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# Community-Based Philosophy and Service-Learning: A Case Study at Barry University

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

# COMMUNITY-BASED PHILOSOPHY AND SERVICE-LEARNING: A CASE STUDY AT BARRY UNIVERSITY

By

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Service-learning, as a pedagogical technique, presents unique learning opportunities for students, where they get to use their skills and knowledge from courses to help improve communities that have particular needs. Barry University has recently begun to expand it program across the school, reaching into disciplines that are not often associated with service-learning. Barry is also a school that presents itself as aware of inequality, with the goal of helping to diminish it. However, there is a clear lack of philosophical direction behind the application of service-learning. This research seeks to ascertain the extent to which community-based philosophy is being employed at Barry by interviewing faculty members and students, a total of twenty-five (25) participants, about their experiences with service-learning. The findings suggest that there are many problems with service-learning at this institution, leaving all parties involved wanting more from this practice. From the findings a series of policy implications are made in the hope of further strengthening service-learning at Barry, and making it a community-based endeavor.

To Melissa Murphy, a.k.a., The Murph, for everything you did with and for me while we were together. Even though you did not want me to leave, you supported me. I will never forget you, or what you did for me.

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Finally, to Dr. John W. Murphy, you never gave up on me, and you are the best mentor a graduate student could ever have. Thank you for this experience.

## Acknowledgements

***We have constructed pyramids in honor of our escaping. This is the land where the pharaoh died. The negroes in the forest brightly feathered. They are saying "Forget the night. Life with us in forests of azure. Out here on the perimeter there are no stars. Out here we is stoned – immaculate.***
The WASP (Texas Radio and the Big Beat), by The Doors.

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge Dr. John W. Murphy in this work. The quote above I put there because, at times, we would quote music to one another, and that is one of his favorites. He has been with me my entire graduate career, and I cannot say enough about him. Concerning this dissertation, he pushed me the entire way, making sure that I kept with deadlines that we jointly set while keeping me sane and focused. There were times when I never thought I would finish, and he just kept pushing. His editing style is second to no one else's. It could be tedious, but it was definitely worth the time and effort. I have learned so much from him in my years of working for and with him, and I can honestly say that I am well prepared to take on what the future of higher education throws at me. Any student would be lucky to have him chair their dissertation or to work for him. I know that I am better for it.

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**Preface**

The research presented in the following pages was inspired by the personal experiences and background of the researcher. Accordingly, understanding the researcher's background and professional life may help to contextualize this project. With the collapse of dualism in social sciences, due to the work of post-modern theorists, such as Lyotard (1984) and his "linguistic turn," any project is inevitably influences by the researcher. By understanding the "standpoint" of the researcher, readers will be able to appreciate better the nature of this undertaking (Smith 1997; Smith 1992).

This project was inspired by the researcher's own experiences with service-learning in a class he has taught at Barry University since 2007: Sociology 200: Perspectives, Consciousness, and Social Justice. Having had no experience with service-learning in the traditional sense, the researcher had to rely on handouts and outside preparation to understand what this pedagogical technique was meant to entail. In doing outside research, he came to the conclusion that what he was doing was service-learning in name only. He had no connections to communities or community agencies, and did not have the time to create these bonds.

His personal experiences with the course development and execution extend to the students as well. In the class, students are expected to complete ten (10) hours of service-learning and hand in journals in conjunction with those hours, as well as write a reflection paper at the end of the semester meant to connect what they learn in class to various substantive areas of sociology, human rights, and the Barry University mission statement. When the students handed in these assignments, their connections to the

community were non-existent, and any relationships they identified between their course work and their service experiences were superficial, at best.

In casual conversations with colleagues in the sociology department, and eventually the theology department, many expressed similar frustrations about their service-learning courses. They stated simply that their students "just didn't get it." These conversations showed that the frustrations of the researcher were not limited to his class and were, instead, symptomatic of something broader at the university. The conversations with others, combined with the experiences the researcher had with his service-learning course, led to a simple set of questions: (1) What is wrong with service-learning as it is being practiced, and (2) How can it be improved? These general questions would guide the subsequent research objectives.

A little bit of background information on the researcher, as a person, beyond being an academic, may also be helpful at this juncture. He was raised in upstate New York in a Catholic family, attending Catholic school all through his primary and secondary education. He attended a Jesuit high school and college, each with strong community service and activist traditions. While not a practicing Catholic today, the social teachings of the church, as well as the Jesuit tradition of "Being Men for Others," are congruent with pedagogical techniques, like service-learning, whereby learning is meant to go beyond self-improvement and should be used to further social justice for all.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to Service-Learning and Community

President Barack Obama, during his initial presidential campaign, stressed the importance of community building on different fronts. Part of his public appeal as a presidential candidate was the fact that he had worked as a community organizer before entering politics, which helped to shape some of his political proposals. He called for students who were attending universities and colleges to return to their respective communities and use their talents to help build and improve these places. He has proposed expanding "Teach for America" programs, as well as a program resembling the Peace Corps that operates on a domestic level. While there has been some resistance to such projects, the President has reintroduced the idea of community, community building, and civil society back into the mainstream of political discourse. Likewise, there has been a push for universities to increasingly introduce service-learning into their curriculums as part of their community outreach drives (Fisher, Fabricant, and Simmons 2004). While the link between service-learning and community is undeniable, this association is rarely examined from a critical standpoint. Particularly important is how people involved with service-learning come to define community; in fact, this element is key to determining whether or not a project is community-based.

In general, service-learning is the attempt to combine what is learned in the classroom, whatever the subject may be, with experiences that happen in the real world, and often with a focus on social justice (Butin 2007, Boyle-Baise and Langford 2004, Maurrasse 2001). For example, students in a sociology classes often learn about subjects concerning racial inequality, class inequality, and the glass ceiling. Yet, these students rarely experience the workings of what they learn outside of the classroom. This failure

can leave students disconnected from what they have learned, or at least with the belief that these are simply words coming from an instructor who is out of touch with reality - albeit the students' version of reality – and insulated by the ivory tower of the university. Service-learning practitioners seek to halt this trend in higher education by allowing students to engage communities and acquire a sense of social responsibility.

A lot of research has been conducted on service-learning. These investigations have focused on the effects of service-learning on educational investment (Myers-Lipton 2009), civic engagement (Watson, Jr. 2004, Exley 2004), community-based organizations (Blouin and Perry 2009), and social change (Lewis 2004). However, whether or not service-learning is community-based has received scant attention.

More often than not, however, the focus of service-learning is associated with a perspective that is aimed at social justice. While the goal of many educators may not be social justice, this outcome is central to service-learning. As practitioners of service-learning, teachers attempt to identify a community in need and then use their class, university resources, and their position as an educator to help rectify this particular problem. In many respects, service-learning is an extension of the "free school movement" as outlined by Jonathan Kozol (1972), or the attempt to democratize education in unique ways that are more community and student centered (Apple and Beane 1995). The overall goal of service-learning is to bring the institution of higher learning into closer contact with the community, as well as to bring the community into the university in order to develop a truly lasting partnership.

Service-learning can be an important tool for both faculty and students when this activity is included in the curriculum. This maneuver seems to make quite a lot of sense:

the teacher gets to bring the curriculum to life for the students, and they get to experience how this knowledge plays out in the foreboding "real world." To bring the benefits even further, both the educator and the students (roles that will eventually be broken down in further discussion of service-learning) get to use their unique and important abilities to enact social change, which leads to positive mental health benefits (Thoits and Hewitt 2001). Certainly there are disputes about whether service-learning is a teaching technique or a completely different form of educational philosophy, but those debates are not important to this research project. Despite the various academic conversations concerning service-learning, most scholars can agree that this activity should be grounded in communities.

At the same time, recent trends suggest that institutions of higher learning are rarely truly involved with their respective communities (Cortés 1998). Certainly, many colleges and universities give mention of community in some form in their mission statements, as well as in official communications from the administration. However, most references to community seem to be either superficial or inwardly focused, and thus these institutions seem to be removed from the world. Attitudes such as these are often contrary to the institution's stated goals, as well as the general goal of higher education (Schlaerth and Murphy 2009).

Within the practice of service-learning, there are four different actors that have to be taken into account. The first is the university or college as the facilitator of service-learning. What is meant here is that the university or college has a wealth of resources to either support service-learning on a broad scale or to pursue other programs (Gamoran, Secada, Marrett 2011). The amount of support that is provided for any service-learning

program will help to determine the thoroughness and quality of these initiatives. However, the administration is rarely in direct contact with those who are participating in service-learning classes or projects. The main job of the administration, in most cases, is to provide various types of support, including physical and human resources (Gamoran, Secada, Marrett 2001: 161-165). Physical resources are defined as classrooms, physical space, and capital. Human resources could be teachers and staff who participate in service-learning, training for those who use service-learning, or a department/person/center devoted to service-learning. Finally, social resources refer to the publicity within the school that concerns service-learning, as well as a school trying to become an active, constructive, and concerned member of a community. The goal of social resources is to make the community aware that the university is open and available - essentially the public relations of the college or university.

The second actor within the service-learning paradigm is the faculty member. While from an administrative standpoint, teachers may be seen as a resource to be used (or not) in service-learning; indeed, they have direct knowledge and contact with students and community members through their service-learning classes and projects. In this way, the educator is at the forefront of service-learning at many institutions of higher learning. In reality the talents and knowledge of the teachers are going to help determine the success of any particular project.

But teachers have to believe in service-learning to undertake these projects effectively. If there is little or no commitment to service-learning, negative attitudes can be conveyed to students that undermine this activity. Furthermore, the teacher has to work at breaking down the traditional teacher and student roles within and outside of the

classroom, in order to establish a more egalitarian relationship between these two actors. This task may be difficult for teachers because they must relinquish some control within the classroom, something that is very different from how in general educators are trained (Emmer and Stough 2010; Brouwer and Korthagen 2005; Manning and Bucher 2005; Dreikurs, Brunwald, and Pepper 1998). However, this democratization is essential for achieving successful service-learning, as well as making the project more community-based.

Students are the third element. There is a lot of relearning that must occur on the part of teachers and students in order for a service-learning project to be successful. A lot of service-learning literature talks about how teachers, students, and communities must form partnerships with one another, so that they all have equal status in a project. For this partnership to be meaningful, a lot of re-organization must take place in the classroom, so that students have some input with respect to how class will be conducted, what a service-learning project will entail, and how evaluations will be done. Many students find this new environment, where their opinions and feelings actually do matter, either invigorating or somewhat disorienting, since these changes are not usually a part of the traditional classroom (Gracey 2009, Loewen 1995, Orenstein 1994, LeCompte 1978, Illich 1971). Now that they have some control over their classroom lives, however, this new found power must be channeled into the service-learning project. The process of breaking down the traditional roles of teacher and student, and the importance of doing so, must be stressed into service-learning.

The final element in a service-learning project is the community. A lot of literature on service-learning discusses or at least mentions the concept of "community,"

but these references are varied and at times vague or shallow (Mitchell 2008). The central concern of this project is to deal with the role of community within service-learning projects, insofar that this activity is community-based. But because the concept of community is rarely clearly defined, the positive impact of service maybe minimal (Strom 2010, Eby 1998).

For instance, service-learning projects could come to reinforce stereotypes about communities instead of challenging these images (Jones, Gilbride-Brown, and Gasiorski 2005). Sometimes the community is described as a physical environment where the students, educators, and community members work together towards solving a particular problem, fulfilling a need, or addressing an injustice. Other times, this group is described as a full partner in the development of the service-learning project. In other cases, however, the community is described as a collection of ethnic traits or social indicators, which is often not very flattering. In the end, this variation in definitions creates confusion about the meaning of becoming community-based.

**Nature of the Problem**

As mentioned above, there are many problems with the manner in which service-learning and the concept of community involvement are linked. For instance, a lot of research and theory that focuses on service-learning mentions "community," but this notion is rarely defined. On the other hand, the definitions that are provided are esoteric. For example, Frank Codispoti (2004: 105) describes "community as inquiry" in a paper that discusses the communitarian model of service-learning, which is not very practical until he concludes that community is an ever-evolving concept that is never a completely

finished product. This idea that a community is constantly changing is important, because the assumption is that this group is difficult to define.

Another definition of community that has been used in research is an amorphous one – that of the cohort. Cohorts can be used to describe a variety of different groups, but are defined usually in terms of demographic characteristics, shared experiences, or geographic boundaries (Ragin, Ricci, Rhodes, Holohan, Smirnoff, and Richardson 2008). Many researchers would agree, however, that a universal definition of community is not fitting. Research should take into account the community in question, and the definition must, in the very least, partially arise from the members of this group (Weijer 1999).

A third definition of community that has been used in social-psychological research is a "sense" of we-ness. According to Durkheim (1966), this feeling would pertain to integration into something that is greater than the individual. MacMillan and George (1986) outline four different facets to the concept of community as sense: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. ***Membership*** refers to personal relatedness. ***Influence*** indicates the ability to make a difference to a group, and likewise, the group to shape the individual. ***Integration and fulfillment of needs*** means that a member of a group can count on having his/her needs met by the resources of the group. And finally, ***shared emotional experiences*** relates to the idea that the members of a community share a common commitment, history, and have similar experiences. The definition of community as "sense" helps to illustrate the connection the individual has to the group. However, this definition would not be very helpful for practitioners of service learning, since the

implied interrelationship is vague. Overall, the literature illustrates the difficulties in defining communities in research and educational endeavors.

But by not providing the practitioners of service-learning with a working concept of community, they often times have to resort to ad hoc methods to clarify this idea. This shortcoming could potentially pose problems for service-learning adopting a community-based approach. For example, one of the ad hoc methods for defining community is to make assumptions about a geographic area, with any boundaries determined by landmarks, streets, or a particular piece of shared space (Cohen 2001). The real issue here, though, is figuring out whether this typology has anything to do with the community in question. The important issue, however, is whether or not a community-based project should accept such a definition. On the other hand, what would a community-based definition of a community resemble?

What is important at this time is that many of these definitions attempt to break down a community into a collection of empirical characteristics that can be measured and universally applied to all members of that community. The problem is that researchers are not dealing with variables, but rather with people. In other disciplines, such as in community psychology, there has been the recognition that a community must be viewed in a more holistic manner, which has been referred to as an ecological environment (Jakes and Brookins 2004). This treatment of the community will receive more attention in Chapter 3.

In general, how do the practitioners of service-learning define and use the term community in their service-learning projects? While there is ambiguity at this point, an aspect that may be taken for granted, particularly from a community-based perspective, is

that the community should participate in the formulation of any definition. For this reason, teachers are part of the focus of this project – how their definitions differ from those provided by a community is important to understand.

The opposite side of this problem is considering how the students end up constructing or conceiving the community. In this regard, students bring a lot of biases to service-learning about the nature of community. On the other hand, the definitions provided by a teacher will influence how students view these groups. In fact, the teacher's influence on the students' definition of community in the service-learning project is almost inevitable, because often times students have little input into the project at hand. Nonetheless, how the members of a community define themselves may not relate to the positions taken by either the teachers or students.

The question here is the extent to which the teacher informs the students' definition, the degree which the student is aware that a community may have a different or altered definition, and that the student, in participating in this service-learning project, becomes a partner to the community. In this regard, does this confluence of definitions inform the meaning of a community-based project? How teachers and students define community is particularly important, given the partnership that is supposed to be formed with this group.

Although reflection is considered to be a vital part of service-learning, the definitions of community are not often part of this process. Perhaps because everyone belongs to a community, or actually multiple communities, in some manner, this idea is simply taken for granted by persons. Nonetheless, because persons are influenced by communities, reflection on the nature of these groups should be a key part of service

learning. For example, how do certain definitions come to be accepted by teachers and students, and are these relevant to the visions adopted by the communities where service takes place?

Finally, at Barry University, there is a sense that service-learning is supposed to be a community-based endeavor. A lot of the literature distributed to service-learning courses portrays the various service-learning projects as linked to communities, but these materials never really address the nature of these groups. Most of the descriptions associated with service-learning courses tend to treat a community as merely an environment where the service-learning is to take place. If this is how the community is being treated in the literature and in the classroom, then the claim that the university is using a community-based approach is questionable. As literature coming from other community-based projects notes, a community is meant to be an active partner in the creation, execution, and evaluation of any projects and, thus, is not merely an environment (Dewar and Isaac 1998).

The overall goals of this project are as follows:

(1) To discover how the teachers and students associated with service learning come to define a community.

(2) Figuring out how a community is involved with a service learning project.

(3) Ascertaining the extent to which service learning at Barry University employs a community-based approach.

Each of these aspects, those dealing with the definition of community and the role of community, has been ignored largely by the literature concerning service-learning. This research seeks to address these shortcomings by interviewing practitioners of service learning.

**Methods**

The point of this project is to discover how teachers and students who experience service-learning in the college or university environment construct definitions of community. Likewise, there is interest in discovering how the definition used impacts community involvement in service-learning. As mentioned earlier, there is research on how members of a community come to define themselves (MacMillan and George 1986) and how researchers define community for a particular research endeavor (Ragin, et. al. 2008; Chappell, Funk, and Allan 2006), but little has been done concerning the definitions used by practitioners of service-learning. Nonetheless, there has been an implicit existence and assumed involvement of a community.

The other aspect of this research is to discover the extent a community is involved with service-learning. Most of the literature on service learning has indicated that the community should be involved with varying degrees, depending on the model of service-learning that is employed in the classroom. Simultaneously, regardless of the model used for service-learning, there should be a partnership established between the teachers of service learning, the students[1], and the community. The second goal of this research is to ascertain the extent to which service-learning, in practice at one particular university, is community-based. For the service-learning to be community-based, the community would need to be involved with every aspect of the service-learning project.

To conduct this research, both faculty members and students will be sampled and interviewed, using a snowball sampling technique for the faculty members. Faculty members will be sampled first, with the initial point of contact being Barry University's

[1] At appropriate times, faculty members and students will be jointly referred to as "practitioners of service learning."

Center of Community Initiatives, which has compiled a list of faculty members who have used or are currently using service-learning in their classes. Those who elect to participate in this project may refer other faculty members who are not associated with the center but still use service-learning in their courses.

Faculty members, once selected, will be contacted initially with an email that informs them of the research and explains that they will be recruited via a phone call. Research has shown that using multiple forms of contact for recruitment increases the likelihood of participation (Porter 2004, Goldstein and Jennings 2002). If the faculty member agrees to participate in this research over the phone, a time and place that is convenient for him/her will be agreed upon for an interview. Once an interview time and site is chosen, the interview will last about an hour (but could go longer), while focusing on six questions pertaining to community and service learning, and will be electronically recorded. The recordings will be transcribed into word files and then analyzed for themes regarding community definition and community involvement in the service-learning projects or courses.

After the interview, the faculty members will be asked (but not required) to provide a class roster for a service-learning course that they had taught. Preferably, this roster should be from a recent course. Class rosters at Barry University include contact information for the students. The students will be selected randomly from the class rosters provided and then recruited, via email, using their email addresses. Should the students agree to participate they will be contacted using their phone numbers, in order to set up an interview time and location that is convenient for them. Once a time and place

is chosen, the interview and the interview process will be similar to that for faculty members, but with the questions more focused on the experiences of the student.

Overall, the goal is to interview twenty-five (25) participants that represent a mixture of faculty and students (fifteen faculty and ten students). Using these interviews, the aim will be able to uncover how those involved with service-learning come to confront, conceive, and construct a definition of community. The manner in which this definition is created and applied will influence the level to which the community is truly a partner within the service-learning project.

These interviews will be guided by an ethnomethodological approach to qualitative research. Ethnomethodology allows researchers to examine mundane topics, such as greetings, glances, gestures, and others (Lynch and Peyrot 1992). While many researchers view these topics as ordinary and unimportant, they are essentially the basis of social order and human interaction and exhibit the intentionality of those involved (Pollner 1987). Likewise, how members of a society come to define and use this type of mundane reasoning can help researchers to understand the boundaries and limits of participation of particular group members in more specific areas of social life, in this case university members and the community involved with service-learning.

The concept of community can be said to be mundane. As previously mentioned, community is a mundane topic, one that individuals are rarely forced to confront, yet is a concept that people use to help order their daily lives. In using an ethnomethodological approach for the interviews, the first step would get the participants in the study explain how they come to define community for their service learning projects, and to reveal the reasoning they use to create and make use of that definition (Pollner 1987).

Once the participants define community for service-learning, the researcher and the participant can explore the intentionality with respect to how the definition relates to community involvement in a service-learning project. As stated earlier, service-learning is intended to engender a partnership between the teachers, students, and community members, while addressing a particular community need or social injustice. The participant's use of a definition of community may help to provide insight into the level of community involvement in the development and execution of the curriculum and projects for a service learning course. But for a project to be truly community based, the community members should be involved at each stage of the class and the project.

**Contribution to the Literature**

This research seeks to add to the literature in two different areas. The first is service-learning, particularly community-based service learning. As stated earlier, a lot of literature concerning service-learning tends to assume the existence of a community where a project will take place. However, much of this literature fails to help practitioners define clearly who or what the community is meant to be, or how they come to define the community for a service-learning project. The hope here is to uncover how the teachers and their students establish their definitions of community and, subsequently, how these definitions are employed for a service-learning project.

The second area where this research hopes to make a contribution is to help clarify the role of community within service-learning projects. A lot of scholars within this area of study, as well as in other community-based disciplines, have indicated that communities need to be involved with every stage of a community-based undertaking. This means that the members of a community should be involved with the planning,

practice, and execution of any service-learning based class. They should have a role planning the class, have a significant presence within the classroom, and be a partner to any activity outside the classroom that concerns the service-learning project. The goal with this aspect of the research is to ascertain the extent to which this is done at Barry University.

**Chapter Outlines**

The second chapter will provide a history of service-learning in general, as well as at Barry University, the location of the study. This research is being conducted at Barry University for several reasons. First, this is a local, private, Catholic university with a liberal arts tradition. Students and faculty, therefore, are expected to be well-rounded in terms of their academic choices. Being a Catholic university, a goal of education is the integration of studies with reflection and action. Also, Barry University has had a long tradition of including service-learning in various parts of the curriculum, most notably in the theology and sociology departments. Likewise, to show its continued commitment to service learning, Barry has provided resources to those interested in integrating these learning methods into their curriculum by establishing a center devoted to community outreach (the Center for Community Initiatives) that has full-time faculty and staff members. These developments make Barry University an optimal environment for conducting this type of research.

The third chapter will explore, from a practical stand-point, what a community-based service-learning initiative would resemble. There are certain criteria that need to be met in order for something to be "community-based," which have been established in other areas of study that have adopted this model. Literature from other areas will be

used to justify the characteristics for community-based service-learning programs. For instance, there is a lot of overlap with service-learning and community mental health, as well as community-based schooling, that would help to focus the definition of community for service-learning. The purpose of this chapter is to define these characteristics as a set-up for the research and analysis in subsequent chapters.

The fourth chapter will describe the methods that were used in order to examine community and service-learning. An ethnomethodological approach will be adopted in order to examine "community" and its various facets. This methodology is appropriate because topics can be confronted are often times considered quite ordinary, in the attempt to discover why particular social phenomenon operate as they do. The idea of community is one of these phenomena that are often taken for granted, but must be examined thoroughly for service-learning to succeed. As discussed more fully later, faculty members and students who have taught or experienced service-learning at Barry University will be sampled, and those that elect to participate in this research will be given an in-depth interview regarding their service-learning experiences. The hope is that through these interviews insight will be gained into how these persons construct and employ the idea of community within the context of community-based service-learning.

The fifth chapter will contain the findings. Each interview will be transcribed into electronic documents and then analyzed for themes regarding community involvement with service-learning. The findings will then be compared to the characteristics of a community-based approach to service-learning that are described in the third chapter to gauge the extent to which service-learning at Barry is truly community-based. Included in the analysis of the interviews will also be an examination of the materials distributed

for service-learning courses, in order to ascertain how the concept of community is used in these documents.

