An Exploration of the Impact of a Service-Learning Programme in Two School Communities

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, in the Graduate Programme in Research Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal,
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I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Research Psychology) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

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"Unless specifically indicated to the contrary, this project is the result of my own work"

Name: Hilton Humphries   Signed _____

Abstract

Research in the area of service-learning has been steadily growing over the past decade, with an interest in the benefits for all parties involved in its implementation. However, research into the impact that service learning has on the community has been severely under-researched remaining practically absent from the service-learning research agenda.

This qualitative study attempted to gain in-depth knowledge on the impact of service learning on two school communities. The research made use of participatory research techniques as they allow the researcher to access the 'community voice' and 'hand over' the research process. As the focus groups involved children, participatory techniques were used to elicit information regarding what element of the service-learning programme affected the learner's experiences of participating in the service-learning programme. Ranking activity was the participatory technique used (Theis and Grady, 1991).

The study had interesting results relating to what elements affect the community experience of service-learning programmes. Main findings include student characteristics, relationship development and how the students gain from service-learning. It gained insight into many areas that require further study relating to community experiences, and illustrates the complexity that characterises the community experience.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study explored those elements of a service-learning programme that influenced how a community of learners experienced the programme whilst it was run in the school for a three month period. The study aimed to discover and interrogate those factors that were considered most salient in their influence on whether or not the community of learners had a positive or negative experience of the service-learning programme. There is a lack of research into how communities are affected by service-learning programmes. Until recently, this issue of community influence has been practically absent from the service-learning research agenda (Giles & Eyler, 1999). The study explored how service-learning programmes can be tailored to incorporate the community perception in the design of service-learning programmes.

The community is an essential part of any service-learning programme. It is the interaction of the university and the community partner that provides the context in which service-learning can occur (Butin, 2003). Therefore it is important that the community is included in the design, implementation and evaluation of service-learning programmes. This highlights the need to engage with the community using the social justice approach forwarded by Morton (1997), whereby the community is treated as an equitable partner, and is recognised as having strengths and important assets needed by the university.

The researcher was motivated to undertake this study because of the glaring lack of research concerning what impact service-learning has on the communities it works in. From the literature it seems that the utility of service-learning is based almost exclusively on the experiences of students participating in these programmes (Keen & Baldwin, 2004; Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). The obvious question to ask is how can a programme claim to be beneficial for a community, if the community opinions are not sought? The researcher was motivated to conduct this research in order to ascertain whether or not this assumption of benefit was founded, when evaluating the programme from the perspective of the community being served.

The study also sought to evaluate what methodological tool could be used to evaluate community perception (Theis and Grady, 1991). The researcher did not want to use traditional interviewing techniques, or questionnaires as these are inadequate to capture the

potential complexity inherent in community experiences, and the researcher wanted to avoid the power dynamics that are present in the research process. Thus, participatory techniques were employed in order to diminish the power dynamics between the researcher and the learners by handing the process over to the community. The researcher wanted to assess the utility of these techniques in order to evaluate whether or not they provide a methodology that could be used in community evaluation research, especially with regards to the impact that service-learning has (Theis & Grady, 1991).

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.2.1   The Study Aims

The study addressed the following aims and objectives:

- The first aim of the study was to obtain information regarding the community perspective towards service-learning
- Secondly, the study sought to observe and qualify what impact, and what elements affected the community's feelings towards the service-learning programme.
- Thirdly, the study hoped to provide an indication of the usefulness of participatory research techniques in assessing the community viewpoints on service-learning

1.2.2   The Study Objectives

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- To highlight the importance of assessing the value of service-learning for the community in which it is implemented
- To access the 'community voice' in order to find what elements of service-learning influence how the community experiences service-learning
- To evaluate the utility of service-learning to the community partner, and make recommendations on how service-learning can be made more beneficial to all the partners involved in the programme.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated:

- What is the effect of a service-learning programme on two school community/ies?
- What are the elements that make a service-learning programme more or less beneficial to certain communities?

1.4 Methodological Approach

As the study aimed to research an area of service-learning that is under-researched within the field of service-learning, the study was descriptive in nature (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999 in Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). A qualitative approach was employed in order to capture the intricate and complex data surrounding communities' perceptions of their service-learning experience (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The study was informed by a post-structuralist perspective as it aimed to ask questions, and challenge the assumptions made by service-learning programmes as well as to gain insight into how communities perceive the efficacy of service-learning programmes. The research also made use of participatory research techniques as they are useful in accessing information from participants whose 'voices' are usually silenced. The techniques are also useful in a community setting as they minimise the power dynamics that often exist between community and the university (Theis & Grady, 1991; Van Vlaenderen, n.d). Participants were sampled purposefully from schools and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. A full explanation of the methodology employed is provided in chapter 4.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Community: Defining community is a difficult task; in the South African context community has often been used to describe previously disadvantaged, black populations. Community can also be conceptualised as being defined by geographical and legal/governmental criteria (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002). Following this criterion a community is defined as a group of people who reside in the same locality (Figueroa *et al,* 2002) as well as a "group of individuals who share a common interest" (Figueroa *et al,* 2002, p.15). In this study the word community is used to describe a sample of learners from two schools in the Pietermaritzburg

area. They were considered a community in that they shared the experience of service-learning. There were no other criteria involved in defining the community.

Service-learning: Service-learning is a pedagogy that is often used in tertiary institutions. It is normally a credit bearing course that involves student participating in an organised activity in order to meet the requirements of a community partner. The students then reflect on their experiences as part of a reflection process. There are many forms of service-learning ranging from community service to academic service-learning. An in-depth definition of service-learning is provided in Chapter 2. For this study, service-learning involved students teaching life-skills classes to learners at specific schools in the Pietermaritzburg region.

Service provider: the service-provider is the member of the service-learning partnership that is part of the university and is responsible for providing the given service to the community partner. In this study the university students were the service-providers. This term is used within the service-learning tradition and raises questions about treating the community as an equal partner within the social justice perspective. The term is used as no alternative has been proposed.

Service recipient: this is a term developed and used within the service-learning tradition. It is used to denote the partner that receives the service. In this study it is used inter-changedly with the community. It too raises questions about treating the community as an equal partner in the university-community partnership and is used because no other alternative has been proposed.

Participatory research: this is a research tradition that is aims to use a participatory process and techniques in order to create a research environment in which the research process is handed over to the research participants in an effort to empower them to make the research process more 'their own.' This research process makes use of techniques such as Venn diagrams, ranking tables, history timelines and seasonal calendars. This research used the techniques of this approach as a methodology, but did not engage in a truly participatory research approach. A full explanation of participatory research is provided in chapter 3.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

The thesis will be set out as follows:

Chapter 1

This chapter is the introductory chapter and provides an outline of the need for the research to be conducted, the outline of the aims and objective of the study as well as a brief explanation of the methodological approach. The chapter also provides definitions for key concepts found in the thesis.

Chapter 2

This is the literature review. It provides background to the research study and provides the argument for why the research is needed. It will provide the reader with the framework that informs the research.

Chapter 3

Aims and Rationale. Provides the aims and rationale for the research. It highlights the key aims of the study, as well as the research questions that will guide the research.

Chapter 4

This is the methodology chapter. It will provide the reader with information regarding the methodological approach used to obtain the information from the research participants. It provides the research design, sampling techniques used, the data collection process and the data analysis method used.

Chapter 5

Results Section. This section reports on the finding obtained from the data collection process. It highlights all the findings extracted from the data during the data analysis.

Chapter 6

Discussion. Provides an interpretation and evaluation of the results of the study. It links the finding to the literature reviewed for the thesis, and addresses the research questions asked.

Chapter 7

Conclusion. Provides a summary of the key findings of the research. Discusses the limitations of the research study and highlights recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualising Service-learning

2.1.1 Defining Service-learning

In order to contextualise this research, it is necessary to have an understanding of the construct service-learning. Service-learning is described by Bringle & Hatcher (1995) as a "course based, credit-bearing educational experience that allows students to (a) participate in an organised activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (p.112). Service-learning falls within the rubric of community engagement, where there are various forms of engagement that can be conceptualised as falling along a continuum. Furco (1996) states service-learning is situated in the middle of this continuum, where internship and pratica are located at the one end (focusing on student career development), and volunteer activities (with an emphasis on civic involvement and providing recipients with service) at the opposite end. Furco (1996) claims that service-learning is unique in its "intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both service being provided and learning that is occurring" (p.5).

Butin (2003) refers to service-learning as an active pedagogy that is committed to connecting theory and practice, schools or servers with communities, as well as engaging cognitive and ethical domains. Service-learning advocates consider these linkages the reason why service-learning leads to a plethora of positive outcomes, which include fostering a sense of citizenry in students, cognitive, affective and ethical changes in students, reconnecting students with their communities and promoting a more equitable society (Butin, 2003). Butin (2003) however highlights some of the ambiguities in the principles and goals that are evident in the service-learning literature, which raise the following questions:

- Is service-learning a pedagogical strategy for better comprehension of course content?
- A philosophical stance committed to the betterment of the local or global community?
- An institutionalised mechanism fostering students' growth and self-awareness concerning issues of diversity, volunteerism and civic responsibility?
- Alternatively, and the area of contention, is service-learning a voyeuristic exploitation of the cultural other that masquerades as academically sanctioned servant leadership?

(Butin, 2003, p. 1675)

Service-learning emphasises concepts such as practice, theory and knowledge with context (Altman, 1996). Altman (1996) states that socially-responsible knowledge has three goals which can be achieved through the process of service-learning: "first, to educate students in the problems of society; second, [to] have them experience and understand first hand social issues in their community; and third, and most important, [to] give students the experience and skills to act on social problems" (p. 375-376). Therefore, it is important to remain sensitive to the circumstances of the community context, and respectful of the circumstances, outlooks and ways of life of the community (Butin, 2003). Thus, service-learning is not intended to be a 'white knight' riding in to save a community, but a program that has to respect and work within the context of the community (Butin, 2003).

2.1.2 The Origins of Service-learning

Service-learning's origins are situated within Dewey's philosophy of education for democracy (Hatcher, 1997) as well as Boyer's "scholarship of engagement" (Boyer, 1990, cited in O'Brien, 2005, p.67).

Service-learning is a pedagogy imported from the United States and implemented in the South African context. It has become popular in South Africa as a means of getting tertiary institutions to become more integrated with their communities, exchanging expertise with local communities. Since being placed on the research agenda of higher education institutions in the late 1990s, growth in service-learning in South Africa has gained momentum (Le Grange, 2007). As alluded to earlier, the importance of service-learning in higher education institutions has become more prominent because of the need for these institutions to "become more democratic, more responsive to community challenge and conducive to partnership-building with a variety of stakeholders" (Erasmus, 2005, p.1).

Due to the 'newness' of service-learning it remains the subject of debate and deliberation especially with regards to what constitutes service-learning and its theoretical and conceptual foundations (Le Grange, 2007). Le Grange (2007) raises concerns regarding an inherent ambiguity which resides within service-learning, stating that although, on the one hand, it can act as a counter agent to the traditional positivistic trends in education it can also become a means to use the community as an arena in which to allow students to practice their skills on a given community. In South Africa, as elsewhere, service-learning has also had its growth accelerated by the fact that it is a useful and appealing political slogan insofar as it is used by politicians and university leadership as a catch phrase on what tertiary institutions should be implementing. Despite this its implementation into policy is difficult to achieve because of the resources needed to run a service-learning program (Le Grange, 2007). As a construct developed mainly in the United States, the usefulness of service-learning in the South African context remains in need of assessment.

2.2 Conceptualisations of Service-learning

This section will discuss the three different ways in which service-learning can be conceptualised. The models provide alternative ways of thinking about service-learning

outside the realm of the dominant conceptualisations. These Models include those posited by Butin (2003), Morton (1995) and Delueze and Guattari (1987).

2.2.1 The Butin Model

Butin (2003) proposes a conceptual framework that may prove useful in viewing and evaluating service-learning. The four perspectives he proposes are intended to provide clarification of the possibilities within the field of service-learning, and may overlap and may be interrelated. These perspectives are:

- The Technical perspective,
- The Cultural perspective,
- The Political perspective,
- And the Post-structuralist perspective.

a) The Technical Perspective

The technical perspective focuses on "the innovation itself, on its characteristics and component parts and its production and introduction as a technology" (Hargreaves, Earl & Schmidt, 2002, p.73). The technical perspective is interested in answering questions concerning the efficacy, quality, sustainability and efficiency of both the processes and the outcomes of an innovation (i.e. service-learning). This perspective considers questions about a programme's implementation and not questions pertaining to the programme's legitimacy or the implications that the programme will have (Butin, 2003). Thus, within the technical perspective the questions that relate to the process and outcomes efficacy, quality, efficiency and sustainability become the most salient issue to consider. It is for this reason that the technical perspective has formed a major focus of service learning research (Butin, 2003).

When considering the technical aspects of a service learning programme and how these affect students' experience of the programme, one must consider the following issues:

Firstly the *quality of the placement* will affect how the students feel about the service learning experience (Butin, 2003). If the placement is difficult to work in, or the relationship strained between the students and the community then it is likely that the students' experience would be negative, although perhaps still a valuable experience.

Secondly, the *frequency and length of the contact time* with the community will influence the experience (Butin, 2003). Often service-learning programmes are one semester long and the contact with the community is often regulated to a certain time period, if this time period is short it is unlikely that either the students or the community will benefit significantly from the experience (Butin, 2003; Giles and Eyler, 1998).

Thirdly, and important to the fundamental processes of service learning is the time and extent to which the students get *time to reflect* on their experience -both within the classroom setting and outside of it (Butin, 2003). Reflection is an essential part of service-learning as it allows the students to reflect on their experience, seek advice from their peers and lecturers as well as to make sense of their own experience (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002). However, it would be beneficial to afford the community the opportunity to engage in a reflection process as well, this may aid in allowing the community to discuss their own experience of the programme and raise concerns and praise thereof.

Fourthly, the *perceived impact* that the service has had will also influence how the students experience the programme. If the students feel like they have had little to no success with the community, they are more inclined to feel like the experience of service-learning was not positive. On the other hand if they feel as if they have had a significant effect then they are more likely to experience the programme as being a valuable endeavour (Butin, 2003).

Lastly, an important aspect of service-learning that is beneficial to both the community and the students is that they have the *opportunity to experience and interact significantly with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures* to their own (Butin, 2003). This

affords those involved a chance to gain an understanding into others and how they are affected by the environment in which they exist (Butin, 2003).

b) The Cultural Perspective

Butin (2003) regards the cultural perspective as that which emphasizes individual "meaning making within and through the context of the innovation" (p.1680) and claims that we come to know more about ourselves through engaging with people that are different from us (Butin, 2003). The cultural perspective is not focused on the innovation itself, but is rather focused on the accrual, understanding and appropriation of the innovation, seeking to understand how students learn to respect cultural diversity by engaging with those different from them (Butin, 2003;2007).

Service learning is synonymous with this cultural perspective as it privileges the affective, formative and ethical components of service-learning and is concerned with linking the experiential components of a service-learning program with local, national and international issues (Butin, 2003). Thus, on a macro level service-learning can be used as a means of repairing the worn social network of a society that is increasingly "individualistic and narcissistic" (Butin, 2003, p.1680), whilst on a micro level service-learning can instil within the students a respect for diversity and the varying cultural contexts (Butin, 2003). Within the cultural perspective students involved in service-learning will learn to respect cultural diversity by engaging with those that are different from them (Rosner-Salazar, 2003).

c) The Political Perspective

The political perspective raises important issues that have been largely ignored by service-learning advocates. The perspective aims to examine and challenge an innovation (i.e. service-learning) on normative, ontological, epistemological and ethical grounds, and is most concerned with "issues of competing constituencies and how these issues manifest through power (im)balances, questions of legitimacy, allowed or silenced

perspectives, and negotiations over neutrality/objectivity" (Butin, 2003, p.1681). Butin (2003) goes further to pose the following questions that are highly salient, which should be asked, and answered, by service-learning practitioners:

- Whose voices are heard and whose are silenced?
- Who makes the decisions and by what criteria?
- Who benefits, and who loses from such decisions?
- In addition, to what extent is the program a "repetition, a reinforcement, or revocation of the status quo?"

(Butin, 2003, p.1681)

Within the political perspective the underlying driving force and consequence of the process of the innovation is conflict rather than consensus (Butin, 2003; 2007). It is argued that through this process of conflict and the resulting resolution, or mutual agreement concerning the innovation, that a more mutually beneficial innovation is achieved for all partners involved in the service-learning activity. This perspective is important to research and is currently underrepresented on the service-learning agenda. This will be discussed in the section on the limitations of service-learning research later in this chapter.

An important aspect of the political perspective is that it allows vital questions concerning service-learning to be raised. It is within this perspective that service-learning can be considered both a repressive and a transformative innovation (Butin, 2003, Jorge, 2007). When reflecting on the foundations and implications of service-learning from a political perspective asking the difficult questions about service-learning's utility produces uncomfortable answers. Firstly, on the issue of community impact, there is little evidence to suggest that there are any long-term benefits to the community partner (Butin, 2003; Giles and Eyler, 1998; Rosner-Salazar, 2003 & Wildschut and Mouton, 2005). Secondly, service-learning may have a negative impact in that it may allow or perpetuate deficit models of service provision in that it may serve to maintain the charity perspective of the university partner serving the 'helpless'

community under the semblance of volunteerism (Butin, 2003; Butin, 2007, Jorge, 2007, Osman & Castle, 2006; Rosner-Salazar, 2003).

The focus of the political perspective remains on how service-learning affects the power relations among and across various different individuals, groups, and institutions. It is important to note that the political perspective is not tightly linked to the technical and cultural perspective; this is because whereas the first two perspectives are concerned with the innovation, the political perspective is more concerned with the issues related to the partners involved in the programme.

d) The Post-structuralist Perspective

Finally, the post-structuralist perspective is "concerned with how an innovation [i.e. service-learning] constructs, reinforces or disrupts particular unarticulated societal norms of being or thinking" (Butin, 2003, p.1683). The post-structuralist perspective is based on two premises, the first is called the 'incredulity of meta-narratives' and was posited by Lyotard (1984). This premise proposes that there is no single, objective truth and that all perspectives are based on context and modes of thought. The second premise 'the subjectification of the self' claims that we are constructed and construct ourselves within the context of society and its rules and norms (Foucault, 1983).

The post-structuralist perspective questions how much service-learning supports or undermines the notions of teaching, learning, self and otherness and asks the following questions concerning service-learning:

- "Does service-learning perpetuate or disrupt our notions of who the teacher is and who the learner is?
- Who the served is and who is doing the serving?
- How does service-learning help to construct student's notions of themselves and others as gendered, racial, and status-bound individuals?"

(Butin, 2003, p.1683)

This perspective does not presume that service-learning is a positive or negative activity, but rather looks at what is or is not possible to think or do given the limitations and constraints we find ourselves working with. Thus, the post-structuralist perspective suggests that service-learning "is a site of identity construction, destruction, and reconstruction with profound consequences of how we view the definitions and boundaries of the teaching process" (Butin, 2003, p.1684). The post-structuralist perspective emphasises the importance of the community partner within the service-learning partnership: if the community was absent the programme would not occur (Eyler, Giles and Grey, 1999; Osman & Castle, 2006; Ward &Wolf-Wendal,2000). Thus, the political and post-structuralist perspectives are important lenses through which to view service-learning, and challenge its practice.

