSCA Service Learning Manual, SL experience documentation and SL accomplishment and assessment reports.



Based on the review of literature and document analysis, the engagement framework with five identified elements was developed. The next step was the instrumentation. Engagement indicators per element were established (Table 1). The engagement elements with indicators were presented at the Research Forum of the Lasallian Mission Unit of DLSU and at the first national conference of SL practitioners in the Philippines held last September 21-22, 2012 at the University of St. La Salle, Bacolod. The indicators were slightly sharpened through the questions and comments during the open forum. Following the development of the engagement framework and the identification of the indicators was a pilot test in a case of DLSU through the SL program of COSCA.

## **LIMITATION OF THE METHODOLOGY**

The instrument needed further validation. The next step consisted of validation with the selected SL experts and then pilot tests in other cases (one from Mindanao, one from Visayas and another from Luzon). After the follow-up pilot tests, there was a need to conduct a meta-analysis, where the similarities and dissimilarities of other relevant studies were determined.

## **The Practice of Engagement in Service Learning: The Case of De La Salle University**

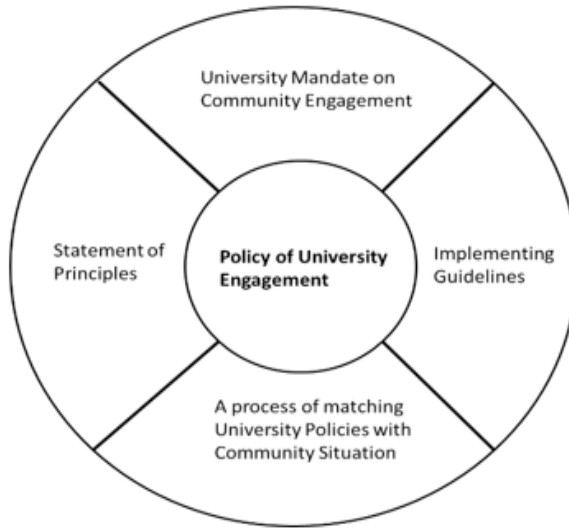
In order to locate DLSU's SL status in the area of engagement and ethical consideration, the engagement framework developed in this study was applied. The first element on University Policy on Engagement was traced using the established indicators (Figure 2).

## **DLSU Policy on Community Engagement**

Source of Mandate: University Thrust

The DLSU Strategic Directions for 2011-2016 clearly stated that by 2016, service-learning component would have been integrated and mainstreamed into the regular academic programs. The University underscores that service-learning is a key component in the character-building of the ideal Lasallian graduate, and it enriches the value of service by providing

opportunities to apply skills learned to serve others. COSCA, being the advocate and implementer of service-learning in the University, has set policy on community engagement.



**Figure 2.** University Policy on Engagement

### **University Principles: CE Principles/Framework**

Guided by these Lasallian principles of social development, the university formulated a framework (see Figure 3) that was utilized by students, faculty, and staff in all community engagement initiatives.

A deep understanding of the University's Vision–Mission served as the starting point of this continuous process. Before effecting liberating action, however, the university deemed it more important to seek and connect with other groups, institutions, and individuals already involved in addressing the social reality it was then facing. By doing so, resources can be shared; forces can be converged; and impact to society, magnified. At the completion of one cycle, the core again serves as the filter that evaluates which actions remain faithful to the university's vision–mission, and which do not. The core identifies which are distinctly Lasallian and those that are not. As the university reflects on the vision–mission of the university, it exposes itself to social realities calibrating its analysis and action given the changing context, and the process repeats itself (Penullar & Neil, 2012, p.8).

**DLSU Community Engagement Framework****Figure 3.** DLSU CE Framework**Implementing Systems and Guidelines**

University Mission Council (UMC). The UMC functions as a coordinating body responsible in overseeing the implementation of all curricular, including SL, co-curricular CE activities, and spirituality and social formation. UMC reviews and formulates administrative and operational policies on university CE. It also identifies and prioritizes research agenda and conducts monitoring and evaluation. The UMC is headed by the Office of the Lasallian Mission, and it is composed of External Affairs Director of the eight (8) Colleges and COSCA Director, Deans and Vice Deans. COSCA serves as the secretariat of the UMC in terms of social formation and action. The Director of COSCA evaluates CE project proposals of the different colleges and submits recommendation to the UMC. In terms of SL, UMC serves as the advisory body but the Academics Council and the Vice-chancellor for Academics provide the over-all direction.

SL program implementation. The program was implemented by different stakeholders. The SL Program Coordinator, Marietta Guanzone (2012) enumerated the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Roles and Responsibilities of Program Implementor

<b>Implementor/ Stakeholder</b>	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>
UMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides policy guidance to faculty and COSCA with regards to service learning program implementation</li> <li>● Meets regularly for updates and address program policy concerns</li> </ul>
COSCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Serves as Secretariat of UMC, specifically on community engagement</li> <li>● Provides logistics and administrative support during service-learning program implementation</li> <li>● Provides necessary operational support to partner organizations</li> </ul>
Service-Learning Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordinates with community partners, faculty, colleges/department and community partners regarding program implementation</li> <li>● Provides technical and logistics support during actual service activity of students</li> <li>● Facilitates deployment of students in the community</li> <li>● Facilitates processing of students' service-learning experience</li> <li>● Consolidates service-learning experiences of students, faculty and community partners through regular monitoring and assessment</li> <li>● Develops monitoring and evaluation tools and feedback mechanisms</li> <li>● Ensures process documentation of all service activities per college and department</li> <li>● Coordinates with partner organizations through regular meetings, feed backing</li> <li>● Advocates service learning program in various department and colleges</li> </ul>
External Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides overall operational guidance to faculty and COSCA with regards to community engagement activities of students</li> <li>● Attends UMC regular meeting</li> </ul>
Academic Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensures linkage between service-learning with academic knowledge</li> <li>● Monitors students' service-learning project implementation in the community/center</li> <li>● Coordinates with COSCA regarding program implementation</li> <li>● Participates in post service-learning implementation and together with and service learning coordinator</li> <li>● Develops grading system on service learning activity (group or individual grading, etc)</li> </ul>

Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that service-learning program is part of the regular course requirement</li> <li>• Coordinates with COSCA regarding program implementation</li> <li>• Ensures that faculty members facilitate service-learning program</li> <li>• Develops incentive mechanism for faculty to encourage implementation of service-learning program</li> <li>• Issues waiver or letter of permit to undergraduate students prior to field activity</li> <li>• Helps advocate service-learning program within the department</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates service-learning activity in the community (conduct organizational and community orientation, community tour, processing activities, etc.</li> <li>• Identifies possible service activity for the students based on community needs and skills of students</li> <li>• Assists students in service plan development and implementation</li> <li>• Participates in coordination meetings with COSCA and academic faculty</li> <li>• Ensures safety and security of students while on the field</li> </ul>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submits reflection paper/journals describing service-learning experience and lessons learned</li> <li>• Participates in community activities</li> <li>• Implements service plan based on agreement</li> </ul>

Source: Guanzon, M. (2012). COSCA Service Learning Manual

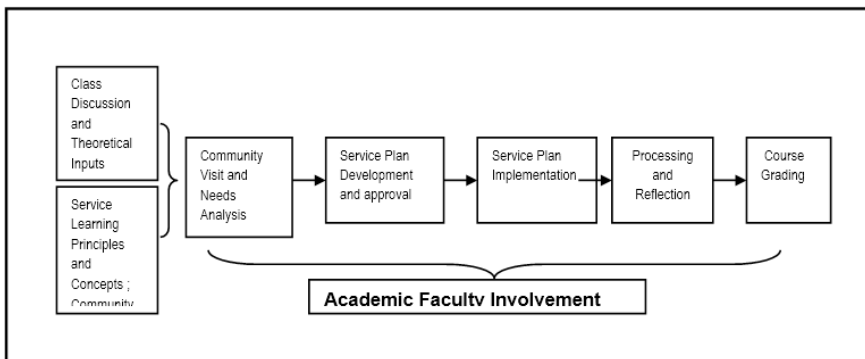


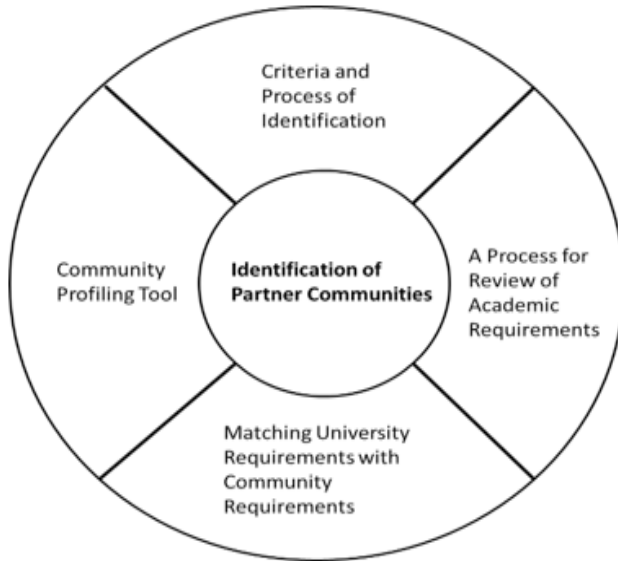
Figure 4. Process Flow

**Program implementation process.** SL process activity involved classroom and community orientation, field exposure and actual deployment, project implementation, and processing of field experience. As a general guide, Figure 4 shows the process of how SL is being implemented.

**Implementing guidelines and compliance with legal mandates.**

Community engagement guidelines were developed consistent with the University policies as stated in the University Student Manual.

The second element on university partner community identification were traced using the established indicators (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Partner Community Identification

**DLSU Partner Community Identification**

The Center of Social Concern and Action (COSCA)-DLSU has two community categories: community-based or center-based. Community-based partners are usually peoples’ organizations found in poor communities and providing services based on the felt needs of sector and area they are in. They include fisherfolk’s organization, homeowners’ associations, farmer’s organization, indigenous peoples’ organization, and others. Center-based partners are usually non-governmental organizations or foundations providing services to a particular group of people or sector. They include institutions engaged in the care of the children such as orphanages and center for juvenile delinquent, home for the elderly, faith-based organization, center for abused women, and cooperatives among others.

**Selection criteria.** COSCA partners are selected using the following selection criteria:

- Upholds COSCA's development framework and principles of participatory decision-making, ecological soundness, cultural spiritual sensitivity, sustainable development, gender sensitivity, justice, and equality;
- Has student development experience at least for three consecutive years;
- Has clear vision and mission and practical and achievable goals;
- Possesses the necessary competence, reputation, experience, and potential in its area of expertise;
- Has a defined organizational structure and demonstrated/potential leadership skills;
- Needs services provided by students and faculty of DLSU;
- Demonstrates commitment and initiatives in servicing the target population/sector;
- Is legitimate:
  - Has mechanisms to generate own fund;
  - Is registered/accredited with the government (SEC, CDA, etc);
  - Has good relations with other NGOs, LGUs in the community;
  - Has active membership; and
  - Preferably has experience working with the youth sector and/or students.

**Community profiling.** A community profiling instrument was developed to standardize the data to be gathered in each community. This instrument purported to elicit socio-economic-political, biophysical information significant for community profile. Also, this instrument aimed to identify specific interventions initiated by LGUs and partners per MDG/target. The data to be gathered from the instrument were useful in distilling gaps in the community. The end goal was to plan out interventions for community engagement of DLSU.

1. **Reviewing academic requirements.** The academic faculty prepared the syllabus integrating SL and identified academic requirements relevant to community engagement. Both the

faculty and COSCA determined the specific needs of the course which must be taken into consideration in the community integration and SL implementation.

2. ***Matching community and academic program needs.*** The academic faculty and COSCA worked together in identifying suitable community-based and center-based partner for the students. COSCA identified and coordinated with partner community and institution where students conducted their SL activity. Deployment areas were selected from the pool of COSCA's partners. To aid in selection of community for the students, skills and interest of students were matched with community/center needs. In this way, these organizations could maximize skills of students on product development, business plan development, marketing, and the like. At the same time, students utilize their skills and knowledge gained in school to assist the community/institution address their needs (Guanzon, 2012, p.10).