The final chapter will offer a discussion of the findings from the interviews and class materials, while also including other lines of thought and insight that arose from the research. Practical implications for community-based approaches to service-learning will be offered by pointing out areas of research that are lacking in the area of service-learning. For instance, because this project focuses mainly on the students and the faculty engaged in service-learning classes and projects – only two of the elements for service-learning mentioned earlier – members from the community might be included in future research projects.

**Conclusion**

Overall there has been a lot of work done on service-learning and higher education. However, not much has done on how people come to define community in this area, although this process is expected to be community-based. This research project seeks to address this shortcoming by using an ethnomethodological approach to discover how teachers and students come to define community for their respective service-learning projects, as well as to ascertain whether the community has had input in the service-learning curriculum and projects.

## Chapter 2: History, Background, and Varieties of Service-Learning and Community-Based Endeavors

The status of service-learning within higher education is not quite clear: Does this strategy represent a theory of education or a learning method (Crews 2002)? The model adopted, as well as the practitioners' understanding of the practice, dictates how service-learning is used by those engaged in higher education. This chapter assesses the historical circumstances and developments that have influenced service-learning, and outlines the different models available. The aim is to provide some insight into how the participants in this study might view this activity. The participants' views, in turn, might justify their definition of community and the level of community involvement infused into their courses. This chapter also discusses a brief history and explanation of recent developments concerning service-learning at Barry University.

In order to begin a discussion on the history of service-learning, an introduction is necessary for the relationship between this practice and key educational theories in the United States. The origins of service-learning stem from three central figures in the area of education. One of these luminaries is John Dewey. Often times, Dewey wrote about how those who receive an education owe a debt to their communities (Zieren and Stoddard 2004; Saltmarsh 1996). Specifically, the talents that students develop during their education should help their respective communities. This principle is not simply about starting a business in the name of economic development, for example, as some critics claim (Mayo and Craig 1995: 1). Dewey, instead, talks in terms of community building and students becoming civically engaged. This push for civic engagement includes many different aspects: running for public office, participating in local meetings, participating in elections, etc.

The overall thrust of Dewey's educational philosophy is that public higher education should meet public needs (Dewey 1966). This philosophy is a central tenet of service-learning, whereby the university, in conjunction with a community, identifies and helps to address a public need while also building a lasting partnership between the university and this group of persons. The main difference between Dewey's philosophy and service-learning is that he talked about public higher education, and service-learning expands to private schools as well. While Dewey never addressed service-learning specifically, much of his work concerning education has had a direct influence this activity as an educational theory and tool for the classroom (Rocheleau 2004; Giles, Jr. and Eyler 1994).

Education, by definition, is a social activity that focuses on the discovery and communication of knowledge. Dewey viewed education in this way, and believed that learning should take place and be used outside of the university setting. Consistent with Dewey's philosophy on education, the goal of service-learning is to break down the "Ivory Tower" and unite the community and classroom. Yet, his approach was more generalized and mainly theoretical. Other writers put his words and theories into practice in ways that tried to join communities and educational institutions (Daynes and Longo 2004: 5).

The other early practitioner of service-learning often mentioned in conjunction with Dewey, and indeed his contemporary, is Jane Addams, founder of Hull House (Daynes and Longo 2004). Addams's work at Hull House, a settlement house, embodied a community-based approach to service-learning before this phrase was used to describe this novel strategy. For instance, her work broke down many of the barriers

between the women who went to Hull House and those who were teaching them, who were mostly business owners, thus forming a dialogical form of education where the roles of teachers and students are often rotated. This form of education recognized that community members had skills and talents that were useful to those who were conducting the teaching. Likewise, barriers were broken down between the community and the local educational institutions, whereby these schools were integrated closely into the work of their communities.

Another aspect of Addams' Hull House was that a partnership was established between the community and the University of Chicago. The university was able to do research with community members, while also providing various services through Hull House. In this manner, the community is not treated merely as a laboratory where academics can perform their research on "those other people." Rather, bonds were formed with the community that would help to enrich the lives of those persons, while challenging commonly held assumptions and stereotypes held by academics about those who reside in poor communities (Meyers-Lipton 2009: 41-44; Cohen 1995). Accordingly, Addams believed that working with diverse populations is essential to democracy and serves as a core component to service-learning that is often lacking in traditional approaches to education.

The final aspect of Addams's Hull House relates to the inclusion of critical reflection in every aspect of the work. Through this reflection, Addams and her colleagues were able to realize that changing the culture of the immigrants in the community was not enough to improve their lives (Daynes and Longo 2004). Rather, a more holistic approach was needed to recognize that community members have

knowledge and information that could serve both business and academia. As a result of this reflection, Addams went on to establish a unique manner of protesting against traditional forms of education that were becoming increasingly scientific and led almost solely by experts. The notion of reflection, combined with the breaking of traditional barriers and partnering with the community, led Addams to help re-conceptualize education in a manner that, in practice, was close to what is referred to today as service-learning.

Other scholars have argued that education should be a transformative experience for both the student and the community, with a focus on social justice (Shields 2004; Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2003; Fraser 1997). One that had a significant influence on service-learning was Paulo Freire, specifically his work on transformative pedagogies. Freire, in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005), wrote that students are not merely vessels to be filled with knowledge ("banking"), a method that merely allows them to become agents of their own subjugation. Instead, he recognized that they have something to contribute to the creation and sharing of knowledge, thereby making education more of a dialogue than a lecture, and thus eventually a mechanism of liberation rather than oppression. An essential facet of Freire's work in service-learning is that students are partners with their teachers and the community.

**Historical Circumstances Around Service-Learning**

Despite service-learning's educational and philosophical underpinnings, certain historical developments have helped to determine the value of service-learning in education. Accordingly, a lot of the work on service-learning has been adopted from various other fields that employed a community-based methodology. The catalysts for a

lot of these changers were general civil unrest and various social programs that were instituted prior to and following World War II.

***Role of the Government***

Prior to World War II, the United States experienced a large contraction in the economy that is often referred to as the Great Depression. That economic decline led to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal reforms. Included in the New Deal was the formation of the National Youth Administration (NYA), similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) but focused on students, including women. The program was designed to pay students to go into their communities and perform work. The National Youth Administration had two goals: (1) reduce the unemployment of the student and youth populations, and (2) induce these persons to use their talents within their respective communities. Students in this program got to pay back the benefits they received through education, while establishing an environment that promotes service to others through overall community betterment (Hopkins 1999). These aims continued after the Great Depression, all the way through the 1960's and 1970's, with the development and promotion of the Civil Society and Great Society programs.

During the 1960's, the federal government, under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, established two major organizations that sought to foster activist education: the Peace Corps (1961) and Volunteers in Service to America (1965). These programs were meant to get younger people to use their skills and talents to improve the world. With respect to the Peace Corps, this involvement would be in a foreign country, while VISTA would be domestically oriented. The goal of these programs was not only for students to use their skills and talents, but to demonstrate the worth of working in and

building communities. In certain ways, these programs were extensions of President Roosevelt's pre-World War II efforts. The direct efforts of the federal government alone, however, would not necessarily result in service-learning. The expansion of college education to groups of people who were previously excluded would further the spread of service-learning to campuses nationwide.

While World War II did not bring about directly a lot of social unrest in the United States, some war-related developments served as starting points. For instance, one important development was the G.I. Bill that was introduced to provide returning veterans with a chance at the "American Dream." This legislation allowed soldiers to send themselves and their children to college, thereby creating a first generation of college students that had the skills to participate actively in politics and become advocates of their communities (Lipset 1982). However, despite the opportunity of enrolling en masse in schools, the "American Dream" remained outside the reach of many persons. Accordingly, civil unrest erupted in the 1960's that acted as an even greater catalyst for the further development and expansion of community-based approaches in various other fields. Indeed, this unrest would help lay the ground work for community-based service-learning.

***Role of Civil Unrest***

To help further understand the development and popularization of service-learning in the United States, the social tumult of the 1950's and 60's energized a lot of people in post-World War II America. Most of those movements were centered on returning dignity and self-direction to various groups of people who had been historically

marginalized, including minorities and women. Although many of these movements started out locally, as community protests or actions, their effects were national.

The movement for civil rights, for example, began to gain support starting in the 1950's and 1960's. In reality, the Civil Rights movement started with the abolition of slavery but changed as new ideologies and legal strategies emerged (Wilson 1980). During this particular period, segregation was legal and was not thought to violate of the "equal protections clause" of the 14th Amendment, due to the judgments in *Plessy v. Fergusson*. As a result, segregation was commonplace in various regions of the United States, in terms of both physical and social separation.

The Civil Rights movement was based on the idea that racial segregation and discrimination are not merely individual violations of human dignity, but rather practices that harm the entire black community (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). These acts of injustice were shared by all black people in the United States, regardless of other characteristics, and therefore a communal correction was needed. Thus, civil rights leaders called on all black persons, due to their shared experiences, to combat (along with allies) racial discrimination and improve the quality of life for everyone. While these struggles were often local, such as transportation strikes and boycotts, they had broad reaching and national consequences, and alerted the general public of the issues that faced black Americans. A lot of the language of the Civil Rights movement, such as the notion of social justice and community empowerment, has been adopted by practitioners of service-learning (Jacoby 1996: 8-10).

Another trend that helped to influence service-learning was the women's liberation movement. This response had similar characteristics similar to the Civil Rights

movement, and could even be considered part of this rebellion, but with the focus on women and inequality rather than race (Evans 1980). In point of fact, the women's liberation movement was largely an outgrowth of the radicalism of the 1960's. Nonetheless, the roles that women played in many radical organizations were not much different from those in mainstream society (Renzetti and Curran 1999). The publication of Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1997), illustrated further the oppression that women were facing in modern American life. This book also helped to explain that even women who were living traditional, comfortable lives were really being oppressed in a manner that did not allow them to explore fully their potential as human beings and active participants in the historical process.

The overall goals of the different movements that comprised this civil unrest embodied a set of values that are important for service-learning, and are employed by many practitioners. For instance, one of the goals of service-learning is the restoration of human dignity for historically dispossessed group by demanding that equality be codified into law at both the state and federal levels. Such a demand for equality can be accomplished through activism, and outreach to allies who seek social justice by encouraging institutions of higher learning to become agents of social change. Another goal of both these movements and service-learning is the empowerment of groups and communities to become self-directing and self-governing, rather than have their destinies determined by outside forces. Self-direction can be attained through community agencies partnering with local institutions, like the universities, in order to achieve and sustain communal development – another basic tenet of service-learning.

***Community Based Approaches in Different Areas***

Three areas that helped to develop community-based philosophy in a practical, and not merely an academic level, were community mental health, community policing, and the free schools movements. In each of these areas, the point is that the community should be involved with the respective issues concerning the treatment of the mentally ill, keeping neighborhoods safe, and educating children. In each of these examples, the community was not merely an untapped resource, but an active agent of social change. In this section, each area will be explored briefly to illustrate the contribution that is made to a community-based approach to service-learning.

The community mental health movement of the 1960's was a novel approach to treating people who had been deemed deviant or mentally ill, but not dangerous, to society.[2] The Community Mental Health Act was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy in 1963. This legislation was based on studies that investigated the adverse effects of total institutions, as revealed in Goffaman's book *Asylums* (1962). Instead of warehousing the mentally-ill in large state run institutions, where the main form of treatment seemed to be isolation and restraint, individuals should to be treated within their respective communities. Accordingly, the goal of community mental health treatment, and the general movement towards de-institutionalization, is to provide services in a comprehensive, holistic, and humane manner (Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer 2011). Proponents claimed that the cause of many problems was not simply biological conditions or "chemical imbalances," but also psychological and social elements (Engel 1977). In this regard, the community was enlisted as a vital participant in treatment.

[2] The community mental health movement has been linked with pushes towards decarceration of juvenile delinquents as well, with many similar principles being involved. Due to the two movements being closely linked, having similar motivations and similar results, decarceration was not given its own section.

Specifically, community members had input into designing treatments and specifying successful outcomes, so that the unique needs to those persons would be reflected in treatment plans. This inclusion of the community and community members represents a reversal of the tradition of the top-down approach to medical treatment (Bloom 1984).

Starting in the 1980's, community policing is another area that adopted a community-based approach with varying degrees of success (Morabito 2008). Community policing, unlike the community mental health movement, was enacted in response to the general feeling that police officers, charged with the protection of and service to civilians, were out of touch with those they were sworn to protect – especially those in minority neighborhoods. In other words, community policing was an outgrowth of dissatisfaction with traditional policing practices (Rosenbaum and Lurigio 1994: 299). A key aspect of this strategy is that policing should be decentralized and adopt a holistic view on fighting crime (Kappeler and Gaines 2012). To accomplish these aims, agencies had to establish smaller police offices within communities, instead of relying on larger, centralized police units. From these smaller stations, officers would not merely patrol and arrest people, but rather should form relationships with community members, educate these persons on crime prevention, and work toward reducing social disorganization. This decentralization, combined with the community partnership, is important because the police can engage communities in a flexible and responsive manner.

A final movement that employed community-based philosophy, and not directly involved with social control, was the free school movement. Free schools developed as a response to the increased bureaucratization of education that seemed to obscure the needs of students (Kozol 1972; Meier and Schwartz 1995). Public school education, according

to these critics, was not teaching subjects pertinent to the daily lives of persons. Indeed, at times, the pedagogy that was adopted contributed to their alienation (Loewen 1995). For these reasons, many communities decided to make a break with the established public school system, in order to create educational environments that better reflected the histories and issues facing local communities. In doing so, many of these free schools instituted alternative curriculums that included more ethnic history, environmental and social justice projects, and practical applications of the traditional core curriculum (Beane and Apple 1995). Again, the community was involved intimately with the free school from the beginning – operated as a partner – and provided input into the curriculum.

In the end, the success or failure of the community-based endeavors mentioned above reflects the potential shortcomings of service-learning. Many supporters envisioned these projects to simply cut costs, for example, with respect to the institutionalization of criminals or mentally ill, or increase control of the local communities (Scull 1984). Others have argued that these steps represented an attempt at reform that just did not work in the end, with recidivism rates higher than traditional incarceration models (Gottfredson and Barton 2006). Therefore, some critics emerged, such as Robert Martinson (2003), who argued that these programs are not working, and perhaps could never be successful. While some of these claims may be valid (Cullen, Smith, Lowenkamp, and Latessa 2009; Sands 1984), funding and devotion to community-based endeavors has been lacking. For example, to have successful outcomes, deinstitutionalization should have been accompanied by strong follow-up programs that were not put in place (Lamb and Bachrach 2001). These are all

shortcomings that community-based service-learning programs will face: issues related to resources, monitoring, funding, and enthusiasm.

**Service-Learning Models**

Service-learning, like many educational practices, subjects, or theories, is not a unified approach to higher education. Although there are different models that academics have applied in their classes and curriculums, most practices fall into one of three perspectives. The three models are: philanthropic, civic engagement, and communitarian. These three, likewise, can be synthesized to create hybrid service-learning paradigms, since their focuses and goals are not always at odds with one another. Regardless, there are three principles that must apply for a practice to be considered service-learning (Sigmon 1979):

(1) Those being served control the service(s) provided;

(2) Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions; and

(3) Those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned.

Each of these principles helps to insure that the community is directly involved in service-learning projects. Equally important, students are expected to control these endeavors. These models will be discussed, accordingly, in terms of their respective emphases and expected outcomes.

***The Philanthropic Model***

The philanthropic model of service-learning is focused largely on how information and issues are presented in a classroom and provides quasi-academic freedom for the student. For the most part, there has been a conflict over whether

service-learning should be used to promote a particular cause or remain neutral and merely present information to students. In the philanthropic model, students are presented with objective information and gradually begin to adopt a particular position. The teacher's goal for the student, accordingly, is the development of self-direction based on the information presented. The result is thus a disinterested pursuit of knowledge and the growth of individual character.

The question then remains: what is the role of the instructor? This role, according to the philanthropic model, is to acknowledge the existence of competing value systems and allow students to negotiate them on their own (Abel 2004). Therefore, all sides of an issue should be presented. For instance, one issue that social scientists often mention is the "nature versus nurture" debate. If the philanthropic model is used for service-learning, then both sides would be presented without the instructor placing any emphasis on one or the other, and without the instructor's own personal proclivities making their way into the discussion. In general, the idea is to minimize the influence the instructor has on student development. The assumption, of course, is that teachers are able to present information in a neutral and objective manner.

Outside of the classroom, the student is an assistant who also observes while performing the service-learning project. Students are thus acting in a charitable manner by donating time and energy to a project in which they are not necessarily invested. A student simply shows up at a given institution and assists the instructor and community members in whatever tasks that need to be completed, in order to further the mission of a local organization. Given the fact that the students have been provided with all sides of

the issue in question, they must decide for themselves whether they should support that particular organization's mission.

In actuality, the philanthropic model is service-learning in name only, and more closely resembles charity. The assumption is that service is the natural responsibility of those who have the ability to contribute, like college students. This model is relatively popular because it is relatively simple and cost effective. The major issue confronting the philanthropic model, however, is that the instructors and students are not working from a common ground; they are not partners who have joined together in order to tackle an injustice within a community. Likewise, the community is treated as an environment in which a project occurs, rather than a partner.

The philanthropic model of service-learning lacks some of the key elements that are associated with service-learning. When this model is adopted, service-learning becomes merely another task for students to complete in order to receive a grade and credit for a course. Additionally, social justice issues are not raised, because, as stated earlier, the instructor provides information in a manner that is meant to be "objective," rather than encourage advocacy. In the end, the philanthropic model of service learning has the potential of reinforcing the social and political status quo, in addition to any stereotypes that students may have, because critical reflection is not central to this strategy (Butin 2006).

***The Civic Engagement Model***

Sociological research has indicated that there has been a decline in civic engagement within the United States. In his (2000) classic book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam indicates that persons are

reluctant to participate actively in the everyday life of institutions. Civic engagement means essentially attending town, village, or city council meetings, voting in local (and national) elections, and making others aware of the issues that face their respective communities, while also participating in local social activities. The decline in civic engagement is associated with many problems in modern America, such as political scandals, a sense of mistrust and cynicism about the government, economic decay, and the operation of an increasingly top-down style of governance (Elshtain 1997), combined with an increasingly anomic population and unresponsive macro-economic system (Putnam 2000). This model of service-learning seeks to mitigate the reduction in community engagement by introducing this idea to students in educational institutions.

For the most part, social institutions tend to transmit aspects of culture that originate from the dominant group in society (Fraser 1997: 4). As a result, these institutions end up benefitting mostly those in positions of power, either directly or indirectly (Blauner 1972, Carmichael and Hamilton 1967), due to how information is presented (Illich 1971). For example, while universities are members of a community – as employers, public figures, and service providers (public health services, educational services) – they tend to act as though they are detached from their surroundings (Bok 1982). But allowing a university to be an "Ivory Tower" is often antithetical to the mission statements of these organizations. The civic engagement model of service-learning, therefore, seeks to break down these barriers by encouraging the university to become an agent of social change (Marullo and Edwards 2000).

The central thrust of the civic engagement model is that teaching, service, and research should be combined in an effort to improve communities and governments. In

this regard, service-learning is intended to be a transformative experience for all of the parties involved: the teacher, student, and community (Watson 2004). According to Elshtain (1997), there are three ways that this aim is achieved with respect to the civic engagement model:

(1) Promoting the formation of democratic skills and dispositions through education and exposure;

(2) Placing students in civic organizations, non-profit groups, health and human service agencies, and government agencies where they are introduced to the community; and

(3) Promotion of multi-cultural perspectives and obtaining a greater understanding of diversity.

These goals are reached by establishing and maintaining a learning environment that is centered on students, and their ability to act and create, rather than merely mastering the curriculum.

As many practitioners of higher education have noted, academic scholarship is not enough to motivate students to think, let alone act, outside of the classroom (Battistoni 1997). There are many reasons for this inaction, such as the focus on individual development, students having to take on multiple responsibilities outside of the classroom, and the rise of the non-traditional student. In creating a learner-centered environment, students will be more engaged because their projects are not merely tasks that are tied to a grade, but rather a part of their daily lives over which they have some control (Cornelius-White 2007; Eyler, Giles, Jr., and Braxton 1997).

Numerous issues arise when the civic engagement model is adopted. Many of these considerations require universities to reorganize their priorities. For instance, creating a partnership with community agencies and maintaining a student-centered

learning environment that is flexible are both vital. But civic engagement is not usually at the heart of a university's priorities. For example, these criteria are often some of the lowest factors in determining faculty tenure (Wise, Retzleff, and Reilly 2002). There is also the problem with the breaking down of the traditional student/teacher barriers when combining teaching, research, and service. Without eliminating these obstacles, students will not likely have the latitude necessary for them to control their projects. In this regard, in order to achieve the transformational goals of this model, special training, institutional support, and reflection may be required (Bringle and Hatcher 1996). Furthermore, new and less authoritarian relationships must be established between teachers and students.

The final and main problem with the civic engagement model of service-learning is the absence of any component related to active, guided reflection concerning the community or the activities that are performed (Exley 1996: 36). But, reflection is an essential exercise in service-learning, since students are often confronted with unfamiliar experiences (Eyler 2002). In order to prevent these encounters from confirming whatever stereotypes students may have prior to their involvement in service-learning, Jones (2002) suggests that reflection is required to link effectively the theory in the classroom with the activities in the field.

***The Communitarian Model***

While research has indicated a decline in civic engagement, those findings are often explained by arguments related to the economy or the use of modern technology (Costa and Khan 2003; Delli Carpini 2000; Putnam 2000). Specifically, economic changes have reduced the time available for service, while technology has fostered

increasing isolation of persons. Nonetheless, many writers have ignored that, in the United States, people have been socialized with a distorted view of freedom. This view equates freedom with personal gain and self-interest, regardless of the consequences to others – similar to the position of Herbert Spencer (1892) and other advocates of social Darwinism – and culminated in the hyper-individualism that has become popular since the 1980's. The communitarian model of service-learning seeks to reverse this trend, or at least to alter a student's perception of freedom.

Communitarianism is a social philosophy that began to develop in the 1990's and sought to promote the individual freedom, while promoting the idea that persons are always part of a community (Etzioni 1996). Emphasis is placed on the idea that humans are social and cultural creatures by nature (Charon 2011), while the social habits that foster democracy – while also encouraging self-governance – must be nurtured through proper socialization and education. This process means that students should be exposed to evidence that illustrates they are part of a larger social fabric, and therefore problems such as crime, poverty, homelessness, consumerism, and environmental pollution can be resolved most effectively through collective action. However, simple exposure to sociological evidence is not necessarily enough. To gain this insight, more often than not, practical action is required (Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2013; Boyle-Baise and Langford 2010).

At this juncture, in the training of students, is where service-learning becomes one of the keys to fostering this communitarian ideal. Through the promotion of social responsibility in the classroom and the ability to pursue alternatives, students can begin to envision that they are agents of change. When teachers only present the status quo or

adopt a scientific approach to education, they may believe they are being objective in the classroom, in a manner similar to the philanthropic model. However, in trying to remain value neutral, educators avoid the issue of social justice and the related need for activism on the part of citizens.

The emphasis of this model is thus the communal nature of all activities. In the classroom, for instance, assignments are cooperative, so that students learn that education is a shared experience.[3] A service-learning project, according to this model, would have to be large enough in scale to allow students to feel that they have made a meaningful contribution to society, and thereby experience a sense of social solidarity (Codispoti 2004:113-115). In essence, a communitarian model of service-learning should focus on collective action both inside and outside the classroom.