2.2.2 Morton's Models of Service-learning

In 1997 Morton proposed that there are two major purposes that can underlie service-learning as pedagogy: these include the charity perspective and the social justice perspective (Morton, 1997). The *charity perspective* is described by Morton (1995) as the provision of direct service where control of the service remains with the provider. The characteristics of a charity approach include the fact that it is: time limited, has limited impacts, confined to particular aspects of a programme, and has closed decision making situated with the service-provider, rather than the service recipient. Within the charity position there is a focus on the deficits of those being 'served' rather than recognising the strengths of the community partner, often creating a long-term dependency of those being served on those that have the resources (Morton, 1997). In this way a charity perspective is destructive, may make a situation worse rather than provide a remedy for it, and may end up perpetuating the *status quo*, reinforcing stereotypes and blaming those community groups that display a need for the service provided by the more resourced partner (Morton, 1997). It is important to note that a charity approach to service-learning has been dominant. This is particularly true with service-learning in which the university partner helps out its assumed 'grateful' community partner, with the university paying

little to no attention to the needs, views and ideas of its 'imposed upon partner'. Morton (2007) implies that charity is a thin form of service, which is described as a form of service that has "little or no integrity, that is, [it] diminish [es] the dignity of one or more of the persons involved" (p.11).

It follows that the majority of research into service-learning has focused on service-learning as a technical activity assuming that it is an effective pedagogy that has a positive outcome for the community it serves (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007). This view highlights the charity perspective in which one class "[achieves] merit by doing things gratuitously for an inferior class" (Morton, 1997, p.8). The charity perspective is often in service of maintaining the social arrangements and norms that exist within the service-learning tradition, these include the university serving a 'poor' community, and the university assuming that a mutually beneficial relationship between all stakeholders exists based purely on the responses of students to the service-learning experience (Morton, 1997). This means that the 'service recipient' is often undervalued whilst more emphasis is placed on the 'service-provider', this leads to power imbalances, and may lead to a situation in which the community may begin to resent the university because they feel like a laboratory in which the university sends their students to experiment (Rosner-Salazar, 2003). This study argues that there is a need to move away from a charity perspective and towards a perspective geared towards mutual respect and social justice.

The *social justice perspective* is demonstrated when participants are considered as mutual resources and a community is understood through the identification of its strengths, assets and knowledge (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007; Rosner-Salazar, 2003). It is through the processes of mutual communication, recognition, access to resources and opportunities that a shared reality between the partners of a relationship is established. It is also important that even though a shared reality may be established, the partners are autonomous entities, and are free to leave a partnership if they would like to (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007). Rosner-Salazar (2003) elaborate on the concept of social justice positing that social justice is "having the perspective that allows one to take social action

against social structural inequality and an understanding of oppression and inequality which allows greater insight into methods of eradicating them" (p.64).

The characteristics of a *social justice* perspective are outlined by Morton (1995), the characteristics include that it is process focused, meaning that the social justice perspective remains focused on the entire process of service-learning rather than merely the outcomes. Therefore, it is not only the outcomes that should be considered when taking a social justice approach, but also the factors that are at play before and during the implementation of a programme (Morton, 1995). The social justice perspective is concerned with building relationships amongst and within the stakeholders of the programme, and endeavours to ensure that all those partners affected by the programme are included in the implementation and evaluation of the programme (Morton, 1995). Therefore, through the adoption of a justice perspective service-learning advocates could promote and value the multicultural diversity of the service-learning partners and ensure the equitable distribution of power amongst all those benefitting from the partnership (this includes the university and the community partner) (Rosner-Salazar, 2003).

The *social justice* perspective is congruent with the political and post-structralist perspective as it asks difficult questions around community benefits, whose voices are being heard and who is silenced (Butin, 2003; Butin, 2007). The social justice perspective is also congruent with the post-structuralist notion that the truth about service-learning's effectiveness is not a unitary idea, but depends on the input and evaluation of all the perspectives of all the partners that participate within a service-learning programme (Butin, 2003).

A decade after his initial proposal Morton (2007) added two new concepts that complement a social justice perspective; these concepts are project and change. Furthermore, Morton (2007) explains that there are two important dimensions to these concepts of service, namely the quality of the relationship between partners, and the desire of the partners to get to the root cause of the problem. Morton (2007) explains that these dimensions are affected by the level of commitment that the partners have to them,

and that this commitment can be thought of as existing on a continuum where the partners of a service-learning programme can move from no commitment to full commitment. Thus, when there is only a middle commitment to these dimensions then 'project' occurs, whilst if both partners are fully committed to these dimensions then 'process' or 'change' will occur. The importance of having a service that is characterised by 'process' is that it forms a 'thick' service in which there is "deep integrity; [that] affirm[s] or increase[s] the dignity of everyone involved" (Morton, 2007, p.11). It is important to note that both these concepts are congruent with social justice. However, the concept of change deals with the service being more transformative than the service characterised by project.

To elaborate on these concepts, when considering service as *project*, the focus of the service is on the individual and the mediating institution with this form of service characterised by assisting someone to define and achieve a goal (Morton, 2007). The expression of the service is that it respects the boundaries that define and distinguish the 'server' and the 'served' in order to make sure the dignity of both the partners remains intact (Morton, 2007). Morton (2007) goes on to describe how the effect of this type of service is characterised by the community having increased equality for its members, not being the 'poor' community defined by need as in the charity perspective.

The concept of *change*, as described by Morton (2007) has a collective focus, in which it organises individuals to have and use power. Time in 'change' is historic and long term focused. Morton (2007) describes change as focusing on ensuring that the service is organised around community values, and that it aims to achieve utility for the community by embracing creative conflict. This creative conflict acts as a mechanism through which the service-recipient can be involved in improving the service that is given to them by the service-provider. Thus, 'change' aims to prioritise the community voice with the service-learning programme. The effects that 'change' aims to have on the community it serves, is to increase the ability of the community to exercise power within their relationship with the service-provider whilst accomplishing the goals set out by the service programme (Morton, 2007).

These two concepts build onto the social justice tradition, with change being the ultimate goal of service, in which the community being 'served' is able to exert power in such a way, that they can help themselves accomplish goals without relying on the 'server'. Within service-learning this means that the community being served by the university could have their capacity built so that they can solve their own problems, and that community perceptions and ideas should be listened to, and appreciated for their strengths, and incorporated into the design of any service-learning programme.

2.2.3 Le Grange's Rhizomatic and Arborescent Theory of Service-learning

Le Grange (2007) posits a way of thinking about service-learning called 'after' theory. This 'after theory' involves thinking about service-learning in a way that allows one to include many alternate understandings, without discounting the contributions of other theorists (Le Grange, 2007).

Le Grange (2007) discusses the seminal work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in which they discuss and distinguish between arborescent and rhizomatic thinking. Arborescent thinking conceives "of knowledge as hierarchically articulated branches of a central stem or trunk rooted in firm foundations" whilst rhizomatic conceptions refer to a "chaotically complex network of stems interconnecting the upshots of some grasses" (Le Grange, 2007, p.7).

a) Arborescent and Rhizomatic Conceptions of Service-learning

Arborescent thinking can be likened to a tree, a single taproot from which a main stem grows, from which branches will grow to produce leaves and fruit (Le Grange, 2007). The tree is a useful metaphor for understanding traditional Western thought, which remains the dominant way of thinking about service-learning (Le Grange, 2007). When one thinks of service-learning arborescently, its usefulness has to be justified in terms of

a theoretical groundwork, which forms the roots from which the trunk grows and in turn from which all service-learning branches out (Le Grange, 2007).

The rhizome metaphor used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) posits many new ways of thinking about service-learning and knowledge. To understand Deleuze and Guattari's explanation we must explore the metaphor, and how it pertains to service-learning. In nature a rhizome can range from small root-like extensions to bulbs and tubers , illustrating the diverse forms that service-learning can take, a rhizome also takes forms that embody the best and worst in nature, from the useful potato to the 'troublesome crabgrass' – in service-learning this means that it can be a very positive process which is transformative and progressive like the 'potato' or it can embody the very worst in which it is an activity which takes advantage of the cultural other (Butin, 2007; Le Grange, 2007). Le Grange (2007) introduces the concept of territorialisation and deterritorialisation which she describes as the process whereby the best aspects of a programme can become the worst, and the worst aspects have the potential to become the best.

In service-learning we can illustrate territorialisation and deterritorialisation by considering the relationship between the university and the community. It is this connection that can lead to a transformative, long-lasting partnership whereby all involved gain a positive experience - making service-learning what it claims to be (territorialise) (Le Grange, 2007). However, this connection can also lead to a situation where service-learning is prescriptive and beneficial to one partner only, making service-learning a potentially repressive activity – theoretically what service-learning is not (deterritorialise). By relating service-learning to deterritorialisation Le Grange is showing how the best practices of service-learning can become the worst and the worst can become the best within service-learning.

2. 3 Principles of Service-learning

The core principles of service-learning are presented below. These include the main principles discussed in the previous section under each of the models discussed. This is by no means an exhaustive list but aims to highlight some of the important principles that guide service-learning.

2.3.1   Butin

Butin (2003:2007) proposes four principles; these include respect, reciprocity, relevance and reflection under the rubric of the four R's:

These four Rs will be discussed below briefly; firstly, the concept of *respect* deals with how the context and belief systems of those being served must be respected by those providing the service (Butin, 2003). It is important to note that the 'service provider[1]' and the community both have strengths and assets that they bring to the partnership, and that these must be respected as they are both needed in order to have a successful and fruitful service-learning programme (Butin, 2003, Mitchell & Humphries, 2007). Secondly, *reciprocity* deals with the way in which the service is not meant to benefit only the students providing the service but should provide a meaningful experience for all those partners in the relationship (Butin, 2003).

Thirdly, *relevance*, deals with how the service provided must be relevant to the course content of the course (Butin, 2003). This means that the service provided should be the main part of the course providing the students with the opportunity to engage with, reinforce, extend and critically interact with the content of their course (Butin, 2003). The last concept is *reflection* and forms an essential part of the service-learning experience (Butin, 2003). Reflection is essential to ensure that the students are given

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[1] I use the term developed and used within the service-learning tradition. The term raises questions about treating the community as an equal partner within the social justice perspective. The term is used because no alternative has been proposed.

enough time to give meaning and context to the complexity that is the service-learning experiences (Butin, 2003).

The benefit of service-learning is that it rejects the banking model of education, moving away from the traditional downward transference of knowledge from teacher to student to an active pedagogy that rejects the school as a silent graveyard of information dissemination (Butin, 2003). Thus, service learning provides an alternative to the traditional positivistic educational means of teaching, allowing for interaction between the university and the community in which it is situated.

2.3.2   Morton

The principles that can be extracted from Morton's social justice perspective are that it:

- Is process focused,
- Is concerned with building relationships amongst and within the stakeholders of the programme,
- Endeavours to ensure that all affected partners are included in the implementation and evaluation of the programme (Morton, 1995; Rosner-Salazar, 2003).

2.3.3   Le Grange (Deleuze and Guattari)

The third set of principles are posited by Le Grange (2007) informed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Le Grange (2007) describes six characteristics of rhizomes which can be useful when thinking about service-learning. The first two principles deal with principles of connection and heterogeneity, the third deals with multiplicity, the fourth with assigning rupture and the final two with cartography and decalcomania. These six principles are briefly outlined below:

- Principles of connection and heterogeneity and service-learning

This principle deals with the way in which at "any point a rhizome can be connected to anything other" (Le Grange, 2007, p.8). Thus, service-learning can connect in many ways the ideas, tools and skills of the various partners involved in the service-learning activity. This connection involves bringing together the skills and knowledge of the various stakeholders to create new knowledge and new jointly understood spaces in which mutual learning can occur (Le Grange, 2007).

- Principle of multiplicity and service-learning

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe that arborescent processes result in pseudo-multiplicities rather than actual multiplicity as found when thinking rhizomatically. This is because arborescent thinking involves the branching off from a single trunk, which in effect means that what is produced (the branches and fruits) are merely all variants of the same theoretical beginning (Le Grange, 2007). However, with a rhizome, true multiplicity can be achieved because a rhizome has no points but rather lines which enable the proliferation in all directions to form what is described by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) as an assemblage. This assemblage can change its nature as it grows and is not fixed and with regards to service-learning this means that the process should always be understood in terms of the context that it is in. This is because every service-learning activity relies on the interaction of numerous stakeholders and is unique in its possible outcomes (Le Grange, 2007).

- Principle of assigning rupture and service-learning

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) forward the idea that although a rhizome may become broken at a given point it will grow again from one of its old lines or on new lines. This principle also deals with the process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. These processes are generative when considering service-learning, Le Grange (2007) uses the example of the movement of service-learning from the USA to South Africa to illustrate

these processes. Firstly, service-learning is a pedagogy from the US, which means that it was territorialised in the US. Upon the adoption of service-learning in South Africa the service-learning process became deterritorialised through the interaction of humans and technology as it travelled from the US to South Africa and upon arrival service-learning was reterritorialsed in the context of South Africa, changed to suit the local climate (Le Grange, 2007). This means that through the process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation a phenomenon is not kept intact, a carbon copy of the original, but is transformed for the new context (Le Grange, 2007).

- Principle of Cartography and decalcomania and service-learning

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) view the rhizome as being a map rather than merely a tracing. They claim that the traditional western thinking of the tree logic is based on tracing and being able to reproduce, whereas when we consider service-learning as a map it is open to new connections and alternative explanations and possibilities (Le Grange, 2007). Therefore from this way of thinking service-learning is free from the need to trace the theoretical roots and as Le Grange points out "service-learning has multiple entryways, and its transformative potential lies in its orientation towards experimentation with (real) communities in efforts to address pressing problems faced by such communities"(p. 10).

This view forwarded by Le Grange (2007) is a useful way to consider service-learning as it allows for the theory of service-learning to become a very transformative process by nature of thinking about service-learning from an array of different perspective or 'boxes'.

2.4 Community- University Partnerships

Arguably, the most important part of any service-learning programme is the Community-University partnership. It is this partnership between the university and the community that ensures that any service-learning programme is able to run, without either party's involvement, service-learning would not exist.

It is important for higher education institutions to realise that they have a responsibility to society, and that they play an important social role and have a responsibility to share their resources with the community in which they are situated (Edwards, Mooney, Heald, 2001). The university also has a need to make education more practical and experience based and thus, service-learning with its focus on experiential learning provides the means through which the university can achieve this aim (Edwards et al., 2001). However, this said, it is important to note that historically; most higher education institutions have treated communities as "pockets of needs, laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise" (Bringle, Games & Malloy, 1999, p.9) rather than equal partners within the relationship.

The characteristics of community-university partnership are discussed by Bringle and Hatcher (2002) where they are identified as being very complex. The authors elaborate by saying that the cultural differences that exist between the university and the community make the relationship between these two partners complex. This cultural difference can be explicated by understanding that community-university partnerships are too often rooted in a culture of charity rather than social justice (Morton, 1995) as discussed previously in this chapter. Within this culture of charity the relationship between the community and the university is usually hierarchical and unidirectional in favour of the university partner (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). This means that the university uses the community under the guise of volunteerism, assisting the 'helpless' other without showing the necessary respect for the community, as well as, undermining the resources that the community brings to the partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Mitchell & Humphries,2007). Therefore, within the realm of university community relationships the quality of the relationship becomes vital, there is a need for the relationship to have a collegial, reciprocal and participatory nature where communication, respect and action towards mutually agreed upon goals is the main priority for both partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

Another important aspect to take into account when considering the community-university partnership is that these partnerships are dynamic, they will change and evolve and to avoid them becoming stagnant and unstable regular attention and support needs to be given to the partnership (Gelmon *et al*, 1998). In order to maintain a healthy, stable relationship there needs to be a means of effectively evaluating and communicating information about the potential costs and benefits that can be expected from the partnership. In this evaluation it is important for both partners to have a sense of self-awareness so that they can critically engage in discussion about what they would like to bring to, have brought and what is beneficial and negative in their partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Another fundamental aspect of the university-community partnership is effective communication between the partners. This communication needs to occur within a forum in which both the partners feel powerful enough to engage in constructive communication about the service-learning programme (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005).

Other aspects of the community-university partnership that need to be considered when discussing the characteristics of these service-learning unions include that the relationships are not linear, but are rather dynamic and bidirectional in that both the community partner and the university partner need to interact so as to attempt to balance power issues. This is to ensure that both partners can interact within the relationship in an equitable manner (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007). It is also important for the university partner to remember that the goals and length of the service-learning programme they have in mind may not be congruent with that of the community. Thus, the technical and cultural aspects of a service-learning programme have to be considered from a political perspective in order to ensure that even if the community and university approaches to the service-learning programme are not congruent, that they are openly and equally discussed by the parties involved to ensure that the programme is mutually worthwhile (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Butin, 2003; Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005).

Bringle and Hatcher (2002) and Gelmon *et al* (1998) posit different theories for thinking about relationship development and maintenance. These theories frame the possible

ways in which the development of the relationship between the university and the community, as well as the student and the community affects how the community will experience a service-learning programme. The four theories are systems theory (Gelmon *et al.*, 1998), exchange theory, equity theory and social exchange theory (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002). These are discussed briefly below:

2.4.1 *Systems Theory*

Gelmon *et al* (1998) suggest that a systems approach can be used when approaching the university-community partnership. This means that if the partnership is a system, a single change in one part of this system will potentially affect the whole system. Thus in order for the system to function properly Messer (in Gelmon *et al*, 1998) suggests that there needs to be: mutual respect, active participation, communication, mutual goals, mutual accountability, respect for autonomy, willingness to be flexible and adaptable and beneficial to the community. It is important to include the structural and historical aspects of a partnership when evaluating service-learning.

2.4.2 *Exchange Theory*

Exchange theory states that the outcomes (the rewards and the costs) must exceed what is minimally expected for a relationship to be initiated and maintained (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Within exchange theory there are three important issues that are required for relationship development. These three issues are:

- Appropriately reporting displeasure
- Emotional support and advice
- Managing interpersonal conflict

(Bringle & Hatcher, 2002)

Exchange theory also lists certain criteria that are necessary in order to have closeness within a community-university partnership. These factors are:

- Frequency of interaction
- Diversity of interaction

- Strengths of other partner's behaviour, decisions, plans and goals
- Bilateral influence, consensual decision making and interdependency

(Bringle & Hatcher, 2002)

Exchange theory remains a useful theory when taking a political/post structuralist perspective in examining community-university partnerships. This is because exchange theory recognises that all relationships are different, and that the relationship is different for both members involved in the partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Hence it highlights the need for the relationship between the two parties to be examined from the perspective of both of these parties. It is through the examination from both perspectives that the relationship between the university and the community can be understood, evaluated and appreciated in the best way (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

2.4.3 *Equity Theory*

Within the realm of relationship development, equity theory posits that when the outcomes of a relationship are perceived as in proportion to the inputs, even if the outcomes are unequal the relationship will be satisfying (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Thus, in the case of service-learning, a partnership would be satisfying for both partners if the outcomes of the service-learning programme will be beneficial to both of them. Therefore, the university may feel that a site for their students and the benefits for their students may be beneficial enough for them, whilst the community partner may feel that the chance for gaining resources from the university is enough for them to have a positive relationship experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005).

In community-university partnerships what frequently happens is that there is inequitable balance in the relationship, most often in favour of the tertiary institution, where the university partner over benefits whilst the community partner under benefits from the partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). According to equity theory when this occurs the relationship often becomes marked by distress from one or both of the partners, when this happens one of two outcomes can occur (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Firstly, and the more

common occurrence is that the relationship dissolves and the university-community link is severed; secondly, and what should happen when working within a political/post-structuralist perspective is that equity is restored through the rebalancing of the inputs and outcomes of each partner (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

A third scenario that could occur in an inequitable partnership, is that the less powerful partner remains in the partnership for fear of losing any needed resources from the more powerful partner. The partner benefiting (usually the university) would continue to reap benefits at the expense of the silenced community partner who continues in the relationship out of fear of losing a connection with the university.