The third element on university-community partnership was traced using the established indicators (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** University-Community Partnership



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## DLSU-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 1. Partnership with local community-based organization.** COSCA developed partnerships with community non-government organizations, people's organizations, local government units, and church-based organizations. To guide COSCA in identifying and choosing its partner organizations, criteria for selection were established. The criteria included upholding the principles of participatory decision making, observing ecological soundness, having cultural and spiritual sensitivity, upholding sustainable development, upholding justice and equality, and gender sensitivity; having a legal personality; possessing the required competence and reputation; having a clear management structure; demonstrating a transparent decision-making process; having a mechanism to generate funds and pursuing at least one Millennium Development Goals.
  - 2. Partnership building.** To develop the partnership between COSCA and its partner organizations, the following actions were undertaken:
    - 2.1. Levelling off on core values and defining common vision and goals.** A workshop to level-off on the values and principles of COSCA and partners was an important process. The values common to them were those incorporated in the social development principles such as respect of human rights, ecological integrity, and just and peaceful process. An important activity was also the process of defining a common vision. The partners and COSCA aspired to have a just, peaceful, and equitable community.
    - 2.2. Memorandum of agreement.** A MOA was drafted to determine the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. The instrument also provided parameters of involvement, and the opportunities and benefits that each one may get in the partnership.
    - 2.3. Development of implementing systems and mechanisms.** A manual of operation had been developed and updated from time to time as guide of parties involved. The manual contained processes, systems, and mechanisms in implementing the program, policies, and procedures in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation clearly inscribed in the manual.
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**3. Partnership benefits.** As clearly revealed in the findings of assessing impact of CWTS with the partners, the partners gained from the services and resources of the University through the projects of our students in the community. Even the presence of University in the community through partnership with the local organizations was claimed by the partners as a benefit of the partnership. DLSU-COSCA, on the other hand, mutually benefit from the partnership. The partners provided the students of DLSU avenue to learn more about community, societal issues, and concerns and through their interaction with the poorer sectors of the society their hearts and minds are being transformed from apathy to sympathy. The partners and the University mutually gained from the partnership.

The fourth element on Participatory Engagement is traced using the established indicators (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Participatory Engagement

### **DLSU’s Structures of Participatory Engagement**

To start determining the SL Program’s structures of participatory engagement, it is essential to define relevant terms (Table 3).

**Table 3. Definition of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation**

	<b>Process</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Planning</b>	Collectively determining courses of action	Make the future conform to their desired state
<b>Monitoring</b>	Gathering, filing, and accessing information	Enable the Center to determine the progress of implementation of a plan and make corrective measures to ensure that the organization is moving towards realizing objectives/directions set
<b>Evaluation</b>	Collecting and analyzing information	Enable the Center to determine what happened to a particular plan so that its overall performance can be enhanced

Source: COSCA Manual of Operations, June 2008

**1. Planning and implementation process.** Faculty, students, partner community, and COSCA are all part of the planning process. The COSCA SL Manual (2012) states that “the academic faculty and COSCA work together to identify suitable community-based and center-based partner for the students. COSCA identifies and coordinates with partner community and institution where students will conduct their service-learning activity. Deployment areas are selected from the pool of COSCA’s partners. To aid in selection of community for the students, skills and interest of students are matched with community/center needs. For instance, students enrolled in Entrepreneurship course is matched with partner organization with livelihood activities or projects such as KILUS Foundation, BUKLOD Tao and among others. In this way, these organizations can maximize skills of students on product development, business plan development, marketing, etc. At the same time, students utilize their skills and knowledge gained from school to assist the community/institution in addressing their needs” (p15).

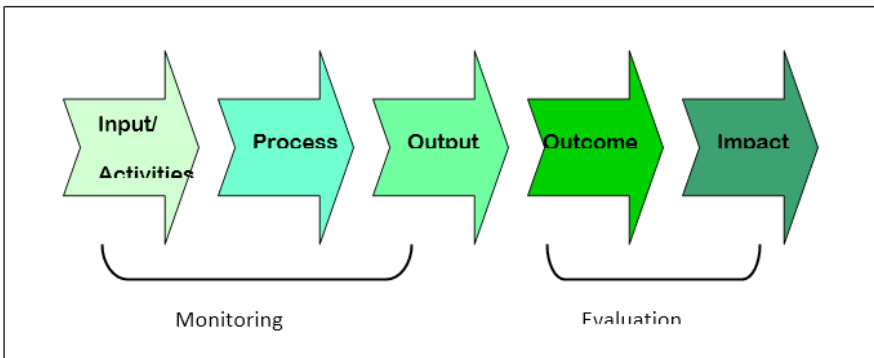
**1.2. Implementation process.** COSCA (2012) follows a 7-step process for SL implementation:

Step 1. Once SL component is integrated in the course curriculum, implementation process starts with the classroom session conducted by the faculty in-charge of the academic program. During classroom

- sessions, students are equipped with necessary skills and specific knowledge needed in fulfilling their community tasks.
- Step 2. Students attend SL orientation to learn the concepts and principles of service activity, and overview of community and partner organization. The orientation is conducted by COSCA through its program coordinator. A more detailed discussion on community and organizational situation is also provided by the partner organization on field so that students will have a better understanding of community situation where they will be assigned.
- Step 3. After the orientation, students together with the academic faculty and COSCA coordinator conduct initial community visit for an ocular inspection of the community as well as meet the members of peoples' organization that will serve as project partner of students during service activity.
- Step 4. In consultation with the community leaders, students may opt to identify a possible project activity based on the observed condition and need of the area or the partner organization. The identified priority need of the community serve as reference of the students in writing their proposed service plan with guidance from the academic faculty. The service plan have to be approved by the community leaders before implementation.
- Step 5. Service plan execution involves actual project implementation activity in the community in partnership with the community organization. Number of service hours may not be required during project implementation. However, a project output that benefits and that can be sustained by the community organization is given more importance. A final copy of the project output shall be submitted directly to the community organization, program coordinator, and faculty in-charge.
- Step 6. Upon completion of community project, a processing session is facilitated by the COSCA coordinator, academic faculty, or community leaders. During processing sessions, students reflect on their service experience, learnings, and personal plan of action. The students may be required to submit reflection papers or accomplish feedback forms at the end of the activity.
- Step 7. Academic faculty then gives grade to students on their rendered service and project result. (pp.10-11)

It is to be noted that the SLP coordinator helps facilitate the entire SL process by coordinating with partner organizations, identifying communities, and ensuring that project activity is consistent with the course requirement and community need. The faculty in-charge is also involved in the entire SL by supervising the students in its project implementation. According to Guanzon (2012), “Tripartite partnership of faculty, community, and students is the key in the successful implementation of service-learning process. The faculty provides students the social foundations of academic course in school and hone students’ potentials. The faculty bridges the gap between the students and the community thus, contributes not only to students and academic institutions, more so, to local, national and global communities. The partner communities, on the other hand, provide for real life experiences and exposes students to the social realities” (p.6).