There are problems with the communitarian model of service-learning. For example, this strategy represents a radical departure from the values students have accepted as valid for most of their educational lives, but also because the principle of a value-free education is abandoned. However, an argument is that value neutrality is impossible, due to the fact that persons are always pursuing a particular line of thought and action (Weber 2004). A much larger problem with communitarian service-learning, however, is how students learn and are evaluated must be rethought. Finally, this model requires commitment of the faculty to service-learning courses, students becoming more flexible, and the university making and maintaining community connections. Nonetheless, this model of service-learning seems to most closely approximate what community-based service-learning should resemble (Codispoti 2004: 116).

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[3] To better understand what a communal or cooperative form of education would resemble, please see Uri Bronfenbrenner's work *Two Worlds of Childhood: U.S. and U.S.S.R.* (1970).

**Service Learning at Barry University: History and Recent Developments**

Many Catholic educational institutions in the United States, whether they are high schools or colleges, require their students to complete a set number of hours of community service, while not always calling this practice service-learning. Barry University is no different. In this regard, certain academic departments have established a curriculum that includes service-learning, spanning both the arts and sciences. This formalization is a relatively young process that is still developing and becoming more integral to the education of the student body.

Around the turn of the twenty-first century, Barry had decided to make social diversity a priority and a core value in Catholic education. This change meant that the curriculum had to adopt diversity as a teaching and learning outcome. To accomplish this goal, various academic subjects had in include discussions of diversity, expose the marginalization of cultures and classes of persons, and provide theories and strategies designed to change this condition and promote inclusion. Within many arts and sciences subjects, particularly sociology and theology, this means breaking down the rampant individualism in the United States and introducing students to concepts such as connectedness, social bonds, and humanity. For this reason, classes like *Perspective Consciousness and Social Justice* (SOC 200) in sociology and *Faith, Belief, and Traditions* (THE 201) in theology were established and required of all students who are pursuing majors in the division of arts and sciences.

The current mission statement of the university, which was released in the summer of 2008, states that Barry is committed to serving global and local communities

in the Catholic tradition, based on studies, reflection, and action toward social justice.[4] The goal of education at Barry is to teach the students, who then are expected to reflect on what they have learned. Through that reflection, the students are able to act in a manner that is informed by this new knowledge. This call to action, central to Catholic teachings, is not meant to be an individual endeavor, but rather something that is done in communion with fellow members of a community (Bowes 1998). Thus, Barry University is trying to combat the individualistic tendencies that have become prevalent in the modern American lexicon, reminiscent of Durkheim's (1966) vision of anomie. Collaborative action, combined with academic studies and reflection, are central to the pedagogical practice of service-learning and the Barry mission.

In 2012, Barry institutionalized service-learning further as a core piece of the curriculum by establishing the Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI) and devoting greater resources toward community-based education. This center has a full-time staff, a director (who specializes in service-learning), a space with a library and meeting area, and two faculty fellows dedicated service-learning. The goal of this organization is to become the "clearing house" for all community service opportunities, and serve as a central link between all those who are interested in service-learning and the various community agencies that want to establish a relationship with Barry University.[5] Likewise, training for service-learning, funding opportunities, grant writing assistance, help for faculty members who want to include service projects in their courses, and guidance for publishing in this area are also provided by this facility.

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[4] The Barry University mission statement can be found at http://www.barry.edu/includes/docs/hpls/MissionStatement.pdf . Retrieved on April 12, 2013.

[5] Much of the information on the CCSI can be found at their website http://www.barry.edu/service/. Retrieved on April 12, 2013.

Establishing centers devoted to community outreach in higher education is becoming more common at college campuses, due to the government's favorable attitude towards community building (Gray, et. al. 1999; Bringle and Hatcher 1996).

The CCSI also assists faculty by acting as the link to community agencies. Help is provided in tracking students who are engaged in service-learning, thereby streamlining the logistics of fieldwork through the development and maintenance of an online system called the Community Engagement Management System (CEMS). Classes that employ service-learning are registered with the CCSI, and then faculty members have access to all of their students' work in the community. Also, the CCSI solicits feedback from the community agencies and uses this information to help better inform service-learning classes in the future, that is, to more clearly match the needs and goals of the community-based agencies with academic requirements.

The effort that Barry University has put into developing and promoting service-learning has not gone unnoticed from a national perspective. For instance, in 2010, Barry University and one of its community partners, the Community Learning Partnership of Miami Shores, won the Graham-Frey Civic Award, given by the Florida Campus Compact to recognize leaders in combining service with academic studies. That same year, Barry University was a finalist for the "Most Engaged Campus Award," also given by the FLCC.[6] This year, 2013, Barry University was recognized by the United States Department of Education by being placed on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Barry University received this recognition because its students and faculty performed around 25,000 hours of community service and service-

[6] The announcement of the award being given to Barry University can be found at http://www.floridacompact.org/awardwinners.html . Retrieved on April 12, 2013.

learning designed to serve under-privileged areas.[7] Most of these hours were conducted by students in psychology and sociology, thus illustrating the important role that service-learning can play for the social sciences and humanities.

Overall, service-learning at Barry University is fairly young and is still being formalized and developed into a central part of the curriculum. The fact that Barry emphasizes service-learning on its website reveals that this university is attempting to separate itself from other universities by providing potential students with unique and fulfilling learning opportunities not found elsewhere. Many have said that the current dean of arts and sciences, Karen A. Callaghan, has made improving and spreading service-learning at Barry University central to her administration and part of her legacy at the university. However, because service-learning is relatively new at Barry University, despite the presences of a dedicated center, the faculty still faces hurdles and challenges in trying to use service-learning in their courses. For example, the CCSI has existed for only two years, and thus many members of the faculty may not be aware of the full range of services that are provided. These are issues that will only be solved by growth and the passage of time.

**Conclusion**

The concept of service-learning is not young; however, this approach to learning has taken some time to become formalized. But clearly, there have been many historical circumstances surrounding the development of this practice. For instance, third wave immigrants brought many skills and talents to America, but through service-learning, offered by Jane Addams' Hull House, they were able to realize their potential as a

[7] The announcement of this honor was made on March 23, 2012 by the Office of Communications. The announcement and more information can be found at http://www.barry.edu/universityrelations/pressreleases/details.aspx?ID=20785 . Retrieved April 12, 2013.

community. The government also played an important role in the proliferation of service-learning through various programs, such as those inaugurated during the Great Depression and others that became part of the Civil and Great Society projects of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Adding to these developments was the civil unrest that was a reaction to traditional forms of exclusion during the 1950s and 1960s, when many people fought inequality in an attempt to improve their communities.

Likewise, areas outside of higher education that attempted to deal with social problems through community-based solutions helped to inform the direction taken eventually by service-learning. The central principle that these areas bring to service-learning is that the community should not be treated as an environment, but rather a living partner in the creation of any interventions designed to solve social problems. For these reasons, these community-based endeavors sought participation from community members in creating projects and feedback to further refine their efforts. Also illustrated was the need for a sustained partnership with a community, whereby members are involved in all phases of an endeavor, and for these persons to be committed to a project. In the end, all of these ideals are necessary to promote a community-based approach to service-learning.

Earlier in this chapter the different paradigms for service-learning were outlined in order to show that service-learning, as a tool or as a theory, does not necessarily represent a unified approach to higher education. There are differing means and goals, depending on what the practitioners hope to achieve and the outcome is expected by the community agency. The historical events mentioned, while influencing service-learning, also had an impact on the practitioners, namely the teachers, in one form or another.

Perhaps these events helped to mobilize faculty members to advocate for social justice or become more involved with a group that has been historically oppressed. These events play a role in which paradigm, or more likely a combination of paradigms, the professors will employ in order to achieve the desired effects on their students and the community (Knowles 1991; Clandinin 1985).

Finally, this chapter supplied a brief history of the state of service-learning at the location of the upcoming case study: Barry University. Service-learning, with respect to being formalized into the curriculum, is somewhat new at Barry. Although there is an institutional commitment to this approach to experiential learning, growing pains are evident. Nonetheless, the desire to make education community-based is clear. The end goal of this research, accordingly, is to determine whether or not the service-learning being practiced at Barry is community-based, and, if not, what changes should be made to achieve this level of community involvement. The following chapter will outline what a community-based approach to service-learning should resemble, and what an institution must do to achieve the desired partnership with a community.

## Chapter 3: Community-Based Service Learning: Characteristics and Ideals

Service-learning provides educators and students with a unique opportunity to apply what is learned in the classroom to "real world" experiences. This teaching method empowers practitioners to enter into a relationship with a community or community agency and promote meaningful social change, while obtaining a rich understanding of what is learned in the classroom. However, the literature on service-learning, while mentioning the partnership between the university and community, treats the community as an environment or context where practitioners play out their theories (Kelly 2006; Addams 1938).

When treating the community as a context, practitioners of service-learning violate the central tenet of this pedagogical technique: the community should be a partner. As examined in the previous chapter, other fields have embraced the idea of a community-based philosophy – such as mental health, policing, and schooling. In these areas, the community is not just an environment, but rather an active participant with unique and critical knowledge to be used to address social ills and inform the relevant research. These approaches share many characteristics with service-learning, including the aim to become community-based.

Indeed, much of the literature on service-learning has gone into detail about the important role a community has in any particular project (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2000). While the community is significant, the nature of any involvement is not clear. Usually any partnerships are very superficial, with little authentic communication between the teacher and the community agency. Often the educator contacts an agency to see if students could help out with this organization's mission and nothing more. The agency

receives free labor, the students complete their assignments, and the teacher fulfills the service-learning requirement for the class. This activity does not resemble service-learning, but rather is community service attached to a course of study (Mooney and Edwards 2001; Furco 1996). The problem with this approach is that there are no clear guidelines or expectations for the relationship.

While service-learning entails community building and partnering with local agencies, the pedagogy lacks any guidance from community-based philosophy. Without this guidance, many projects fall short of their goals in terms of the community, student development, and social change. There are guides that provide information on the agencies available for partnering and contact information, such as *Higher Education Service-Learning Sourcebook* (Crews 2002), but little else. Teachers often find themselves using ad hoc methods to make community contacts and develop their classes, or they resort to the university's service-learning center or center for community outreach to fulfill this goal. The lack of philosophy and practical application leads to the question: What would a community-based approach to service-learning resemble?

As indicated, literature on service-learning mentions community, but does little to define this group (Mitchell 2008). This lack of a definition is not inherently a problem, since a universal rendition would be difficult to design. After all, communities have different characteristics that set them apart from one another. The concept of community, while ubiquitous, is elusive when trying to define all communities. Nonetheless, some guidelines would be useful when considering the adoption of a community-based methodology.

One of these elements is that any definition of community should originate from the community. There is a trend in service-learning to impose these definitions without consulting a community (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2000). If an educator is going to employ a community-based approach, however, the community should be consulted to identify the members and any needs. Often, in the social sciences, academics tend to define community by using physical boundaries or, borrowing from the United States Census Bureau, "census tracts" (Weiss, Ompad, Galea, and Vlahov 2007; Mullan, Phillips, Jr., and Kinman 2004). While these techniques may be convenient for researchers or educators, these geographic indicators may have nothing to do with how a particular community defines itself. Only by consulting community members can an outsider determine whether geography or some other characteristic is important. As Blumer (1969) suggested, any research, from start to completion, needs to be verified by those who are studied, in this case a community.

Another guideline for outlining a community is that participants in a service-learning project should recognize that this entity is not finite or static, but fluid and ever changing, depending on circumstances that range from mobility and change in populations, economic factors, and alterations in the technological environment (Etzioni 2004). For instance, even when some or all the individuals physically move they may remain tied to one another, thereby maintaining social bonds, yet altering the original condition of membership. These linkages are then maintained through other means, such as the internet, telephone, or social media outlets. The fluidity and strength of the bonds may transcend any physical feature, which is something that has to be taken into account when defining a community.

A final component of a definition of community is flexibility. For instance, some communities may define themselves according to geographical boundaries; others may be based on shared experiences, while others may reflect common interests (Fowler 1995: 88). These various characteristics do not necessarily mean that members of these theoretical communities live near one another or know one another personally, since communal bonds can be formed through the use of technology, especially in the cases of shared experiences and common interests. Each one should be considered a community, despite their use of different defining characteristics.

While service-learning and the incorporation of community involvement is not questioned, there remains the idea that service-learning should be a community-based endeavor. However, the literature fails to reconcile, adequately, service-learning and community-based philosophy (Dewar and Isaac 1998). This neglect of community-based philosophy has led to problems concerning the appropriate role that an agency or community should play in a project. This chapter shall establish six (6) elements that should be adopted by educators in order to insure that their service-learning practices are community-based. These dimensions include: participation, constructionism, anti-empiricism, identity, involvement, and community as commitment.

**Participation**

For a service-learning project to be successful there needs to be full participation from all parties involved (Wallerstein and Duran 2006; Bringle and Hatcher 1996). Full participation means that everyone has a high degree of control throughout a service-learning project. In doing so, members will begin to form authentic bonds and collectively take ownership of a service-learning endeavor. While the entire project

should originate from the community, everyone involved should have a vested interest in and give direction to this undertaking. No one should have a monopoly over the tasks at hand, and all should work jointly together and fulfill the different roles required by the project (Stoecker 1999).

Many times teachers are not directly involved in community affairs outside of the classroom. For example, in service-learning classes and projects, the teacher acts merely as a conduit between the students and community, with little attachment to a project beyond informing students where to go and how this activity relates to their curricular activities. There may be various reasons for this lack of involvement, such as personal time commitments, career obligations, or simply a lack of interest. Indeed, there is rarely a requirement that a scholar must become a political activist or a community organizer, and not all disciplines support such practices (Bousquet and Nelson 2008; Katz 1973). However, this lack of a mandate should not excuse a practitioner of service-learning from engaging in community building activities, while proclaiming the benefits of service-learning and expecting students to buy into the project.

Enthusiasm is one of the keys for a successful project, while insuring that students get the most out of their experiences in a community (Mendel-Reyes 1997; Kolenko, Porter, Wheatley and Colby 1996). If a teacher is unable to exhibit enthusiasm for service-learning, or the project involved, apathy can potentially spread to the students, truly reducing the likelihood of them taking their role seriously. For this reason, the educator should be involved with the service-learning process alongside the students. Given this connection, the enthusiasm expressed by a teacher can become contagious. Additionally, on a more practical note, a teacher can observe closely a student's progress

in the course, thereby fostering insightful evaluations. And finally, by participating in the service-learning project alongside the students, a teacher can become a full participant in the community, rather than just a faceless expert who funnels students towards a particular cause.

Another form of participation needs to originate with the students. The participation of students in service-learning projects usually resembles free labor used by the community or community agency (Payne 2000). In many cases, students show up to a particular agency and are told the tasks they should perform by the coordinator of volunteers. The student has very little self-direction while at the agency, and is hardly a partner with the community. Furthermore, the duties of the student at these agencies may not have any connection to their classroom learning. For instance, when students sign up for their projects at a homeless shelter, they often end up serving the homeless a meal or work in the kitchen without any interaction with these persons. This act of serving, with little explanation from the agency, reduces the likelihood of student reflection and, thus, can reinforce stereotypes about being homeless – the opposite of what service-learning is meant to accomplish (Jones 2002).

Clearly treating students in this manner does not allow them to achieve full participation in the service-learning project. As Morgan and Streb (2001) explain, when students take ownership in a service project, truly providing them with a sense of community belonging, they exhibit better attitudes towards out groups, and a more positive self-concept. When participation is inauthentic, students are merely told what to do in a project. Accomplishing this goal is difficult if the student is merely directed as to what is to be done for the project. To remedy this trend, students need to participate in a

service-learning project from start to completion. In doing so, they will have an impact on the goals, as well a chance to become self-directed and a significant part of the agency, allowing them to take ownership. Of course, this type of participation, from the perspective of the student, would require a rethinking of service-learning requirements for a class, going beyond the standard 10-15 hours that are often assigned (Israel, et.al. 2003).

What participation represents is an epistemology devoted to collective action, whereby knowledge is understood to be a product of human interaction (Gergen 2009; Gergen 1985). A service-learning project, in this regard, should be the product of authentic action, or joint action, between all members involved. Within this framework, the participants, consisting of the teachers, students, and community members, collectively decide any problems to be addressed, the nature of a successful project, and finally how to go about creating this end product.

**Constructionism**

Constructionism is the idea that reality is something created, jointly, by members of a society (Gergen 2009). Consequently, reality is not objective, external, and controlling but rather is the product of individual or collective actions (Berger and Luckman 1990). Yet, people tend to treat their social world as something that antedates them and has an objective existence. However, reality would not appear this way without the interactions of people. Indeed, through their interaction, and subsequent sharing of meaning and perception, people construct their worlds (Gergen 2009). The result is that reality, contrary to what many empiricists contend, is fluid and dynamic, based on various perspectives and commitments. The various renditions, accordingly, depend on

social circumstances, such as class and occupation (Kohn 1980). The result is that there are multiple realities that must be shared in order for people to navigate the social world.

The framework of constructionism is something that should be applied to any service-learning undertaking. Specifically, all service-learning projects are the product of joint action between a community and the practitioners of service-learning (Falls-Borda 1987). Without the participation of these entities, there would be no project. Taking joint action into account, there needs to be a recognition that teachers, students, and community members, when taking part in a service-learning project, are interacting in a manner that constructs their shared reality. Naturally, constructionism does not mean that the result is a consensus. For instance, the teacher may see an environment full of injustice that stems from structural inequalities, such as housing discrimination or economic dislocation. On the other hand, students may view a community to be a group of people in need of their assistance. Nonetheless, through service-learning a collective identity is expressed and realized, as these different perspectives are united.

Upon entering a service-learning project, participants create something new and different. In certain ways, the integration of the elements of service-learning leads to the creation of a new "community" that consists of the community members, teachers, and students (Garcia, Guiliani, and Wiesenfeld 1999). This combination of elements can be viewed in much the same manner as a chemical reaction: a combination of mutually exclusive compounds that forms something new and unique (Lieberson and Lynn 2002).

Earlier in this chapter there was a hypothetical discussion on how each member may view a community differently, with each perspective is equally relevant. Through their interactions, however, the members share their different world-views in order to

create unified picture. Through communication the particular parameters of a service-learning project are established, including the long and short term goals and the methods for their achievement. During the interaction, there may be a consensus about social injustice, but any remedy might lead in a variety of directions. In this regard, dialogue grounds classroom learning in the community. Each of the participant's views are thus incorporated equally and contribute to their socially constructed reality.

Adopting a constructionist epistemology means that teachers and students can no longer treat the community as "object" or "other". One of the goals of community-based service-learning is to eliminate any barriers that exist between the participants (Kelly 2006; Bickford and Reynolds 2002). For this reason, all those concerned must be treated as collaborators in a service-learning project (Rappaport 1987: 140). So, teachers and students need to adopt a "subject/subject" perspective, to borrow from Fals-Borda (1987: 330), rather than the traditional "helper/helped" model that has been prevalent in service-learning. Doing so brings teachers, students, and community members to the same level, thereby helping to further break down any barriers that may inhibit a project. To accomplish this maneuver there needs to be a change in how the community is viewed and treated in service-learning projects. Specifically, a community is no longer an environment or an empirical domain.

**More than an Empirical Domain**

One of the key issues in service-learning is how the community is used and involved with most projects. Practitioners of service-learning often treat communities as an environment, or laboratory, where the theories that are learned in class are tested.

According to Jane Addams, who directed Hull House in Chicago, treating the community in this manner in antithetical to the spirit of service-learning (Daynes and Longo 2004).

The treatment of a community as a laboratory, context, or empirical domain for theory testing violates the goals and purposes of a service-learning partnership. For instance, approaching a community, and community members, as objects that are meant to be manipulated and used for the purpose of educational enlightenment is dehumanizing. Doing so relegates the community members to "others," or things, and violates the moral imperative that people should not be used as a means to an end (Kant 1993). For service-learning to be community-based, educators and students must avoid treating communities as things, and instead strive to work with community members.

The point, however, is not to reject that communities exist as empirical entities, based on shared experiences and interactions between persons. In fact, the use of verifiable information that originates from a community can be quite useful for service-learning. What should be abandoned by those who employ a community-based philosophy, however, is the empiricism often associated with social planning. Indeed, the characteristics of a community are not universal or natural; they are not variables that can be measured neatly and applied automatically to all members. Rather, the shared experiences and interactions should be the focus, since the interpretations of these experiences are what constitute a community.

Another reason to avoid treating a community as an empirical domain relates to the implication that these persons are incapable of self-direction and, therefore, in need of special assistance from the local university or an expert. Treating communities as objects harkens back to a behaviorist view of human interaction, where the community is merely

a tabula rasa that responds to the stimulus provided by experts or students (Furco and Billig 2001). This mentality gives special preference to those who arrive from a university, for example, thereby creating a relationship that is by no means egalitarian. Because students are there to help a community, the reflective side of service-learning, i.e., that communities are not only helping themselves but also play a role in the education of students, becomes obsolete. If educators and students were to take this view, then service-learning is no different from charity work (Furco 1996).

Many academic areas have treated communities as a collection of empirical properties, or variables, that are measured, collected, and then analyzed, as though these are objective or natural characteristics of the participants. However, there have been attempts to circumvent this particular view of the community and establish a more holistic paradigm, such as in the area of community psychology. In this field of study the ecological metaphor has been applied to communities, thereby taking into account various processes that are analogous to biological functions: cycling of resources, adaptation, interdependence, and succession (Kelly 1987).

However, the ecological paradigm informs researchers as to how they should take community into account, rather than illustrate how these persons can control a project (Trickett 1984: 265). The ecological paradigm is meant to make any research or intervention more sensitive to the needs of a community. Nonetheless, the ecological model is not sufficiently constructionist and thus inconsistent in many ways with a community-based philosophy. Although a community cannot be reduced to a set of empirical elements, the problem with the ecological perspective is that a harsh metaphor

based in a scientific mind-set is used that can obscure easily the human element that mediates a community-based project (Espino and Trickett 2008).

Most important for practitioners of service-learning to keep in mind is that communities are self-directing agents capable of improvement and achieving their own goals. Despite this realization, teachers and students tend to treat communities as lesser entities, incapable of improvement, development, or actualization without their assistance (Rappaport 1981). If this attitude is adopted by practitioners, then any service-learning project becomes little more than community service hours related to a class assignment. Assumed by this viewpoint is that a community has very little to offer to the academic world beyond receiving services. While there is nothing inherently wrong charity, central to service-learning is that communities can solve their problems and become autonomous (Fourie 2003; Rappaport 1981).

There are times when people may wonder why "service" and "learning" are hyphenated. The hyphenation in service-learning stands for a few things, not least of which is the act of reflection that occurs between the performance of service and student learning (Eyler 2001). Another reason why the term is hyphenated is to reinforce the bonds formed from collaboration. The hyphenation illustrates that students and teachers are not only helping the community, but that the community is also helping the students and teachers to learn. Service-learning is meant to be a dialectical relationship that fosters mutual help for all parties involved, ultimately leading to greater mastery over their life-worlds, or what some scholars have referred to as empowerment (Rappaport 1987).

In sum, the community is not meant to be an object or an environment where students get to "test" the theories that they learn in the classroom. This method misrepresents a community and has the potential to reinforce the stereotype that these persons are in need of the services provided by students or other experts. Instead, teachers should emphasize what students should be learning from a community, and how this knowledge is related to what they learn in class. Hence, learning is meant to happen on different levels, not just an academic one. For this reason, teachers should reject the empirical notion of a community and adopt a more dialectal outlook, something that is enhanced by including the community in the classroom (Langhout, Rappaport, and Simmons 2002).