2.4.4   *Social Exchange Theory*

Social exchange theory states that dependency within a relationship is the degree to which outcomes from a relationship exceed the assumed outcomes that are available in another, different relationship (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). The theory states the dependency within a relationship is only healthy when it is mutual interdependency rather than dependency that is one sided, and that the relative dependency within the relationship is based on who invests more, who commits more, who puts in more effort and who gains more from the relationship (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

Social Exchange theory also draws on Walters principle of least investment. This principle states that the partner within the relationship who invests least in the partnership has the most power (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Although this is understandable as the partner who has least to lose would lose less if they left, the partner investing the least may not want to lose the resources provided by the other partner and so this may not always be the case. The problem with this power imbalance makes one partner more powerful than the other which is destructive for relationship building insofar as, if there is the ability to threaten the community by withdrawing support then there will not be a mutual trust or collegial spirit.

Having discussed the different theoretical ways of looking at partnerships between the two primary stakeholders (i.e. the university and the community) it is important to remember a less spoken about partnership that is critical to the maintenance of service-learning programmes. In this study this 'micro-partnership' comes in the form of a relationship between students and learners. It is an important element of service-learning partnerships that will directly influence how a programme is received by the population it aims to service. This interaction moves beyond the university-community partnership, as it involves the direct players in the service-learning program and will ultimately influence how the university-community partnership is established. Thus, when considering the macro-partnership that is established between the university and the community, it is important to look at the smaller and important partnership and relationship between the players actually conducting and participating in the programme.

The above theories are congruent with a political and poststructuralist perspective in that they allow for questions to be asked about conflict within partnerships. Furthermore, in line with these perspectives, there is no unitary truth about how a partnership should be conceptualised, but rather that a partnership is different for each involved party and that the aims, goals, desires - and not merely the technical aspects of each - should become an integral part of the planning process when establishing a partnership (Butin, 2003; Butin, 2007, Le Grange, 2007).

Within the service-learning tradition longevity of a relationship is a desirable characteristic, however, a long relationship or partnership is not necessarily close or healthy (Bringle &Hatcher, 2002). An unhealthy relationship may be characterised by one-sided dependency or a relationship dominated by a charity perspective in which the university creates an environment in which the community is treated as a helpless partner (Morton, 1995).

Thus, from this discussion we can see that it is important to move towards partnerships in service-learning that are supportive, mutually beneficial to all parties involved, beneficial to all and that protect the 'we' rather than the 'me' (Katz & Beach, 2000). Therefore,

what becomes important for the partnership is the preservation of integrity, honouring the purpose of the relationship, ensuring the growth of each partner and rather than focusing on individual outcomes, appraising and systematically evaluating the joint outcomes of the programme for both the university and the community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). It is important to remember that each partner is contributing in a meaningful manner to activities that have a positive impact on important community and campus outcomes (Bringle and Hatcher, 2007)

2.5 Research in the field of Service-learning

2.5.1 Current Focus of Research in the Service-learning Field

Research in the field of service-learning has remained focused on student experiences of service-learning, and what outcomes are fostered by their participation in service-learning activities.

There is relatively little published research on service-learning in South Africa. In a recent innovative publication, the University of Johannesburg has listed some of the most current research into service-learning especially in South Africa. The Education as Change Special Issue: Community Service Learning Journal (2007) lists 15 of the most current articles relating to service-learning. Of the 15 articles, five report on the community voice within service-learning programs, the remainder of the articles report on student benefits from service-learning participation, staff participation in service-learning, issues regarding service-learning in the academic setting, and experiences gained by implementers of service-learning programmes.

It is interesting to note that the publication reports on community voice, showing that service-learning advocates are beginning to recognise the importance of incorporating the community experience of service-learning on the research agenda. This said the majority of research remains university-student focussed. The article by Nduna (2007) reports on the experience of those communities participating in a service-learning programme with

the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Although the article moves in a positive direction insofar as accessing the community voice, the methodology of interviews is used.

This South African publication is congruent with the international service-learning research agenda in that it reports that service-learning's impact on students is a positive one, and that the benefits of service-learning include enhancing cognitive, affective and ethical outcomes, fostering active citizenry within students, promoting a scholarship of engagement amongst teachers and institutions and helping to instil in students a sense of equitable societies (Butin, 2003, Giles and Eyler, 1998). Articles that discuss the benefits of service-learning for students include Daniels (2007) who looks at the benefits of service-learning for students participating in a service-learning programme. The research reports benefits congruent with the findings found in other research studies including that students grow personally and professionally and have increased ability to reflect on their internal biases and actions within the community setting. Karekezi, Wrench, Quinn, Belluigi and Srinivas (2007) and Bheekie, Adonis and Daniels (2007) discuss the benefits of service-learning for pharmacy students involved in service-learning programmes. Again these articles are in line with the dominant focus of service-learning, remaining focused on the benefits that the students accrued during their time with the communities, all the while failing to discuss what impact the programme had for the community in which the programme was carried out.

Erasmus (2007) discuss the issue of supporting academic staff as the champions of service-learning and "looks at the gap that exists between the rhetoric of a renewed focus on community engagement and reality of staff members' perceptions in respect of the lack of substantial support for their efforts" (Erasmus, 2007, p.109). This is also becoming an increasingly important issue in service-learning, as staff involved in service-learning are becoming an important experience group from whom to gain information. Lazarus (2007) article reflects on the CHESP programme and its implementation in the South African setting, but fails to mention anything significant about how this

programme initiative has been accepted by community members, or even whether the community was involved in its development at all.

Thus, although service-providers are beginning to understand that service-learning should "equally benefit the provider and the recipient" (Furco, 1996, p.5 in Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004, p.6), they still emphasise the importance of the students and service-provider over the community.

2.5.2 Limitations of the Service-learning Research Agenda

Current service-learning research has focused on how students benefit from participating in a service-learning program, and the importance of developing the partnership between the campus and the community (such as studies conducted by Amtmann, 2004; Eyler, Giles and Braxton, 1997; Osborne, Hammerich & Hensley, 1998). However, there are areas of service-learning that have been underrepresented on the service-learning research agenda. These areas include service-learning's impact on the community (Schmidt & Robby, 2002 citing Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2002), the elements that make a service-learning program more or less beneficial to certain communities and the questions raised concerning the efficacy of current service-learning evaluation methods.

Service-learning researchers and practitioners need to assess how the community is influenced by the way in which the service-learning programmes are conducted, and how characteristics of a program may influence the quality of the service-learning experience for the community involved. This raises some important issues that need to be considered by service-learning advocates:

Firstly, although service-learning programs bring together various stakeholders (such as the university, the students, the faculty, and the community), the primary 'voice' governing service-learning is the university's and the element affecting the outcome of a course is defined by student learning experiences (Eby, 1998). However, this approach neglects the importance of how, and what community elements affect a service-learning program. This view neglects to identify how a community may play a part in the success

or failure of a program. It is important for service-learning advocates to remember that the community partner's acceptance and support for a program is critical if the program is to succeed, without community support, a program will not be able to be sustainable and will fail to be beneficial to either partner. This neglected area of service-learning research needs to be placed higher on the research agenda and an adequate methodology to capture this important data needs to be established.

Secondly, it is important to understand what elements (student, university and community) provide the means to ensure that the benefits of a service-learning program are maintained and allowed to accrue (Butin, 2003). These issues are important to research because upon review of numerous articles from the Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning (1994-2006), there were few articles found concerning what elements (be they student, community or program elements) make a service-learning more or less beneficial to a community. The focus of the journals appears to be on what outcomes are achieved for students after participating in a service-learning program, and what characteristics service-learning fosters in students. There is a distinct lack of focus on what characteristics affect the implementation of service-learning programmes, and how these characteristics influence the efficacy of a service-learning programme for the community.

As discussed previously current research has shown a bias towards student opinions forming the basis for the utility of a given program whilst the community voice in research has been largely silent or assumed to be congruent with that of the students feelings and experiences. Little evidence exists to show that a service learning program has any significant impact for the recipients of the service (Butin, 2003; Giles et al, 1999; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Questions that need to be asked concerning community impact include questions concerning issues of sustained impact, who benefits from service-learning programs, and what actual learning is documented from the service recipients (Butin, 2003). Other areas of service learning research that need to be addressed concern the presumptions that underlie service learning, these presumptions include issues around neutrality, the privileging of whiteness and imbalances in power

relations (Butin, 2003; Butin, 2007). These areas are important, because service learning assumes that the students are neutral entities that positively affect the environment in which they are placed (Butin, 2003; Stanton, Giles and Cruz, 1999). By acting within the community, the students will affect the system in certain ways – when one acts within a system, one leaves it changed forever, positively, negatively or with no significant impact at all – it is this change that service-learning researchers need to access and systematically research.

Power dynamics within a partnership are an important aspect of any service-learning program that need further research as well. It is important to note that power imbalances within a partnership lead to inequity and may make one partner more dependant than the other (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002). A relationship with unbalanced dependency is congruent with a charity perspective (Morton, 1995), which undermines the importance of the service recipient, valuing the service provider for being more resourced than the other is. This type of relationship is not congruent with the values espoused by service learning conceptualisations that value equity within partnerships. This conceptualisations need to be systematically researched in order to determine whether or not these power imbalances impact on the experience of service-learning for all partners involved. Research is also needed to ascertain if these power imbalances exist, and what impact they have service-learning programmes.

Another area that has been neglected within the service-learning tradition is programme evaluation especially from the perspective of the community partner. Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamone, & Conners (1998) state that as of yet there has been little systematic investigation into how service-learning as an educational medium impacts on the communities in which it is implemented. It is important to remember that the community is a partner within the partnership and thus, using a social justice perspective, effective program evaluation cannot occur unless the community perspective of the program is taken into consideration (Gelmon, et al., 1998).

Gelmon *et al* (1998) claim that an important part of evaluating service-learning programmes is to ask important questions such as how the service-learning affects the community-university partnership, and what impact the service-learning learning program has on its participating community members. These are important issues to consider when dealing with any service as it moves the service away from social charity to a perspective that embraces social justice, realising that the community partner provides strengths to the partnership as well. It is important to remember that community-university partnerships are organic, multifaceted and interdependent systems (Sigmon, 1996), thus, neither involved party is more important than the other is, but rather both parties are as integrally important to the process as the other is.

In an earlier study the current author reviewed the research that claimed to focus on community perspectives and highlighted the following:

In the article "Service-learning: A language of "we" (Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004) the authors reflect on the need for reciprocity within community-service provider partnership but appear to view service-learning as charity. They refer to the serviced community as "high risk," "underserved, low income population" and that the program was designed to meet community needs. The article also assumes that students' views of the program are a true reflection of community attitudes. "Students promoting economic development and environmental sustainability: An analysis of the impact of involvement in a community-based research and service-learning program", Keen & Baldwin's (2004) emphasis on the benefits of service learning on the community is limited. Although the authors state that to focus merely on student outcomes would neglect the importance of meeting the needs of the community partners, they still report more information about how the students benefited from the program.

The article "Perceived Effects of a Correctional Health Education Service-learning Program" (Amtmann, 2004) provided community perceptions (inmates at a prison) about their experience in the service-learning program (students teaching a Continuing Health Education [CHE] course). The authors state that " the purpose of the study was to determine the subjective college student and inmate perceptions of the effectiveness of the CHE component of the wellness program, and whether or not this program provided a worthwhile educational experience for the college students" (Amtmann, 2004, p. 337). The disparity in this statement (the researchers want to find out how a program, aimed at benefiting inmates and students provided a worthwhile educational experience for students only) reflects what appears to be a common trend in service-learning research. The article "Linking Environmental Science Students to External Community Partners" (Grossman & Cooper, 2004) is an example of how many researchers and service-learning providers tend to ignore the community partners. This article does not refer to the community and the authors did not appear to assess the affects that service-learning had on the relevant communities.

When considering the service-learning research agenda one has to ask why research into the impact and affects of service-learning on the community has been largely ignored or underrepresented in the service-learning research agenda, when its salience is so glaringly obvious. One is left contemplating "where is the community in service learning?"

Chapter 3: Aims and Rationale

This chapter outlines the aims and rationale for this research study. This chapter will highlight the rationale behind the use of participatory techniques, as one of the secondary aims of this study was to assess the utility of the methodology.

3.1 Aims of the Study

The important aims of the study are listed below:

- To obtain information regarding the community perspective towards service-learning.
- The study sought to observe and qualify what impact, and what elements affected the community's feelings towards the service-learning programme
- The study hoped to provide an indication of the usefulness of participatory research techniques in assessing the community viewpoints on service-learning.

The research questions guiding the research were:

- What is the effect of a service-learning programme on two school communities?
- What are the elements that make a service-learning programme more or less beneficial to certain communities?

The research aimed to gain information regarding the community feelings towards service-learning and to observe and qualify what impact, and what elements affected the community's feelings towards the service-learning programme. The research objectives were to assess the value of service-learning for the community in which it was implemented, to access the 'community voice' and to evaluate the utility of service-learning to the community partner and make recommendations on how service-learning can be made more beneficial for the partners involved in the programme.

3.2 Rationale for the Study

3.2.1 Rationale for Conducting this Research

The study is significant because it researched an area of service-learning that has been absent from the service-learning research agenda (Giles and Eyler, 1997). From the literature it is evident that utility of service-learning has been based largely on information obtained from students, the assumption being that if the students had a positive experience then the service-learning programme is automatically a success (Keen & Baldwin, 2004; Taylor & Ballengee-Morris, 2004). This study chose to examine whether or not this assumption of benefit is founded, when evaluating the programme from the perspective of the community being served.

As discussed in the literature review service-learning research has focused on how students benefit from participating in a service-learning program. The research has also focused on what factors, and what important elements are at play when developing the partnership between the campus and the community (such as studies conducted by Amtmann, 2004; Eyler, Giles and Braxton, 1997; Osborne, Hammerich & Hensley, 1998). The areas of service-learning that have been under-represented on the research agenda include which elements make a service-learning program more or less beneficial to certain communities and what the efficacy of current service-learning evaluation methods is (Schmidt & Robby, 2002 citing Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2002).

Thus, there is a need for service-learning researchers and practitioners to assess how the community is influenced by the way in which programmes are conducted, and how the characteristics of a programme may influence the quality of the service-learning experience for the community involved.

3.2.2 Methodological Approach to this Study

This section will explain the potential importance and utility of participatory research approaches in the field of service-learning. This section will explain how these less traditional approaches to programme evaluation may provide a beneficial way of seeking the community voice within a community programme, and finding out how the community experiences the service-learning programme.

This study follows previous research conducted by the author, and continued the use of participatory research techniques in order to obtain information from the community about how they had experienced the service-learning programme during the entire duration of the programme. The research used participatory research techniques because of the lack of established methodology with regards to community perceptions in service-learning, and because the techniques aim to diminish the power dynamics that exist between the researcher and the participants, as well as creating an environment that empowers the community members to provide the experiences of the programme without being influenced by the power dynamics that exist between the university-community relationship as well (Theis & Grady, 1991).

Participatory research is useful in studying the local knowledge of a community which is "the integrative framework people in a particular setting use to make sense of their world" (Van Vlaenderen, n.d, p.2), i.e. the contextualised knowledge of the community. Participatory techniques are also useful in a South African setting because they were designed for use in nations where previously developed 'American-Euro centric' techniques had failed (Van Vlaenderen, n.d.).

The great usefulness of participatory techniques is that they may act as a useful qualitative methodology for research in service-learning as they provide a means by which the power dynamics that exist between the university and the community can be minimised, this is because it highlights the role of the researcher as a facilitator in the research process not as a controller, making the research process a joint venture shared

and owned by all involved (Gilbert, 1997 citing Van Vlaenderen, 1995). Participatory techniques include ranking exercises, Venn diagrams, timelines, and seasonal calendars, transect walks and mapping (Theis & Grady, 1991).

Participatory techniques are useful as they allow the researcher to probe during the research process so that deeper insight can be obtained into participant knowledge (Gilbert, 1997). Gilbert (1997) explains that Participatory techniques are characterised by:

- They allow people to provide information and ideas using symbols and materials that are relevant to them
- They allow research participants to provide information using local concepts and classifications.
- They allow data to be collected in a holistic way (which remains contextualised, making the information gained relevant to the research setting).
- They allow the researcher to observe differences in the information gained from different members of the relevant community
- They are based on collective data gathering.

These characteristics show that those values espoused by service-learning are congruent with those of participatory approaches to research (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). The value of participatory techniques means that the community and the service provider are able to explicate and share their knowledge and feelings, whilst the service provider gains insight into the advantages and disadvantages of their program. This would be achieved through the discussion that revolves around the output generated during the participatory techniques (Gilbert, 1997).

Another useful benefit of participatory research techniques for service-learning research is that they usually provide diagrammatic output which acts as a simple schematic device that presents the community generated data in a visual form (Gilbert, 1997). The visual output is usually generated by the groups and not individuals. This quality is useful for

researchers as it means that the community can assist in the generation of knowledge, which can be combined to form a representative view of the community's knowledge (Van Vlaenderen, n.d). Another benefit of this graphical output is that it facilitates discussion between the research participants; this discussion can be captured by the research and the complexities of the discussion can be interrogated and 'interviewed' (Gilbert, 1997). This allows the researcher to gain an understanding of what the community is trying to communicate and means that the research is able to remain centred on their views and experiences (Gilbert, 1997; Theis & Grady, 1991).

Perhaps the most important aspect of participatory research techniques for service-learning is that they assess community knowledge (Theis & Grady, 1991; Van Vlaenderen, n.d). This aspect of service-learning has been under represented on its research agenda, and this failure means that service-learning's utility for the community partner has been ignored, and seriously under-researched. To elaborate, since most research in service-learning is aimed at student experiences, and seems to assume that if the students report that the program benefited them then the community must have benefited as well, it lends itself to an imbalance in the community-university relationship, where the research being conducted subscribes to the interests of the university and not the community. Thus, participatory techniques may provide a means by which the service providers could ensure that their programs benefit not only themselves but the community as well.

3.3 Conclusion

This section shows that the need for research in community impact is necessary. Thus, the research has utility in that it is adding to the limited information surrounding this topic. The methodology chosen for this study is important as it provides a means through which the community is able to take over the research process, and even though the research may not achieve a proper participatory approach, the techniques will be useful in accessing the community voice that has been largely absent from service-learning research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

As the current study aimed to research an area of service-learning that remains under-researched, the study was descriptive in nature (Terre Blanche & Durrheim , 1999). A qualitative approach was employed as there is a need for research to capture the intricate and rich data surrounding communities' perceptions of their service-learning experience (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The study was informed by the post-structuralist/critical perspective insofar as the study aimed to question, and challenge the assumptions made by service-learning programmes, and also sought to gain insight into how communities perceive the service-learning programme's efficacy. A complete post-structuralist/critical analysis of the data would require more in-depth research but it is hoped that this research moved towards using this framework and began asking the questions that are currently being insufficiently researched in the service-learning field.

As mentioned previously the research was a qualitative study and involved a repeated measures (via focus groups) design (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). To elaborate, this was in the form of focus group discussions with the same group of sample learners on three occasions namely before, during and after the implementation of a service-learning program. Figure 3.1 below shows a schematic representation of the research design which clarifies the repeated measures design. From the figure below it is observable that the focus groups were conducted on three occasions, staggered in time to obtain a community perspective of the service-learning programme at its beginning, implementation and conclusion at the schools. This schematic representation provides an overview of the entire research design for this project.