**2. Monitoring and Evaluation.** A monitoring and evaluation system is already built in the whole program process of DLSU SL as manifested in COSCA Manual on Service Learning. The coordinator of SL is in-charge of monitoring sub-program progress of activities, process of implementation and immediate and tangible outputs. After service program implementation, outcome, and long-term impact shall be evaluated. The diagram below shows the monitoring and evaluation framework that is used under this subprogram. This is modified version of World Bank’s M&E framework.



**Figure 8.** M&E Framework (modified)<sup>[1]</sup>

1 World Bank, The PPD Handbook: A Toolkit for Business Environment Reformers, [www.privatepublicdialogue.org](http://www.privatepublicdialogue.org)

COSCA has also established M&E Input, Process, Output and Impact Indicators (Table 4).

**Table 4.** M&E Inputs, Process, Output, Outcome and Impact Indicators

<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Human</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Material</li> </ul>	<p>Classroom session</p> <p>Community Partners Orientation</p> <p>Project implementation</p> <p>Field visit Processing session</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>Reflection Papers</p> <p>Reports</p> <p>Project deliverables</p>	<p>Change in knowledge and/or behavior of students</p> <p>Addressed community and/or organizational needs</p>	<p>Increased level of social development awareness of Lasallians</p> <p>Improved project development skills</p> <p>Improved organizational performance</p> <p>Contributed in the improvement of quality of life</p>
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Measures of inputs, process, output, outcome, and impact are called performance indicators, which are used to track progress and results.

1. An input indicator refers to the resources used in program activities such as human, financial, training and material.
2. Process indicators are the actions taken or work performed in the program using specified inputs. These include classroom orientation, field visits, project implementation, processing and assessment sessions.
3. Output indicators are results of the identified activities. The outputs include reflection papers, reports, and project specific deliverables.
4. The outputs are expected to yield certain outcomes in terms of changes in knowledge, behavior and performance among students and community partners, as well as addressing community and/or organizational needs.
5. Finally, it is anticipated that the program will generate development impacts including increased level of social

development awareness, improved project development skills, improved organizational performance, and contribution in the improvement of quality of life (World Bank, 2006, as cited in Guanzon, 2012, pp.21-22 ).

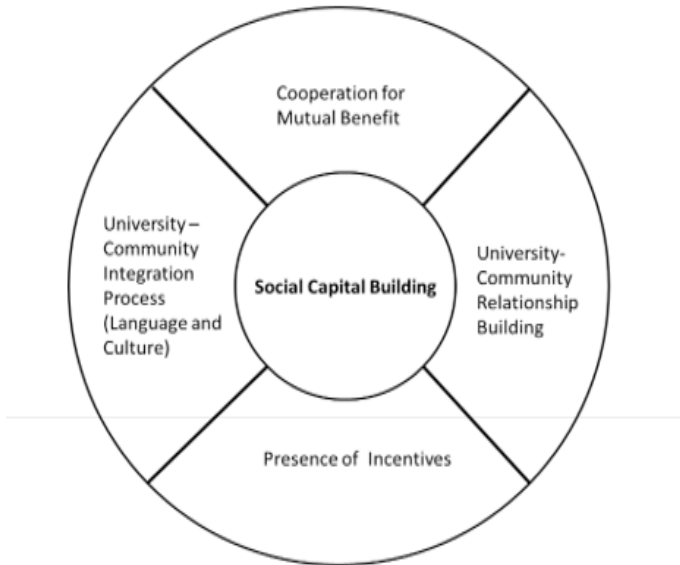
In the conduct of M&E, methods and corresponding tools are to be selected to ensure that data can be collected and analyzed on input, output, outcome, and impact indicators. M&E methods could in the form of interview, desk review, site visits and among others while M&E tools are the instruments that are used to gather, synthesize, and analyze information in a way that is appropriate and participatory. Table 5 provides a list of the M&E methods and tools.

**Table 5. M&E Methods and Tools**

Methods	Tools
Desk review Interview (students, faculty, community partners, program coordinator) Site visits Focus group discussion (analysis, validation and discussion of findings) Feedbacking Reporting	Documentation reports Questionnaires Checklist Interview schedule Visual aids (written, digital) Profiles of stakeholders M&E reports Project outputs

Monitoring of SL activities is done periodically such as during the end of each term. Program evaluation is done at the end of the academic year. However, end of the term subprogram assessment is done after each term to document and address issues and concerns arising. In order to ensure that relevant information generated during the entire process of program implementation, process documentation shall be done. Additionally, process documentation contains program challenges, constraints as well as assessment of program implementation. The documentation will serve as basis for service learning assessment, planning, and evaluation. Documentation tools may include but may not be limited to the following: progress reports, assessment, plans, proceedings, feedback forms, evaluation reports, and others. (Guanzon, 2012, p.21).

The fifth element, Social Capital Building will be traced using the established indicators as shown in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** Social Capital Building

**Social capital building.** Partnerships require trust in the relationship and aspire for mutual benefit. Building trust is a process and must be given utmost attention. COSCA recognizes the importance of this element in its partnership with partner organizations. In order to develop this trust, the following processes are applied:

1. ***Levelling-off and determination of goals.*** Both COSCA and its partner organizations define its implementing goals based on the organizational milieu, community context, and project requirements. Consultations and workshops are undertaken to gather relevant data.
2. ***Integration with the community.*** Another pertinent step is the process of getting to know and understand the community and its issues. This is done through community immersion, social investigation, dialogue with key stakeholders, and public consultation with the affected members of the community. A common view of the situation is discussed and based on the group's analysis of the situation a framework of intervention is developed.
3. ***Community building.*** Relationship with the partners is more than just implementing projects. COSCA is very particular about



building a harmonious and meaningful relationship with its partner organizations. A number of community building activities are planned yearly to develop camaraderie, trust, and respect with one another.