**Community as Identity**

The literature on service-learning has been very much concerned with the concept and inclusion of community (Cruz and Giles 2000). Yet, at the same time, practitioners of service-learning have done little in terms of defining or conceptualizing this theme. This lack of reflection on community has left service-learning impoverished in terms of any transformative potential for both students and community members. For this reason, the concept of community must be central to any service-learning class or project. But, what is a community?

When many people talk about community, they make a lot of assumptions. These presuppositions are reminiscent of Garfinkel's (1967) "breaching experiments," where he subjected his students' cultural beliefs to critical interrogation. Often times when someone mentions the word "community," a neighborhood, a group with defined boundaries, or some other image comes to mind. The definitions get even more

confusing when one considers certain technological advancements that connect people over great distances, such as Facebook, twitter, or various other websites – much in the same manner that Robert Putnam (2000) seems to suggest. Herein lies one of the problems with the concept of community: not everyone is going to have the same image. Ultimately, there is no single definition, because of the various associations that the concept entails.

Nonetheless, any definition must originate from the community (Wiesenfeld 1996). Many practitioners of service-learning tend to impose a definition on their classes, one that is limiting and potentially not representative of the experience of community members. Doing so has been symptomatic, as previously mentioned, of treating communities as empirical domains. The imposition of a teacher's definition may also happen because of how a service-learning class is conducted, that is, if students get to choose their own project. In such cases, the teacher may have to provide a broad definition in order to guide students. Overlooking or masking the experiences of a community, however, can become very problematic.

Another aspect of communities is that they are elusive. People who are members of a community are not necessarily clear as to who belongs and who does not; membership is a rather general sense of belonging. In this regard, they tend to enter and leave as they please, which contributes to this elusiveness (Etzioni 2004A). For this reason, communities have been difficult to operationalize. Consequently, social scientists tend to treat a community as monolithic: as a neighborhood, a town or village, or a census track (Mullan, Phillips, Jr., and Kinman 2004; Garcia, Giuliani, and Wiesenfeld 1999). The reality, though, is that a particular community will establish its own boundaries and

membership standards based on the community's self-definition, which may contain many, often competing, constructions of reality.

The idea that a community consists of an image is consistent with an *interactionist* social ontology (Blumer 1969). Within this image of society there is recognition that individuals help to create a community that is not greater than any single individual or individual's perspective. The community does not exist sui generis, as Durkheim (1979) might say, but embodies competing constructs. As many would attest, communities have history; they have personalities (Israel, et. al. 2003; Fowler 1995). A community is something amorphous rather than absolute, since these persons participate actively in the creation, maintenance, and mutation of any communal norms, boundaries, or membership standards. Essentially, a community is porous, flexible, and constantly changing.

Often, people tend to think of a community as a group of people who tend to feel, act, and think in the same manner. According to this theory of community psychology, a community is a sense of "we-ness" (MacMillan and George 1986). This view of community as "we" may not be appropriate for service-learning, or any community-based research, since diversity is obscured. This sense of "we-ness" tends to paint communities as static. While communities may be stable, they are not necessarily homogenous.

However, because they are composed of interacting individuals, as Wiesenfeld (1996) observed, communities are dynamic, dialectical, and in a constant state of flux. Members are diverse in their politics, economic statuses, careers, and their levels of participation – yet they can also be homogenous, depending on the community (Etzioni 2004). While some community members, in spite of their membership, may not feel the

need to participate in any events, gatherings, or traditions, they still maintain their membership status. Knowing how a community navigates this diversity is vital to organizing a successful community-based project.

**Community Involvement in the Classroom**

An important theme in service-learning projects has been gravely misunderstood. That is, teachers make connections with a community, often merely to ask permission for students to use an agency to complete service-learning hours (Ward 2003). This lack of community involvement can lead to many problems (Strom 2010). For this reason, a community or community agency should be involved with the development of each stage of a service-learning project, including: curriculum development, classroom procedures, student evaluations, project design, and finally implementation.

In order to encourage community involvement in each phase, teachers need to re-think radically the classroom and the idea of teaching. Typically, teachers will construct a syllabus for a class without input from sources other than what the school or university requires. They select the readings that are believed to be pertinent to the goals of the class and the proposed service-learning project. These educators also choose assignments that they believe will best achieve the learning outcomes set out for the class. As a result, the course building is done in a manner that may not reflect the needs of a community or the goals of the service-learning project (Crews 2002).

To remedy the problem of isolated course development, a teacher should seek the input of community agencies or community members when developing a course. Community members should be invited to help select readings, evaluation assignments, and set up the goals of a service-learning project. Traditionally, these activities that are

left to academics are viewed as beyond the scope of the lay community (Crews 2002). However, there are no rules, aside from possibly administrative barriers, that say a teacher cannot consult with community members in developing a service-learning course or project. In allowing communities to be involved in the development of a course, there is recognition that the community is not merely an environment, but has special knowledge that is important for designing an effective project.

Involvement from this perspective also includes a community having a presence in the classroom. There is a trend to keep separate the academic portion of a service-learning class from the "not-so-clean" humans that live in the community (Bringle and Hatcher 1996). Indeed, for most service-learning classes, community members do not have a direct presence in the classroom. They are talked about, maybe referenced in the news or academic articles, and may even have a chance to give a guest lecture, but these encounters are superficial. Such interactions with community members tend to reinforce the teacher as central to the course, because community members functions merely as another teaching tool, much the same way as movies or readings. What a community has to say is diminished by the process. Having the course co-taught, for example, might be an appropriate remedy for this situation (Eisen 2000).

The final element of community involvement concerns the area of student evaluation. Educators provide their students with assignments of varying types that are evaluated in terms of learning outcomes. Again, much in the manner that a service-learning course is developed, the evaluation of students is often an endeavor completed solely by the teacher. The community is thus absent from this process. But what a teacher deems to be "successful" learning outcomes may differ from those that a

community may find important. For instance, in the classroom grammar, conceptualization, and communication of abstract concepts may be the learning goals, outcomes that are often associated with academic success (Astin and Sax 1998). However, the community may value political action, commitment, personal development, or civic engagement – themes often overlooked in the classroom – as indicative of the successful completion of a service-learning course. For this reason, a community-based approach to service-learning should incorporate community input in the evaluation of students.

Such inclusion in the evaluation process can be accomplished in different ways. First, community members or agencies should participate in the formulation of the learning objectives, rather than simply the teacher. Another way to increase community involvement is for representatives to create graded assignments. And finally, community members should be involved directly in the grading process, beyond reporting that a student did well or not. They should have access to the assignments, be able to make comments and suggestions, and also provide advice regarding a final grade. The inclusion of the community in evaluating students does not mean the teacher does not make the final judgment, but rather grading becomes a collective process.

This involvement of the community helps to mitigate the notion that the classroom is the monopoly of the professional staff. Also, this change helps to reinforce the idea that schools are not the sole source of knowledge, and that communities can contribute meaningfully to academic discourse. Finally, the value of grades or achievement outside of the academic realm, such as civic engagement and personal development, becomes just as important as understanding and communicating academic

concepts in a service-learning class. The recognition of multiple goals for a service-learning project is not simply an exercise in community development, but also builds social responsibility on the part of students (Deeley 2010; Jones and Hill 2001; Billig 2000).

Including communities in the classroom requires a fundamental reorganization of what is commonly thought to be a "classroom." No longer is this sphere the sole domain of students and teachers, but rather a space that unites the school and community. To gain this type of inclusiveness, both teachers and schools must exhibit a level of commitment that has not been witnessed often in the past (Bringle and Hatcher 1996).

**Community as Commitment**

Often in service-learning courses, there is a tendency to place a narrow time requirement on the completion of student projects. This requirement represents a minimum and often changes depending on the class and school. Usually the number of hours is relatively low, reflecting that the student body has become more active in other ways beyond the curriculum (Karasik 2008). Likewise, the time commitment that is set by teachers is often used as part of a student's evaluation. While the time requirement serves a functional purpose in terms of providing the basis for a grade, this strategy is hardly an adequate measure of commitment to a community. Hence, a new way of thinking about commitment is needed in community-based projects.

One of the problems with using this strategy is that commitment is equated with an objective empirical standard. However, in terms of time management, most students will do the bare minimum in order to complete a course and receive an adequate grade. And once they fulfill the necessary hours, students often view themselves as having

finished a project and terminate involvement with a community agency. Consequently, studies have shown that service-learning fails to increase student involvement in their communities (Reinke 2003).

Another issue concerning time minimums relates to the relevance of this requirement to the community. If a time requirement is too low, community agencies may be left with unfinished projects, or have to train a new cohort of students. In this regard, the time minimum may retard service-learning by encouraging superficial projects that may not attain the goals relevant to students or communities. To remedy these problems, practitioners of service-learning must re-think the idea of commitment.

One of the ways in which practitioners can operationalize commitment to a service-learning project is through the idea of responsibility to the community and the project (Rappaport 1987: 138; Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). Accordingly, students and teachers must construct and maintain bonds with a community that are not abandoned once a time requirement is satisfied. In fact, any significant community-based endeavor is going to be time consuming, reaching far beyond the requirements of a class (Minkler and Wallerstein 2003: 20).

Another way to talk about commitment would be to stress the completion of a project. In a community-based approach to service-learning, the successful completion of service-learning project, as defined by community members, would be central rather than some time requirement. To achieve the required commitment, a project must be integrated into the daily lives of students rather than merely the component of a course. While such integration is difficult to achieve, especially when considering the current academic climate, failure to do so leads to a disjointed and superficial service-learning

experience (Butin 2006; Mabry 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff 1994). One way to accomplish this integration is to eliminate the classroom component altogether, or to make the community the classroom. By basing student evaluations on the completion of a project, rather than a temporal measure, students will have to increase their level of commitment.

Another area of commitment that needs to be addressed relates to teachers. Currently, they exhibit commitment by sending students to various community agencies in order for them to fulfill their hours, with little communication or devotion beyond the classroom. As stated earlier, teachers should be involved directly with the community where a service-learning project is taking place. For example, they should be integrated into a project as a facilitator (Rappaport 1987) or as a member of the project team (Garcia, Giuliani, and Wiesenfeld 1999). Essentially, teachers leave the ivory tower and join community members, thereby helping to eliminate barriers that may prevent the thorough integration of a project into the curriculum. While they may not achieve true membership status, integration may improve through a show of commitment of time, energy, and resources. As Wiesenfeld (1996) notes, communities permit diverse membership, if these persons exhibit the proper values and other traits.

Commitment is something that is tough to achieve, particularly given the various roles that people take on in their daily lives. In service-learning teachers and students are assuming several different roles simultaneously (Bringle, Clayton, and Price 2009; Rappaport 1987). Students become researchers, helpers, and community members, while teachers become students, facilitators, researchers, and community members. Still, this confusion can be mediated by integrating the community into the classroom, thereby

reducing gradually any contradictions that may exist between these roles (Goffman 1959). The point is to establish a space where these differences are recognized and possibly reconciled.

**Conclusion**

For service-learning to be a true community-based endeavor, the preceding characteristics need to be exhibited. Without them, service-learning projects tend to become indicative of community service or volunteerism (Furco 1996). Likewise, without adopting a community-based approach, a project can easily be detrimental to a community, as discussed by Stephanie Strom (2010) in her piece "Does Service-Learning Really Help?" Without a community's input, how can teachers expect that a project will be helpful, reach the desired goals, or something that is desired?

Furthermore, teachers need to participate and show commitment to a project by working together with students in a community. In the absence of such participation, there is no connection between the teachers, students, and communities. Specifically important is that this involvement must extend beyond teaching and evaluating students. In doing so, a project has a greater chance of gaining legitimacy in a community and having some appreciable impact (Kerry et. al. 2003).

On the other hand, students need to show a greater level of involvement with a project beyond the classroom. This engagement helps them to master their environment and increase their sense of efficacy and responsibility (Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). However, this manner of approaching service-learning requires a new theory of pedagogy, as well as a change in student evaluation practices. Community members, for example, might have to be integrated into developing the service-learning curriculum.

The traditional approach to service-learning has kept the community and the classroom as distinct and separate entities, thusly creating a rift between teachers and communities. As a result, projects may not meet the needs of communities, while reinforcing beliefs that these groups cannot become autonomous (Fourie 2003; Rappaport 1981). Hence, communities should have a greater presence in schools, in order to avoid these pitfalls. Community-based service-learning, in this way, strives to remove these divisions.

## Chapter 4: Methods

This research attempts to ascertain the extent to which service-learning, as practiced at Barry University, is consistent with community-based philosophy. The study is motivated by the researcher's own experiences using service-learning at that university, his students' experiences, and conversations with colleagues over their struggles with their students' reflections on their "field work." Taking these issues into account, many of the problems practitioners of service-learning experience may be related to the lack of definitions of community, as well as the absence of the community in the classroom. These oversights render service-learning experiences shallow and incomplete.

Research of this nature cannot treat a community in the same manner that a biologist would study cells, or a physicist would study some natural sequence of events. When dealing with human actions and behaviors, the application of scientific laws is not appropriate because of the interpretive character of the human condition. In short, the empirical approach to sociology – the notion that sociology should be more like a natural science, or the *naturwissenschaften* to borrow from Max Weber (1978) – is rejected in this case. The implication of this empirical world-view is that a researcher is able to be objective, while applying standard measures to find law-like behaviors or universals. Research methods of this sort are rejected not because of their "nomothetic" nature, but because the type of knowledge sought, related to community, is incompatible with empiricism.

Research that involves an experiential concept such as community cannot adopt a natural science perspective. In this project, sociology is treated like a humanity, or philosophy (*geisteswissenschaften*), where the concern is individualistic or "ideographic"

phenomena (Weber 1978). This methodological undertaking implies that so-called objective knowledge unmediated by interpretation is impossible to obtain. All relevant research, accordingly, must engage those who are studied.

The standpoint of this project is engaged research (Silverman 1980). The logic of this methodology is two-fold. First is that the researcher is a member of the faculty where the subjects were recruited, thereby establishing a connection with those being studied. This relationship shows how a researcher can be both the agent of research and a participant (Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont 2003). The second is that the researcher's experiences with service-learning helped to inform and guide the questions that were asked.

Unlike the grounded theory outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), where researchers put aside their previous experiences and allow findings to emerge from the data, an engaged researcher is ubiquitous to the research process. In fact, to ignore these experiences would be disingenuous. Additionally, given the "linguistic turn" present in contemporary philosophy, searching for unmediated knowledge makes little sense (Lyotard 1984). Ultimately, interpretation and data are intertwined and thus a researcher, motivated by *geisteswissenschaften*, strives to understand the resulting construction (Charnaz 2006). At the nexus of these two elements is where knowledge resides.

The engaged research perspective means that the focus of this project to gain entrée into the life-world, or *lebenswelt*, of the participants. The life-world consists of differing subjective realities – expressed as perceptions and actions – of various individuals, which can be communicated in an intersubjective manner with others, thereby creating a shared reality (Habermas 1984, Buttmer 1976). By sharing in this life-

world, the researcher is able to gain a deep understanding of how the concept of community, and its implications for service-learning, is constructed and used by the participants.

**Research Design**

The goal of this research is to understand how community is defined and employed in classes that use service-learning as a pedagogical technique. As described in the previous chapter, service-learning is meant to be a community-based endeavor. However, the literature on service-learning is scant on the role that a community or agency plays in this activity (Langhout, Rappaport, and Simmons 2002).

Because the research is focused on the classroom, professors and students were sampled for the interviews, with the hope of ascertaining their conceptions and role of community in service-learning. Both teachers and students agreed to participate in in-depth interviews where they were questioned on their respective service-learning experiences. Specifically, these two groups were interviewed in order to determine how the issue of community was addressed in their service-learning classes and project.

Due to the nature of the phenomenon studied, the researcher must gain access, or epistemological entrée, to the life-world of the participants to construct the data (Johansson, Ekebergh, and Dalhberg 2009). Qualitative research strategies, particularly those of an engaged researcher, were used to sample and recruit participants, as well as collect and analyze data. Non-probability samples were adopted with the goal of achieving theoretical saturation (Charmaz 2006). Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted, using probe questions, in order to create a conversation between the researcher and participants that would germinate the data (Rubin and Rubin 2005).

Finally, a multi-stage comparative technique was used to analyze the data that allows the researcher to return continuously to the data when new findings are created or current findings change (Charmaz 2006).

**Barry University as a Case**

Barry University was chosen as the site to conduct this research for several reasons. The first is that Barry University is a Catholic school run by the Adrian Dominican Sisters. The Dominican sect of the Catholic Church has a long standing tradition of community service and outreach. As a Dominican university, Barry has made community service central to its mission statement.[8] In this general statement, collaboration and social justice are stressed.

The second is that this university has a tradition of service-learning. This history makes Barry an ideal environment for studying this phenomenon.

And third, the researcher is an adjunct faculty member in the department of sociology, thus making this university a "natural setting" for undertaking this study (Lofland 1976). For example, contacts were relatively easy to make, while interviews could be scheduled with little interference from the bureaucracy. Additionally, as a participant in the service-learning program, sources of data were available that would otherwise be difficult to unearth (Burgess 1991).

**Sampling and Recruitment**

This research uses a non-probability sampling technique to recruit participants (Creswell and Maitta 2002). Being a qualitative study, this research does not seek to generalize findings beyond this particular institution, but rather gain a deep understanding

[8] Barry University's mission statement, which was revised in 2008, can be viewed at http://www.barry.edu/president/mission/ . Retrieved November 27, 2013.

of how community is defined and used within the classroom setting (Charmaz 2006). Nonetheless, this research may provide insights into the practicalities of implementing community-based service-learning practices at other institutions of higher learning, if the world-view that is operating in this setting in present elsewhere (Nordgren, Asp, and Fagerberg 2008).

Qualitative research tends to struggle with issues of generalization. The problem of generalizability is stems from all findings being interpreted, and that interpretations may vary among differing world-views (Gadamer 1976). Nonetheless, findings may be extended as far as a particular world-view allows. A lack of generalizability, therefore, is not necessarily a methodological issue, but reflects that nature of interpretive data. Information has validity, in short, only within the parameters that support particular interpretations.

The goal of this research was to recruit a total of twenty-five (25) participants: fifteen (15) faculty members and ten (10) students. This number was chosen to gain sufficient depth and theoretical saturation regarding the participants' experiences with service-learning (Sandelowski 1995). The reason for the difference is the assumption that faculty members have a broader knowledge of the inner workings of service-learning, would be easier to contact, and that many students have trouble recalling their service-learning experiences – let alone the specifics of their classes (Corbin and Strauss 2008). The student perspective is mainly to ascertain whether or not the professor presents a community-based approach to service-learning.

The purposeful, non-probability, snowball sample was the most appropriate type of sampling device for this research (Coyne 2008, Marshall 1996). The sample started

with an initial point of contact, Professor Glen Bowen – Director of the Center for Community Service Initiatives – who is knowledgeable regarding all of the community service and service learning activities on campus. Professor Bowen was not interviewed for this research, but he did offer some advice on how to get in touch with those who were practicing service-learning in their classes. He is what Parker and Lynn (2002) refer to as an ally in gaining access to potential recruits. As the initial point of contact, he was asked to provide a list of names of professors who engage in service-learning throughout the university. Indeed, he was able to point out individuals in departments that would not be associated traditionally with service-learning, such as language arts, communications, and the physical sciences (Gray, et. al. 1999).

Another source of recruitment was the faculty members in the Department of Sociology. Being a faculty member gave the researcher access to colleagues who were willing to be interviewed. In effect, collegiality helped in building the snowball sample, along with the help of Professor Bowen. Eventually some of the contacts began to overlap, thereby indicating that certain individuals are central to service-learning at Barry.

***Faculty Demographics***

There were fifteen (15) faculty members recruited for this study. All but one of the faculty participants were full-time, coming from the departments of sociology (4), theology (4), communications (2), nursing (2) physical sciences (1), psychology (1), and one (1) professor from the language arts department at the School of Adult Continuing Education. Four (4) of the faculty participants had special training in either community building or a community-based discipline. The ages ranged from thirty-two (32) to

seventy-three (73), with an average age of almost thirty-six (35.8). Their races were white (9), black (3), and Hispanic (3). Three (3) of the faculty members had their master's degrees, while the rest had doctorates in their respective fields. Regarding faculty religions, four (4) were Catholic, six (6) identified as "spiritual" with no specific religion, and five (5) identified as atheists. One (1) was a former Jesuit priest. Eleven (11) of the participants had previous experience with service-learning before their time at Barry.

***Student Demographics***

There were nine (9) students interviewed in this study, and one (1) who submitted his replies to the interview questions in writing. The average age of the students was over 18 (18.4), with twenty-two (22) as the oldest and eighteen (18) as the youngest. Their majors were in different areas, including various social sciences (3), mathematics (2), theology (1), public relations (1), nursing (1), and (2) undecided. The average grade point average for student participants was 3.25, the highest being 3.8 and the lowest score being 2.75; two (2) students did not know their grade point average. The students' self-reported race was white (3), black (3), Hispanic (2), Middle Eastern (1), and mixed race (1). All but two (2) of the students reported having taken multiple service-learning classes, and all of them had experienced service-learning prior to their time at Barry.[9] The following religions were reported: one (1) Muslim, one (1) Agnostic, one (2) Catholic, and six (6) who identified themselves as Christian. The grade levels of the

[9] The interviewer did not define service-learning for the students and assumed that they knew what that entailed. Their reporting of service-learning prior to their time at Barry was more akin to the trend of many high schools that requires their students to complete a certain amount of service hours before graduating (Howard 2003, Conrad and Hedin 1989).

students were: one (1) freshman, three (3) juniors, four (4) seniors, and two (2) students who had recently graduated from the university.

***Screening***

Basic to this research is the question: is service-learning at Barry informed by community-based philosophy? For this reason, only professors who taught or used service-learning in their classes were included for the faculty portion of this study. However, there seemed, at times, to be a misunderstanding of service-learning (Furco 2003). During the screening of potential participants, a specific definition of service-learning was employed during the interview process to insure the research stayed on topic. Specifically, service-learning is: "teaching and learning that blends personal experience and wisdom gained from community-based service with knowledge arising out of more traditional coursework within the academe" (Crews 2002). However, a broader definition was used when asking about past service experiences, which included any service activity that is linked to classroom learning, such as field work, internships, and practicums (Furco 2003). Common sense dictates that faculty members who never had experience using service-learning would not be eligible to participate in this study.

Concerning students, only those who had taken service-learning at Barry University were considered. Students enrolled currently in the researcher's classes at Barry University were not eligible, due to any conflict of interest. Given that professors have power over their students, these particular individuals were excluded (Peterson 2001). Although the institutional review boards of both University of Miami and Barry University approved the recruitment of these students as long as another person conducted the interviews, the researcher decided such involvement was inappropriate.

Also, any student who was under the age of eighteen (18) was excluded for a few reasons. The first is that the college student experience with service-learning, not age, is the focus of this study. Hardly anyone at Barry is under this age. The second reason for the exclusion of anyone under the age of eighteen was more of an issue of practicality. Any student below the legal age of consent would require parental consent, along with the pupil's assent, to participate in this research (Morrow and Richards 1996). Considering that Barry University has a lot of out-of-state students, as well as international students, obtaining parental consent would have unnecessarily complicated the recruitment process. For these reasons, only students who were legally adults were considered.

***Faculty Recruitment***

Faculty members were recruited in two stages. The first stage involved sending a pre-interview request, using the university's email system, to faculty members who were not well known to the researcher. This recruitment email can be found in Appendix A. All of the faculty members' contact information is publicly available online at Barry University. The pre-recruitment email explained the focus and motivation for the research, that interviews would be an audio-recorded, the benefits of the project, and that the researcher would like to contact them via their office phones to establish an appointment for an interview. The email format was used because research has shown that sending an advance communication tends to increase response rates (Goldstein and Jennings 2002).