Pre- service-learning intervention focus groups		Focus groups run during the service-learning program		Post service-learning intervention focus groups
These focus groups were conducted prior to the onset of the service-learning program in the schools. Conducted at two schools n = 10 x 2 = 20 Run 1 month before the start of the service-learning program	University's service-learning program begins in the sample schools	These focus groups were run while the service-learning program was running in the schools. Conducted at two sample schools. n = 10 x 2 = 20 Run mid way through the service-learning program	University service-learning program ends in the schools	These focus groups were run once the service-learning program had finished at the schools Conducted at the two sample schools n = 10 x 2 = 20 Run 3 weeks after the end of the service-learning program (due to the end of year school exam commencement)

Fig 4.1 Schematic representation of research design

Focus groups enable the researcher to "stimulate an in-depth exploration of a topic about which little is known" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1998 p.505), a fundamentally important part of data collection for this study. In each of the focus group discussions the researcher used participatory techniques as the method of data collection. These have been used extensively in community development research and are useful in capturing information in a way which is set out by the community with which one is working (Van Vlaenderen, n.d).

Previous research has revealed that the use of participatory techniques allow participants whose voices are usually 'silenced' to be heard (Mitchell and Humphries, 2007). They are useful in a community setting because they attempt to minimise the power dynamics that often exist between community and the university (Theis and Grady, 1991; Van Vlaenderen, n.d).

4.1.1 Aims and Rationale

The information obtained from the participatory output was used to obtain insight into the research questions posed by this research project, and questions that have been largely ignored in service-learning academia. These questions are

- What is the effect of a service-learning program on a/some community/ies?
- What are the elements that make a service-learning programme more or less beneficial to certain communities?

The aim of this study was to gain information regarding the communities' experiences of service-learning and to observe and qualify what impact and what elements affected the experience. Continuing from previous research conducted by this researcher it is hoped that the procedure used will allow for comparisons between the findings of this research and this previous research as well building on the little previous research conducted in this area of service-learning. This study also aimed to further explore the value of qualitative research in capturing the complex nature of community sentiment towards service-learning which is often lost in the aggregation of more quantitative methodologies.

4.2 Research Sampling

The study used purposive, non-random sampling (Henry, 1998) as the study wanted a sample of learners that met specific, research outlined criteria. The research project obtained information about a given topic from a specific sample group of learners from three schools in the Pietermaritzburg region. The schools were selected based on the criteria that they were: 1) participating in the service-learning program run by the School of Psychology of the UKZN, in 2006, and 2) The learner group had to be taught by the students participating in the service-learning programme. The criteria did not have specified boundaries regarding age, race or gender.

The sample schools were all former Model C, English medium primary schools located in urban suburbs of Pietermaritzburg and both were government schools. The schools are quite large centres catering for over 400 learners each. Only certain classes participated in the service learning programme therefore research involved learners from three classes, and so the total population from which the sample was drawn was approximately 65-70 learners. The original intention was to include a High school in the sample, however, the participating High school's life skills teachers sent learners that were not participating in the service-learning programme to participate in the pre-focus group discussions. The researcher only discovered this when he returned to conduct the during-focus group with the selected learners. Therefore, this sample and their data set were excluded from the study.

The sample consisted of ten learners per focus group; it included approximately equal numbers of males and females of mixed race groups, including African, Coloured and Indian children. The same learners participated throughout the research process and thus the sample size for the study was twenty overall. The age range for the research project was 10-12 years of age. The sample was selected randomly from school class lists of learners by the teachers. The teacher selected learners from the class list at specific intervals, for example every fourth child on the class list was selected to participate, in this way each child had an opportunity to be selected.

4.3 Research Data Collection Techniques

4.3.1 Participatory Research Collection Techniques

Originally, the data collection process planned to make use of three useful participatory techniques within each of the focus groups: Venn diagrams; ranking exercise; history timeline. Due to time constraints and other factors (discussed below) only the ranking exercise was conducted. The History timeline was used in the final focus groups only in order to reflect on the entire experience of the service-learning program.

From previous research, conducted by Humphries (2005), participatory techniques were used as the primary data collection technique because they enabled the community of

learners to express themselves in a way that was most comfortable to them (Krueger, 1994). This was particularly useful for the research as the children were young and the participatory techniques enabled the learners to express themselves in a way that is not dependant on good writing and literacy skills like traditional questionnaire techniques (Krueger, 1994).

It is also important to note here that with participatory research the diagrams produced by the learners as an end product of the technique, provided the researcher with additional insight into the learners' perceptions and allowed the researcher to probe and clarify the ideas forwarded by the learners. The participatory research techniques allowed the researcher to access the learners' opinions and feelings towards the service-learning program. The questions that were asked during the participatory exercises were developed prior to conducting the research so that the research process could be guided throughout by the research questions.

4.3.2 Focus Group Discussions

The participatory techniques were used in the context of a focus group setting. This was most beneficial as the environment of the focus group "provide[s] data that are closer to the emic side of the continuum, because they allow individuals to respond in their own words using their own categorizations and perceived associations" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1998, p.507). This is particularly useful given the congruence of these methods with the principle of social justice which is fore grounded in this research. The focus group also acted as a forum within which the researcher could clarify and probe the community perceptions whilst with the community members, as well as being able to obtain first hand insight into community thoughts without having them summarized into categorical 'boxes' as is often the case with questionnaires. The researcher was able to raise questions and initiate some discussion about the issues that were raised by the community.

It is important to note here that when the focus groups were conducted the sessions could only last a maximum of 90 minutes. Thus, due to time constraints it became impossible to

conduct all three exercises comprehensively within the allocated time period. It was necessary that the design was altered to accommodate the time constraint, and instead of conducting all three exercises, the researcher conducted a discussion with the sample groups, after which a ranking exercise was conducted. This proved a very useful method, as the discussion acted as a platform for rapport building with the learner samples, and useful insights could be interrogated.

The value of conducting three sets of focus groups with the two learner samples over the course of the service-learning programme was that they allowed the samples of learners from the two schools to act as their own comparison group. This was because the focus groups tracked the changes in the learners' perceptions towards the service-learning program; from before it began until it concluded towards the end of the university semester.

4.4 The Research Process

The following section provides a detailed discussion of the research process that was undertaken at the sample schools.

4.4.1 Informed Consent Process

The first step in the research process was to obtain permission from the schools to conduct research with their learners. An appointment was made with the heads of both schools and the aims of research project were outlined to them. Once permission was obtained from the heads of the schools, the classes from which the learners would come were selected. The teachers of these classes then selected learners from their class for the focus groups. Once the learners were selected an informed consent form was sent home with these learners to their parents informing them of the research. The schools informed the researcher that the parents had no objection to their children's participation in the research project, and thus the research was able to continue.

When the researcher arrived to conduct the focus groups informed consent was obtained from the learners to ensure that they had a full understanding of what the research was

about, and that their participation was voluntary and that they could leave the research at any time without any repercussions. The informed consent forms were kept by the researcher and have not been linked to the research findings, ensuring confidentiality of participants. It is important to note that the informed consent process was then verbally undertaken with the participants at each of the focus group conducted throughout the course of the research. All the participants were willing to continue with the process.

4.4.2 Conducting the Focus Group

The focus groups followed the same pattern for both the school samples. This outline is discussed below:

a) Ice breaker

An icebreaker was performed at the first set of focus groups only and its purpose was to build rapport with the learners, and try and make them more comfortable in the research setting. This was done via an exercise in which each of the learners said their name, and made up a hand sign that represented them. The game concluded after five minutes. The researcher then spent some time talking to the participants about what they enjoyed doing so that there could be increased rapport between the researcher and the learners.

b) Overarching Guiding Questions/Themes/Issues:

The second part of the focus group took the form of a discussion with the learners concerning the various aspects of the service learning programme. The three focus group discussions were guided by the following broad questions:

a) *First focus group:* In the first set of focus groups the discussion concerned what the learners' were *expecting* from the life skills classes once the students arrived at the school. Thus, the first set of focus groups dealt with learner *expectations*.

b) *Second focus group:* In the second set of focus groups the discussion revolved around what the life skills classes were like with the student teachers. Thus, the second set of focus groups dealt with learner *experience*.

c) *Third Focus group:* Lastly, in the final set of focus groups the participants were asked to reflect on what the life skills classes were like while the student teachers were taking them. Thus, the final focus groups dealt with the learners retrospectively *reflecting* on their experience.

c) Brainstorming

This process was carried out at the outset of each of the three sets of focus groups. Initially the researcher held a brainstorming session with the learners, this involved using large pieces of paper on which the learners wrote down, drew pictures or represented in another way what they thought were the good and bad things about the service-learning programme. After the brain storming was done the output was 'interviewed' by the researcher, and an open discussion commenced with the learners concerning what they had represented as their experience of the service-learning programme.

d) Ranking Exercise

The ideas that were generated during the open discussions with the learners formed the basis for the ranking activity, and were used to obtain information concerning whether learners felt they were benefiting through participating in the service-learning program, and what elements made it enjoyable or not. Ranking was a useful tool in this research as it allowed the researcher to "discover individuals or groups relative prioritisation of elements of a single issue" (Theis and Grady, 1991, p. no number) as well as allowing the community to "do it their own way" (Theis and Grady, 1991, p.62).

Another benefit of the ranking activity was that it allowed the researcher to discuss and interrogate the issues that were ranked by the participants, thus finding out why the learners felt a certain way about certain issues around the programme. It is important to

note that the ranking activity was based on the direct ranking matrix outlined in Theis and Grady (1991) but was tailored to suit the specific context encountered at each school.

The following process was used at both schools. At the one school the learner sample was discriminated into separate grade groups as the sample consisted of learners from two grades that had two different service-learning students. Thus, before the onset of the focus groups the two groups were placed in separate groups. However, the research process remained the same for both groups.

The purpose of the ranking exercise was to allow the learners at the schools to list what elements of the service-learning programme they enjoyed and which parts they did not. The aim of the ranking exercise was to see what impact the service-learning had on the community of learners. For the first set of focus groups the following process was followed:

- The ice breaker was conducted, and
- At the first school sample the learners were separated into two groups according to which grade they were in, making two groups of five learners each
- At the second sample school the group remained at ten learners as all learners were from a single class
- These groups were maintained for the duration of the research at the schools.

For all focus groups (including pre, during and post) the following research process was followed:

- The learners were asked to brainstorm ideas concerning the overarching questions that guided each set of focus groups as discussed previously.
- The learners were not restricted to any number of issues and the researcher remained separate from the discussion concerning the issues raised until after the learners had finished naming their issues

- The issues became the items that were to be scored and ranked by the learners

- The discussion lasted approximately 40 minutes

- The items raised by the learners were listed on the side of the paper on which the ranking matrix was drawn whilst the learners' names (or pseudonyms as chosen by the learners) were written across the top of the paper (shown in table 3.1). A final column was added to the end of the matrix for total scores and was used as the basis for the initial ranking procedure

- Each learner then individually scored each item using a scale from 1(not an important cost/benefit) through to 10 (important cost/benefit) without consulting other members of the group.

- The scores for each item were added up by the individual learner and totalled once the other learners' had finished scoring each of the items for themselves.

- The items with the highest totals were ranked as most salient whilst the items with the lowest totals were ranked as the least salient. These ranked items were then discussed with the participants to identify whether all members agreed with the order the items had been placed in.

- A discussion of the perceived costs and benefits, and what impact these had on the learner experience of the service-learning programme followed the ranking exercise. The ranking exercise took approximately 50 minutes to complete.

Items	Participant Name	Participant Name	Total
Item 1: e.g. inexperience	Score between 1 and 10		
Item 2 etc.			

Table 4.2: Example of ranking table drawn up by the participants.

e) Closing the focus group

At the end of the first and second focus groups the learners were told that the researcher would be back, and that if they had questions that they thought about, they were welcome to stop the researcher at the next focus group and ask their questions.

At the beginning of the final focus group the learners were told that the researcher would not be returning to the school and that this was the final focus group. At the end of the focus group the learners were reminded that the researcher would not be returning to the school. The learners were asked if they had any questions that they would like to ask about the research process, and about the data before the researcher left. Although the learners did not ask any questions, the researcher reiterated that the learners were welcome to contact the researcher at any time, if they wanted to get information regarding their participation in the research study.

4.5 Data Analysis

In this study the methods of data collection were all techniques geared towards producing rich, qualitative data. This data consisted of transcript data produced from the recording of the focus group discussions and the research output generated from the ranking exercises conducted with the learners.

The first step in the data analysis process was the transcription of the recorded focus group information. Transcription is the process of data reduction which involves "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10). The transcription process began with the researcher listening to the recordings to gain familiarity with the recorded data and to obtain an in-depth understanding of the information gathered during the research process (Boyatzis, 1998). The second step in the transcription process was the actual transcription of the recordings, upon which the formal data analysis and code development could begin.

As stated before the data analysis process involved the analysis of two data sets for each focus group – the participatory technique output and the data transcripts. The first step was to analyse the participatory output, this was important as it provided the researcher with a tangible summary of all the issues that had been raised, by the learners, concerning their experiences of the service-learning programme. It was also data that was directly observable to the researcher and allowed the researcher to gain a summarised version of the community output, although for a deeper understanding of the issues raised it was necessary to analyse the transcript data. Every focus group produced a ranking activity summarising the issues and feelings generated by the community.

The method of analysis chosen for this research project was thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). This involved the researcher reading the transcripts from each of the focus groups and identifying relevant and significant data pertaining to the overall research question and purpose. The researcher first separated the transcripts according to which focus group they pertained to. Thus, the transcripts were separated into transcripts for the pre, during and post group focus groups. This was done because the data for each set of focus groups had to be viewed independently in order for the researcher to see how the learners' experiences changed over time. The researcher began by reading through each of the transcripts (there were three transcripts per set of focus groups – Two from the one sample school [for each separate grade] and one from the other sample school) twice before beginning to extract the relevant data. This was to ensure that the researcher had the necessary familiarity with the data and the context.

The research transcripts, once analysed, had the relevant and significant data grouped into categories. This was done according to whether or not they were related and relevant to the purpose of the research question. These groupings became the themes for the research project. It is important to note here that the themes identified in the 'pre' focus groups were used to inform the analysis for the 'during' and 'post' focus groups as well. This was to identify whether the same themes remained consistent throughout the study or if the themes in the beginning became obsolete as the service-learning programme continued. New themes were identified in order to highlight factors that became

important to the community of learners' as the service-learning programme progressed at the schools.

The themes identified in each set of focus groups were considered on a manifest level (themes that are directly observable in the data, e.g. inexperience). Once they had been identified on a manifest level, these themes were linked to underlying phenomena that affected the themes (i.e. inexperience as a part of the larger theme of student characteristics). This linking of manifest themes to underlying phenomena allowed the analysis to reach a latent level of interpretation, in which the themes rose above being considered only as independent themes, but as linked to one another, in affecting the service-learning process (Boyatzis, 1998). The smaller themes identified during the analysis were collapsed into larger over-arching themes that were inter-related to one another. These themes are discussed in the results section.

Chapter 5: Results

This section reports on the data that emerged from the data collection process. The data reported on comes from the focus groups and participatory techniques used in the research, which included brainstorming sessions and ranking exercises. .

Due to the large amount of data collected from each of the sample schools the results section will be set out according to the plan presented below:

- Brainstorming and ranking exercise:

	School A1:	Pre service-learning
		During service-learning
		Post service-learning
	School A2:	Pre service-learning
		During service-learning
		Post service-learning
	School B:	Pre service-learning
		During service-learning
		Post service-learning

- Thematic analysis for both schools: Pre service-learning Themes
                                          During service-learning Themes
                                          Post service-learning Themes

Note: The following abbreviations are used in the extracts reported in this section

R1: Principal Researcher

R2: Research Assistant

S: Learners

5.1 Simple Ranking Exercise

Both the sample schools in the research process participated in ranking exercises. At the start of the school year, two focus groups were conducted prior to the start of the service-learning programme in the schools. This data acted as baseline information concerning the expectations of the learners regarding their involvement in the service-learning programme. The results from the focus groups (pre, during and post the service-learning experience) are presented in the sections below for each sample school.

For one of the schools there are two ranking exercises presented. It was necessary to stratify the sample population at this school due to the sample consisting of learners from two separate grades. This was because learner exposure to students would have been different for each set of learners.

The ranking exercise required the learners to identify the benefits and costs of the service-learning programme and then score them according to how important they thought that benefit/cost was. The learners scored each issue raised on a scale of 1 -10, where 1 represented 'least important' and 10 represented 'most important'. Please note that the ranking tables have the items listed as they were by the community and not in order from highest to lowest.

5.2 Ranking Exercise Matrices from School A1 throughout the Service-Learning Process

The tables below show data from the one group (School A1) for the entire research process, from Pre Service-Learning, During Service-Learning and Post Service-learning.

	MJA	Buso	Kezi	Njab's	ST	Total
More Understanding	9	8	5	8	6	36
They Know More	7	6	8	8	8	37
They will be fun	10	9	10	10	9	48
More Helpful	7	8	3	9	4	31
Will learn from us	8	7	7	7	9	38
Will be comfortable around them	9	10	5	6	4	34
They will be kind to everyone	6	7	2	2	6	23
They will be interesting	7	5	9	10	7	38
New ways of learning	8	8	6	9	8	39
They will have more experience	8	7	9	6	6	36
Don't know as much as teachers	3	2	1	1	7	14

Table 5.1: Ranking Results for School A1 Pre Service-Learning Focus Groups

	MJA	S.T	N.M.N	K.R	N.K.M	Total
Don't trust them	10	10	9	8	10	47
Not Strict	9	9	9	7	9	34
Not Fun	8	7	9	9	5	38
Boring	9	7	9	10	5	40
Fun	1	1	2	0	0	4
Too Fast	9	4	10	10	6	39
Nice	8	7	4	5	7	31
Teacher is better	7	8	10	10	5	40
Different	4	5	10	2	6	27
No activities	10	10	10	10	10	50

Table 5.2: Ranking Results for School A1 During Service-Learning Focus Groups

	N.M	Mahlinza	MJA	S.T	Keziah	Total
Trust	2	2	2	3	2	11
Activities	8	8	8	7	6	36
Opened up	1	1	0	1	1	4
Inspiring	2	0	1	1	4	8
Change	0	5	5	4	5	19
Teachers better than students	9	5	6	6	8	34

Table 5.3: Ranking Results for School A1 Post Service-Learning Focus Groups

The learners identified 11 topics, which they felt, reflected their expectations of what they hoped the service-learning programme would be like. The issues raised by the learners from the school are presented below from most highly scored to least highly scored:

Pre Focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for School A1

a) *They will be fun* (48) - learners hoped that the students would make the classes more fun than the normal school life skills class.

b) *New ways of learning* (39) –learners hoped that the students would bring new, innovative ways of teaching when they are conducting the life skills class. (This is closely linked to the students being fun – above).

c) *Will learn from us* (38) – students will gain experience from teaching the learners as well as learning about them, and how to work in schools

d) *They will be interesting* (38) –learners felt that the students would be more interesting than the teachers would. This was linked to the fact that the learners are "new", "modern" and "have more knowledge", whereas the teachers are not viewed as such. (This was discussed at length during focus groups.)

e) *They know more* (37) – This issue raised the perception that students will know more than the teachers did. An issue of ambivalence upon discussion though, although the students were perceived as having more, and modern information, they have less experience than the teachers do. This dichotomy of experience versus knowledge was an important issue for the learners.

f) *They will have more experience* (36) – This issue was another area of ambivalence with learners. This theme relates to how the students will have more experience in terms of having more knowledge, and recent experiences, however, concerning being experienced in teaching, the teachers are considered more experienced by the learners.

g) *More understanding* (36) – this theme refers to the perception of the learners that the students will be more understanding than teachers will.

h) *Will be comfortable around them* (34) – this refers to how the learners expected to be more comfortable around the students.

i) *More Helpful* (31) – this theme refers to the learners' perception that students will be more willing to help than the teachers do. The learners perceived that the students are young and enthusiastic.

j) *They will be kind to everyone* (23) – This topic relates to the perception that the students will be kind to everyone especially because the students have no preconceived ideas about the members of the target community.

k) *Don't know as much as teachers* (14) – This topic refer to the perception that the students do not know as much as the teachers especially concerning teaching experience and knowledge relating to working within a school environment.

During Focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for School A1

a) *No activities* (50) – this topic related to the way that learners felt that the students were not providing any new activities to the class.

b) *Don't trust them* (47) – this topic related to the way in which the learners did not trust the students

c) *Boring* (40) – Strongly related to the above topic (no activities?), this topic dealt with the learners feeling of boredom towards the service-learning run life skills classes.

d) *Teacher is better* (40) – this topic reflected the attitude of the learners that their teachers were considered better at the life skills classes than the student teachers

e) *Too Fast* (39) - this topic dealt with the way in which the students went through information very quickly in the classes with the learners.

f) *Not Fun* (38) – this topic relates to the feeling of the learners that the students are not fun, and that life skills classes are boring.

g) *Not strict* (34) – this topic related to the way in which the learners felt that the students were not strict, and could not control the classes as well as the teachers.

h) *Nice* (31) – this topic dealt with how the important it was that the students were nice and friendly.

i) *Different* (27) – this topic related to the fact that some learners felt that it was important that the students were at least different, and that this was a benefit over the familiar teachers

j) *Fun* (4) – this topic was rated 4, however, it must be noted that the learners meant that is was not that this was unimportant but that they did not have fun in class so it was not considered something they should rank highly.

Post Focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for school A1

a) *Activities* (36) – this topic reflects the different activities used by the students in the classes during the service-learning programme.

b) *Teachers better than students* (34) – this topic reflected the way that some learners felt that teachers who teach life skills were better than the student teachers were.

c) *Change* (19) - This topic dealt with how the students did not change throughout the service-learning programme, and that the changes between student classes and teacher classes were minimal.

d) *Trust* (11) – this topic reflected the issue of trust, and it is formation at the end stage of the service-learning programme.

e) *Inspiring* (8) – a low rated topic. Some of the learners felt that the students inspired them because of their education level, and achievements that the students had made.

f) *Opened up* (4) – this topic was rated lowest, not because it was unimportant, but because the learners felt the students never opened up to them and so they rated this topic low.

5.3 Ranking Exercise Matrices from School A2 throughout the Service-Learning Process

The tables below show data from the one group (School A2) for the entire research process, from Pre Service-Learning, During Service-Learning and Post Service-learning.

	Jed	Norris	Zaba	Mfundo	Mons	Total
Trust	9	7	8	7	5	36
Not at all very Strict	6	5	6	8	10	35
New bright ideas	8	10	10	10	9	47
Treat us fairly	9	8	7	8	8	40
Listening to us	10	9	10	10	10	49
Fun work	8	10	8	9	8	43
Understanding us	10	9	10	10	10	49
More knowledgeable	7	7	7	7	10	38
Much Kinder than teachers	10	10	10	10	10	50
Love for learners	9	7	9	10	8	43
Shouting	7	9	7	8	10	41
Back Chatting	8	10	10	10	6	44

Table 5.4: Ranking Results for School A2 Pre Service-Learning Focus Groups

	Norris	Jedy	Lee	Ntombi	Total
Make us do plays about life	10	10	10	10	40
Nothing is different really	6	5	8	10	29
Make us choose our own ideas	8	8	9	9	34
Lack of relationship*	9	10	10	10	39
They are not what they told us they would be	10	10	10	10	40
Need to be fun	9	8	8	9	34
Bright Ideas	10	10	10	10	40
We think they aren't trustworthy	9	10	10	10	39
They don't give us more knowledge	10	8	9	9	36
They do not explain	9	10	10	10	39

* "We are used to the teachers and we tell teachers about our life. We barely know them, so we can't share our life with them."

Table 5.5: Ranking Results for School A2 During Service-Learning Focus Groups

	Nomfundo	Zaba	Jedy	Terence	Simon	Total
They were sometimes nice	1	0.5	1	0	1.5	4
They were scared to punish us	10	8.5	10	10	9.5	48
Our relationship has not developed	10	10	10	10	10	50
Had no control of the class	10	10	10	10	10	50
Did not change	8.5	7	8.5	10	9.5	43.5
They must never come back with no specific topic	10	10	10	10	10	50
They suck	10	10	10	10	10	50
If we saw them we wouldn't greet them	8.5	9	10	10	10	47.5
They were not very interested in what they did	10	10	10	10	10	50
I think they were very, very boring	10	8.5	10	10	9.5	48

Table 5.6: Ranking Results for School A2 Post Service-Learning Focus Groups

Pre focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for School A2

a) *Much Kinder than teachers* (50) – This was rated the most important issue regarding the expectations of the learners concerning students coming to take life skills classes. This topic related to how learners expected the students to be kinder than their teachers.

b) *Listening to us* (49) –This issue related to the learners' expectation that the students would be more willing to listen to the learners, as opposed to the teachers at the school who are perceived as less willing to listen the learners.

c) *Understanding us* (49) –It relates to the issue of student empathy, and the perception from the learners that students will be more able to understand the learners due to sharing similar life experiences, and being more youthful.

d) *New bright ideas* (47) - the learners ranked new ideas highly. This related to the expectation that the students would bring new, modern ideas to the life-skills classes, resulting in classes that were less boring than the normal school run life skills classes.

e) *Back Chatting* (44) – this topic related to how the learners perceive that back chatting and misbehaviour may be expected because learners respect the students less, and may misbehave more as a result.

f) *Love for learners* (43) – this topic related to the perception from the learners that the students would 'love' or 'care' for the learners more than the teachers do. This topic is highly related to the perceived increased empathy, understanding and kindness that the students are endowed with by the learners.

g) *Fun work* (43) – An important topic relating to the perception that the students will make the life skills more fun, by bringing interesting topics and activities to the classes.

h) *Shouting* (41) – this issue dealt with how students were perceived as less likely to shout at the learners. This correlates with the concept of less discipline from students.

i) *Treat us fairly* (40) –This topic related to the learner expectation that the students would treat the learners more fairly than the teachers do. This was related to youth and the student's greater perceived empathy.

j) *More knowledgeable* (38) – This relatively important issue relates to the learners perception that students are more knowledgeable than the teachers as their knowledge is more current and their education is perceived as being of a higher quality.

k) *Trust* (36) – Trust was ranked as the second least important aspect of the learners' expectations of the students coming to teach at the schools. Trust dealt with how the learners would be able to trust the students more than they would be able to trust the teachers.

l) *Not at all very Strict* (35) – this issue was considered least important within the ranking exercise with the learners at the school. This issue related to how learners expected the students to be less strict than the teachers due to inexperience in teaching and youth.

During Focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for School A2

a) *Make us do plays about life* (40) – this topic referred to the learners feelings towards some of the activities conducted in the classes. The learners enjoyed novel teaching techniques.

b) *They are not what they told us they would be* (40) – This topic deals with the way in which the learners felt that the students were not actually delivering on what the learners expected when the students had first come to the school.

c) *Bright ideas* (40) – This topic deals with the ideas that the students brought to the classes. The learners wanted the students to bring more bright ideas to the classes but appreciated the bright ideas already brought to the classes.

d) *We are used to the teachers and we tell teachers about our life. We barely know them, so we can't share our life with them* (39) – this topic reflects the benefit that the teachers have because of the relationship that they have established with the learners.

e) *We think they aren't trustworthy* (39) – This is an important topic concerning relationship building. The learners did not feel like they could trust the students.

f) *They don't explain* (39) – these topics dealt with how the learners felt that the students did not, or were not willing to explain during the classes.

g) *They don't give us more knowledge* (36) – this topic dealt with how the learners felt like the students were not providing them with any more knowledge than the teachers do.

h) *Make us choose our own ideas* (34) – this topic reflected the students allowing the learners to choose their own topics for what is to be discussed in life skills classes.

i) *Need to be fun* (34) – this topic dealt with how the learners wanted the students to be more fun, and more creative in the life skills classes.

j) *Nothing is really different* (29) – this topic reflects that some learners felt that there was no significant difference between the life skills classes prior to the students and now that the students were present.

Post Focus Group topics discussed in ranking exercise for School A2

a) *Our relationship has not developed* (50) – this topic reflected how learners felt that the relationship between them and the students had not developed during the course of the service-learning programme.

b) *Had no control of the class* (50) - this topic reflected the learners' perception that the students lacked control in the class.

c) *They were not very interested in what they did* (50) – this topic reflected how some learners felt that the students were not interested in teaching them, and interested in teaching life skills.

d) *They must never come back with no specific topic* (50) – this topic dealt with the way in which the learners felt that students did not discus the topics requested by the learners.

e) *They suck* (50) – this reflected the opinion of some of the learners that they did not enjoy the experience of having the student teach them.

f) *They were scared to punish us* (48) – This topic referred to how learners felt that the students lacked control during the life skills classes because the learners perceived the students as being scared to punish the learners.

g) *I think they were very, very boring* (48) – This reflected that some learners felt that the students were boring, and that life skills with the students were boring.

h) *If we saw them, we wouldn't greet them* (47.5) – this reflected a problem with the relationship between the students and learners. This topic reflected how some learners said that they would not greet the students if they saw them outside the school setting.

i) *Did not change (44)* – This topic reflect how the learners felt that the students did not change during the course of the service-learning programme.

j) *They were nice sometimes* (4) – rated low because many of the learners did not think the students were nice. However, some learners did feel that the students were nice some of the time.

5.4 Ranking Exercise Matrices from School B throughout the Service-Learning Process

The tables below show data from the one group (School B) for the entire research process, from Pre Service-Learning, During Service-Learning and Post Service-learning.

	LGG	Ice	Yo.M	P.M	Zoe	FA	PWS	L.N	RQ2	Total
Fun	5	8	9	6	7	8	10	7	1	54
Respect	7	10	10	7	9	10	9	10	2	74
Info	2	6	7	9	8	9	8	9	3	63
Trust	3	7	8	10	9	6	7	10	10	70
Open	2	9	9	8	5	7	6	7	10	63
Notes	1	2	5	2	2	5	5	5	10	37
Punishment	1	3	4	4	1	1	10	4	10	38
Backgrounds	5	8	7	6	10	8	10	10	8	72
Health	10	10	10	9	10	9	9	9	7	83
Friendly	10	10	10	8	8	8	7	8	10	79
Anger	4	4	3	1	8	5	2	6	10	43
Feelings	8	9	10	7	10	7	10	10	7	78
Understanding	10	10	10	10	3	10	5	4	10	72

Table 5.7: Ranking Results for School B Pre Service-Learning Focus Groups

Topic	Zoey	Gwegs	Lungelo	Solumo	Ezona	Yoyo's	Lindo	PWS	FAH	Mlenza	Total
Shyness	6	6	8	5	9	7	9	8	7	10	85
Respect	5	10	9	8	9	10	10	9	10	10	92
Understanding	7	10	10	1	1	10	10	7	10	10	86
Kindness	5	10	8	9	9	10	10	10	8	8	95
Trustness	1	10	6	10	8	10	10	5	10	10	90
Backgrounds	10	8	8	10	5	3	8	7	8	3	73
Breaking problems	10	7	8	10	3	1	8	3	10	4	74
Forced	1	3	5	9	8	5	7	4	5	5	57
Boring	10	10	10	8	10	2	10	7	10	7	84
Games	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	6	8	10	94
Openess	10	9	5	10	4	6	9	3	10	3	69
Choosie	1	5	5	3	10	3	1	5	3	5	46

Table 5.8: Ranking Results for School B During Service-Learning Focus Groups

	Nofu	Esona	Zoe	Phiwe	Yoyo	Thando	For	Pierre	Lulu	Ajades unlimited	Total
Relationship	10	1	2	1	7	5	9	7	6	10	58
Feelings	10	3	5	3	6	9	10	6	7	9	68
Focus	5	6	7	7	9	7	7	7	8	8	
Respect	5	10	1	8	10	9	10	9	10	10	
Backgrounds	10	5	2	1	10	2	8	7	4	6	
Information	10	7	3	2	10	4	6	8	6	10	

Table 5.9: Ranking Results for School B Post Service-Learning Focus Groups

Ranking table for second sample School B from the Pre Service-Learning Focus Groups

a) *Health (83)* – this topic deals with the way in which the learners felt that the students would teach them to love and treasure their bodies.

b) *Friendly* (79) – this topic refers to the expectation that the learners felt that the students would be friendlier than their teachers are.

c) *Feelings* (78) – This topic refers to the learners' feelings that the students would be different from the teachers.

d) *Respect* (74) – Respect referred to the respect that the learners have for the students. Learners felt that students would have less respect from learners because of the youth of the students.

e) *Backgrounds* (72) – This topic refers to the expectation of the learners that the students would be willing to share about their backgrounds with the learners. This was an important issue, and was discussed extensively in the focus groups.

f) *Understanding* (72) – this topic refers to the learners' expectation that the students would be more understanding than the teachers are.

g) *Trust* (70) – Trust was an issue that the learners to expected from the students. The students expected that they would be able to trust the students more than they trust the

teachers because the students were external to the community, and because they are young.

h) *Info* (63) – information related to the information that students would bring to the learners. They expected this information to be more modern and current as the students had a 'better' education than the teachers do.

i) *Open* (63) – this topic referred to the way in which the learners expected the students to be more open with them, to open up and share information with them.

j) *Fun* (54) - This topic referred to the expectation that the learners had that the students would be fun, and that they would make the classes more fun and would teach using innovative new techniques.

k) *Anger* (43) – this refers to the way learners felt that the students would not get angry with the learners.

l) *Punishment* (38) – This topic referred to the learners' perception that the students would be more lenient than the teachers are. This also referred to the learners' expectation that the students would be less able to control the learners.

m) *Notes* (37) – a minor issue referring to the learners' expectation that the students would make them take notes during class.

Ranking table for second sample School B from the During Service-Learning focus groups

a) *Kindness* (95) – this topic dealt with how the learners felt that the students were kind.

b) *Games* (94) – this topic dealt with the way in which the learners felt that the activities in classes were enjoyable.

c) *Respect* (92) – Respect dealt with the respect that the learners had for the students taking the classes.

d) *Trustness* (90) – this issue related to the trust, and how the learners felt about trust development with the students now that the programme had been running for a while.

e) *Understanding* (86) – this topic deals with the way in which the learners felt that the students would be more understanding and how understanding the students were.

f) *Shyness* (85) – this topic dealt with how the learners felt that the students were shy during the classes, and unwilling to share information about themselves.

g) *Boring* (84) – this topic dealt with the way in which the learners felt that the life skills classes were boring and no more exciting than the normal school run life skills classes.

h) *Breaking Problems* (74) – this topic refers to how the learners felt that the students brought their problems to the classes.

i) *Backgrounds* (73) – this issue related to the way in which learners felt that the students were unwilling to share information about their backgrounds, or allow the learners to get to know more about the students.

j) *Openess* (69) – This topic dealt with the way in which the learners felt that that the students were unwilling to be open with the learners.

k) *Forced* (57) - this topic dealt with how the learners felt that the students were being forced to come and teach at the schools and did not really want to be at the schools.

l) *'Choosie'* (46) – this topic of being choosie (pronounced choose-y) reflected how some learners felt that the students preferred some learners above others in a way that was obvious.

Ranking table for second sample School B from the Post Service-Learning Focus Groups

a) *Feelings* (68) – the most important topic according to the ranking matrix and related to the feelings the learners had towards the students.

b) *Relationship* (58) – this topic dealt with how learners felt towards the relationship they established with the students.

c) *Respect* (10) – this topic dealt with how respected the students, and what level of respect was achieved by the end of the service-learning programme

d) *Information* (10) – this topic reflected the importance of the information that the learners received during the course of the service-learning programme.

e) *Information* (10) – this topic reflected the importance of the information that the learners received during the course of the service-learning programme.

f) *Focus* (8) - this topic refers to the focus that the learners had during the student run classes.

g) *Backgrounds* (6) – This topic dealt with how learners felt they did not learn anything about the student's backgrounds whilst the students were teaching them. This was ranked low, not because it was unimportant, but because it was not achieved.

5.5 Themes extracted from the Transcript Data

The section below reports on the results of the thematic analysis of the transcript data obtained through recording the focus groups. Separation of the themes was according to whether the aggregated data came from the pre-service-learning, during service-learning focus group, or the post service-learning focus groups. This separation allowed the researcher to observe which themes remained constant throughout the process of service-learning implementation, which themes were no longer important and what new themes arose during the programme implementation. It is important to note that the themes are not clear-cut categories that are independent of one another but are highly related and interdependent.

5.5.1 Pre Service-learning Themes

After the thematic analysis of the data (from both participating schools before the start of the service-learning programme focus groups), five themes emerged as most important for the expectations that learners had of the incoming students and the life skills programme.

Eleven other themes were also extracted from the data, where these are highly related to one another they have been aggregated. Most of the 'smaller' themes were either largely considered less significant by the community (discussed below), or were important themes that were independent of the other already identified themes. Thus, the themes remain separate in order to maintain clarity, and reflect the complexity that characterises the community's expectations of the service-learning programme. Listed below are the five most important themes.

1. Student Characteristics

This theme dealt with the characteristics that the learners felt the students would possess that would make the life skills classes more enjoyable. These characteristics were considered very important in affecting how the learners will respond to the programme, and included student qualities such as: a) that the students will be nicer and kinder, b) that the students would be more approachable, c)more understanding, d) that the learners would be more comfortable with the students, e) learners would be more willing to ask for explanation f) students will be more enthusiastic about teaching, and finally that the students would have no preconceived ideas as they are external to the community.

2. Youth

This theme dealt with the youth of the students and how the students were perceived as younger than the teachers were. This youth theme is characterised by ambivalence, as youth was both an asset and a problem. Positively, youth is considered important because the learners feel the students will be able to a) relate more to the learners, b) have recent, current and modern knowledge, c) be more empathic d) make the learners feel more relaxed and comfortable and d) share similar experiences with the learners. The negative side of youth is that the learners will a) respect the students less because of their age, b) feel more able to misbehave around the students and c) that the students are inexperienced in teaching. It is important to note that trust and youth were linked, with the learners feeling that they would be able to trust the students more because they were young.

3. Background and openness

This theme examines the perception and expectation from the learners that the students would be more willing to share (to be open) information about whom they are, and about their backgrounds. The learners felt this was very important for their relationship and trust formation with the students.

4. Trust

Although not ranked as highly as other issues in the ranking activities, trust emerged as an important topic for learners during focus group discussions. Trust deals with whether the learners would be able to form a trusting bond with the students. Trust was an area of ambivalence for the learners insofar as the learners felt that because the students were from outside the school context they would be able to trust them more; but that because the learners had a stronger relationship with the teachers, as they knew the teachers longer. The learners felt that the teachers are trusted more than the students would be.

5. Perception of students' knowledge and education

This theme dealt with the issue of how learners perceive the knowledge and education of the students. There is an inherent ambivalence within the topic because although the learners felt that a) the students had a better education and more knowledge, b) that this knowledge was more current, modern, and thus more up to date than that of the teachers, the learners also felt that c) the teachers were more knowledgeable of teaching because of greater experience.