4. **Capability building activities.** Through the Organization Development Program of COSCA, an assessment of the organizational need of the partner organizations is conducted. Result of the assessment would determine the types of training to be developed for the partners to enhance their knowledge, technical capacity, and values formation. To support OD interventions, other activities such as mentorship, sharing of experiences, and spiritual exercises are also conducted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Evidently, SL is one way of DLSU's venue in engaging with the larger communities for the beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. The study reveals that SL in DLSU is already in place in terms of the following policies, frameworks, structures and mechanisms:

- Presence of university policy;
- Clear principle and framework of engagement;
- Policy on university-community partnership;
- Clear partner community selection;
- Established structures on participatory engagement; and
- Built-in process of building social capital.

However, the study shows that DLSU has yet to develop the following systems and mechanisms:

- Social Marketing--there is a need to sell the concept to a wider user;
- Rubric on SL--there is a need to develop a rubric on SL to assess the progress of DLSU in implementing SL;
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Tool--there is a need to enhance the DLSU's M&E tool to consider the impact of SL to the university as well as to the community.

As the center for learning, universities serve as a locus for academic discourse and the advancement of social theories. It is also where the social issues and goals of the society are discussed and reflected upon. The continuing challenge is how the University can be truly relevant and responsive to the community and society as a whole. Lasallian educators believe in transformative learning whereby a student-learner exercises his/her critical thinking; develops social awareness and forms Filipino conscience that is committed towards social change.

At DLSU, venues and opportunities for self-propelled individual and collective actions must be context-sensitive so that it could be purposeful and sustainable. Hence, all social and community engagement of the University must be life-affirming and mutually empowering, involving the Lasallian family in partnership with the larger communities because the ultimate goal of social transformation is to preserve and bring forth the fullness of life.

SL is one way of DLSU's ways of engaging with the larger communities for the beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. One of the challenges is to be able to integrate service learning in other academic programs of the colleges of DLSU that are not into SL yet. SL has to be woven into the yardstick of the University and at the same time reflect the needs of both the community and students.

In an age where community involvement and partnerships with civil society are increasingly recognized as indispensable, there is clearly a growing potential for cooperative development and renewal worldwide. — Kofi Annan

### **AUTHOR NOTE:**

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# Greening My Neighbor School: Reframing the Concept of Partnerships

*People don't get along because  
they fear each other.  
People fear each other because  
they don't know each other.  
They don't know each other because  
they have not properly communicated  
with each other.*

**- Martin Luther King Jr.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Quality education can be achieved by keeping pace with the pressing issues, challenges, and new opportunities in the classroom, in the whole institution, and in the country in general. The 1987 Philippine constitution asserts that the state “shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels.” The mandate translates to multiple missions for the Philippine higher education system. Two of the four mission statements where academic community involvement is expected to take place are as follows:

- a. To produce thoughtful graduates imbued with 1) values reflective of a humanist orientation (e.g., fundamental respect for others as human beings with intrinsic rights, cultural rootedness, an avocation to serve); 2) analytical and problem solving skills; 3) the ability to think through the ethical and social implications of a given course of action; and 4) the competency to learn continuously throughout life—that will enable them to live meaningfully in a complex, rapidly changing and globalized world while engaging their community and the nation’s development issues and concerns; and

- b. To help improve the quality of human life of Filipinos and respond effectively to changing societal needs and conditions; and to provide solutions to problems at the local community, regional and national levels.

The mission statement can be fulfilled with the active participation of higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the country. The HEIs are expected to offer quality and relevant programs that are responsive to societal needs and are able to meet national standards.

At Southern Christian College, the focus now is on the student outcome associated with an education grounded on faith, character, and service. The Commission on Higher Education mandates all HEIs in the country to realign and introduce some reforms in quality assurance. SCC is not exempted from such reform. As emphasized in the Academic Affairs Division Strategic Plans, SCC is committed to do more to integrate the classroom experience with service-learning and personal development as envisioned by the founders and administrators of the college. Hence, this paper was put into writing to share how COA-SCC integrate CSL in professional subjects, how partnerships are cultivated, what the outcomes are in CSL, as well as opportunities and some possible ways to address identified ethical issues.

The integration of community service-learning (CSL) in two professional subjects in the College of Agriculture of Southern Christian College (COA-SCC) was inspired by its own vision, mission and goals. The COA-SCC vision-mission clearly states:

The college envisions producing highly qualified, resourceful, productive model and life-long learners in various fields of agriculture equipped with desirable skills for total human development.

The College of Agriculture is committed to the formation and development of well-rounded professionals in agriculture. They are to be trained as farm managers, researchers, agri-entrepreneurs and agriculturists that are capable of responding to the needs of the rural communities, promoting the upliftment of the countryside, mindful in the proper use and conservation of the natural resources.

The two subjects with CSL were SocSci 42 (Agricultural Extension and Communication with Peace Education component) and AgBus 43 (Project Development and Evaluation Analysis). The former was regularly offered during the second semester for agriculture junior students and the latter during the first semester of the senior year. The integration of CSL is based on the premise that 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students have substantial knowledge and skills, and the right values in transferring or sharing agricultural technologies to partner communities.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> c Agriculturists**

The mark of SCC students are best measured by setting forth curriculum standards and by bringing to the fore the character dimension of the curriculum. As highlighted in Philippine Agenda for Agriculture, agriculturists should possess the following attributes:

- Well-informed and conscious of the socio-technical concerns of agriculture as well as with the fundamental issues of structural reforms and social justice for better society;
- Trained and involved in the “hows and whys”—critical thinkers and effective decision makers and individuals who willing to play active roles for the improvement of rural life; and
- Nurturing and respectful of one’s own culture and traditional values; mindful that human beings have values of their own and aware that development will occur only when rooted in the cultural soil of the country.