Once the pre-recruitment emails were sent, a phone call was made to the faculty members' office phones. If no one picked up, a voice message was left that repeated

some of the information in the recruitment email, along with contact information. Additionally, they were informed that they would receive another call in the near future, in order to set up an interview.

The second stage occurred at the conclusion of a successful interview. In order to increase the sample size, faculty members were asked two questions. First, did they know any other faculty members at Barry University who were using service-learning in their classes? If so, they were asked to provide their contact information. The second recruitment question asked faculty members to provide a class roster from a recent service-learning class that could be used to identify students. Some members were reluctant to provide their class rosters, or were unable to do so, but many supplied the names of students that could be found in the Barry University directory or offered to contact students.[10]

***Student Recruitment***

Student recruitment tended to be a lot more difficult, so a variety of methods were used that were approved by the institutional review boards. One method was to ask the faculty participants for a recent roster from a class that involved service-learning. Class rosters at Barry University include the students' names and email addresses. Using these lists, an email was sent to the students that solicited their participation and asked them to respond with a phone number. The student recruitment email can be found in Appendix A. This method of student recruitment proved to be fruitless, since no students responded to the emails.

[10] Barry University's online academic system, WebAdvisor, allows faculty members to access class rosters from the previous semester, but no further back than that. For this reason, some faculty members were unable to provide rosters.

A second method, suggested by faculty recruits, was more effective. Instead of the researcher sending out a cold email, the faculty members sent an email with the researcher's contact information (Kanuk and Berenson 1975). This recruitment method seemed to work. Meetings were then set up with the students who contacted the researcher at a time and place that was convenient for them.

Finally, to augment the pool of potential recruits, students were asked if any of their friends or classmates would be willing to participate in the research. Students either provided the researcher with these names and phone numbers, or gave the researcher's contact information, listed on University of Miami business cards, to these persons. As others have shown, pre-contact with potential recruits help to increase participation rates (Kanuk and Berenson 1975). Making a pre-contact with students through someone known to them, either their friends or professors, was key in recruiting student participants.

**Interview Procedures**

The interview process had two stages. Because there were two groups, the interviews were conducted differently in both their content and approaches, and thus reflected the perspectives of the groups interviewed. All but one of the interviews was audio recorded, while field notes were taken during the interviews (Charmaz 2006). The average time of the interviews for faculty members was sixty (60) minutes, and for students thirty (30).

While the researcher employed a set of guiding questions to prompt the participants into conversations, no set script was followed. Qualitative research is inherently flexible, knowing that each interview, via each participant, is going to be

different (Grafanaki 2007). There is no universal template that can be followed in trying to construct data for the research and subsequent analysis. To initiate a conversation with participants, the interviewer used probe questions that were designed to illicit detailed responses from the participants. The interview guides, specific to professors and students, can be found in Appendix B. Some of the probe questions were:

(1) Describe the types of projects that your students (or "you" if participant was a student) were involved with in the different classes where service-learning was used.

(2) Was community defined for the service project? If so, how?

(3) Did you know anything about the communities where the service-learning projects were being held? Was the history of the communities ever conveyed?

(4) Did you develop a connection to the community? If so, how was that manifested?

When answers fell short in terms of their depth, follow-up questions were used to push the conversation deeper, and to, at times, challenge the participants to reflect critically on their experiences with service-learning and their respective community agencies.

***Faculty Interviews***

After the professors were contacted and agreed to participate in the research, a meeting was scheduled for the near future. Meetings were scheduled at a time and place that was most convenient for them. These meetings often occurred in their offices on campus, during their office hours. But there were some anomalies. One professor asked to have the interview conducted at a restaurant near downtown Miami, due to her busy schedule with various community agencies. Another required two separate meetings to

complete the interview, because of her exam schedule.[11] Due to there being no compensation for the faculty recruits, every effort was made, consistent with the ethics associated with qualitative research, to reduce the inconveniences faced by the interviewees (Cieurzo and Keitel 1999).

The interviews began with the researcher introducing himself as a graduate student and then requesting their participation in the research. If the faculty member obliged, they were then given a consent form to read and sign. Then the interview commenced. During the interview with faculty members, they were asked questions regarding their service-learning classes. While these were technically interviews, they had a unique twist. That is, faculty members were treated as if they were colleagues who had the time to collaborate and share their experiences, similar to a casual conversation (Rubin and Rubin 2005). In essence, these interviews allowed the interlocutors to compare notes and offer suggestions, based on experiences in their respective classrooms, on how to address the issues faced when implementing service-learning. So, while these interviews were conducted in the name of formal research, the format was very informal (Rubin and Rubin 2005). This dynamic, however, was quite different for the student interviews.

Faculty participants were questioned about the classroom environment, kinds of projects their students conducted, assignments their students completed, their definition of community, construction of the course, and their relationships to the community. Appropriate follow-up questions were also asked. Some follow-up queries dealt with the

[11] The meeting with this particular professor was never completed. The interview did get through the substantive material, which was the focus of the research, but did not get at the background information, which was ancillary. Some of the background information sought was available publicly through Barry University's website.

troubles these professors had with their students, challenges they faced, and the inability of their students to make the connections between what is learned in the classroom and their projects.

These participants were also asked some background information for the sake of comparisons. The questions pertained to the status of the faculty member, their area of interests, their experiences with service-learning at any institutions other than Barry, and whether they participated in service-learning as a student. The interview guide for faculty recruits can be found in Appendix B. To close out the interview, they were asked about their hopes for the Center for Community Service Initiatives, whether or not they had used any of its resources for their courses, and if they had concerns about institutional problems with service-learning at Barry.

***Student Interviews***

Once successful contact was made with student recruits, the interview process was similar, but there were a few key differences in setting up the meeting. Again, since they were receiving no compensation for their participation, every effort was made to reduce their inconvenience. Two different methods were used to interview the students. The first was to schedule meetings at a time and place that was most convenient for them. These meetings were often held at various times during the day to accommodate their schedules, and took place in the adjunct faculty office at Barry University. This location was suggested by the researcher because most of the students who were interviewed were living on campus, or would be there at some point during the week. The office also offered students the greatest amount of privacy.

While in-person interviewing was the preferred method for conducting research, this strategy was not always the most convenient or efficient for students. For this reason, they could complete the interview by phone, if they could not make it to campus, or write their answers to the interview questions as reflection-style essays. These alternatives were offered near the end of or after the spring semester, a time when students are finishing finals, moving off campus (and at times out of town), or graduating. Only one student agreed to return his written answers via email because he had just graduated from Barry University, but wanted to participate in the research.

The interview began with the researcher introducing himself as a graduate student at the University of Miami and also as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Sociology at Barry. During the introduction the students received a brief overview of the research subject at hand, asked if they had any experience with service-learning at Barry, and if they were over eighteen (18). Once these introductions were completed, the interviewer asked if the students would participate in the interview, and if they agreed they were given a consent form to read and sign. At the end of this process, the interview began.

The questions asked were broad and open ended enough to gain some depth into students' experiences with service-learning. The students were asked what they did for their service-learning projects, whether or not their professor defined community, how the community was involved with the service-learning project, whether or not they developed a connection to the community, among others. Appropriate follow-up questions were used to get students to clarify their answers and gain a better understanding of their experiences. The interview guide that was used with student

recruits can be found in Appendix B. Students were also asked about their backgrounds. The interview concluded by asking them how they felt service-learning at Barry could be improved.

While professors may believe what they are teaching is clear, students may have a very different experience. The two groups represent very different and, at times, conflicting world-views. The professor may believe that they are clear in their definition of community and its role in service-learning, while the student may not realize that community was never defined or an active participant in the service project. Therefore, the aim of research was to understand and compare these different perspectives, and how their realities are constructed (Berger and Luckman 1990).

The feeling of the student interviews was quite different from those of the faculty, since the students did not view the researcher to be a colleague. As a result, many students took this interview as an opportunity to either praise or complain about their service-learning experiences, similar to the way a manager may be criticized in the service industry. Although the interview was still a conversation, the experience and authority of the researcher altered the direction of the conversation; specifically, the researcher and students were not equal partners in the research process (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Despite the unequal statuses of the two people involved in the data construction process, the researcher was able to compare and contrast his perception of his students' experiences with those of the other participants, which helped to construct a better understanding of the perspectives of both the researcher and the student.

**Analysis**

Twenty-five (25) interviews were conducted by the researcher and electronically recorded with the permission of the participants. The recordings started out being conducted with mini-cassette tapes, but were transferred into digital MP3 format for the purpose of creating word documents. Moreover, while the cassettes had been a tried and true method, problems arose in the decay of the cassettes and transformations into digital media. For these reasons, a digital recorder was purchased eventually to improve the quality of the recordings.

The interviews were transcribed either by the researcher or a professional transcriber. Those that were transcribed by the professional were reviewed by the researcher to ensure their accuracy. Upon completion of the transcriptions the interviews were imported into NVivo 10, a qualitative research computer program (Richards 1999). The use of such a program allows for patterns and storylines to be identified regarding the definition and role of community used by the participants in their service-learning projects.

Standard qualitative techniques were employed to analyze the data, such as memo-writing (Charmaz 2006) and line-by-line coding (Saldaña 2009). But all coding decisions were made by the researcher, rather than the computer program. While this program can be used for such purposes, this technology should be used only as a tool to assist in the analysis (Dreyfus 1992, Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986). Indeed, computers do not analyze data; that is done by the researcher, but they can assist in the organization of large amounts of data (Weitzman 2000). While there are fears that computers will come

to de-skill researchers, their role is not automatically diminished by the use of these programs (Richards and Richards 1994).

The author chose to avoid a grounded theory framework, due to the implication that data are neutral and reveal themselves through analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Because the researcher can also be viewed as a subject, particularly when understood to be engaged, findings are created and constructed with the participants through their interactions and conversations. In this regard, researchers are bound to impact the data and the findings; findings, accordingly, are an intersubjective construction (Creswell and Maietta 2002). Therefore, as opposed to grounded theory, a constructionist approach was adopted (Berger and Luckman 1990).

Upon completion of the transcriptions, a multi-stage comparative method was used to analyze the data for themes (Charmaz 2006). This analysis was completed in different phases, which allowed the author to revise continuously and revisit the data during the entire research process (Braun and Clarke 2006). The author began by reading over the transcriptions along with the notes that were taken at the time of the interview. This initial phase is used to reflect on the process and construction of the data, in order to identify important issues that were discussed by the participants. During this review of the data, the researcher made notes on things that tend to stand out, which later become codes. Nonetheless, this method is flexible enough so that codes can be changed as different issues arise in the data (Denzin and Lincoln 2008).

Once the initial reading of the interviews was complete and memos written, the data were systematically coded using the software. After this first coding was done, the various codes were linked to provide some coherence to the data. The next phase

involved naming the themes and using them to tell a story of community-based service-learning at Barry University. The final step of the analysis pertained to creating the report and the further refinement of themes, as well as self-reflection on the part played by the researcher and how his interpretations of the data colored the findings (Oliver, Serovich, and Mason 2005).

**Conclusion**

This chapter provides an outline of the theoretical motivations behind this research and the methods of data collection, along with some challenges faced by the researcher. Due to this type of research, which seeks to explore how community is conceptualized by professors and students, a constructionist paradigm was adopted to gather and analyze the data. Likewise, the literature, as described in earlier chapters, rarely deals with issues of community as a construction that mediates the educational experience of both teachers and students. Challenging the participants to reflect on this issue helps to further clarify the designs and goals of any service-learning project – an area sorely lacking in the literature.

Finally, this research was informed by many different sources associated with qualitative research, conducted in a manner consistent with ethical research guidelines discussed by Charmaz (2006), Rubin and Rubin (2005), and Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont (2003), and approved by the institutional review boards at both the University of Miami and Barry University. All of the data were collected by the author at Barry. The findings of this research are the product of decisions made by the researcher, from design through analysis, consistent with a constructionist epistemology. The results are reported in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5: Findings

The previous chapters focused on different aspects of service-learning in general, and specifically at Barry University. This discussion dealt with theory and the practice of service-learning at this school. In this chapter, more details will be provided about this process at Barry, the role that the community plays in the classroom, and the extent to which service-learning is truly a community-based endeavor. These themes will be assessed to gain a better understanding of how service-learning is constructed and implemented at this university.

Service-learning has grown at Barry. This activity is part of the academic tradition, as a Catholic university, but recently more resources have been devoted to expanding this pedagogical technique. To demonstrate the commitment to service-learning, the College of Arts and Sciences now requires all students to take service-learning courses as part of the general education requirements. To help students attain this goal, the university has expanded this technique into areas that do not traditionally emphasize service-learning, such as communication, the physical sciences, and the arts. Now, students in these courses are forced to confront social problems that may not be addressed directly by the subject matter of these classes. At the same time, faculty members have to be creative in these non-traditional service-learning courses by linking them to some aspect of social justice, which is not necessarily an easy task.

By making students participate in service-learning, they may become uncomfortable dealing with people who are unlike themselves, or situations that are unfamiliar. Nonetheless, as Max Weber stated, the goal of social science is to expose pupils to inconvenient facts (Weber 2004B). Doing so introduces them to local

communities, sometimes their own communities, and gets them to think about how they can use their specialized knowledge to make the world a better place. In this regard, argues John Dewey, the duty of an educated person is to help those less fortunate by improving the world for everyone (Dewey 1966). Service-learning, by taking students and faculty out of the classroom, breaks down barriers and creates a more authentic educational experience for all parties involved (Hunt 2007).

By making all students take service-learning classes, those from majors that are not traditionally associated with this activity get to learn about the plight of local communities. They are exposed to social problems that are not confronted in their major classes. For example, no longer are science and art studied with the sole intention of getting a job or for the sake of learning. With service-learning, education has a grander purpose beyond improvement of the individual self (Speck and Hoppe 2004). Now students must begin to think about using their education, in a creative manner, to combat social injustices.

Another aim of service-learning is to break down prejudices and stereotypes (Erickson and O'Connor 2000, Myers-Lipton 1996). As students learn about factors in the classroom that lead to certain groups being oppressed or systematically disadvantaged, they can witness this discrimination at their service-learning sites. This goal has been prevalent, given Barry University's mission statement concerning inclusivity and social justice. These issues are not merely part of an administrative campaign, but rather have been put into practice by the faculty.

Most of the participants in this research either taught or took low-level courses to fulfill service-learning requirements, and these survey courses were mostly in sociology

and religion. This trend is important to note because in lower level courses professors do not expect pupils to have an in-depth knowledge of any particular field. Indeed, students are taught broadly about various subjects with the expectation of introducing them to some fundamentals. By using service-learning in these broad, lower-level courses, students think creatively about both their role in service projects and their broader purpose in society. Also, because these classes are broad, students can incorporate skills from their other classes into the service projects. In using this pedagogical technique in these introductory courses, students are able, through their participation in a community or agency, to build partnerships that can promote meaningful social change.

Not all of the classes surveyed by this research were introductory classes. There were some upper-level, cap-stone, and graduate courses as well. These classes are mainly in nursing, psychology, and theology. Upper-level classes present opportunities for students that are not realized in lower-level ones. For instance, in these courses there is a greater expectation of student commitment to service-learning. These projects, and their completion, are central to the class rather than merely a side-component, as they are often in the introductory classes. Making projects central to a class enables students to gain a deeper understanding of a community. Finally, because these classes are often related to a student's major, both faculty and students are more enthusiastic and willing to get involved thoroughly with these projects.

Among the different classes, there was a wide variety of service-learning projects. But most of the projects were undertaken with agencies that are aligned closely to service-learning. Some of these projects included feeding the homeless and other needy groups, working with troubled youth in detention centers or at specialized agencies,

helping the elderly, and performing health screenings in vulnerable or underprivileged populations. Each of the organizations involved with these various projects was devoted to the ideals of social justice, consistent with the professed aim of service-learning (Wade 2000). Likewise, these organizations also shared many of the tenets of Barry University's mission statement, such as inclusiveness, social justice, and collaborative service.

Some classes, however, posed unique problems. The Department of Communication provided an interesting dilemma with the inclusion of social media outlets as "communities." Students in these classes created promotional campaigns to raise awareness for different causes. While "virtual service-learning" is new to the literature, and difficult conceptualize, the process is still service-learning (Jarmon, Traphagan, Mayrath, and Trivedi 2009). Philosophy classes provided another problem, where students were asked to reflect on their past service learning experiences without any new actions to fulfill course requirements. These classes blur the lines between service-learning and other activities, thereby generating confusion among both students and professors.

Another problematic element of a service-learning project is the time commitments that are required of students. As mentioned in a previous chapter, time requirements change depending on the course, student, and a faculty members' devotion to service-learning (Sipe 2001). Most classes required a minimum of ten (10) hours to be completed outside the classroom. An advantage of having a time requirement is that students spend a certain number of hours on the required service-learning project, while providing a quantifiable assessment of the work completed. Conversely, a time

requirement can represent a student's minimum obligation. Once the time requirement is fulfilled, a project may be considered complete, whether or not the goals have been realized. Time was certainly an issue that came up in this research.

The following sections provide the readers with insight as to the professed intentions of the practitioners of service-learning, the realities of the practices, and how these participants related to communities through this pedagogical technique. Despite more resources being devoted to service-learning and community engagement at Barry, problems have arisen indicative of a program that is experiencing growing pains, as more people begin to use service-learning in their courses. At times, the reader will see the disparity between what is professed and what is actually accomplished through this activity.

**Themes**

Themes in this type of qualitative research do not emerge from the data, as espoused by practitioners of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Instead, the following themes were constructed through conversations between the interviewer and the participants, consistent with the constructionist approach that has been described in the earlier chapters (Lofland 1976). Yet, while these themes were co-constructed, the researcher defers to the participants in order to gain access to their world-views. Through reflection on the part of the researcher, the intentions of the participants were able to be probed. This act of reflection is an important step in the research process, in order to ensure that researchers are not imposing their world-views and distorting the dialogue with participants (Oliver, Serovich, and Mason 2005).

The findings in the themes are consistent with the theories on service-learning and community-based philosophy. Five themes became apparent from the dialogues with participants: "Role of Community in the Classroom," "Faux Service-Learning," "Absence of Community-Based Philosophy," "Reflection," and "Re-Socializing the University." A host of issues is revealed in these themes that calls into question the community-based nature of service-learning at Barry University.

***Role of Community in the Classroom***

One way that service-learning can become a community-based is through the inclusion of a community in every aspect of a project, including the curriculum and the evaluation of students. However, before any of this can happen, practitioners of service-learning need to acknowledge the existence of a community, or multiple communities, by recognizing their involvement with actual people who have needs and goals. To get at this definition of community, participants were asked if they could define this group.[12]

Some professors seemed to either misunderstand the question, and would go directly back to describing their service-learning projects, or they would avoid the query altogether. This avoidance was witnessed mainly in psychology and communication, for reasons that are uncertain; maybe the question was unclear since the researcher did state that the focus was service-learning and their students' projects. Another reason could be that the question seemed too obvious, although the participants clearly saw the relevance of community to service-learning. Surprisingly, many of the participants were unable to provide a definition of community, and admitted that they did not even think about this issue. Indeed, typical responses consisted of the following:

[12] A participant key can be found in Appendix C.

> You know, that's a very good question and not really, I'll be honest with you.
> (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

> No, (sighs), uh, now again, as I remember, in the context this was an introductory course in theology, now…but you know in terms of sort of local meanings, no, I didn't.
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

> Um…I would say no, that we never really define community.
> (Denise, Professor of Language Arts)

A possible explanation for this lack of definition could be how the classes are structured. Sometimes students were given lists to choose from, as explained by Cathy, a junior student who took service-learning classes in both the sociology and theology departments:

> In soc(iology), she provided a list. In Theology, we could, we had a certain area that we could kind of go commit ourselves to and if we needed help, we could go to someone in the Theology department and get help finding a place to volunteer.
> (Cathy, junior, criminology major)

In many of the service-learning classes, particularly in communication, theology, and sociology, students were able to choose their own service-learning projects and sites. Frank, a professor of sociology, acknowledged that the manner in which service-learning is organized in his department does not encourage students to define community:

> Again, the way that it is structured doesn't really lend itself for that. In what I have experienced with SOC 200. One is the fact that there is a different variety of opportunities. So you can't really tie in specifically everyone's experience. You kind of have to talk in these broad terms. So I do not think that that lends itself to that concrete connection.
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

The diversity of service-learning projects in many different communities does not enable professors to define concretely community for their entire classes. Students also picked up on this lack of a definition, and this absence colored their view of service-

learning. Stan, a recent Barry graduate, could not recall any definition, while Amy, a senior criminology major, stated the following:

> But based community-wise, I don't think I've heard anything about it. Maybe if they like, they probably say it subliminally, but they don't sit down and say a community is a group of people that come together and like, they didn't do that.
> (Amy, senior, criminology major)

Amy states explicitly that her professors made very little, if any, effort to define community, and if they did she does not remember this definition. Without professors defining community, they are indicating to students that communities are not important, and have little to offer in terms of their education, and have no role in the classroom beyond a place to offer service (Cruz and Giles 2000, Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2000). Conducting service-learning in this manner leads to some problems related to a watered down service-learning experience.

When professors failed to define community, students were often left to invent a definition on their own, sometimes as part of the reflection segment of a service-learning project. Amy came up with definition that resulted from her years of undergraduate training in sociology:

> Well I define community as a group of individuals, diverse group of individuals that come together and take part in everyday lives of each one and actually share, I would say share their experience with each other, their stories, just being there for one another, trying to make the area they live in a better place.
> (Amy, senior, criminology major)

She used her skills as a budding sociologist in order to fill in the gaps that were left by her professors. She recognizes that there are multiple definitions of community, and that this social phenomenon consists of more than just a location or collection of people.

While many professors did not define community, or left the defining up to their students, there were professors who did provide definitions for their students. Based on those who responded that they had defined community, a typology of four categories was created: broad and incoherent, religious, physical, and experiential. The most popular type that was used was a broad-based definition. Professor Peter takes the following approach in his service-learning classes:

> Um, as far as defining community, specifically the word "community," no, but I do get into discussions of what society is, kind of a sociological foundation of understanding culture, the institution, understanding our place in it as individuals. So indirectly, I think yes, I address it…
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Sociologists tended to employ a definition that was sufficiently broad in order to cover all of the different experiences of their students, yet they seem to define community by making references to culture and social bonds. Yet, these broad definitions were not limited to the sociologists. Two theology professors emphasized equally broad definitions. For example, Sam, a theology professor, said:

> …so I kind of go about emphasizing those kind of things dialogically, make sure that community, not in the limited sense, but in terms of the whole class or the whole country, um, opinion, you know, we we trade and share information back and forth…
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

Again, the use of a broad definition pertains mostly to how a service-learning program is run. When students are allowed to choose their own service agencies, thereby encouraging diverse experiences, a broad definition might be expected. Such definitions, however, may not be applicable to the community where a student is undertaking a project.

A second type that was used is religious. These definitions are employed mostly in the theology department. One such definition came from the service-coordinator, whose role is to place all of the students in different agencies. Michael, the service-learning coordinator for theology, provided this religious definition:

> How does God exist as a community of love? You know, you think of God in a Trinitarian concept…It is one of the basic things we are taught and we teach. But helping to understand ah, or beginning to understand God itself, as a relational entity, an entity that exists *as* a community. In other words, God is not an individual person; God is a community of three… God being existing as a community of three persons who are perfect in love, perfect in equality and us being created in the image and likeness of that, means that we ourselves are meant to help, or foment communities of radical equality and love. Then that is the way we are meant to image and (indiscernible) the Hebrew image and likeness of God, and that is the way we are to act I think in the world.
> (Michael, Professor of Theology)

With this definition, Michael envisions a community to be in the image of God. While these definitions may have some use inside of the classroom, and may make connecting what is learned in class with the service experience easier, they may not have any practical use. This is not to say that these definitions are not meaningful, or that they are useless, but rather are not grounded in the lived experiences of the community members.