6. Respect

This theme dealt with the respect that learners have for the students. The youth and inexperience of the students influenced the respect for the students. The learners felt that the students would be respected less because of these factors. This topic also dealt with the issue of being able to disrespect the students because of their perceived inability to control the class due to their inexperience in the school environment.

7. Punishment and control

This theme dealt with issues related to the learners perception that classes would be more disruptive because the students would not be able to control the class, or that the students would be too lenient on the learners. This theme related to respect and youth, as these factors contributed to the learners perception that the students would lack control in the classes.

8. More interesting

This minor theme dealt with the fact that the students would be more interesting than the teachers would. This was because the learners perceived that the youth, and better education of the students would lead to more interesting life skills classes.

9. Fun Activities

This theme was important to the learners. The theme dealt with the following issues: a) that the lessons would be fun with the students, b) that the students would teach using new techniques that would make classes more fun, c) that the students' youth and 'modern' knowledge would lead to more exciting lessons and d) that the learners would use activities in the classes.

10. Information Content

This theme dealt with how learners perceive the information that they will get from the students. The learners felt that the students would a) give the learners all the information and not withhold any information concerning discussed topics, b) give more information regarding discussed topics, and finally c) give the correct information in a way that is interesting and fun.

11. Characteristics of school classes

This theme dealt with the characteristics of the life skills classes run at the school by the teachers. This theme contains three main issues:

   a. School run life skills – general characteristic of the school life skills classes including that they are not exciting, no more enjoyed than other subjects, and lack creativity
   b. School techniques of teaching – that a information dissemination/ traditional technique of teaching is used, including giving notes
   c. Dynamics of class – the dynamics of the class such as teaching boys and girls in the same class especially when teaching about certain topics such as hormonal changes in the body.

12. Benefits of teachers

This theme dealt with what benefits teachers afford the learners above those of the students, before the start of the service-learning programme. These benefits included that a) that the learners are more comfortable with the teachers than they are with the students, b) the teachers are very willing to help and that c) the students, although they may know more are less educated in teaching.

13. Topics learners expect

A minor theme dealing with the topics that the learners expect to learn about when the students teach the life skills class.

14. Benefits for the students

This theme dealt with the issue of the students' benefiting from being part of the service-learning programme. The learners felt that the students would gain experience as well as learn from teaching in the schools. This theme highlights how the learners perceive that the benefits of the life skills classes will be reciprocal for all involved members.

15. Free lesson

This minor theme dealt with the learner perception that the student-run life skills programme would be a free lesson. This may influence the programmes utility if the community does not take the programme seriously.

16. Apathy/indifference towards student arrival

This minor theme dealt with the way in which the learners showed indifference to the arrival of the students. Some learners did not think that the students would be any different to their teachers, and that the classes would not be any different.

5.5.2 During Service-learning Themes

The section below reports on the themes extracted through thematic analysis for the aggregated data from the 'during' service-learning programme focus groups. This section reports on the thirteen themes extracted, some of the themes are more important than others were and are reported below. Some small themes have been kept to reflect the complexity of the community attitude towards the programme.

1. Relationship Characteristics

This theme dealt with the factors that affect the relationship between the learners and the students. There were two major sub-themes within this theme, and two minor but no less important themes. The two main sub-themes were a) trust – including a lack of trust for the students by the learners, the need for mutual trust, and how time affects the trust of learners, b) Relationship issues, this sub theme dealt with issues relating to the relationship that had been established between the learners and the students by this stage in the service-learning programme. These included the forcing of a relationship, the need for familiarity of the community context before entering it and reciprocal communication.

2. Communication

This theme dealt with learner opinions regarding communication with the students. This theme was important for the community of learners. The theme highlights the importance of communication with the community, and the problems that can arise from a lack of, or inconsistent communication.

3. Class Characteristics

This topic dealt with issues related to the classes conducted by the students. The major subthemes included within this theme are a) the new activities used in the classes made the classes enjoyable, b) desire for classes to be more interactive and c) boredom in lessons.

4. Teacher Characteristics

This theme deals with the characteristics of the teachers that the learners perceived as being different from those possessed by the student teachers. The characteristics of the teachers raised by the learners include a) teachers are more experienced, b) more able to control the classes, c) more respected, d) more trusted as better known by the learners, but they also used boring teaching techniques and are more likely to shout at the learners.

5. Teacher/Student Differences

An important theme extracted from the transcript information. This theme dealt with the differences that the learners found when comparing the students to the teachers. The differences between the teachers included a) trust, b) familiarity with teachers, c) knowledge perceptions, d) treated more fairly by the students and e) experience levels.

6. Student Characteristics

This theme dealt with the characteristics that the learners feel the students possess that made the life skills classes more enjoyable. This topic was important to the learners especially in the focus group discussions. These characteristics were considered very important in affecting how the learners were experiencing the programme. These characteristics include student qualities such as, a) the students' personality characteristics such as their kindness, b) enthusiasm in classes, c) perception of students being forced to be teaching the learners, c) that the students can be 'choosy' meaning showing favouritism, d) the students' willingness to include the learners in class development and e) the youth of the students.

7. Respect

This theme dealt with the respect issues deemed important by the learners. The learners respect was diminished towards the students due to their youth and inexperience in teaching.

8. Openness/ Background

This theme dealt with how learners felt about the students not opening up and sharing with the learners. This theme dealt with how the student's lack of openness and sharing affected the relationship that developed between the students and the learners. The theme included three primary factors including a) lack of students willingness to share information about themselves to the learners, b) lack of students sharing information concerning their backgrounds and c) the learners perceived the students as being 'greedy' meaning that the students were perceived as requiring the learners to be open and share information about themselves, but the students were unwilling to reciprocate.

9. Control/Punishment

This theme dealt with the issue of student control, and punishment and whether or not the students can take control of the classes. The learners felt that the students were unable to control the learners effectively and that they did not consistently follow the rules that had been established for the class. Another part of the theme is that the learners perceived the students as being inexperienced and unable to control the class because of this youth and inexperience.

10. Time

This theme was mentioned as a minor theme for the learners and was not discussed length but was still an important issue affecting the service-learning programme. The learners felt that the time with the students was not enough and that the lessons were too short. The learners felt that this made the lessons less useful than they could have been.

11. Feelings towards Class

This minor theme dealt with the expectation that the learners had of the students. The learners felt that the student teachers would be different and expected the students to be more exciting. The learners also showed the same indifference towards the students that they had expressed in the first focus group.

12. Consistency

This minor theme dealt with the importance the community placed on the need for students to be consistent when dealing with them. This included consistency in discipline, punishment, following through on promises and the way in which the students interact with the learners.

13. Community Dynamic Problem

This minor theme dealt with the way in which some learners reported that there was a community student dynamic problem because the teacher did not leave the class, but stayed inside the class whilst the students taught. The learners felt that this had an impact on the utility of the student teachers classes.

5.5.3 Post Service-learning Themes

The section below reports the results for the thematic analysis of the aggregated data from the 'post' service learning programme focus groups. Identified from the data (that reported on how the community felt towards the service-learning programme now that it had concluded) were nine themes. It is important to note that there were three themes that emerged as having primary importance, whilst the remaining seven themes, although significant, were minor themes. However, this does not mean that they are less important as within the area of service learning and its community impact it is important to consider all themes as equally important.

1. Relationship Characteristics

A major theme in the final set of focus group discussion data with the learners regarded the relationship. This theme raised primary issues that affected the overall service-learning programme. This theme dealt with the relationship development between the learners and the students. There were four primary sub themes: a) relationship and bond development between the students and the learners, b) trust development between the learners and students, c) openness from the students and student willingness to share about themselves and d) influence of time on relationship development.

2. Class Characteristics

This theme dealt with the characteristics of the life skills classes conducted by the students, and how the community felt about these classes. This theme reflected how classes changed over time, and how some learners felt the classes improved or remained the same. The class characteristic theme included a) topics covered in the classes, b) new teaching techniques and activities, and c) class boredom.

3. Student Characteristics

This topic was a fundamental theme affecting the learners' perception of the life skills classes with the students. The theme dealt with the characteristics of the students that influenced how the learners experienced the programme. This theme is common throughout the research process. Student characteristics include a) student personality traits, b) student interest, c) youth and d) experience of student teachers. This theme of student characteristics was also strongly related to theme of relationship characteristics as the student characteristic, especially personality traits and interest , influenced relationship, trust and bond development.

4. Information Content

This theme dealt with how learners perceived the information that they got from the students. The learners felt that the students a) did not give all the information concerning some of the discussed topics, b) that some of the information and topics discussed were not community relevant or understood and c) that some of the information given may not have been community appropriate.

5. Delivering on Promises

A minor theme dealing with how some learners felt that the students did not deliver on some of the promises that they made. This was evident from the use of the suggestion box, which the students did not discuss with the learners during the service-learning programme despite this being the main utility of the suggestion box. This theme highlights the need to remember the community input during service delivery. This theme

relates to relationship characteristics, as students not delivering on what they claim they will do impacts on the relationship between the students and the learners.

6. Punishment and Control

This theme dealt with how some learners felt that the students lacked control within the school environment. The learners perceived the students as being scared to punish learners and so classes were often disruptive. Learners attributed this lack of control to the student characteristics of youth and inexperience.

7. Consistency of students

This minor theme related to the above themes of Punishment and control and delivering on promises. The learners felt that the students inconsistent in the use of punishment and in the implementation of the rules and class suggestion box.

8. Student/teacher comparisons

This minor theme dealt with the comparisons that learners made between the students and the teachers. The theme dealt with the following opinions towards the student teachers: a) the conflict between learners about whether or not the students or teachers were better, b) that the students were no different from having teachers for life skills, c) that some learners thought that the students were better than the teachers and d) that some learners felt happy that the students had finally left.

9. Accountability of Students

A minor theme mentioned by the learners. This theme deals with how some learners felt that the students should have the university grade them on their ability to teach. The learners felt that this would result in the students putting more effort into teaching at the schools.

5.6 Conclusion

The results show that the community experience of service learning is complex, and that there are many different factors interact to influence its utility. The major finding of the study is that a plethora of student characteristics appear to have the most significant affect on the community experience of service learning by the community. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the literature surrounding service learning.

Chapter 6: Discussion

It is important to frame the discussion in the context of the aims and rationale of the study. As stated before the study aimed to find the effect that service-learning has on the community it claims to serve. It can be argued that the significance of this research is that it sought the community perceptions of what made service-learning more or less beneficial. The second primary aim of the research study was to find the elements of the service-learning programme that made it more or less beneficial to the community. A secondary aim of the research was to investigate the usefulness of participatory methodologies in studying the community perceptions regarding service-learning. These issues will be discussed below to illustrate how the research findings relate to the aims of this research study.

6.1 Usefulness of Participatory Research Techniques (PRT)

The research aimed to assess the usefulness of participatory research methodologies in investigating community perceptions of service-learning. This is in response to the lack of an established methodology within the service-learning tradition (Giles & Eyler, 1998). The value of using participatory research techniques was that they allowed the learners to make the research process their own, without the interference of the researcher. Even though the researchers facilitated the process; it was the community members who were in charge of the research process.

This study was not a complete participatory approach to research; it merely used the techniques of this research tradition. A major limiting factor of obtaining a more participatory research process was time. This was because the focus groups were conducted only three times in the year, for a two hour period at each time. In a true participatory approach time is taken to interact with the community, and build rapport over an extended period. The research would involve the community in the research process, with the aim of achieving reciprocity and mutual sharing amongst the members of the research process. Although the study did not achieve a truly participatory approach to research, the benefits of the participatory methodology were evident from the focus groups, even in the short period of time in which the research occurred the relationship established with the learners was characterised by a forum of comfortable sharing in which the researchers did not prescribe to

the learners in the form of set questions, but built up rapport with the learners in an effort to enable the learners to disclose their perceptions of the programme to the researchers. Another benefit of the research process was that the researchers were external to the service-learning process. Even though the researchers were perceived as part of the university it was interesting to see how the learners forgot this, and engaged in the research process without holding back what they thought about the service-learning process.

The research, by becoming a community controlled process, was useful as it accessed the community voice that has been lacking in service-learning research (Cruz and Giles, 2000; Jorge, 2007), and even though not a truly participatory approach it shows the potential that these methodologies have for service-learning research. In conclusion, the methodologies used in this research captured the complexity that characterises the research within the community. The techniques helped the research to achieve the aims of the study by making the learners more comfortable in the research setting, and 'handing' the research process over to the learners. This allowed the learners to establish their own viewpoints without the researcher prescribing what information was desired.

6.2 Effect of service-learning on the community

As mentioned above the aim of this research was to 1) see what effects service-learning has on the communities it purportedly serves and 2) what elements of service-learning make it more or less beneficial. These questions have been largely ignored on the service-learning research agenda, with little information being generated about the effects of service-learning on the community. It is hard to see how service-learning can claim beneficence for the community it serves based solely on the reports of students.

Although the primary aim of the research was to focus on the effects of service-learning, little information was obtained about the direct effects. It seemed the participants were more interested in the nature of their relationship with the students and that this relationship mediated their experience of the programme.

The study found various elements that were important for the learners with regards to their participation in the service-learning programme, and followed these as the service-learning programme continued. This gave the researchers an idea of what elements were important to

the learners and how these changed over the course of the service-learning programme. These elements will be discussed below:

6.2.1 Student Characteristics

a) Personality Traits

The research found that an important theme influencing service-learning programs is the personality traits of the students. Students are an essential component of the service-learning process as they are the partner in the process that conducts the service-learning activity, as well as being the interface between the university and community. It is therefore obvious that the personality traits of the students would influence the implementation and running of the programme in the community setting. The research found that those negative traits appeared to lead to a more negative experience by the community members whilst positive personality traits tended to result in positive experiences from the community members. This finding is interesting because although previous research has shown that students undergo changes in certain personality traits as a result of participating in service-learning programs, including personal growth and increased awareness (Daniels, 2007), no research has discussed how the characteristics of the students (and any changes they undergo) affect the community experience.

The research also found that certain elements of the student's personality influenced the service-learning programme more than others. The personality qualities such as kindness and willingness to interact with the community had a positive impact of the community, and led to a more favourable service-learning experience for those community members interacting with students who had these qualities. The negative qualities of certain students led to an unfavourable experience by the community members who interacted with those students. This means that when service-learning programmes are being designed in the university, the service-learning facilitators at the university should remain aware that certain students may not be suitable for working in a community setting. For example, if a student is arrogant or engages in a service-learning course because they feel it may be easy credits and are actually disinterested in engaging with community members, then the community may not respond

well to the programme, showing similar disinterest and apathy towards the service-providers. This in turn undermines the effect that service-learning programs could have on the partners in the service-learning program. For instance, this research showed that the service-learning programme could have a more significant positive impact if the student teachers had positive attitudes towards the programme, and showed an interest in being in the community setting.

In extract A below the learners express that one of the students was disinterested in teaching in the school. Interestingly, as the service learning programme progressed over the year; the learners reported having a more significant learning experience with the student who was interested in teaching at the school whilst the student who was arrogant, and perceived as disinterested in being at the school was disliked by the community learners. This illustrates that service-learning programs implemented at schools can receive an unfavourable evaluation if the student teachers have negative personality traits, even if all other factors are in place for a favourable service-learning experience.

Extract A

S: Kind of (0.5) kind of (0.5) just like a bit (0.1) but I don't like the thin one (1.0) ja, I like the fat one (0.5) Yes (0.1) (laughter and unintelligible) (4.0) we just don't like the thin one (.)

R1: Okay (0.5) what (.) what made you like the one more than the other (0.5) how did you prefer the one to the other (0.5)

S: Because the one (.) the other one just sat in the chair outside (0.5)

R1: She sat outside (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5) not outside (0.5) yes outside (0.5) not saying anything (0.5)

R1: Oh okay (0.5) now are you (0.5) you're not the ones (0.5) you didn't have (.) the one that stood (.) there (2.0)

S: No (0.5)

R1: You had the other one (1.0) so she just stands there (0.5) she just sat down and stared out the window (0.5)

S: Ja and then when she was (.) like making a joke about something she (unintelligible) (2.0)

R1: Okay (3.0) so you guys didn't like her (2.0) and then the other one was nice (1.0)

S: Yes (0.5)

R1: And what did you like about the other one (0.5) what made her nice (0.5)

S: Because (0.5) she would make us laugh (0.5) and (0.5) she was (0.5) kind (1.0) and she was (unintelligible) (2.0)

R1: Okay (0.5)

S: And (0.5) (unintelligible) (2.0)

R1: So she would like (0.5) take an interest and like talk (0.5) to you guys and (0.5) not just about school and about what you were doing (.) and (0.5) how's school going and (0.5) (unintelligible) (3.0) okay so they didn't (0.5) so you guys what else (0.5) what would you do (0.5) did you guys think about what you would do to make it better (0.5) what do you think the students could do to make it better (0.5)

b) Attitude

An important theme influencing the community members' experience of service-learning was the level of enthusiasm that the students brought to the classes. The community equated this enthusiasm with the classes being exciting and of increased utility. This enthusiasm towards teaching has important implications for service-learning programmes conducted in school environments, as it provides the community with an alternative to the normal programmes that may be run within the community setting.

In traditional educational practices teachers often have to disseminate the same information to learners each year, this may result in classes becoming tedious and monotonous, resulting in the teachers becoming unenthusiastic about the teaching material. This means that the learners may end up getting boring, unenthusiastic education delivery that has little utility. This is where service-learning has great potential because if the students come into the community with enthusiasm, fresh ideas and a desire to make the educational experience interesting the community may respond favourably to the service-learning programme and its contents.

This said, although this element is useful when present and aids in positively affecting the service-learning programme experience, if it is not there or diminishes as the students work in the community setting over time, it could have a detrimental effect. In extract B the learners discuss how they felt that the students did not really want to be at the school, or that the students were forced to be teaching in the schools. This negative perception, even if false, has a negative impact on the service-learning programme, as the learners lost interest in participating in the classes, and did not feel like they should attempt to engage with the students.

Extract B

R1: Okay (0.5) and if you want (0.5) just think of it like (0.5)

S: And then sometimes they are but (0.5) often (0.5) (unintelligible) (1.0) they are not open and sometimes they are (0.5) open (0.5) sometimes (0.5) but not often (0.5) why do you say often *njalo* [all the time] (0.5) sometimes they are s- (laugh) (1.0) sometimes they seem (0.5)

R1: So guys what (.) if (0.5) just think about if you wanted the students (0.5) or if the students could change (0.5) something (0.5) now in the last week (0.5) what would it be (0.5) [or whatever you want (0.5) just (0.5) what do you wish they hadn't done that they had done (0.5)

S: [they are not open (0.5) and sometimes it's like (0.5) they were doing something outside on their own (0.5) with our problems in this class (0.5)

R1: Who (0.5) the students (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5) and sometimes it's like (0.5) they're not in the mood they are not happy (.) they just like are forced to teach us (0.5) when there are problems (0.5) discuss them (0.5)

R1: So you think that (0.5) they should (0.5) they should leave their problems (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5) Yes (0.5) they must be happy with us (0.5) like they mustn't show that there is something happening (.) they must like (0.5) smile and be (0.5) happy (0.5)

R1: Ja (0.5) okay (0.5) right (0.5) write that down (0.5)

R2: Guys (0.5) last year when you had a good experience with this (0.5) was the teacher also in the class (0.5)

S: No (0.5) No (0.5) (unintelligible) (3.0)

R1: It's fine (0.5) if you want to both use the same pen (0.5) (unintelligible) (5.0) don't worry (1.0) you have time (7.0) I mean we've got an hour left (0.5) we've got lots of time (0.5)

S: (discussions about pens) (5.0) sometimes they seem to be so mad at us and (0.5) they bring their problems into the class

Those learners, who had students that showed a lack of interest in being in the community setting, felt that they did not have useful learning experiences, and believed that the students did not bring anything of value to the classes. This undermines the ideological underpinnings of service-learning as this negative attitude fails to 'equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service" (Furco, 1996).

c) Youth

The results revealed that 'youth' was an important theme effecting how the service-learning programme was received by the community. The element of youth was interesting as it showed an inherent disparity in its effects on the service-learning program. The community discussion showed that youth had both a positive and negative effect on how the service-learning program was perceived in the community setting. This illustrates how complex the community experience can be, and that the benefits and disadvantages of the service-learning experience can be embedded within one another. This highlights the need for more research into the complexity that characterises community views on service-learning.