These attributes were also integrated in the curriculum. To intensify the image of SCC, core values were identified by students and teachers, namely work ethics and responsibility, compassion, love and care, commitment/dedication, respect for community and the environment, respect for self and others, self-discipline/self-control, tolerance, fairness and justice, trustworthiness and cooperation. These core values, therefore, were given equal importance and utmost consideration in the conduct of various academic and non-academic endeavors of the college.



How should agriculture students be prepared to become well-rounded professionals in various field of studies in agriculture? Is service-learning, as innovative teaching pedagogy, a venue for building desirable competencies for agriculture students?

## **CULTIVATING PARTNERSHIP: GREENING MY NEIGHBOR SCHOOL**

In CSL program, sustainability is one of the major concerns in partnerships. In SCC, since its founding years and as embodied in its mission statement, the town and gown concept of the school had been geared towards bridging the school and the community was actualized. Thus, CSL was integrated in some of the professional subjects in the College of Agriculture in 2010.

This concept was affirmed by Heil et al., (2010) who explained that the significant component in the success of CSL is the development of working relationship with the target community and the establishment of trust. This is the foundation of the efforts that made CSL possible.

### **How Partnerships Began: Seeing the Mutual Gains**

The partner community was Arizona High School, a public school about 30 kms away from SCC campus. It was headed by a principal who is an SCC alumna. The concerned principal developed the national greening program (NGP) of the school as model in the community and as part of the school improvement program required by the Philippines' Department of Education (DepEd).

The principal recognized that they had human resource who could work with NGP who happened to be products of COA-SCC under Bachelor in Agricultural Technology. The NGP members had education units and are now licensed teachers. These teachers were trained to handle enhanced basic education curriculum with emphasis on TLE majoring in agriculture following the K to 12 paradigm. Recognizing that COA-SCC could help them, the principal intentionally visited the Dean and presented the AHS-NGP plans. At that time, the COA Dean was also looking for a potential partner community where students could be given the learning opportunity to conduct needs assessment as one of the significant course contents in SocSci 42 (Agricultural Extension and Communication). The learning

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activity matched the principle of agriculture extension of working with rural people along the lines of their current interest and needs and was closely related to gaining livelihood, improving the physical level of living, and fostering community welfare. In this context, fostering partnerships took place and the potential of mutual benefit was recognized.

Working with the partner community posed some new opportunities. As planned and prepared by the school principal, the service-learning providers established relationship based on needs outlined by the partner community. The partners assumed responsibility and liability for final project design and implementation. Actual site visits and dialogues were done in the community. To institutionalize the partnership, a covenant of partnership (COP) was inked. A written commitment was shared and discussed with all involved in CSL implementation as reflected in the COP. The CSL participants facilitated the assessment of needs and the partner community identified which of the NGP components needed to be prioritized and implemented the soonest.

### **The National Greening Program: A Glimpse**

One of the main goals of the CSL project was to develop a sustainable, long-term solution that could be maintained by the community. The NGP project is a collaborative, inter-professional service-learning course that provides a venue for involving agricultural technology and agricultural business students, faculty, and the partner community

The CSL project TEAM committed to realize the following objectives of NGP:

- a. establish vegetable gardens to serve as food basket and ready source of vegetables to sustain supplementary feeding program;
- b. establish nurseries/seed banks to sustain seed requirement for different planting cycles as well as fruit bearing and forest tree saplings for the tree-planting activity;
- c. enhance the development of values among the learners by integrating curricula concepts in planting and eating vegetables, waste management and environmental protection, and land conservation, among others;

- d. coordinate with other agencies, NGOs, and private institutions relative to the program; and
- e. conduct monitoring and evaluation.

## SHARING REAL COMMITMENT: THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Community service-learning as teaching pedagogy hones students' sense of social responsibility and other civic engagement benefits. Ehrlich (2000) vividly defined service-learning:

[C]ivic engagement is working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community. In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

The outcomes of sharing real commitment were best expressed by some reflections of students in class. Acquiring knowledge (the cognitive domain), enriching one's values (the affective), and honing desirable skills (the psychomotor) were highly recognized.

On the cognitive domain, one student recognized that "the positive outcome in the conduct of CSL was to share agricultural knowledge and skills to others. Whatever the community learn from us, they would use such knowledge and apply for their own benefit." As observed by the faculty, the community was so appreciative of how COA-SCC students delivered inputs in vermiculture technology as one of the specific components in NGP. The faculty recognized that there were multiple potentials in students such as facilitating some group dynamic activities.

On the psychomotor domain, students claimed that their communication skills were enhanced. The activity also developed their ability to deal with community people effectively and interact with them. In terms of values, students got the chance to apply and nurture learned capabilities and talents in real life situations, immerse themselves in various cultures, and see things at a wider perspective.

However, at this point, the ethical issue on assessing positive outcomes in relation to student's outcome and the outcome from the community needed to be validated.

## OPPORTUNITIES ON APPLIED ETHICS IN AGRICULTURE

Although it was recognized that service-learning offers a lot of benefits, at the SCC, there were challenges on ethics and human protection that were considered vital to the conduct of CSL. As identified by the service-learning coordinator of the whole college, the following ethical issues were raised:

1. perception of community as a learning laboratory;
2. the messianic syndrome attached to academic institutions;
3. multiple professional burden: Intellectual and physical exhaustion;
4. maximization or optimization of reciprocity in service-learning;
5. endogenization or indigenization of knowledge; and
6. ending, closing or culmination.

This paper seeks to highlight three factors, in particular, that have a strong bearing to the experience of COA-SCC.

**Perception of community as a learning laboratory.** If community engagement or citizenship is part of college mission, it needs to promote and support SL. One's perception of community as a learning laboratory is greatly influenced by one's culture and traditions. As experienced by two agriculture students, CSL was a way of helping people through sharing and an opportunity for students to learn from the community and to bring back good practices in implementing NGP:

CSL is a way of helping a person by sharing the knowledge and skills in the latest agricultural technologies that is useful to the community and the community giving us back good experiences that we could make use of in the future. I consider the community as partners not a laboratory of the class because the community discusses the problem, we gave them series of information to find the solution and see the results by themselves.