A third style employs physical boundaries to circumscribe a community. This definition came up only once in relation to the La Paloma neighborhood improvement project. Michael identifies this particular neighborhood by using streets:

> Well she asked "What the heck is 'La Paloma?' I've never heard of this before." And it used to be a neighborhood many years ago, um, it's been through some changes recently, and it remains unincorporated. So, there are some boundaries to it. 115$^{th}$ St north to 119$^{th}$ St, and then from NE 2$^{nd}$ Ave. west to I-95.
> (Michael, Professor of Theology)

The focus on physical boundaries is by no means arbitrary. This neighborhood is located between the town of Miami Shores, where Barry University resides, and the City of North Miami. Essentially, according to Denise, a professor of language arts, La Paloma is a community with specific boundaries but is disorganized; yet members have expressed an interest in becoming more organized and more connected with one another. In this case, the use of physical demarcations helps to locate a community, although this strategy is quite speculative. Specifically, what the members identify to be the parameters of their community remains unknown.

The fourth that was used was an experiential-based definition, that is, a community is thought to be made of a group of people who have shared life experiences and other commonalities (Ragin, Ricci, Rhodes, Holohan, Smirnoff, and Richardson 2008). Many participants keyed in on the shared experiences. For example, participants from the physical sciences and nursing used this type of definition for their classes. Heather, from the physical sciences, adopted an ecological definition, but stressed the shared experiences of the students from under-resourced schools in need of science education:

> Yea, we wanted to work with ah, as I said, work with under resourced students who wouldn't have exposure to science otherwise. So we went to schools, um but we had to work in the realm of after school programs because of our own student's schedules and after school tends to fit in better.
> (Heather, Professor of Physical Sciences)

Heather defined her community as students who share the experience of coming from a school that lacks the resources to teach properly their students chemistry. Nursing also took a similar approach in using an experiential definition, as Daisy, a professor of nursing, describes:

> Well, the first thing is we you know do the definition of a community, you know, it is a collection of people that have the same, the same goals, um, the same ideas. But then we also define communities as, what people define their community as. And so community has different definitions.
> (Daisy, Professor of Nursing)

Upon arriving at the experiential definition, one thing is clear to these particular professors, and presumably their students: a reliable definition must originate from the community. Daisy then goes on to get more specific about the shared experiences at two different sites: St. Martha's and Grenada:

> So for instance the Saint Martha's it was a community of people who had, who have experienced food insecurity…And so when you define the community if Jamaica it was ah, a community of you know um, when we did the health fair it was a community of people that came together to get screenin'
> (Daisy, Professor of Nursing)

In both cases, Daisy recognizes that multiple communities exist, and will differ based on their shared experiences and world-views.

Students also picked up on the experiential definition from their various courses as well. For instance, Cathy's sociology professor addressed communities from a social justice perspective, as those that are in need of help:

> She defined the community that needed to be helped as those who are greatly underprivileged because she talked a lot about the Nicaraguan children that she helped in her own services and she talked about Miami as a whole, she talked about the culture and the fact that there is a lot of people who are in the underdregs of society who really need some help lifting them up.
> (Cathy, senior, criminology major)

As mentioned before, Daisy was explicit that any valid definition of community must originate from the community, which is consistent with the literature on community-based philosophy (Weijer 1999).

Despite the variety and often lack of definitions, many of the participants recognized that the community should have a greater presence in the classroom, be more involved with the curriculum, and contribute to how students are evaluated. When faculty members were asked if they ever consulted anyone from the community in developing their service-learning class or curriculum, many were surprised by the question and taken aback. For example, Peter stated:

> And and from all aspects of it. Um, and you know what that is a question that I never really even thought about, now that you ask me now. Uh… It's going to be there for a while man. That's a good question. I mean, I guess in a practical sense it would be fairly hard to do, but I do not even think it has ever been considered at times.
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Here is a case where a professor had never even considered consulting community members or agencies to set up a service-learning project. Indeed, for many professors, the community represented simply an environment or physical place.

Other professors from sociology had similar responses, knowing that this inclusion is a source of problems for the service-learning paradigm. Edward, a professor of sociology, knows that not consulting community members has led difficulties, such as students not being able to make any connections between their classes and the communities where service-learning took place. Another professor attempts to explain why community members are not brought in, as outside experts, to advise on a service learning course:

> No, not in the curriculum level, no, no. Um, that's a good question; I would say probably the timing. It is a good question. Probably the timing, I think there is a disconnect between academia and communities in general. Like I feel like I am fairly connected in the community particularly with this initiative, but not to the point where I would ever

> necessarily go to these folks and say I'm creating a syllabus, what core points should I cover?
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

Francine maintains that there is a disconnect between the university, representing academia, and the communities where students are sent to perform their service hours. The lack of community presence in the development of curriculums and service-learning courses is a problem that spans across disciplines and is symptomatic of how faculty members view service-learning.

While many professors acknowledged the absence of the community in the development of the curriculum, the communities themselves were not completely absent from the classroom environment, and indeed did play various limited roles in service-learning projects. For instance, the community plays the role of receiving students and services, as explained by Peter:

> So, basically the community's involvement is, they are just an agency to send our students to
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Peter acknowledges that the community has an extremely restricted role in the classroom, and is used by the faculty to fulfill the service-learning requirements in their classes. The problem with practicing service-learning in this manner is that professors do not know if what they are teaching is relevant to the students' experiences until after their assignments are reviewed, or whether or not the community is benefitting from their students.

Another manner in which the community was involved was through the use of guest speakers. These speakers are an important resource for professors because they help to put a human face on the issues that are trying to cover in class:

> I know that he talked about things like domestic violence, and she actually brought in people from the community and people to speak to speak on their account, from their experience. It was really helpful to hear from someone their personal you know, experience, what they had to deal with. You get involved with kind of what they went through. And it's not just all numbers and statistics and you tend to bond with what they went through, so it's not just all numbers and when you see someone it happened to.
> (Charlie, senior, unknown major)

Not only do these guests break up the routine of teaching, they also bring the curriculum to life for the students, a goal that is shared by service-learning initiatives (Agha-Jaffar 2000). Shawna, a senior in sociology, had similar experiences with her service-learning classes:

> Because I know one of our topics is about workers' rights, and she brought in one of the Imokolee workers…and she would bring in actual people to tell us, not just give us statistics and points, that was like real life situations in class.
> (Shawna, senior, criminology major)

Despite the benefits of using guest speakers, they are a fleeting and temporary presence in the classroom, and not true partners to the service-learning experience.

In psychology, which has faculty members trained in community-based disciplines, the communities were involved in needs assessments and student evaluations. Professor Hailey, who specializes in community psychology, stated:

> I went down to the church, I've met to see what kinds of activities and programs were goin' on, I talked to him about what some of the needs were. Because, you know, as a, a, a community psychologist I have to consult, I can't go in and act like I know anything about that community, you know, my student is a good researcher, you know part of doing the research is doing program evaluation…
> (Hailey, Professor of Psychology)

Hailey, as part of her profession, as a community researcher, believes she should consult communities before establishing projects, to ascertain and meet their needs. She also

builds feedback from the community agencies into her courses, so that each subsequent section will improve on the last:

> Because, well when I say involved with the curriculum, they may have given me ideas on what types of information I need to share with my students
> (Hailey, Professor of Psychology)

Hailey had the most involvement of the community in her classroom and courses than any of the other disciplines, aside from nursing. Daisy, from nursing, echoes this sentiment of community involvement in the development of a curriculum:

> …the partnership has to be developed with the community, stakeholders, um, you know they have to have some input into your, your, your curriculum, your plan of study, you know there must be this reciprocal relationship and then the end part, you know, the students must be able to, um, to be able to reflect on their experience and then you have to be able to, to, evaluate your outcome…they do have is top diseases, so conservation with them we ask what are your top diseases and what would you think are would be a good topic for students to research about and do a presentation about.
> (Daisy, Professor of Nursing)

Nursing also seems to understand that, in using service-learning, there needs to be a partnership and reciprocation with community representatives in order for a project to have a successful outcome. But involvement is not just having input into what students need to learn, even though this change is important. The community agencies where the students are doing their service-learning projects should also be involved in their evaluation. Daisy and Hailey have the community agencies play a role in evaluating students for two reasons. The first is to ensure that what the students are learning, in the classroom and at the service sites, is relevant to the communities' needs and world-views. The other is to improve their courses and projects in a manner that would better serve these populations.

Another interesting finding concerning the role that a community has in the classroom is where the teacher plays a dual role as both professor and community member, although navigating this dual role is not always easy. For instance, Sam, a professor of theology, attempted to get his church involved with service learning at Barry:

> Actually, one that I am involved with a local church, St. Martha's over here in Miami Shores, a weekly feeding program, but this food distribution to people. I tried from the other end, not from this end, but from the other end to make a contact there to get some students coming over, and I would have been able to watch what's going on and all that. (Sam, Professor of Theology)

Sam was met with bureaucratic barriers set forth by the diocese that prevented him from utilizing his dual role status. Both Denise and Francine, professors in English and sociology, respectively, were members of the different agencies that they used in their service-learning classes. Denise stated:

> Right. But that's really because I am in the odd position of being both a community partner and faculty… Well, I thought it was better if a class did a project together, that the instructor would have something to do with it.
> (Denise, Professor of Language Arts)

She recognizes that she has a unique position that can be used to improve the students' service-learning experiences, while also providing a benefit to the community where she is a member. Francine also explains that not only do students get to see what she does outside of the classroom, and that she is involved directly with the agencies where service is being performed, she also feels as though her commitment helps to improve the quality of service-learning experiences:

> I think it is important. And to see that we are more than just professors, that we actually do get involved in our communities, which is really important because when you start telling them you should do this, the first

> question they are thinking even if they don't ask it is "why don't you do it?"
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

She maintains the view that academics should become more involved in their communities, and incorporate those experiences into their service-learning classes to better educate their students. Both Denise and Francine used their dual roles to ensure that the community has a continued presence in the classroom, tailor classes closer to meet the needs of those communities, and better evaluate the projects and their students.

***Faux Service-Learning***

In conducting the interviews, there seemed to be an issue regarding what, exactly, service-learning should entail. While service-learning has been defined clearly as a combination of service to a community, linked with classroom studies, often times to the benefit of all parties involved (Rocheleau 2004). During this process, all parties are expected to be equal partners in designing, executing, and evaluating a particular service-learning project. As mentioned in the previous section, the community is often completely neglected in terms of having a role within the classroom or developing the curriculum. These shortfalls often leave students unable to make sense of what they learned in class and experienced at their service sites. For these reasons, this theme relates to activities that are called service-learning but are not, and how these practices end up falling short of their stated goals.

Some professors realized that what they and their students were doing was service-learning in name only. Many of these professors pointed to something lacking in their classes or would outright confess that what they were not doing service-learning.

Particularly noteworthy is the recognition that a unique philosophy drives service learning that is not being adhered to in many classes:

> Because I don't think, you know…That's a really good question. I think that the philosophy of service-learning isn't really being adhered to the way it is set-up. I think what it ends up turning out to be more of, is so, is kind of the traditional "do volunteer work."
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Peter realizes that what he is doing is far from service-learning; something is missing. He goes as far to say that what his students are doing is volunteer work and community service, not service-learning. This recognition extends into other disciplines as well, such as in religion where Professor Stephanie, of theology says:

> (sighs) Because I think at this stage it's not. It's community service not service-learning…Yeah, let's hope, but, um, but is it community engagement? I mean, is it really a community partnership…
> (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

The sigh here is important and denotes frustration with the service-learning program at Barry University. She further elaborates on this frustration:

> Ok, the agent of expressing what are the needs of the community, you know, how will we know if those needs are fulfilled, etc. etc. That's a far, that's a step, a mile from what we're doing with service-learning at this point.
> (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

Stephanie is aware of what service-learning entails, yet knows that what her department engages in currently falls short of expectations. She is also aware that a partnership is truly necessary for the community engagement required of service-learning.

Students also seemed surmise that something was lacking in their service experiences. For instance, service-learning may have been mentioned at the beginning of the semester, as listed on the syllabus, but may never be discussed until their projects are due. As Amy stated:

> Based on the assignments, no. The only thing you get from service learning is the paper and in the time you have to do it. You might not even hear about service learning again until the due date is coming up. You hear that the first week of school, the check in, "I hope you're doing your hours," and then when the paper is due and that's it.
> (Amy, senior, criminology major)

She seemed perplexed that while she was expected to go through this service-learning process, as an important part of her education, her professor never seemed to stress the project during the course of her class. Although the focus of the class was supposed to be the service-learning project, this element was not integrated into the classroom activities.

The big question becomes what is missing in their service-learning classes? Faculty members were asked this very question, and to put the answer succinctly:

> I got to admit that in theory I am, um, completely behind an idea like this, I think not only the students level, but also the faculty level, but we have to find some way to integrate our academic background with, just out lifestyle, and service for others, and that kind of thing. Now, I think people are doing that, but they're not necessarily integrating it effectively…
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

Clearly the integration of service-learning into the curriculum seems to be the key to making the service-learning experiences of students meaningful, lasting, and robust (Markus, Howard, and King 1993). Without integration, service-learning projects are completed and then forgotten, a task that gets checked off in order to obtain a grade. Professor Francine explains:

> And I think maybe after the fact they realize that it's not so bad, that they kind of like doing it but like I think their mental set going into it is check it off.
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

Viewing service-learning as a means to an end leads often to projects that are left incomplete, and with students feeling as though they have just completed an assignment that is not personally or socially transformative (Giles, Jr. and Eyler 1994B).

The integration of the curriculum, community, and service-projects is done regularly in nursing and psychology. In those disciplines, the service-learning project is not simply a task related to the course for a grade. Rather, the service-learning project is central to the class – the task and all experiences are integrated into the course. However, even with the lack of integration in sociology and religion, professors expressed a desire to move in that direction:

> (Sighs)…Yeah, I think at the department, I mean now that you raise these questions, I mean I starting to try and think about these issues, right? (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

Again, the "sigh" indicates frustration with how servicer-learning is done at Barry University. However, Professor Edward realizes that one of the ways to remedy the problems faculty members have faced is to better integrate service projects into the coursework and curriculum. To do so would require changes to be made at the classroom, departmental, and university levels (Bringle and Hatcher 1996).

***Absence of Community-Based Philosophy***

One of the issues that face service-learning at Barry University is the lack of a community-based philosophy. As already indicated, the community does not have much input into the development of service-learning classes. Often times, community is not even defined or mentioned in class, and when definitions are provided they are not grounded in the lived experiences of community members.

While definitions are important, a related matter is the social imagery. The questions that should be addressed, accordingly, is how knowledge and social order are

understood. Jane Addams, who was discussed in the second chapter, eschewed a scientific view of how Hull House was to be run and service-learning practiced (Daynes and Longo 2004). Despite the anti-scientific world-view of service-learning, the practice is often much different. For instance, Stephanie made this observation about service-learning:

> Ok, you know that, the community is, in some sense, like a laboratory. Ok, let's face it, you know in a scientific laboratory, the um, materials, I am being literally very blunt about this, the materials that we work with don't have any say in how we work with them. Ok, in other words, just like in a biology lab, we go, we get the materials that we need, we manipulate those materials to, uh, you know, for some purpose according to a hypothesis, and see if it works. Ok, um, you know, in the process, are people being served? Yeah, you know, ok. In the process, are students hopefully learning something about how the principle is put into action? (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

The community is a laboratory where students get to "test" the theories they learn in the classroom. The problem with this imagery is the ethical implications behind this view. Simply put, the community no longer consists of people, but rather has become an object used in the education process. This outlook is contradictory to the moral imperative of Kant and Catholic social teachings, where people are not to be treated as things (Kant 1993). As Stephanie goes further to explain:

> …the community doesn't have agency here, the community really is, is the lab, in which our students go out and experiment. (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

The way she describes service-learning suggests that the community does not control a project; community members are merely pawns in this activity. Indeed, personal and collective agency is truncated by treating the community as an environment, or educational playground. According to the literature on community-based philosophy, the community should be involved in every stage of a project (Rappaport 1987). Maintaining

the dignity of a community depends on this involvement and control, and is a vital part of service-learning (Weijer1999).

Treating the community in this manner goes against the ideals of service-learning. The community becomes a dumping ground, where students head to complete their assignments. This approach creates the possibility of causing harm to communities and taxing their resources (Strom 2010). Simply sending students to a site, with little input from community members, causes friction between the volunteers and the community representatives. As an example, Trisha, a junior computer science and math major, describes a negative experience she had at a nursing home:

> There was this one particular lady there, it just seemed like she just hated her job all the time. And it's like, and we had to work with her as you know volunteer or service learning, we had to work with her. So a few students I knew kind of clashed with her a little bit…
> (Trisha, junior, computer science and math major)

She has the insight that she, as well as her fellow classmates, was not necessarily welcome at the service site. This friction is also revealed in some of the students' writings that are turned in at the end of the semester:

> Um, I think that has some of the student's feedback on the partnership depending on what they have done there. I have had some who have not experienced that, but some were like {inaudible} they always mention LeAnn Pena {laughing} they are writing nasty things about her sometimes… But I think she kind of feels like that. Like, maybe, I have all of these people and it is too much for me to do.
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

Indeed, not all organizations are prepared to accept volunteers, and when they appear chaos often results.

Part of the problem is that faculty members are insensitive to the needs of the community, largely because they have no real connection to these persons. In service-

learning, teachers and students are supposed to partner with community members in order to achieve a goal (Crews 2002). So, both groups were asked if they developed a connection to the community. As can be imagined, considering the lack of community involvement in the classroom, very few members of either group had formed partnerships with community agencies. For instance, Professor William's response to the question about having a connection with a community is illustrative of many faculty responses:

> Yea, no I have not. I was just thinking about this ah month ago, maybe, that I need, I want to get out and I want to see I'd like to see these places. (William, Professor of Theology)

Professor William states that he has no connection to the communities where he sends his students, and the lack of connection is something that he finds troubling. He has been thinking about this issue and admits that he wants to get more involved. Despite the typical response of having no connection or partnership to the community, people did express a desire to have an authentic relationship. Professor Edward makes this point:

> Maybe we should kinda like do a or make a…a more meaningful effort to try and like, maybe connect what we're doing with…the main objectives of these organizations, right? Like you say, maybe have these people provide some input into how we might go about connecting what they do with the curriculum, right.
> (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

Nine (9) other professors, a majority of the respondents, stated that they also lacked any sort of bond with the communities, and that they should be working to building stronger partnerships so that local knowledge guides projects (Langhout, Rappaport, and Simmons 2002).

The lack of a partnership happens for varying reasons, as a follow-up question revealed. In the case of William, he was focused on finishing his dissertation while maintaining his full-time status as a faculty member. Many of the sociology faculty

members – Francine excluded – said they had not thought about this issue, or did not have the time or resources to develop a true partnership. Professor Sam communicated that he was not as committed to service-learning as he would desire, and has not made any partnerships, because he was retiring at the end of the semester. Finally, Stephanie admitted:

> I'm being perfectly honest with you that, when it comes down to the question of "Where do I put the energies I have?" and…"How I do see my commitments as I see them playing out?" I have to make a decision as to, uh, you know, if I want to do service-learning I'm going to have to have somebody else coordinate it for me. I know that it would mean that I am going to have to go out and find resources and have those connections and things of that nature, but I think it's valuable…it's just so time consuming. (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

Stephanie acknowledges that she simply does not have the time to make the commitments to form partnerships. She has administrative responsibilities at the university, which take up a lot of her time and energy. Additionally, what is often neglected in promotion guidelines is service to the community, which may prevent academics from reaching out and forming those community bonds (Abes, Jackson, and Jones 2002; Antonio, Astin, and Cress 2000; Ward 1998).

The other side of this story is the connections that students make during their time completing service-learning projects. Both faculty members and students, for the most part, did not make any bonds, connections, or partnerships with the communities in question. Michael reports that in his La Paloma service-learning project, a project that has been integrated thoroughly into the classroom, his students seem to lack commitment:

> Um, I have one pair of students that I have walking around La Paloma who seem to, who seem to really be just going through the motions. You know, getting the surveys done, turning it in, and are done with it. (Michael, Professor of Theology)

In this project, students are sent to conduct interviews in order to identify needs and how service-learning can be used to improve the community. During the interview Michael suggested that some of his students did make connections with community members and formed some sort of partnerships, but those students were largely living in the neighborhood and had a vested interest in seeing the project's succeed. But other students viewed service-learning as a task to be completed and forgotten. For instance, a student from the College Brides' Walk project explained:

> Um, during the time of the preparing for the big day, I can't really say that I met anyone up until actually the day of the event. And I can't say that I've seen them since.
> (Amy, senior, criminology major)

This project, like many others, can be completed in one or two sessions, for a total of ten (10) hours. Amy had contact with the agency only the day of the event, and nothing before or after. Her attempt to partner with the community was fleeting and could barely be referred to as a partnership. Nonetheless, her experience is very similar to many of the students who were interviewed.

Not all students failed to make connections or partnerships with their communities. Faculty members described some students, albeit they were exceptions, who developed their own service-learning projects independent from the course offerings. Often, however, these students had previous connections to their communities, as was the case with Stanley and Cathy. Cathy explains her actions in response to a question about her sustained relationship with an agency:

> Yeh, 'cuz I'm a volunteer there. I actually went off of the list that she gave us and I went to a place called "Good Hope Equestrians" and I volunteered my time teaching special needs children how to ride horses as part of their therapy.
> (Cathy, senior, criminology major)

She volunteered at the "Good Hope Equestrians" agency before coming to Barry University, and decided that this previous experience would be beneficial for her service-learning project. Both of these students, because of their long standing relationship with these agencies, expressed the desire to maintain those connections outside of the service-learning project. Having prior connections to community organizations, and allowing students to take advantage of these previous relationships, seems to be important in having them create and maintain partnerships with communities long after a service-learning course has ended.

This theme covered two other aspects of the community-based philosophy missing from service-learning at Barry. The first is the image of community that has been employed by faculty members. The best example came from Professor Stephanie, who maintained communities are treated like "laboratories." The other issue pertains to partnering with a community. Unless professors and students were actually members of the organizations involved with the service-learning projects, no partnerships were formed.

***Reflection***

Reflection is a vital activity in of service-learning, and almost all classes that use this pedagogical technique require students to complete some sort of reflection paper. These assignments are not meant to be research papers in the traditional sense (Eyler 2002, Bringle and Hatcher 1999). Instead, the goal is to get students to think critically about their service experiences and how these projects related to the classroom materials. Students are expected to connect the two experiences in a coherent paper, while also explaining how they were influenced by the entire process.