The positives of 'youth' included that the students were closer in age to the learners, and thus perceived as being affected by the same life issues as them. The negative effects of 'youth' included the perceived inexperience of the students, and that they did not need to be respected in the same way as the educators.

Being 'young' affords students the chance to work with a community of learners in a way that may not be available to the learners with their normal educators. This is as a result of students and learners being of the same generation, allowing for learners to engage in topics that they would otherwise find uncomfortable if discussed with their educators. It also suggests that because the students are younger they may be better equipped to work with the community on a level that is not within the traditional power differentials, but is geared toward mutual benefit for all partners in the service-learning experience (Butin, 2003).Youth highlights that although service-learning traditionally benefits students by giving them the opportunity to experience, and interact significantly with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to their own (Butin, 2007), service-learning may also afford the students and community the opportunity to impact meaningfully on each other because they have similarities to one another.

Extract C

R1: So you think it has a lot (0.5) to do (0.5) with the students this year (0.5) their (.) them themselves (0.5) the actual people (.) rather than the content of the class (1.0)

S: Well I think that they're (0.5) they're too young also (0.5) too young I think (0.5)

R1: Too young (0.5)

S: Like they're scared you know (0.5) the/the/the/the one (.) lady she's (0.5) some times scared (1.0) so (0.5) she's just (.) doesn't really speak a lot (.) yeah (0.5) just writes on the board and (.) gives us worksheets (0.5) she writes on the board (.) what else she asks us a couple of questions (0.5) and then (.) boring questions (0.5) they don't understand the secret box as well (.) also don't understand (0.5) but they write about topics now what must we write about (0.5) we write over there (0.5) they haven't told/they haven't told us (0.5) yes (0.5) they said the first time when they came (.) then they said that (.) if we write about something they're gonna (0.5) like (1.0) respond to you (0.5) but like (0.5)

The negative implications of 'youth' mean that the usefulness of service-learning may be undermined by the learners feeling that they can disrespect the students because they are young. This remained consistent throughout the program and the learners felt that the youth of the students was always a key variable affecting why they had less respect for them than their educators. This was an interesting finding because this lack of experience was an important factor influencing how the learners felt about the quality of the classes conducted by the students. In this instance, and an implication for other service learning programmes, the community perceives the service-provider as being unable to adequately provide the service they claim they can, this undermines the utility that service-learning has for the target communities (Butin, 2003; Hagreaves, Earl & Schmidt, 2002).

d) Background and openness

Background and openness is an important finding of this study that has not been found in any research literature reviewed. This element of service-learning had a large influence on how the learners experienced the program, and how they felt the service-learning program was beneficial to them. This element was the sharing of background information about themselves and the "openness" of the students.

In this research, the learners were more willing to 'open up' about their background in an effort to establish a relationship that extended beyond that of a service-provider disseminating information to a service-recipient (as illustrated in extract D). However, the students entered the community setting and established a relationship of the traditional dissemination-type educational approach, in which the students were the 'knowing other' and the community the ones in 'need of knowledge' (Morton, 1997).

The students did not share information about themselves with the learners, and were unwilling to share about their backgrounds. The learners perceived the students as 'greedy' in the sense that they wanted the community to share information but remained unwilling themselves (extract D). This approach to interacting with the community may have a detrimental impact on the aims of service-learning because the community members become tired of participating in an interaction that is one-sided (Rosner-Salazar, 2003), resulting in the closure of the lines of communication and sharing between school and students.

Extract D

S: Help (0.5) open (0.5)

R1: Help (0.5) that was important (0.5) background (0.5) that they would know about your (0.5) backgrounds (0.5) or get to know your backgrounds (0.5)

R2: They wouldn't know your backgrounds (0.5)

R1: They wouldn't know your backgrounds (0.5) okay (1.0) so what do you guys think about this (0.5) have your expectations been met (0.5)

S: No (0.5) met (0.5)

R2: No (0.5) some of them but not others (0.5) some of them (0.5)

R1: Some of them (0.5)

This element of service-learning is a simple matter to rectify and could have a profound impact on how the community experiences service-learning. Service-learning facilitators should ensure that students are aware that establishing a relationship is important, and that those interactions with the community should be mutual and reciprocally beneficial to both partners (Mitchell & Humphries, 2007). It is important for students to be aware that service-learning aims to have a meaningful impact on the community it serves, and that sharing life experiences and information about themselves makes that community feel like the students are interested in knowing the community and its context. Thus, students must remain cognisant that service-learning endeavours not to subscribe to traditional/positivist educational approaches (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

e) External to the Community

Being external to the community is an important variable that has been largely absent from the service-learning research agenda. This concept was an important aspect for the learners, as they saw it as an opportunity to work with students who had no preconceived ideas about who they are. Being external to the community had a significant impact on relationship development because the learners effectively had a 'clean slate,' free from any of the preconceived ideas held by the educators. This is illustrated in extract E, when the learners say that they look forward to the students being 'nice' to everyone, and that they thought that the students would not treat any of the learners differently. Thus, the learners are able to start afresh with the student teachers and not have their interactions affected by judgements of their knowledge and opinions.

The notion of students having no preconceived ideas is a potentially under-utilised benefit for service-learning. This is because of the fact that they hold no expectations of the learners. The learners felt that they could be more open with the students because of the perceived confidentiality and empathy afforded to the students as they were 'foreign'. This means that the students and service-learning could be a potential tool for establishing a rapport with community members that could be used to discuss issues pertinent to them - establishing those issues that are important for certain community members and not for others.

Extract E

S: So they're going to be nice to everyone (.)

R1: So they'll be nice to everybody (0.5) what else (0.5)

R2: So you think that your teachers treat certain people differently (0.5) because they expect certain people (0.5) behave (1.0) in a specific way (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5) Ja (0.5)

R1: Some of you agree some of you don't (0.5)

S3: The other day (0.5) another oby in our class said mrs (.) said to Mrs (inaudible) that she doesn't like him (0.5) but then Mrs J said that she likes him because (0.5) she just wants him to behave (0.5) She said he must know what's wrong and what's right (0.5)

R2: Okay (0.5) and do you think that they're treated differently (0.5)

S: U'm (0.5) ja (0.5)

R2: It's okay it's okay (0.5)

R1: So those people who are naughty in class (.) do the teachers tend to treat them like they are naughty (0.5)

R2: or (0.5) or/or maybe the/the people who (.) don't do so well in (0.5) a subject (0.5) maybe they get treated differently (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5) ja (5.5)

R2: How (0.5) what/what happens (0.5)

S: Uh (0.5) there's this boy in our class whose parents died (.) and the teacher (0.5) when he doesn't do well helps him (0.5) and when the others don't do well he just (inaudible) (0.5)

R1: Okay (1.5) and the students won't do that (0.5) do you think that the students are going to (0.5) help everyone (0.5) (S: Yes) the same (0.5) because they don't know (0.5)

S: Ja (0.5)

R1: Okay (0.5)

f) Knowledge

The research found that like youth the community had disparate views concerning the knowledge disseminated by the students during the service-learning life skills classes (see extracts F and G).

The disparity found in the issue of knowledge perception was that some learners felt that the teachers were more knowledgeable concerning information given during the life skills classes because of their experience and because the learners equated the educators age with increased knowledge. However, in contrast to this, others felt that the student's knowledge was better than that of the teacher because it was 'modern knowledge'. The community members tended to feel that students were able to give better information on topics such as sex, and HIV/AIDS because these were topics required up to date information (see extract F). This shows how service-learning programmes could use students to provide communities with information surrounding topics in which the students are perceived as experts. This is an interesting finding – as although the university partner may not want to come into the community as an expert, so as to avoid the power dynamics that could result in one partner being perceived as more powerful than the other - there is a need for the students to have a certain degree of credibility in the eyes of the community, in order for their knowledge and ability to provide a service to be taken seriously.

Extract F

S: They'll make it more interesting (0.5)

R1: So they're going to make it more interesting (0.5)

R2: Do you think it'll be the same information (0.5) or will it be (.) interesting because the new stuff (0.5)

S: Because it' new stuff (1.0)

R2: Why do you think your teachers don't give you the new stuff (3.5)

S: Because they're old (laughter)

R1: They're old and they're stuck here and they're not learning new things (0.5) hey (0.5)

S6: Cos when they were little they didn't have proper schools (0.5)

S7: they did (0.5) (laughter) (0.5)

R2: Do you think they didn't (0.5)\S6: I'm saying like (0.5) good education (0.5) and (0.5) like there's no (1.5)

R1: So you think that the students have better education (.) now (0.5)

S6: Cos they're young (0.5)

R1: Than the (0.5) than the teachers did (0.5) and it's new information (.) if you're talking about (0.5) the things that you guys (.) I mean the issues that you're talking about (.) that that (.) in class what were they (0.5) how your body changes (0.5) did you talk about HIV AIDS (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5)

Extract G

R1: You can just go talk to them about anything (0.5) Do you think that the students know as much as the teachers (0.5)

S: No (murmurs of No in the background) (1.0)

R1: No (0.5) (laughter) why don't you think the students know as much as the teachers (0.5)

S: Because they're starting to teach (.) to teach (0.5)

R1: Starting to teach (0.5) so the teachers know more because they've been here longer (0.5) (S: Yes) (0.5) so they've been teaching life skills longer than the students (0.5) So that's an important thing (0.5) So do you think that if the students are coming to take your life skills classes do you think that they're going to be able to teach you properly about (.)

S: Ja (0.5)

R1: All these things (0.5) if they don't have the experience (3.5) You guys can think about it (0.5) Go on (1.5) cos what I'm gonna get you to do just now (0.5) you're going to (.) draw me a table (0.5) and you're gonna say (0.5) all the things that you expect (0.5) when the students come to teach you (1.5) so just think about it that way (0.5) what do you expect from (0.5) what do you expect the students to do (1.5)

The community raised a concern that the students did not give all the information concerning particular topics discussed, but rather provided certain information about given topics, editing information that they thought was inappropriate. The community felt that this should have been discussed with them, because they would have preferred to have been given all the information regarding the topics discussed during the life-skills classes. This highlights the importance of ensuring that service-providers tailor their program to the community in which it will be implemented. This can be done by involving the community in the design of the program and asking for community input regarding information shared during the classes. This will ensure that the program and the knowledge shared through it are appropriate to the community. If the community is not involved, the program may run the risk of being of little value to the community, failing to 'bear on [the] pressing questions facing the partnering organisation' (Rosner-Salazor, 2003, p 71).

g) Consistency

An issue that was highlighted by the community, but has not been discussed in the literature concerning service-learning, that of students being consistent in the way they deal with the community. It is important that students remain consistent when dealing with community so that the norms set up by the community and students during the initial stages of the service-learning programme are maintained. The importance of consistency for service-learning is that it ensures that the students and the community have set norms and ways of interacting, so that all partners are aware of what is expected of them, and what the repercussions will be if the norms are not followed. If the rules are not followed, or are followed inconsistently then the community may feel that the system put in place is not being respected, and may also lead to friction within the community if the rules are implemented for certain members of the community and not for others, as it may be perceived as showing favouritism towards certain members. For instance, in extract H the learners raise the concern that the students implemented a secret box system to get learner thoughts, and ideas about what they wanted to discuss in class but then did not follow through on these suggestions. Thus the learners felt like their suggestions were not being considered and that the students were not consistent in their use of the secret box system.

Extract H

R1: So they haven't (0.5)

S: Mm Mm (0.5) and we're closing (0.5) but me I (.) I never wrote anything to the students (0.5) I wrote to them (0.5) I wrote to them (0.5) I wrote to her because I told her what she wants to (.) know (0.5)

R1: So they haven't (.) so they've got (.) to tell you that there's a secret box and they've got to talk about what happens and then they haven't followed through with it (0.5)

S: Ja (0.5) they've (0.5) the rules over there (.) the rules by the sticker board there they wrote it (0.5) should I go fetch it for you (0.5)

R1: Okay (0.5) let's see (0.5)

S: (6.0) I only wrote one thing (3.0)

R1: Do people follow the rules (1.0)

S: No (resoundingly, repeated) (3.0) we do but not really (0.5) can I just read that rule (0.5)

R1: Ja (.)

6.3 Student benefiting from the Community

A minor issue discussed by the community concerning the service-learning programme was that they reported on how they felt the students would benefit from being in the community setting. This issue will not be discussed in detail as it was not the focus of the research study but it is important to note that this finding is consistent with those found by other authors conducting research in the field of service-learning (Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997; Osborne, Hammerich & Hensley, 1998; Schmidt & Robby, 2002).

Extract I

R1: Okay (0.5) they explain things (0.5) okay (1.5) They'll be more understanding (1.0) okay (.) and why do you think they'll be more understanding (0.5)

S1: Because like (.) because they'll have more time (0.5) (inaudible) (1.5)

R1: okay (3.0)

S1: (inaudible) (5.0) for other classes that they're gonna teach and the teachers (.)

R1: Okay (0.5) (inaudible) (1.5) Oh (.) okay (0.5) so do you think that one/ that when the students come to teach you they're gonna get more knowledge (0.5) through teaching you they're gonna learn more about how to be teachers (0.5)

S: Yes (0.5)

R1: That's very interesting actually (2.5) okay (1.5) (inaudible) (1.5) so you're gonna give them experience (S: Yes) not only they're gonna give you their experience you're gonna give them your experience (.) that's very cool (0.5)

S2: then you'll help (inaudible) (1.0) naughty people (0.5)

R1: How to deal with those students (S: Yes) There (0.5) Okay (1.0) We'll have a new way of learning (.) so we think they're gonna bring new things (0.5) new ways of teaching you (0.5) games perhaps (0.5) things like that (0.5) okay (1.0) they will expect more from the learners (0.5) do you think that your teachers expect certain things from…

The extracts (extract I and J) show how the learners felt that the students could have learnt from conducting life-skills classes in the community setting. The learners felt that the students would learn how to practically go about teaching in a school environment, and be able to extend their theoretical 'university knowledge' with 'practical knowledge' which could only be gained through working within the community setting. This issue highlights that in service-learning the elements of reciprocity and mutuality should be observed, as the community is providing the students with a learning opportunity which they would not otherwise have had. The community felt that the impacts of the service-learning were positive, and this is congruent with research conducted by Osborne, Hammerich and Hensley (1998) which showed that a benefit of service-learning is that it allows university students to interact in a community context. The learners believed that by interacting with the community the students would learn more about the social, economic and systematic barriers that influenced the community (Rosner-Salazar, 2003).

Extract J

S: Cos if it wasn't fun we wouldn't really be listening (0.5) [interesting]

R1: tell then (.) you have/ you have one that was very very low (0.5) fourteen (1.5) that they don't know as much as teachers (2.5) so just explain to the group what that was about (0.5)

S: Because of their experience (0.5)

R1: Okay (0.5) and the grade (0.5) what the grade fives most thought was important is that the students are going to learn from them as well (1.0) through teaching (0.5) And what d othe grade sixes think of that (0.5) do you think that that's important

R2: Do you think that students are going to learn from you as well (0.5)

S: Yes 90.5) yes they might because the future (inaudible) taught us something that you might not know (0.5)

R2: Okay (0.5)

6.4 Factors relating to Relationship Development

A very important theme that emerged during the focus groups with the learners at the two sample schools was the relationship between the university students and the community. The relationship progressed from the learners anticipating having a strong relationship with the students, to the issues of trust and how it was developing, until finally, the community reflected on how the relationship between them and the students had been experienced.

The initial stage of a relationship development was one of expectation by the community members. The relationship that the learner anticipated was one of mutuality and reciprocity (Bringle and Hatcher, 2007; Butin, 2003; Butin, 2007). Initially, the community hoped that they would be able to establish a relationship that was better than the one existing between them and the educators. This expectation was based on the community's preconceived idea that the students would be kinder, more approachable and lack the stereotypes created by the educators.

The community wanted to establish a relationship (extracts K and L) that would be beneficial to all the partners involved in the service-learning programme. This was evident from the way in which the community was of the opinion that they were bringing resources to the partnership in the form of providing students an opportunity to gain experience regarding teaching in schools, whilst the university provided them with expert knowledge and resources (including access to important university resources). Over time the relationship between the community and the students either developed or failed to undergo development (due to the various factors including, student personality traits, student disclosure and students being external to the community) as discussed earlier in the chapter. Interestingly, and in support of the finding that student characteristics play an important role in relationship development, the community reported that over time they had developed a positive relationship with certain students, whilst it had developed negatively with other students (extracts K and L).

Extract K

S: No (0.5) like some of the students here in the class (.) they do have that (0.5) friendship with them (.) but for us (.) we don't feel open to them (0.5) as in this group (0.5) we are open to them (0.5) Oh no

we're not (0.5) especially group one (0.5) listen (.) listen (.) we don't talk a lot with them (0.5) about our secrets (0.5) we do (0.5) (chatter and ruckus) (2.0)

R2: What is / what is it / (0.5) can you guys (0.5) think of anything that is about the students that makes you feel that way (0.5)

S: maybe if we knew their backgrounds more (0.5) I keep my secrets to myself (0.5) and then we trust them less (0.5)

R2: So (0.5) do you (0.5) feel that it's maybe that they are being (1.0) they're expecting you to be open (.) but they're not being open (0.5)

S: Ja (0.5) Yes (1.0) they'd never tell us anything of themselves (.) you know (0.5) and now they expect us to tell them (0.5) um let's say (0.5) as for me (.) can I talk please (0.5) let's say (0.5) as for me I live in a place where (1.0) um (0.5) in a village (0.5) Ja (0.5) in a children's home (0.5) and (0.5) there is some of us right here but (0.5) and (0.5) maybe they will (0.5) some time (0.5) once expects us (0.5) okay (.) 'what happened there' (0.5) 'why are you there' (0.5) but they never actually tell us (0.5) about (.) their backgrounds (0.5) Ja (0.5)

R1: Okay (0.5) so you think it's quite one-sided (0.5) about it (0.5) like (0.5) they just wanna know about you and (0.5)

S: about me (0.5) and if they tell us about themselves we'd trust them more (1.0) but now it's too late (0.5)

R1: So (0.5) do you think (0.5) they should have done it earlier (0.5)

S: ja (0.5) yes (.)