The partner communities benefit from the projects/outputs of the SL activity that primarily aim to answer needs. Service-learning is about sharing what we have to the people in a community to help themselves and to start a difference in their lives.

When we go to engage with community service, our prime purpose is to help people help themselves.

Obviously, students expressed and manifested some good learning experiences and were able to effectively perform some inherent responsibilities in the conduct of CSL. They played a huge role as representatives of the college. Thus, it was vital that students understood and complied with the roles and responsibilities entrusted to them.

**Multiple professional burden: Intellectual and physical exhaustion.** In SCC's practice and in any workplace, multitasking is considered normal. The ethical question now is whether this is probably because only few were qualified to engage in or conduct CSL. Such was likely because only a few people were committed to CSL.

Although teachers were considered to be the prime movers of the acquisition of knowledge, of honing the various skills of the students, and of developing in them the appropriate values that they needed for a promising future, they were not exempted from some professional burden. One faculty member in the college mentioned that "it consumed my being."

At some point, faculty wariness is manifested. As highlighted by Butin (2007), there are legitimate reasons for faculty members' wariness about community engagement. Foremost, community engagement takes extra time and energy to create courses and programs built around powerful and meaningful community engagement—ones that foster reciprocity, respect, relevance, and reflection. A faculty concerned needs to develop local contacts, build trust with them, create collaborative relationships, listen carefully, learn about real community needs, and integrate students' engaged work into course content. All of these concerns must be done before the regular semester starts.

Moreover, faculty may be wary of jumping into an existentially precarious pedagogy. They must shift from the view of the classroom as a controlled environment where they are the experts to the view of the classroom as a messy chaotic world in which they are not the only source of

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knowledge. Faculty members may have to watch the theories in the textbook contradicted by the reality on the ground. They may have to face the fact that their lectures do not speak of the situation that students encounter in their community organizations.

As of the moment, there are some institutions that do not have a clear system to evaluate and reward faculty who have pursued such innovative pedagogical and curricular activities. Seemingly, few institutions describe promotion and tenure policies that recognize and reward scholarship associated with community service-learning.

**Ending/closing or culmination.** In every endeavor, the prospect of termination of relationship is the most challenging and sometimes heartbreaking moment for the service-learning providers and the partner community. Was it closing or ending the partnership or culminating something that was done in the spirit of collaboration and mutual gains?

Closing is defined as the termination of operations or as a concluding action or an act of bringing something to completion or fruition. Like the durian fruit which, once naturally ripened on the tree, will detach and fall on the ground after developing the abscission layer, culmination is also the final, highest, or decisive point or a final moment of glory or triumph. This may imply that something can be done better, if not best, the next time CSL is conducted. The ethical issue now is whether or not to close or to culminate CSL program in partner community.

As an academic institution inspired by its own vision, mission and goals, culmination is best suited in the celebration of successes in CSL. It will end the partnership as stipulated in the COP but the relationship will still remain between and among the service-learning providers and partner community.

Culminating the project will provide a higher ground for maintaining the collaboration between community stakeholders and CSL implementers. Culminating also provides a way of furthering trusting relationship and respectful engagement. Thus, culminating instead of ending each accomplishment is a rewarding activity to ponder on.

## CONCLUSION

Greening my neighbor school as major project in community service-learning reframed the concept of partnership. This entails building trust

and confidence among and between partner communities. CSL forged relationships between academic institutions and communities--relationships that enhanced the effectiveness of both parties to bring about social transformation that contributes to quality of life.

Reframing the partnership is now a big challenge for all of us.

1. Perception of community as laboratory should now be transformed to a community as source of knowledge, sharing one's skills and enriching life's values.
2. Fostering partnership at different levels:
  - a. faculty-to-students;
  - b. student-to-student where the students themselves share ideas and validate or evaluate them;
  - c. the community—which takes part in the CSL evaluation and where partnerships are built;
  - d. service-learners, students, and community, and the institution—whose relationships need to be strengthened;
  - e. partnership—which are a means of relationship-building.
3. Even when service-learning projects are culminated, the communication between and among service-learning providers and implementers will continue. By doing so, the culmination of the service-learning project will pave the way to a higher level of partnership that leads to social change.

Thus, at SCC, we live a life with a ministry of “transforming education,” transforming communities through service-learning and beyond.

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## **Kyosei in International Service-Learning: Engaging Local Communities as Equal Partners**

*Those of us who attempt to do things for  
others or for the world without  
deepening our own self-understanding,  
freedom, integrity, and  
capacity to love, will not have  
anything to give others.*

**- Social Activist Thomas Merton  
(1915-1968)**

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At Silliman University, service-learning (SL) is a program of teaching-learning that pursues the development of the students' intellectual capacity along their chosen career paths and hones a sense of social responsibility through service in a community. Thus, as a teaching-learning strategy, the program allows both students and faculty to serve a chosen community where they individually address specific problems according to their area of expertise. Based on collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork, SL then becomes a community-based reinforcement activity that is anchored on a holistic approach where the University's academic resources—human, technical, and material—are pooled together for the greater good.

### **FROM SLAN TO ISLMP**

The success of SL as a pedagogy has led to the institutionalization of the program. SL at Silliman University is not only community-based service-learning that is grounded on an inter- and multidisciplinary framework but is also now inter-phased in an international setting after the International Christian University of Tokyo, Japan hosted an SL conference that resulted in the establishment of the Service-Learning Asian Network (SLAN) in 2006.

Today, it is this pedagogical strategy in SL that has identified and forged the common purpose of serving a local community in Dumaguete City, Philippines. With SLAN, there is now the reality that intercultural

cooperation is not only achievable but also mutually beneficial to all those who participate in the SL process. In Niponggo, this intercultural relationship is known as *kyosei*, a term that denotes intercultural symbiosis and is also associated with the Bahasa Indonesian term, *saleng melengkapi*.

Kyosei in SL primarily builds on a model of international collaboration where a culturally diverse group of students congregate in a particular community of a country to do SL. In turn, the formation of SLAN also ushered in a dimension for SL that led to a new vision for SL at Silliman University—the International Service Learning Model Program (ISLMP)—that has also strengthened kyosei.