So, how do these reflection papers turn out? What are the fruits of the students' labors? The short answer is a lot of anguish and frustration on the part of the professors. Something that often came up in the interviews was that students were having trouble making connections between their classes and service experiences. For instance, Paul, an adjunct instructor in sociology, stated:

> Um, from they've told me, I didn't see a connection with the community involved with the service-learning, and in the classroom there was no connection to the community there either, and didn't bring any of those people in.
> (Paul, Professor of Sociology)

In his conversations with students, and from their assignment, Paul finds that they were confused about why they had to perform these service hours and how they related to the subject matter. These sentiments were shared by all of the faculty members interviewed in the Department of Sociology, but were not unique to them. Sam explains that while the students may enjoy their time outside of the classroom, and may learn from the service-learning projects, any connection between these endeavors and the coursework is lacking:

> What happens, at least I have some anecdotal evidence on this because of my own class…and then I've heard other people, so the students get out on these assignments and you know, people, this is kind of a new experience for them, so a lot of, a lot of them seem to appreciate that experience outside the classroom, but once again, even though they are asked to write a paper to explain the integration of what they are learning in class with that experience, I don't know, I don't have an overall view but I don't think that happens.
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

William, another faculty member in the Department of Theology and Philosophy states this issue more succinctly:

> Yea, I'd say a certain amount of difficulty, yes. I think they want to, ah, they can, they can write a story about something that happened to them…
> (William, Professor of Theology)

William claims that students know they are supposed to make these connections, but they have a great deal of difficulty doing so. One might surmise that students have trouble in this regard in sociology and religion because these disciplines deal with abstractions. However, even students in communication and nursing have trouble making these connections.[13] The following is an exchange between Gabriele, a professor of communication, and the interviewer:

> Interviewer: Your students, are they able to make those connections between what they learn in class and outside?
> Gabriele: No, that's one of the weaknesses.
> (Gabriele, Professor of Communication)

Gabriele is explicit that one of the big weaknesses of service-learning in her department is that there is little connection between the theories and service-learning projects, such as online advocacy campaigns. While this issue has not been extreme in nursing, Professor Margaret explains:

> I think initially it's really hard for them because they're not even sure what they're supposed to write…Initially, they're just, initially I don't even try to get them emotionally connected, in the beginning, truth be told because they couldn't be bothered… So it's just almost done without much meaning
> (Margaret, Professor of Nursing)

Sometimes her students do not even try to make these connections although the students' workload may be at fault.

[13] Interestingly, the two disciplines that did not express the lack of connections between what is learned in class and the service experiences were psychology and physical sciences. Part of the reason is because Heather has partnered with Hailey to create an avenue for her service-learning projects, namely having students conduct scientific experiments with underprivileged youth, and also because of Hailey's training in community psychology. Also, in the physical sciences they deal more with concrete studies, which makes it easier for students to make those linkages. However, one has to wonder if the students realize the social justice aspects of their service, and whether that is even referenced in the science class.

While students tended to struggle to make connections between what they learned and experienced, there were times when this happened. Yet, these connections were often described in superficial terms, antagonistic to the spirit of service-learning:

> Even there, it's kind of a superficial connection. It's not what I think the aim of service-learning is, or what it's supposed to be, which is much more than simply exposing you know to how the classroom material takes place in the real world. And even when the connections are made it's "Yes just like we talked about in class that homeless people can be of all shapes and sizes, from all walks of life."
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Peter, again, recognizes that something is lacking in how he teaches service-learning. Edward reinforces this notion:

> We, it's almost like there is no real connection; I'll be honest with you.
> (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

The students either do not make the connections, or the connections are shallow. The faculty experiences can be best illustrated with the following student's response concerning her reflection paper:

> Oh, I'm pretty sure it's a lot of BS, to be honest. We have a 2 page paper, and mostly have to talk about what you did, what you experienced, if you felt it was affecting you as a person, also if you had a good experience with it, if it's not what you were learning in class and so forth. So I don't remember everything that was on my paper.
> (Cathy, junior, criminology major)

Here is an example of a student, who would be considered a "good student" according to her grade point average, who could not remember much about the service-learning exercise. Furthermore, she was able to fake her reflections in order to achieve a desired grade. Another student, Trisha, could not remember the connections she made between the course material and service, but did admit:

> I don't remember everything that I said, but I do remember that was a main point that I made.
> (Trisha, junior, computer science and math major)

While students cannot be expected to remember everything after their classes have finished, the aim of service-learning is to reinforce what is learned and make those outcomes memorable (Speck and Hoppe 2004). Apparently, that is not always the case.

The final issue concerning students making these connections pertains to stereotyping. The literature notes that involvement in service-learning can change students' attitudes toward stereotypes and disadvantaged groups (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff 1994). Nonetheless, the literature reveals that service-learning can also reinforce stereotypes, if serious reflection does not accompany these projects. This conflict is illustrated by Edward, a faculty member in sociology:

> Let me tell you one thing man, it has been a challenge with this whole service-learning thing because very often, the whole objective behind this is to give them insights as to what is happening in the world, in the community, and they can kind of connect it to the course material presented in class. But, often times what happens, and this is something that we have talked about with Peter, all these stereotypes we try to dispel are sometimes reinforced.
> (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

Edward indicates that the reinforcement of stereotypes is something that he and his colleagues have to battle against in their service-learning classes. However, this finding may be unique to sociology, where the focus is on inequality and structural barriers to social justice. While sociologists may teach about inequality in their classes and try to break down stereotypes, they become reinforced by the students' service-experiences without input from the community. In fact, at this juncture is where reflection can come into play (Eyler 2002).

Perhaps, professors believe the act of reflection is something easy for students to perform; that such activity should come naturally without much guidance. The problem with this assumption is that students, for most of their educational careers, have not had to reflect on their experiences, especially with the push towards standardized testing and measurable learning outcomes (Gardner 1992). Indeed, reflection is not something that is easily measured and tends to disrupt testing. To get students to reflect properly, and make connections between the classroom and the field, they may need guidance, similar to what Francine does with her students:

> I think we talk to them, I can see they get the connections, but I think sometimes that critical thinking piece for them doesn't come out in their writing as well. So in the last couple of years I have moved more towards, ok here is what a lot of you do in class. Here are some possible things you might make connections on. Without going into the details, but you know like remember that movie we watched or whatever. So, trying to help them navigate…
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

The students, because of their previous restricted educational experiences, may need guidance toward making the academic connections with their service work (Ash and Clayton 2004). Guided reflection is especially important in subjects that are more abstract, like sociology, theology, and to some extent communication (Hatcher and Bringle 1997).

### *Re-Socializing the University*

From the findings illustrated above, there are substantive changes that could be made at Barry that would strengthen the service-learning program and produce the desired learning outcomes. These alterations require the adoption of a community-based perspective at every level of the institution to make service more integrated into the

classroom. Some of the issues mentioned by the participants were: "silo-ism," resources, use of central figures, faculty commitment, and training.

One of the striking issues that came up during the interviews was the lack of collaboration between departments with regard to service-learning. Simply put, departments do not share information about their respective activities. There are structural issues at Barry University that prevent people from truly engaging one another and communities in a manner consistent with a community-based philosophy. As one professor stated:

> Well, I, I'll just give you kind of a structural issue. I'll just give you a general view. The problem here with the university is that it is a kind of silo mentality. That means that everything is separated off and it is real hard to break those down. Um, I guess from the point of view of the teacher, it's hard to ask the faculty to take the initiative to go over to learn about it because of **everything else** that we've got to do.[14]
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

This professor expresses frustration with how the university, as a whole, conducts its service-learning program. In community-based endeavors, boundaries should either be minimal or non-existent (Fals-Borda 1987). While Sam is talking about service-learning activities between departments, other professors have extended their frustrations with "silo-ism" to communities as well – specifically, at times, professors keep themselves at a distance from the communities where their students are performing their service hours. However, there is hope at Barry that the centralization of service-learning will help to break down these artificial barriers and foment greater communication between departments and between the university and community partners.

As noted earlier, Barry University has begun to devote more resources to service-learning to make this learning strategy a central tenet of the curriculum. Members of the

[14] The stress was not added.

university community are well aware of the dean's push, which was further institutionalized by the establishment of the Center for the Community Service Initiatives (CCSI). Nonetheless, faculty members and students have mixed reactions about the new center. Some saw this development as a positive resource that they will use to improve their service-learning classes. Practically all service-learning and other community-based activities will be regulated by the CCSI, thereby creating, as Stephanie said, a "one-stop-shop" for everyone's service needs – faculty, student, or community representative. There is also hope that the center will help to develop and maintain community relationships:

> …how they're doing it, what type of partnership do they have, and how do we improve those partnerships, you know, and how do we extend those partnerships into other areas in the community. So just having the center that storehouses and warehouses everything and knows everything goin' on we can help one another you know…
> (Hailey, Professor of Psychology)

The CCSI has the potential to breakdown the silo-ism that exists by facilitating greater collaboration between professors from different departments.

While these activities encompass the center's stated goals, other professors saw a disadvantage to this approach. Some expressed anxiety that the CCSI could become another level of bureaucracy that separates the faculty and the community, and thus inhibits professors from reaching out to agencies. That fear, however, was minimal when compared to the advantages the center could offer (Bringle and Hatcher 2000). According to some professors, the biggest role the center can play, aside from warehousing all of the community connections and administrative functions, is providing them with training to become better community-based educators.

In the different departments that were included in this research, three (3) had their service-learning courses coordinated by a "central figure," two of whom participated in the interviews. One was a faculty member in sociology who unofficially assumed this role while the other had a full-time job as coordinator. These central figures performed differently based on their positions. Their main duty was building partnerships with various community agencies where students would undertake their service-learning projects. The participant who was in the coordinator position officially was charged also with making placements for all students in any class that engaged in service-learning. The use of central figures has pros and cons. These two participants realized that being a central figure is not an easy job, considering the other activities that professors perform:

> I realized the difficulties, one in getting places who are were willing to accept the students, and then having somebody on the staff there who would be responsible to keep track of the students and report back, I mean, that is not an easy job.
> (Sam, Professor of Theology)

Nonetheless, others indicated that central figures make their job a lot easier, because they take care of the administrative aspects of service learning, such as student placements and the confirmation of completion of hours. These quasi-administrators spend their energies also making connections with agencies and maintaining those relationships at the departmental level. In fact, some professors expressed a preference for having a central figure:

> I think, it certainly is helpful to me that he does all this kind of things…which again, is a commitment of time and energy, and frankly, Christian, you know if somebody else is in charge of it let them do it.
> (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

Time spent doing service-learning is a resource that many faculty members do not have, either because of their multiple roles at the university or because of their part-time status.

As Dr. Glen Bowen warned, before this research began, professors (and students) simply do not have the proper amount of time or resources to devote to service-learning, or to spend in the community.

Another advantage of having someone devoted to organizing service-learning in a department concerns the issue of placements. This person can spend the time and energy necessary to match students with different programs based on their interests and schedules and the agencies' needs:

> Well we kind of were I think this was around the same time that they were changing it like we had a list of things that we had options to do and we had an interview with Dr. Schlick to decide whether or not it was good with our schedule, it was something we'd enjoy doing, if we had transportation there and yea this big long interview and then eventually you got placed in a place.
> (Katie, junior, undecided)

In an effort to make service-learning more robust, the service coordinator can utilize the skills and abilities of the students to better connect their projects to their majors or interests. This change has the potential to connect students properly to a community organization in an efficient manner (Bringle and Hatcher 2000).

While having central figures coordinate either the service sites or go further and keep track of all the students may lessen the faculty workload, there are some drawbacks to coordinating service-learning in this manner. These persons, for instance, may have a particular view of the community, or the parameters of service-learning, thereby imposing a world-view on the rest of the department, as was the case in theology. Concerning the former service-learning coordinator, Stephanie said:

> …he used to call it their "theology lab," ok, and um, you know, if I took it as their theology lab, ok, just like a scientist, a biologist teaching students,

> ok, I give them my hypotheses, and then they go out and test the hypotheses in the community
> (Stephanie, Professor of Theology)

The coordinator, in other words, has the ability to influence an entire department's service-learning program. Accordingly, Margaret had the insight that the personality of the coordinator is important, and that this person needs to be flexible to allow professors to have some freedom to utilize all aspects of service-learning in a manner that they see fit.

Undue influence is not the only issue that was raised by the participants. A second concern about the use of central figures is that, while making the teaching aspect of service-learning a lot less burdensome, the professors can become complacent about having no connections with the community agencies. Many stated a desire to become more involved with communities, but felt the presence of a coordinator exempted them from that duty. What is important to note, however, is that the coordinator does not automatically prevent faculty members from making connections (Jacoby 2003).

A third area where changes need to be made concerns the commitment of faculty members to the service-learning paradigm. Revealed in earlier sections of this chapter was the fact that faculty members do not, for the most part, have any connections to the communities or agencies where they are sending their students. Some have admitted to not knowing anything about the history or needs of these communities, something that has been left up to the central figures or the CCSI. While they have expressed a desire to make these partnerships and exhibit more commitment, their actions speak otherwise. What faculty members have to do is re-think these partnerships. Francine explains how she has made this maneuver:

> And so we not only have all became friends but we are very connected to the issue and already were and so that probably contributed to building network…it's a nice little crew of people at this point who are stable… and I think that piece is often missing when you try to do community organizing and movement stuff, you have to have personal bonds, I think, to make it work really well. You have to appreciate that person who I'm working with, I owe that person something as a friend, I'm not going to let them down, I'm not going to fall back on my job, you know.
> (Francine, Professor of Sociology)

Francine has not kept her academic self separate from her personal life, and seems to suggest that such a separation would be impossible and undesirable. She has altered her service-learning commitments in a way that makes them seem less like work. Specifically, Francine has converted the practice of service-learning from a professional partnership to friendship. Having befriended local activists, as Francine explains, means that she is not only committed to the cause and the agency, but to the people themselves and does not want to let them down. The point is that the process of forming community partnerships can be reframed, so that these associations have a human quality (Jacoby 2003).

The final aspect of re-socializing the university into a community-based service-learning program relates the issue of training. Many of the participants, both faculty members and students, have very little training or experience with service-learning. They know little about service-learning and what this pedagogical technique entails, as evidenced by their responses in the "Faux Service-Learning" section, yet they are unsure of how to implement the ideals of service-learning:

> Yes, that's true. Yeah, I mean we've been doing this maybe 6 years I think? 6 or 7 years, so, we're still in the process of learning ourselves. (Laughs)
> (Edward, Professor of Sociology)

While there has been a greater push and more resources devoted to service-learning at Barry, the program as a whole is still relatively young. Professors who did not have any formal or informal training are still learning how to integrate service into their curriculum. Those who had success with service-learning either had special training due to their specialty areas, such as nursing or psychology, or they have been involved with service-learning for most of their careers and have gone through a lot of trial and error, as is the case with Denise, a professor of language arts:

> Again, when I was at Penn State was from '93-'98, and at that time they started talking about diversity…there was no…there was no reason for me to involve my students in that project in Redding, except that it seemed to make sense.
> (Denise, Professor of Language Arts)

While Denise did not have any formal training in service-learning, including students in her project seemed to improve the educational process. Those faculty members who have had training or have always integrated aspects of community in their classrooms tended to report fewer problems concerning reflection assignments compared to those who have little or no training.

The lack of training is also evidenced by the reflection assignments of students, where they are unable to make the connections between their service experiences and what is learned in the classroom. Many faculty members are putting little effort into the service-learning process, as evidenced by the reliance on central figures and their utilization of the CCSI:

> I think, I think uh, you know, that is something that individuals who are more directly involved with organizing this, like Francine, I think there is a strong connection. Especially for example Francine, she has worked with some of these organizations directly…Well, again, the way

> that we structured it, we usually assign one person to be the liaison, and that is Francine.
> (Peter, Professor of Sociology)

Training will help professors better integrate service-learning into their classes, while also ensuring that the goals of service-learning are made clear to students (Bringle and Hatcher 1995).

**Conclusion**

This findings chapter covered five different themes that were constructed through interviews with the various participants: the role of the community in the classroom, faux service-learning, absence of community-based philosophy, reflection, and re-socialization of the university. In each theme, participants pointed out various problems that they face with service-learning and also hinted at some solutions. The practical side of dealing with the university and departmental-wide problems, which were mentioned by the participants, will be discussed in the final chapter. Suggested by these research findings are areas where the university could improve the service-learning experiences for all parties involved. Also, in the next chapter, further directions for research on community-based service-learning will be discussed in the form of policy recommendations.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The research presented in this dissertation started out by focusing on three aspects of service-learning at Barry University: (1) how community is defined, (2) what is community involvement, and (3) to what extent does the university use a community-based approach. This final chapter will provide a brief summary of the findings and offer policy recommendations to strengthen the service-learning program at Barry.

In previous chapters, the development and motivations behind service-learning were discussed, with the argument made that service-learning should be community-based. Without communities informing these projects, their benefits will never be fully realized (Rappaport 1987). Worse is that harm is caused by projects, in the form of taxing community agencies (Strom 2010) or reinforcing stereotypes (Jones 2002). For these reasons, the community must be thoroughly involved, so that the curriculum coincides with the community's world-view and any projects are meaningful to both community members and students (Brown and Vega 1996).

Interviewing faculty members and students led to some interesting and important findings concerning the current state of service-learning at Barry. The themes that were constructed out of the data reflect the characteristics of community-based service-learning. The findings indicated that some people are doing service-learning very well at Barry, something that approximates the ideals of the practice, along with elements of a community-based endeavor, while others expressed frustration. Those who are finding success, in terms of projects meeting goals and students making connections between their classwork and their experiences in the community, tended to have more training – formal or informal – and more familiarity with service-learning. This trend indicates that

for service-learning to be realized faculty members and students need to have more training on service-learning and community engagement.

Another finding is that what most faculty and students are doing at Barry University, under the banner of service-learning, is, in fact, something else. Many of the participants realized this problem and indicated the need for service-learning to change to accommodate the ideals of this pedagogical technique. There are three areas of improvement that will be emphasized: individual, departmental, and institutional changes.

Community involvement in the classroom and development of service-learning courses was another issue that was discussed by the participants. Faculty participants indicated that they have little contact with community agencies or members, and that these persons did not play a role in curriculum development. At the same time, they also indicated a desire to become more involved with community agencies, because connections with community members are important for the success of any projects.

Those who had contact were either specifically trained in a community-based discipline, such as nursing or social psychology, or were community members. This contact, however, was minimal, and used mainly for needs assessment purposes rather than course development. At times, as in the field of communication, community involvement was not necessarily welcome and viewed as an area of contention between the professors and community agencies. However, student participants viewed community presence in the classroom to be important, as indicated by their excitement over guest speakers. Yet, guest speakers supply a fleeting connection to a community, and are viewed as an aside, rather than central, to course material (McKain 2014).

Another key finding relates to the issue of reflection. A popular t-shirt at Barry contains one of the university's mottos – "Learn, Reflect, Serve" – which captures the essence of the university's mission. Reflection, an integral part of service-learning (Eyler 2002, Hatcher and Bringle 1997), has been treated mostly in the same manner as any other writing assignment that students undertake in traditional college classes: a task to be completed in order to receive a grade. Treating reflection in this manner really leaves students and faculty members impoverished with respect to the service-learning experience. As indicated by the participants, students do not remember their service experience, and faculty members report that students are unable to connect what they learned in the classroom to their community activities. But reflection is not meant to be just another assignment to be completed and graded (Eyler 2002, Bringle and Hatcher 1999); this process should be sustained throughout the semester (Eyler, Giles, Jr., and Schmiede 1996). Furthermore, the aim of reflection is to interrogate knowledge bases, contexts, and traditional explanations, so that new, unbiased insights can be gained into community issues.

Taking these findings into consideration implies certain policy changes that could be undertaken at Barry to help alleviate some of these shortcomings. Indeed, these recommendations would improve tremendously service-learning by integrating this process further into the institution. Most important, each of the recommendations is informed by the principles of community-based philosophy. Some of these suggestions may be unique to Barry University, considering its location in Miami-Dade County and that service-learning is relatively young and still developing. On the other hand, similar policies have already been adopted at other universities and point to a strategy that Barry

could easily adopt.[15] These policy recommendations include: better training, changing the university's culture, examining the role of the Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI), and implementing community-based education. These policy recommendations will be followed with a brief discussion on the limitations of this study and future directions for research in this particular area.

**Training**

The data from this research indicate that training is vital. Students who had training seemed to be more pleased and experienced more success with their projects, as compared to those who admitted being new to service-learning. At the same time, faculty members did not indicate a need for special training, but did suggest that they could benefit from such a practice.

The Center for Community Service Initiatives has already taken some steps to implement training programs for faculty members. To date, this program has sponsored voluntary seminars for faculty members who are integrating service-learning into their classes for the first time, or for those who are want to improve their service-learning classes. These seminars are run by faculty members from different departments, including two who were interviewed for this research. The seminars, so far, have covered basic topics such as "What is Service-Learning?", and more advanced themes like "Making Reflection Meaningful." While these seminars have been helpful, particularly to those who have no experience with service-learning or are wary of this pedagogy, there have been problems.

[15] For instance, Providence College has a service-learning program integrated into their undergraduate majors, with projects being connected to all of a student's major courses.

For example, these seminars are poorly publicized, informal, and not mandatory. They are put on by faculty members who have volunteered to present information to improve service-learning. These factors have led to poor attendance by professors.[16] Specifically noteworthy is that information about the seminars is disseminated through Barry's email system, but not to the entire faculty. Also, the seminars tend to consist of games that are meant to pique professors' interests. As a result, this training has not been widespread or taken seriously.

The Department of Theology and Philosophy has a solid training model and is expanding this process. But this department has a central figure, a "Service-Learning Coordinator," whose job is to place all students in the Introduction to Theology classes with community agencies. Furthermore, this individual has specialized training in community organizing, thereby making him well suited for this particular role. While his primary job has been organizing service-learning placements, he also serves as a trainer for other faculty members who are interested in employing service-learning in their other classes and develops syllabi and assignments for the introductory classes.

As part of his specialized duties, this professor has made and developed a relationship with a community agency where his students complete their service hours, and participates with them in their projects. Due to these practices, the coordinator's role will likely expand as more professors come to him for assistance, while those who are newly trained begin to train others. Two consequences of this process are especially important. The first is that proper service-learning training spreads faster among

[16] At the first seminar, held in October, there were around fourteen (14) professors present. The November seminar had a total of five (5).

colleagues, while the other is that the role of trainer is eventually eliminated (Green and Reid 1994).

What the Department of Theology and Philosophy has quasi-adopted (if only unofficially) is a train-the-trainer model (Todaro 2002). This model of training should be adopted by the Center for Community Service Initiatives, in order to expand service-learning across the various disciplines governed by the School of Arts and Sciences. In this training paradigm, a few individuals would receive specialized training provided by the CCSI. These individuals would then go back to their respective departments and train their colleagues, further spreading this information. The training would then continue to spread through departments, not from the CCSI but colleagues. Eventually, the trainer, in an official capacity, would be obsolete and become indistinguishable from the rest of a department. Doing so does not eliminate the trainer's job, but rather makes everyone a trainer and responsible for this activity (Nakamura, et. al. 2014).

The Center for Community Service Initiatives needs to implement training in two stages. The first is to get faculty members attending seminars to learn how to improve their service-learning experiences. One method is to provide financial incentives for attending, similar to Miami-Dade College. Doing so would guarantee increased attendance (Hardré 2014), while also formalizing these sessions. In the end, the professor can still choose to attend, thereby maintaining academic freedom. The second step in this service-learning dissemination would be to have those professors who receive training train or advise other professors, without having to rely solely on the CCSI. The completion of this process begins to decentralize the responsibility for service-learning.

Adopting the "train-the-trainers" model, as outlined above, accomplishes three things when working towards a community-based service-learning program. The first is that formalized, quality service-learning will spread faster throughout a department, if information comes from colleagues and peers rather than officially sponsored seminars (Nakamura, et. al. 2014). Second, the trainer and the trainee become one in the same, thereby encouraging more collaboration and sharing of experiences, with the hope of improving everyone's service-learning. No one person is solely the expert and no one remains forever a trainee. Faculty members will thus be able to take greater ownership of this university endeavor. And finally, the role of the Center for Community Service Initiatives will have to be re-examined in order to insure that its training model is compatible with a community-based philosophy.

**Changing University Culture**

Faculty members may be apprehensive to attend service-learning training seminars, due to lack of motivation, compensation, or, as the findings suggested, lack of time because of other official commitments. To remedy these issues, there needs to be a drastic change in the day-to-day operations of the university. These changes will challenge the commonly held assumptions about the role of the university, in the broader social context, and how this institution can wield its resources in order to become a force for social change. These changes to university culture need to address faculty compensation and promotion, bureaucratic barriers, and the traditional lines between academic and activist.

The first issue that has to be addressed, in order to get more faculty members involved with communities and service-learning, is compensation and promotion

guidelines for full-time and adjunct faculty members. In this discussion, the focus will remain on full-time faculty members, because adjuncts are often paid per credit hour or course, regardless of any other considerations.[17] Referring back to the findings, participants indicated that they wanted to be more involved with their communities, but did not have the time or resources to do so because of the nature of their jobs. This reasoning suggests that if community service was more central to their jobs, they would become more involved.

Administrations take into account, usually, publications, teaching evaluations, service to the department and university, while community service is very low on this list when making decisions about compensation and promotion (Meyers 2014, Katz 1973). Barry University is a college that expects a mixture of publications, teaching, and service from its full-time faculty members.[18] But most times, service is defined as support to the university or department, while community service is given scant consideration for promotion (Meyers 2014). Although the criteria employed at Barry are similar, some attempts are underway to change this situation. The faculty senate is attempting to address this issue at this time by elevating community service in importance.

A second consideration relates to activism. As should be noted, changing promotion guidelines is cosmetic and will only lead to engagement on a superficial level.

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[17] The fact that adjuncts are treated differently, in terms of compensation, than other faculty members is problematic because, at times, service-learning courses are left to adjunct instructors who receive little or no training. Likewise, their community outreach efforts are seldom recognized by the university, or taken into account for compensation. Hence, while this section addresses changing university cultures, the treatment of adjunct instructors is a much broader issue that should be addressed elsewhere.

[18] In terms of "Community Service," service-learning is absent for promotion. It instead refers to serving on boards for organizations, public lectures, and other such activities. It does state that faculty members "assume the responsibility of involvement, and commitment to bettering their community" (*Faculty Handbook*: 271), suggesting that service could be interpreted broadly. Barry University's *Faculty Handbook*, which includes guidelines for evaluation and promotion, can be found at http://snhs-plin.barry.edu/Instructional/facultyHandbook-2003-2004.pdf. Retrieved February 9, 2014.

For example, faculty members may engage communities simply for the credit, much in the same manner that students often complete their service-learning projects. Academics need to go outside of their "Ivory Towers" and become activists within their communities, or, as some have said, become "public intellectuals" (Behm, Rankins-Robertson, and Roen 2014; Giroux 2013). There is no reason why professors cannot combine activism and academics, something that has been well documented in participatory action research (Fals-Borda 1987). Indeed, activism could provide new areas of research. Additionally, community activism could strengthen existing research by providing different insights and perspectives on various academic subjects, regardless of the discipline, through participatory action research and other avenues (Blomley 2008).

Participants identified a third issue related to the university culture, which is "silo-ism." When academic departments act on their own, with little communication or consideration for what is happening in other departments, a university policy is difficult to sustain. In terms of maintaining the broad focus of service-learning, departments have a lot to offer one another. For example, in the course of the data analysis, the theology and sociology departments were identified as trying to deal with social justice, albeit through different avenues – one theological and the other research-based. One way to break down the aforementioned silo-ism is to institute more team-taught, multi-disciplinary service-learning courses, particularly in departments where the subject matter would be complimentary (Newell 1994). Teaming up would help professors to collaborate more in terms of partnering with community members, streamlining content, and creating more integrated and robust service projects that could, potentially, last

longer than a semester; all while easing the burden on individual professors, who now carry the workload (Letterman and Dugan 2004). Additionally, professors could also collaborate on any research activities that are produced from the service-learning projects or community experiences.

Instituting more team-taught, multi-disciplinary courses, however, is only one way to break down silo-ism at the university. The university could also rely on institutional resources, such as the Center for Community Service Initiatives, to further break down silo-ism by facilitating communications between departments and matching professors' teaching and research interests with other academics from different departments, or even different schools.

The framework of this suggestion is that Barry University is an institution of higher learning. The implication is that academic culture, as a whole, needs to change as well. For instance, there has been a shift in universities to adopt a more business-like stance, with resources directed to administrative activities and the production of a product – educated students (Hancock 2007). The neo-liberal ethics that support this change, while conducive to a functionalist perspective on education, provide a limited world-view on the roles that colleges and universities perform. Indeed, other educational philosophies are available (Freire 2005; Kozol 1972). So, not only does Barry have to change, but then entire culture associated with academia.

**Re-Examining the Role of the CCSI**

The Center for Community Service Initiatives (CCSI) was a topic brought up by many of the participants, who expressed differing views, and at times confusion, over its function and role at Barry University. Currently, the CCSI acts as a warehouse for all

service activities, including service-learning. This office is also a conduit for community engagement, thereby acting as an outreach arm for the university. The center, however, performs other functions to varying degrees of success. These other operations will be discussed below, along with suggestions of how to re-examine the role of the CCSI in light of community-based philosophy. But basically, the CCSI needs to become more akin to a community-based organization.

Overall, the CCSI has helped to strengthen and expand service-learning into disciplines that do not traditionally use this pedagogy by helping to standardize all relevant courses through training seminars. In doing so, the CCSI has helped to clarify for the faculty the differences between community service, volunteerism, service-learning, internships, and practicums, points of confusion for many. Also provided is guidance on publishing in the area of community service and service-learning, thus reinforcing the academic side of community engagement, while offering a reference library devoted to service activities.

The center also helps to place, keep track, and log hours for students engaged in service-learning. These services are done through an online interface called the Community Engagement Management System (CEMS). The CEMS has the benefit of keeping track of all the students' hours as they are reported to the CCSI, but there have been system glitches where hours are not reported or properly logged. While this service may make a professor's life easier as a result of reducing paperwork, another reason is provided to avoid community contact. For example, before the advent of the CEMS, a professor had to confirm personally a student's hours with a particular agency. Now this task is done through the CCSI, which, inadvertently, has created a barrier between the

faculty and community. Granted, the CCSI does not prevent faculty members from engaging community partners, and even provides resources to facilitate engagement, but an excuse is readily available for not becoming community-engaged. In this regard, the outright encouragement of engagement becomes ambiguous.

One of the major issues facing the CCSI is that of boundary maintenance. Simply put, the center seems to be focused on justifying its existence. The CCSI is centralized, has had a successful marketing campaign on campus through mass emails, and is relatively easy to locate. While these characteristics benefit the center and the university, they are contrary to the spirit of a community-based organization. The operation of the center is top-down, while acting as the bastion of all service activities. Operating in this manner makes the center more of a barrier to engagement than a facilitator. Currently, few faculty members visit the center, aside from those who seek out or are invited for special training seminars. The center should be a space where faculty, students, and community members come together in order to collaborate, participate, and design future projects for service-learning classes. To achieve this aim, the CCSI must become more diffuse throughout the university community.

The representatives of the CCS, therefore, must reach out to the different departments to ascertain their resources, skills, and needs. This office should have a consistent presence in the departments that are using various community-based educational techniques by providing guidance, as well as making community introductions. As some of the participants indicated, the center needs to talk to people and tell them what they should do for service-learning. The CCSI seems to operate under the assumption that each faculty member is trained in service-learning and, therefore, up

to the task of using this approach in their classes. The findings indicated that many of the departments are not prepared to implement rigorous service-learning programs, without further refinement in terms of training and the development of robust, meaningful connections to community agencies.

At times, the CCSI has helped to maintain silo-ism, though inadvertently, by keeping track of the departments' community service records and publishing the results as if community service is a competition, which turns off some professors by establishing an "us versus them" mentality and providing little incentive for them to communicate with other departments. If the CCSI is going to act as a coordinator of service activities for the entire university, the attempt should be made to link professors and departments together via subject matters and individual interests. The center has the resources to accomplish this task, but has not devoted any time to linking professors. Doing so would require only a small shift in its mission to include more outreach to the faculty and communication with departments.

If the ultimate goal of the CCSI is to help make departments become self-sufficient in terms of service-learning and community engagement, projects should be set up to be sustained across semesters, and throughout classes, with the center having little duties beyond administrative up-keep. Some administrative duties are best suited for a centralized agency, such as reporting service hours to the Department of Education and applying for grants that are aimed at improving service learning (Crews 2002). However, being the community's primary point of contact with the university would need to be greatly reduced, or eliminated, since these activities involve mostly the departments and individual faculty members. Consistent with the "train-the-trainers" model mentioned

earlier, the CCSI should bring communities, faculty members, and students together. But community engagement is more effective when this activity occurs through direct contact made by departments and students, which may be coordinated through the CCSI (Butin 2010, Jones and Wells 2007). These bonds are stronger, and thus more meaningful and sustainable, when they are negotiated directly by the parties involved. Introducing these participants may be the best role for the CCSI.

While the CCSI may need to expand its current role, these suggestions come with a warning. Like many community-based endeavors, focused on community organizations or other areas of social improvement, such as community mental health, the CCSI must work to avoid drifting, in its mission and actions, away from the persons who are supposed to be served. In this regard, both the community agencies and faculty members should be assessed regularly, in order to insure that their needs are met.

**Community-Based Education**

When taking into account the above recommendations, the functionalist model of education that is largely employed in the United States must be re-examined. Many of the issues discussed in previous chapters, such as forming partnerships and giving students control over their own education, are contrary to what is expected in an educational system that expects uniformity, control, and order. These characteristics run contrary to the ideals of democracy and diversity, since students become standardized through a behaviorist learning model (Collins 2011).

In the functionalist model the teacher is the most important element in a classroom, since students are merely viewed as passive receptacles of knowledge. For this reason, most classrooms are set up with the teacher standing in the front, with all

students facing forward, while interaction between students are discouraged as disruptive. During this process, students are not expected to challenge the teacher's intellectual authority, and any attempt to do so represents their inability to adjust to the so-called student role (Gacey 2011).

In this monological view of education, neither the students nor communities have little to contribute to the generation of knowledge. Since the focus is on the teacher, communication in the educational arena is a one-way-street (Habermas 1970). While this type of education has the benefit of insuring obedience to authority and compliance with the status quo (Durkheim 1956), the implications for social activism or other modes of community engagement are dismal (Shor 1992, Dewey 1937).

While the relationship between the teacher and students is a top-down style, there is a lot to be said about more direct associations among students. Nonetheless, collaboration among students is discouraged or labeled "cheating" in many institutional handbooks. Indeed, they are pitted against one another and compete for limited resources, such as attention of the teacher, prestige among peers, and passing grades (Gracey 2011, Orenstein 1994).

While this sort of Social Darwinism may be compatible with striving to achieve the "American Dream" (Demos, Lemelle, Jr., and Gashaw 2001; Bowles and Gintis 1976), the context of service-learning is very different. For instance, service-learning is designed to foster partnerships among teachers, students, and communities (Rocheleau 2004). The point is that a style of education that promotes collaborative learning and collective success is more appropriate for an institution that seeks to employ service-learning (Bronfenbrenner 1970). However, adopting a collaborative learning

environment in the classroom would not be enough, since education would likely remain mostly an academic endeavor. Rather, an institution that seeks to use service-learning must adopt a community-based perspective on education. But the question remains: "What is community-based education?"

When most students enter into a college or university, they choose a major that will help to shape their academic and, ultimately, post-graduate careers. They will take a series of classes that focuses on their major, along with other classes that ensure all students receive a well-rounded education. While this style of curriculum makes sense from a purely academic standpoint, this arrangement is not conducive to service-learning. Particularly problematic is that service-learning classes are a semester long, or possibly a year in special cases.

What is lacking is the sustainability of service-learning projects, as well as input from the community into the curriculum. These shortcomings can be addressed by altering the major-based curriculum in a manner that makes service-learning a center-piece of learning, equal to the collection of classes in order to receive a terminal degree. So, while students may still choose a major upon entering an institution, they should also choose service-learning projects that will continue throughout their academic careers. The students' graduation criteria are not just attached to the accumulation of credits, but also the completion of a project.

A project would be developed in conjunction with community members and entire departments. Certain communities could be identified, for example, where these projects would be developed for the long-term. As students choose their majors, they would also be integrated into a project until they graduate. The curriculum and these

service projects, in other words, would operate in tandem. Such a curriculum allows students to take ownership of their projects, and feel as though they have made a meaningful contribution to a particular community and changed society.

This shift in the curriculum is consistent with community-based philosophy and encourages collaboration on five (5) different levels. The first is between the professors and a community, since the professors include community members in the development of courses and projects. The second would be between the professors themselves, since these projects span many different courses. The expanse of these projects would help to encourage more team-taught courses, while also potentially promoting more communication between departments and disciplines.

The third, between teachers and students, deserves special mention because of the rejection of the functionalist paradigm of education. In this major-project curriculum model, teachers and students work together intimately at every stage of a project. As a result, the traditional teacher-student relationship begins to breakdown, due to the intense collaboration involved. Since each actor provides valid input to the project's development, execution, evaluation, and future directions, the usual hierarchical associations begin to appear dysfunctional.

The fourth level of collaboration occurs between the students. In reality, their education becomes a joint venture where they must work together, along with a community and their professors, in order to achieve a goal that is greater than the accumulation of credits and grade points. As suggested, the last level relates to how students begin to work together with a community. Under this new curricular arrangement, the students' connection to a community is constant and sustained

throughout their undergraduate education, since they work with these persons over the long-term to solve a particular set of problems. Indeed, one of the central elements associated with community-based philosophy, as discussed in Chapter Three, is commitment.

These changes to the curriculum impact the students' commitment to a community in two different ways. The first is that they will be working with the same agency on the same project (provided it is not completed) for the entire time they are at the university. They will be in constant contact with community members as they go about planning and executing their project. The second is that students (and faculty members, of course) become committed to a community by trying to ensure the sustainability of their projects beyond graduation. If a project remains incomplete, for example, students could recruit others to carry on their project.

Most important is that the projects that are developed through the collaborations between communities, faculty, and students, while meant to be shared, are mainly the domain of community members. Therefore, the community should be involved in problem identification, as well as the development of any solutions. Community members, for example, may require that students take on a particular value orientation that is consistent with their goals and subsequent methods.

To implement this policy suggestion, community agencies might hold fairs on the college campus, much in the same way student organizations do to recruit students, and departments to increase the number of their majors, where they would provide potential students partners with information, while also serving as a screening mechanism. In this manner, the control over projects remains largely in the hands of community members,

while also challenging the prevailing paradigm that is currently employed in higher education by providing the community with a greater presence on campus.

In the end, the university becomes a community-based organization. By incorporating community projects into the institution's curriculum, the walls of the "Ivory Tower" begin to crumble as higher education begins to realize fully its publicly stated goals, which in Barry's case are "Knowledge and Truth, Inclusive Community, Social Justice, and Collaborative Service."[19] In this new curricular model, such mission statements are no longer simply words but carry the force of action, informed by community-based philosophy.

**Limitations and Future Directions for Research**

No research project is perfect, and this one is no exception. Difficulties related to the recruitment of participants resulted in the use of trial and error to find the best method, especially with students. Every department that uses service-learning could have been sampled, but time and resources curtailed this process. Problems also arose in the student interviews, when the student participants did not always understand some of the terminology being used. There is also the possibility of selection bias with the students, since only those who had positive experiences were willing to participate (Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont 2003).

One potential weakness is the lack of input from community agencies or community members. Although the focus of these conclusions is the lack of community-based philosophy in service-learning, as it is practiced at Barry University, the community is absent from this research. Consulting the community, particularly in terms

[19] The core commitments of Barry University's mission statement can be accessed online at http://snhs-plin.barry.edu/Instructional/MissionStatement_24Jun08.pdf. Retrieved February 8, 2014.

of definitions or the desire to be further involved in the education process, was not done. This research, then, is not community-based. Nonetheless, the scope of this project is the practice of service-learning at Barry, and not the perceptions of community of this university on its service-learning program. Future research, as an extension of this report, would involve interviewing community representatives on these very issues, in order to determine whether the absence of a community-based philosophy is causing problems in the communities served.

Another weakness relates to the issue of the academic freedom of professors. For example, some faculty members may not agree with the aims of service-learning, since community-building carries liberal connotations. However, this pedagogical technique fits easily into the idea of free-market economics (Wolff 2002). For instance, partnering with the community involves very little government assistance, and at the same time students learn specific skills that are useful, presumably, in the labor force.

Finally, the policy suggestions made in this final chapter call for a fundamental reorganization of the institution of higher learning and the breakdown of the "Ivory Tower." In this regard, higher education would no longer be the sole domain of academics. While the ideas espoused in this Conclusion are labeled as practical, they should not be mistaken as easy or quick solutions. As is suggested by the train-the-trainer model, disseminating information is difficult and requires that persons expand or change their traditional roles. Professors, not to mention administrators, might find the institutional changes associated with becoming community-based very difficult to accept.

**Conclusion**

Service-learning, as stated in the first chapter, is spreading to many different colleges and universities, for both moral and economic reasons (Speck 2001). Morally, often this practice is in line with their mission statements or religious social teachings, like at Barry University. Economically, service-learning makes sense because the Government has been providing grants to attract students who want to gain "real-world skills" beyond what a single semester internship provides (Servaty-Seib Parikh 2014).

The research presented in this report started out with three (3) specific aims:

(1) Discover how the teachers and students associated with service learning come to define a community.

(2) Figure out how a community is involved with a service learning project.

(3) Ascertain the extent to which service learning at Barry University employs a community-based approach.

The data collected suggest that community is rarely consulted in any of these questions, unless the student or professor had some prior specialized training. A key finding, additionally, is that Barry University does not yet employ a community-based approach to service-learning, although the curriculum in this area is still growing and developing. Accordingly, certain policy changes could be employed in order to alter radically the traditional university structures and create a unique educational experience for incoming students.

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# Appendix A

Recruitment Emails for Faculty and Student Participants

(University of Miami Header Here)

Dear Professor _____,

My name is Christian A. Schlaerth, and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Miami's department of sociology, as well as an adjunct instructor at Barry University. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation on the subject of service learning practices and I need participants for the study. This is merely a recruiting advance email and you will be contacted by phone in the coming weeks.

You have been chosen because by researching past courses taught, one of your courses indicates that service learning has been used as either part of the course curriculum or is central to the course itself, meaning that your participation in this research would be very helpful and appreciated.

Your participation in this research would include an interview with an investigator associated with the project that could last up to an hour. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed as part of the research process. Your name will not be used; however information regarding the course, department, specialty area, age, race, religion, and sex will be included in the project. Information that is potentially identifying will only be reported in aggregate form, so as to protect your identity. All efforts will be made to guarantee your confidentiality. The time and the place of the interview would be chosen to be most convenient for you, should you choose to participate.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary, and should you choose to participate you may discontinue participation at any time without consequence. There is no compensation for participating in this project, but your participation would help to enrich service learning programs at Barry University as well as at other institutions.

As stated earlier, this is merely an advance letter. I will be contacting you via your office telephone within the coming weeks to inquire about your participation and schedule an interview time should you choose to participate.

Sincerely,

Christian A. Schlaerth
PhD Candidate
University of Miami

Dear Student,

My name is Christian A. Schlaerth, and I am a PhD candidate at the University of Miami's department of sociology, as well as an adjunct instructor at Barry University. I am currently conducting research for my dissertation on the subject of service learning practices and I need participants for the study.

I am contacting you because you have taken a course or a course with a service learning project in the past and that makes you eligible to participate in the study. This means that your participation in this research would be very helpful and appreciated.

Your participation in this research would include an interview with an investigator associated with the project that could last up to an hour. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed as part of the research process. Your name will not be used; however information regarding the course, department, specialty area, age, race, religion, and sex will be included in the project. Information that is potentially identifying will only be reported in aggregate form, so as to protect your identity. All efforts will be made to guarantee your confidentiality. The time and the place of the interview would be chosen to be most convenient for you, should you choose to participate.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary, and should you choose to participate you may discontinue participation at any time without consequence. There is no compensation for participating in this project, but your participation would help to enrich service learning programs at Barry University as well as at other institutions.

Should you choose to participate in this project, please respond to this email with an affirmative answer concerning participation as well as a phone number and time that would be most convenient for you to receive a phone call. During our phone conversation, we will establish a time and place for the interview. Upon completion of the interview, your phone number will be deleted.

Sincerely,

Christian A. Schlaerth
PhD Candidate
University of Miami

# Appendix B

Interview Guide for Faculty and Student Participants

**Guiding Questions for Interview (Faculty):**

Describe the types of service learning projects in which your students were involved.

Was community defined in these projects? If so, how?

Did you mention or stress the importance of community in your service learning class(es)?

Did you know anything about the communities where the service learning projects were being conducted? Was the history of the community conveyed to your students? If so, how?

Was the community to be involved with service learning? If so, in what way?

Were community members consulted? Who from the community was consulted?

Was the community involved with the development of the curriculum for the service learning class? If so, how? Was the community involved with the development of the service learning project?

Was there a work agenda for the project? Were there goals? Who defined the agenda and goals of the project?

Did you develop a connection with the community? How did this manifest?

Did you communicate with the community? What is communication? What was involved with the communication?

**Background Information Questions (Faculty):**

(All these questions are voluntary…You may opt out of any question should you feel uncomfortable answering. This information will be used to compile descriptive statistics for the study.)

What is your age?

What is your race?

Do you have a religious affiliation? If so, what is it?

What is the highest degree that you have earned?

In what subject?

What are your areas of research and interest?

Before teaching service learning or incorporating it in your class, did you ever experience it yourself as a student? Was it in college or high school? If so, can you explain your service learning experience? How does your previous service learning experience compare to what you think your students receive here at Barry?

Have your taught service learning at another institution? Describe the service learning at your previous institution(s). How does your previous teaching experience with service learning compare to what is practiced in your department or at Barry? Is the experience different for Barry students compared to students at your other institution(s)?

**Guiding Questions for Interview (Students):**

Describe your service learning project.

Was community defined in your project? If so, how?

Did your instructor mention or stress the importance of community in your service learning class? If so, how?

Did you know anything about the communities where the service learning projects were being conducted? Was the history of the community conveyed to your students? If so, how?

Was the community involved with service learning? If so, in what way?

Who from the community did you have contact with during the course of your project?

Was the community involved with the development of the service learning project?

Was there a work agenda for the project? Were there goals? Who defined the agenda and goals of the project?

Did you develop a connection with the community? How was this manifested?

Did you communicate with the community? What is communication? What was involved with the communication?

**Background Information Questions for Students:**

(All these questions are voluntary…You may opt out of any question should you feel uncomfortable answering. This information will be used to compile descriptive statistics for the study.)

What is your age?

What is your race?
Do you have a religious affiliation? If so, what is it?

What is your major?

Did you attend a religiously affiliated high school? If so, what was the affiliation?

Before coming to Barry University, have you ever experienced service learning before? If so, can you describe your service learning experience? How does it compare to your experience here at Barry?

## Appendix C

Participant Key

Professors of Sociology

Francine: white, female, 40

Peter: Hispanic, male, 39

Edward: white, male, 42

Paul: white, male, 33 (adjunct instructor)

Professors of Theology

Stephanie: white, female, 60

Sam: white, male, 73

William: white, male, 35

Michael: Hispanic, male, 33

Professors of Communication

Christina: white, female, 35

Gabriele: black, female, 35

Professors of Nursing

Daisy: black, female, no age given

Margaret: black, female, 41

Professor of Language Arts

Denise: white, female, 46

Professor of Physical Sciences

Heather: white, female, 33

Professor of Psychology

Hailey: black, female, age not given

Student Participants:

Charlie: Hispanic, male 21, senior

Amy: black, female, 21, senior

Cathy: white, female, 20, junior

Katie: white, female, 20, junior

Trisha: black, female, 20, junior

Ken: black, male, 18, freshman

Shawna: black, female, 21, senior

Stan: Hispanic, male, 22, graduate

Kevin: Middle Eastern, male, 20, sophomore

Jonathan: white, male, 21, senior