The crowning achievement in SL is then kyosei where intercultural symbiosis is the thread that binds diverse cultures together. Nishio (2006) identified SL as a mutually beneficial relationship among culturally diverse peoples or groups where intercultural symbiosis is further enhanced by intercultural communication. However, there are factors that complicate how one communicates. These are feelings, motives, needs, history, and ways individuals interpret the communication of others (Woods, 1997).

## Community Engagements: The Ethical Dimension

SL is a teaching-learning pedagogy. However, perhaps because the term ‘Service- Learning’ does not include or identify the recipient of communication in such learning service, some ethical questions have been raised about the engagement of communities in SL.

Another ethical dimension can be found in the learning engagement where the academe engages the community—not the community engaging the academe. In such a relationship, how then does a host community attain equality as a partner in SL? Butin (2011) offers these four types of the ideal SL outcomes: *technical*, which links classroom teaching to real life practices; *cultural*, which fosters the sense of social responsibility that develops the respect for an increased tolerance for diversity; *political*, which is the border crossing between student-teacher relationship as well as students and teachers with community members; and, *anti-foundational*, which contests the underlying assumptions of professional knowledge and truths.

When the host community then becomes an object of study or a social laboratory in SL, the question of partnership also becomes a question in the ethics of community engagements. In community-based SL, the

interdisciplinary-participatory approach keeps alive the vision of creating transformed, empowered, and self-reliant communities. But are these expectations of transformation, empowerment, and self-reliance really envisioned from among those in the community or instead, only from among the students themselves?

As a social laboratory, what tools and equipment do service-learners employ to create communities that are transformed, empowered, and self-reliant—when such communities already have their own strengths, resources, and network of relationships? Besides, the Standpoint Theory claims that the social groups within which people are located powerfully shape what one experiences and know as well as how one understands and communicates with the self, with another, and with the world (Woods, 1997).

Thus, as the locale for enhanced learning in kyosei, what evaluation strategy in teaching and learning is harnessed to nurture the desired ‘product’ or the host community? How is this host community evaluated, measured? Or as an equal in the SL partnership, is it even fair to evaluate such community? Among the three stakeholders—teachers, students, host community—how then are outcomes for such pedagogy determined?

Without making the host community feel that they have been used when students are rated, do communities have a say in the evaluation of student learning? On the other hand, do students recognize SL as a civic responsibility? What behaviors are observed and noted to record SL accountability in such civic responsibility? When the academic credit is for learning and not service, how is knowledge in service integrated and measured into each student’s preparations for a career in service? What indicators from the community are part of this academic product?

In the traditional classroom, there is a high level of teacher direction while students have the passive learning role. In this non-traditional classroom where the community is the classroom and where there is now a lesser degree of teaching direction while students take an active role in their learning, what roles do the faculty take now that the local community is the object of study? Moreover, when there is now an intercultural and culturally diverse set of stakeholders (students from developed countries who can afford the trip; their Filipino counterparts; the chosen community either ‘built’, agricultural, or coastal), how do role shifts take place? In the construction of knowledge, who handles meanings and values in such role conflicts, keeping in mind that ethics is a code of thinking and behavior

governed by a combination of personal, moral, legal, and social standards of what is 'right,' a term that varies with situations influenced by cultures?

In Howard's *Community Service Learning in the Curriculum* (1993), it is interesting to consider Menlo's (1993) core competencies that underscore student learning from the community: reflective listening, seeking feedback, acuity in observation, and mindfulness in thinking.

## **Equal Partnerships with Local Communities**

There are six phases of the transformation process that opens the service-learner's window towards creativity, productivity, and efficacy: self-awareness or the awareness of others, self-discovery or the discovery of others, self-understanding or the understanding of others, self-acceptance or the acceptance of others, self-appreciation or the appreciation of others, and self-confidence bestowed on others (Ortigas, 1990).

In the Philippine setting, however, where clearly the demarcation line between social classes is much evident among those from the academe and from another culture vis-à-vis the local community, how does such transformation get processed as SL? In addition, how do intra- and intercultural service teachers and learners handle the issue of intrusion as against the community's transformation? In this ethical situation, how can equality ever be achieved? When students have to learn to serve in the community, who determines what the community needs? What community needs are appropriate for learners from across diverse cultures? How is such need measured? When communities are chosen as hosts, will such partnership be achievable? What do communities contribute for them to be considered as 'equal partners'?

By its very nature, SL can only be considered a valid part of education when there is a strong link between what is learned in the classroom and the community as the classroom. When community engagement is done for love of service, who is responsible for the acts of students assigned to the host community as the social laboratory for the moment? Do they, in the community, also assume responsibility for these students?

As a study of theories in action, Woods (1997) asserts that communication is not only a dimension of culture but is also closely linked to it because communication creates, expresses, sustains, and alters cultural life. As intercultural symbiosis in intercultural communication takes place

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in such alteration, how then is kyosei measured as a successful cultural intervention practice?

## An Epilogue

For kyosei to flourish in the engagement of communities as equal partners in SL, there is a convergence of many disciplines. However, one must keep in mind that as a social phenomenon, kyosei is best perceived through the window of the Standpoint Theory where three central ideas also converge: locations in cultural life, situated knowledge, and accuracy of different standpoints (Woods, 1997).

Howard (1993) also offers these ten principles of good practice for SL pedagogy:

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service;
2. Academic rigor should not be compromised;
3. Learning objectives must be established;
4. Criteria for the selection of service-placements must be established;
5. Educationally sound learning strategies should be provided to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives;
6. Students should be prepared for learning from the community;
7. The distinction between the students' community learning role and classroom learning role should be minimized;
8. The faculty instructional role needs rethinking;
9. The faculty should be prepared for variation in, and lesser control over student learning outcomes; and
10. The community responsibility orientation of the course should be maximized.

To further probe into such convergence, from Stanford University Press also comes the book, *The Great Social Laboratory* (2007) that explores the "interface between European and Egyptian social scientific discourses of knowledge production through race, class, and gender." Finally, for SL, there may be a font of knowledge about communities as equal partners from the author, Omnia El Shakry.

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