R1: Like when they came (0.5) maybe having a get to know (0.5) session (.) which (.) when they just sit in a circle and talk (0.5) about (0.5) each other (1.0) do you think that would be better (1.0)

S: yes (0.5) much better (1.0)

R1: So (0.5) how did the students (0.5) did they just come (0.5) in here and (0.5) say (0.5)

S: My name and Ja (0.5) that's all (0.5) and they teach us about (.) about drugs and (0.5) and respect (0.5)

R1: and I take it they spoke about (0.5) they spoke about rules (0.5) as well (0.5)

Trust is an essential element of relationship development. This element of service-learning was characterised by ambivalence due to the fact that the students were from outside the community setting. The students having no preconceived ideas concerning the community, and the fact that they were external to the community was the basis upon which trust was built. The learners felt that because the students did not know them, they would be able to trust them. However the ambivalence of trust came in when the community said that they did not know the students, and that they had a stronger relationship with their teachers, and that for this reason they could trust their teachers more.

The concept that students can be trusted more is only a benefit for service-learning if used by students to develop trust from the initial stages. If the students do not establish this relationship then the value of being external to the community, and the influence this has on trust becomes unimportant. Thus, when establishing a service-learning program, developers must be aware of this potential benefit and use it before the issue of trust becomes unrelated to this factor. Trust is an important element and can be used to make the relationship and experience of service-learning more meaningful to all those involved in the partnership. Without trust between the learners and students many of the benefits that could be achieved through a trusting relationship - such as increased community disclosure to students, increased communication and increased ability to confide in students - will not be achieved.

Extract L

R1: how do you feel (0.5) do you trust the students (0.5) how is that (0.5)

S: Um (0.5) not really (0.5) why do they ask us some (0.5) these questions (0.5) just to be (0.5) I'm just asking (0.5)

R1: Which (0.5) what questions (0.5)

S: Well (0.5) like (0.5) what happened (0.5) they wanna know (0.5) a lot of things (0.5)

R2: What (0.5) what sorts of things (0.5)

R1: Will you share with us some of the questions that they ask (0.5) what do they ask (0.5)

S: See (.) like something happened last week and then they ask us about it (0.5) yes (.) the library (.) last week (0.5) and then they ask us about it (0.5) and some of us didn't want to submit (0.5) like me I didn't want to tell them anything (unintelligible) (2.0) but then they were asking us and some of us didn't want to tell them anything (0.5) eh man no (0.5) we don't want to talk about it (0.5) so they were asking us (.) because they (0.5) already knew (0.5) because they must have told them because (0.5) Ma'am told them it must have been because (0.5) they won't ask about it (0.5) what happened I wasn't here (0.5) nothing much (0.5) oh (0.5)

Of further importance for relationship development in service-learning, it is essential that students are made aware; prior to participating in service-learning, that any commitments made to the community members need to be actualised. If commitments are not actualised, an important part of the foundation upon which the relationship is built (i.e. the student's reliability) will be missing, and may have a negative impact on the development of the relationship.

The factor that aided the students in facilitating relationship development with the community was that they sought the input of the community prior to carrying out their service-learning

program. This was in the form of brainstorming sessions in which the students asked learners what topics they were interested in discussing, as well as implementing a suggestion box in which the learners could place suggestions and comments anonymously so that students could adapt to the needs of the class. Thus, the community became part of the planning process, something missing from the normal prescriptive classes characterised by traditional educational practices. This incorporation of the community viewpoints afforded the student insight into the interests of the community, and allowed for lessons to have more community relevance as they were community chosen. Using this mechanism, the students shared power with the community, sharing knowledge rather than disseminating it.

The suggestion box gave the student the chance to listen to the community, even with those members that did not feel able to share their opinions in a public forum. This is a benefit over traditional teacher practices in which the quiet voices are lost. However, the problem of consistency arose with regards to the use of the suggestion box as the service-learning program progressed (extract H). The learners reported that the students did not follow through on the suggestions that were made, raising questions concerning the degree at which students took the community members input into the program seriously. Extract M below shows how the community members explained that they had put suggestions in the box, but had received no feedback on the suggestions and that the topics were not 'followed-up' on. This shows that if students implement a system it must be consistently observed and implemented otherwise the community members will not feel like the students are delivering on their promises, or considering their inputs as important. Thus, it is important that service-learning providers consistently follow through on promises made to ensure that the relationship established between the community and the students is one based on reliability and surety ensuring that mutually agreed upon systems are respected.

Extract M

R1: So then (0.5) are you guys using the secret box (1.0) and are you (.) or are you (0.5)

S: Me I write a lot of nasty things about (.) not/not (0.5) they're not really nasty but (0.5) they're interesting (.) I play (0.5) I wanna play games (0.5) I wanna (.) you know (0.5) I wanna have a talent show (0.5) I say those things (0.5) I don't talk about abuse (0.5) and all those things (0.5)

R1: And then they don't (0.5) So (0.5) do they ever say okay we've had these suggestions in a secret box and (0.5)

S: No (1.0)

The learners' relationship between themselves and the university students should have mutual and reciprocal sharing in order to have significant meaning. Without trust development and a commitment by the students to the establishment of a mutual relationship the service-learning program will not achieve this goal.

6.5 Time

Time was an overall influencing factor in the service-learning program, and the community members tended to feel that the lack of time in which the program was run affected many of the potential benefits the program could have had. In the end, the community member felt that the students did not spend enough time in the community for them to have any significant affect. The community felt that had the students been in the community setting for longer, the benefits may have had more time to accrue (extract N). This claim supports the theory that service-learning needs to be institutionalised in order to maximise benefits such as program effectiveness substantially (Werner, 1998), and that students should have time to immerse themselves in the community culture to better understand the factors affecting the community members (Butin, 2007).

Extract N

> S: Yes 90.5) but there wouldn't be enough time (0.5) we only had thirty minutes with them (0.5)
>
> R1: Oh did you only have thirty minutes with them (0.5) hey (0.5)
>
> S: Yes (0.5)
>
> R1: Shame but that's a bit hard fro them though too (0.5) hey (0.5) shame (.) to try and get stuff done (0.5) in thirty minutes (1.0) do you think they should have taken you outside and (0.5)\
>
> S: They'd have to do activities with us for the whole thirty minutes (0.5) they can't do those too (0.5) and (0.5) thirty minutes cos it's too short (0.5)
>
> R1: Mmm (0.5) but then your book is (0.5) tell me about your booklet (0.5) what do they have (0.5) does it just have (0.5) information (0.5)
>
> S: Ja it does (0.5) just information (0.5) and sometimes they tell us there (0.5) to do activities but we just skip them (0.5) yes (0.5)
>
> R1: Oh (0.5) so the books actually say do an activity (0.5)
>
> S: Yes (1.0)
>
> R1: Oh (0.5) and then they just went on past that and went oh (0.5) we're just gonna carry on teaching you (0.5)

S: Ja (1.0) Yes (0.5)

R1: And change (0.5) what was change (1.0) is that just telling you that this is how they changed (0.5)

S: Do you like the picture (0.5) they didn't make us feel welcome (0.5)

R1: They didn't make you feel welcome (0.5) okay (1.0) can you explain that to me (2.0)

S: Yes (1.0)

R1: Cos it's in here in your mind (0.5) and I'm not there so I need you to explain it to me (0.5)

S: They didn't open up themselves to us (1.0)

6.6 Community-University Partnerships

The aim of the research was to try and extract some lessons for service-learning practice by focusing on the micro-level relationship and exploring the lessons learned at meso and macro levels. With regards to the meso-level this section aims to stress the important role the university plays in affecting the service-learning program. This is important because the relational factors between the university and community partners had a significant impact on what effect service-learning had on the learners.

Findings show that communities felt the establishment of a mutual and reciprocal relationship between themselves and the university was essential to the usefulness of the service-learning program. It was noted that although the university was providing the community with a service, the community in return was affording the university a chance to have students gain experience in teaching. This was evident from the manner in which the community members acknowledged that students had gained experience from their participation, resulting in both learners and students obtaining benefits in some form or another as a result of their participation in the program. The community should not be a 'passive recipient of expertise' (Bringle, Games &Malloy, 1999, p. 9), but rather an equal partner of the relationship. Universities must acknowledge that without communities, service-learning would not be able to be initiated. For this reason, universities must move away from relating to communities in a charitable manner, but rather an approach which respects the community as an equitable member of the partnership (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

It is important for the university to ensure that the quality of the relationship that exists between the two partners is ensured. This highlights the need for the university to ensure that

students are prepared in advance for their community sessions, and that they are knowledgeable about the issues that they discuss in the classes. This will ensure that the community get the best possible service-learning experience and that the quality of the program is not called into question.

It is important that the university also remains aware that relationships and partnerships are dynamic (Gelmon et al, 1998). The relationship that exists between the partners is not linear and requires frequent evaluation. The research found that had the students adequately used the suggestion box placed in the classroom, they may have had a means to address the issues surrounding what the community desired from the service-learning experience. Thus, it is important for the university to ensure that students have mechanism through which they can evaluate their relationship with the community and adapt to any changes that occur during the programmes implementation.

This research found that the systems theory and exchange theory were important for the conceptualising the relationship between the community and the service-provider. Systems theory was important for this research because the partnership between the learners and the students acts as a system (Gelmon, et al, 1998). The research showed that a change in one aspect of the system had repercussions for the whole system, for instance if the students were arrogant and perceived as unwilling to teach the learners, the whole partnership was affected. The relationship failed to develop and the community found that the utility of the service-learning programme was minimal. This highlights the need for service-practitioners to remain aware that the community-university partnership is a complex system that is affected by many variables.

The importance of exchange theory for service-learning is that it recognises that relationships are all different, and that the relationship can be experienced differently by both partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Exchange theory says that three issues are important for relationship development, namely being able to appropriately report displeasure, emotional support and advice and managing interpersonal conflict. The research found that there was no forum in which the learner could comfortably share their concerns with the students. Thus, for some learners the service-learning experience remained negative because they could not address the issues that concerned them. This highlights the importance of the students and learners establishing mechanisms by which programme evaluation can occur throughout the

duration of the programme (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Another factor of exchange theory that was important for the research was that of frequency of interaction. The learners reported that the short duration of the programme (see extract N) meant that they were unable to develop a close relationship with the students. This highlights the need for institutionalised service-learning programme if they are to have a meaningful impact.

6.7 Findings related to Models of Service-learning

6.7.1 Butin's Model

The research findings have implications for the theoretical perspectives through which to conceptualise service-learning. The model posited by Butin (2003) forwards four perspectives through which service-learning can be viewed. The four perspectives include:

- The Technical perspective

- The Cultural perspective

- The Political perspective

- The Post-structuralist perspective

The research found that the most influential factors affecting the community experience of service-learning pertained to the technical, political and post-structuralist perspectives. The technical perspective was important to the service-learning experience because the community members felt that many of the elements affecting how the programme influenced them were directly related to the "innovation itself, [and] its characteristics and component parts, and its production and introduction as a technology" (Hargreaves, Earl & Schmidt. 2002, p.73). This importance of the technical aspects of service-learning to the community is in line with the majority of service-learning research that identifies this issue as the most salient.

The technical aspects important to how service-leaning was received in the community setting included the lack of time in which the service-learning was run (see extract N– from time). Butin (2003) suggest that if the time and frequency of interaction with the community is short it is unlikely that the programme will have much effect. This was expressed by the

learners when they said that the little time that the students spent in the community meant that they lacked the opportunity to establish a meaningful relationship with the students. This illustrates the inherent weakness of service-learning, the programmes tend to be short-term and so the students have little chance to have a significant impact. This illustrates that to make service-learning programmes more effective, there may be utility in the idea of extending programmes from semester based to all year programmes. In this way students would be afforded more time with the community, and the community may accrue more benefits from their participation.

The importance of the political perspective for service-learning is that it raises awareness around how it is possible to improve the service-learning programme by listening to the 'voices' of the community (Butin, 2003). The political perspective embraces conflict, and establishes this force as that which drives the innovation towards improvement for all partners involved. The research highlights this by showing what issues the community members had regarding the service-learning programme, including relationship development, student characteristics and communication. It is possible to surmise that had the community been afforded a forum in which they could feel comfortable to raise their issues with the students, the utility of the programme would have been improved for all the partners' involved in the programme.

The post-structuralist perspective of service-learning was supported by the finding of this study which showed that the factors affecting the service-learning programme are complex and often highly influenced by the subjectivity of each community member. The inherent ambivalence in the elements around youth, trust, students being external to the community, show that the incredulity of meta-narrative is correct and that no single, objective truth when it comes to community outcomes (Lyotard, 1984). The research shows that context and individual characteristics play a vital role in determining how community members experience a service-learning programme (extract A). The importance for service-learning is that it must remain aware that an understanding of the community context is vital for any successful initiative, and that student's are not educators. The students must use their youth, their similarities with the community, and their benefits of being external to the community in order to construct themselves as change agents rather than negate these in favour of the traditional educator role.

Interestingly this study did not identify with the cultural perspective. The research found that the students were not viewed as 'different' from the community, in fact the learners felt that the students were more similar to them than their own educators (as opposed to the US) (see extract O).

Extract O

> R2: Why do you think that students will have different information (0.5)
>
> S6: Because (0.5) they're modern (0.5) they're young, like us(0.5) (laughter)
>
> R1: younger (0.5)
>
> R2: So do you think the fact that the students are younger is important (0.5)
>
> S: (sounds of decision) (0.5)
>
> R1: So you think they're just gonna bring new information (0.5) but that it's not that important to be young (2.5) Why is it not important (0.5)
>
> S1: I hope I don't get old (0.5)

This may be unique to the South African context because the diversity of culture found in South Africa exposes individuals to different customs and people from the time they are born. Thus, in the South African context the benefits of students learning from engaging with others from diverse background is not a salient issue, rather for service-learning in South Africa, the importance of the students being perceived as similar to the learners opens up possibilities for service-learning to be a more transformative process.

6.7.2 Morton's Charity, Social justice, Project and Change Models

The claim that universities need to move away from engaging with communities in a form of charity, to focussing on interacting with them according to the principles of social justice, project and change was an area that the community felt was important to develop (Morton, 1997).

An important finding for this research was that the learners felt that the students' youth made them easier to relate to and more inclined to be empathic of the factors affecting the community members. However, this was an area of ambivalence for the learners, as they also felt that the youth of the students meant they did not need to be respected. This meant that the

learners maintain respect and admiration for the educators who they perceived as more knowledgeable and experienced in teaching (see extract G).

The service-learning claim of justice and project (recognising the assets of both the service-provider and the service-recipient) was reflected by the communities' assertion that the students would also learn from the community members. This reciprocity within the relationship recognises the need to emphasise the strengths and assets of both the community and the university, recognising that both partners in a service-learning programme should have their needs met by the experience (Werner, 1998). This joint co-operation is important as it keeps the community and the service-providers interests in mind and develops a program that is beneficial and equitable to both partners. The service-learning programme was unable to establish a relationship that was equally powerful to all, with the community members still remaining the less powerful partner in many instances. However, certain students commitment to including the community in the programme, through use of the suggestion box, and through the inclusion of learners in interactive lessons that attempted to access their knowledge meant that for some community members the power dynamics that may have existed between the students and learners was diminished.

The usefulness of change for the service-learning programme was undermined by the fact that the students did not embrace creative conflict. The students most often assumed the role of 'educator'' disseminating their knowledge to the learners. The students and learners did not have a forum in which to discuss their concerns with the students, and felt like their recommendations were not respected by the students (see extract M). This means that many of the important changes that could have been made to improve the service-learning experience for the learners were lost. The influence of change was minimal for this study as the time in which the service-learning programme was run at the schools was limited. This highlights that if a meaningful experience is desired, service-learning programmes need to be institutionalised and sustainable.

6.7.3 Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizomatic and Aborescent Theory

The importance of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work for this research is embedded within the rhizomatic manner of thinking about service-learning. Whilst working with the

community it became evident that service-learning can take many forms. These can vary from being a mutual-transformative process (whereby the community is included in the design of the service-learning program) to a negative process in which the community gains little value at all.

The study findings suggest that using an approach of arborescent thinking may not be the most appropriate approach to service-learning in a South African context. The arborescent school of thought is of the opinion that the usefulness of service-learning has to be justified in the form of a theoretical groundwork. However, it is evident from the research that several theoretical frameworks influence the outcome of a service-learning program – there are numerous processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation existing throughout the implementation of the service-learning programme. It is for this reason that a rhizomatic approach may be a more useful framework on which to base findings on service-learning.

Of further importance is that of service-learning having the potential to incorporate both positive and negative elements within the same programme. In this instance, student characteristics and personality traits may thus be considered as being of both a positive and negative influence on the outcome of the program. The findings illustrate that students with positive personality traits (such as kindness) may allow for a positive evaluation of the service provided to the community – the 'rhizomatic potato' (Le-Grange, 2007). Students with negative personality traits (such as disinterest), on the other hand, could lead to the community evaluating the service in a negative light – the 'rhizomatic crab grass' (Le-Grange, 2007).

It can thus be found that a rhizomatic approach to service-learning can be regarded as providing a more realistic manner of thinking about service-learning as it takes into account the many influences and theoretical frameworks affecting how service-learning is conceptualised and implemented.

6.8 More Realistic Definitions of Service-learning

The research findings suggest that there may be a need to develop more realistic definitions of service-learning. It is evident from the research that the South African context may have factors effecting service-learning that are not like those that effect service-learning in the

United States. The reterritorialisation of service-learning in the South African context requires service-learning advocates to rethink how they define service-learning (Le Grange, 2007).

For instance cultural otherness may not be an important benefit in the South African context. The learners felt that a benefit to the students running the service-learning programme was that they were perceived as similar, and affected by the same factors as the learners. This changes the definition of service-learning by suggesting that within a multicultural context (such as in South Africa) the benefits of being a 'cultural other' becomes null and void. Service-learning is described by Bringle & Hatcher (1995) as a "course based, credit-bearing educational experience that allows students to (a) participate in an organised activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (p.112). Perhaps what is needed is for definitions to include an element of context, so to this definition service-learning should add "which will be effected by the unique contextual factors in which the service is provided." This addition means that context should also become one of the key concepts of service-learning along with *respect*, *reciprocity*, *relevance* and *reflection* (Butin, 2003).

6.9 Conclusion

Although many aspects appear to influence the effectiveness of a service-learning programme, this study found that the student characteristics appear to be the factors that influence the service-learning programme the most. This is logical as the students are the interface between the university and the community. It is the students that are directly responsible for how the community experiences a service-learning programme. The most interesting aspect of the findings is that relational factors appeared to have the most influence on how the service-learning was received by the community members. This means that the effect that service-learning had on the community appeared to hinge more on the relationship and student characteristics, and less on the content of the programme. It appears that the community felt that the information disseminated by the students could have been done by anyone, and that the service-learning programmes utility and effect was situated within the

students themselves. Thus, service-learning programmes need to remain aware that relationship establishment is vital to any programme.

Chapter 7: Conclusion.

This study aimed to evaluate what elements were important to the community with regards to their experience of service-learning. The study also aimed to find what effects exposure to service-learning had on the community. As mentioned before, research into the area of community impact has been lacking (Giles and Eyler, 1999), and therefore the findings of this research are important.

7.1 Significant findings

The aim of the research was to obtain information regarding the community perspective towards service-learning, and to observe and qualify what impact the various elements of service-learning have on the community experience of service-learning. The study hoped to obtain insight into how useful participatory research techniques are when researching communities' experiences with regards to their participation in a service-learning programme.

The research questions that guided the research have been largely ignored by service-learning academia. These questions have remained practically absent from the research service-learning agenda (Cruz & Giles, 2000):

- What is the effect of a service-learning program on two school communities?
- What are the elements that make a service-learning programme more or less beneficial to certain communities?

The key finding of this research was that student characteristics had the most important impact on the experience of service-learning for the community. This shows that within the realm of service-learning the student is an essential component affecting the utility of a programme for the community partner. The research indicated that there is often a disparity in the factors affecting the community experience. This means that the factors affecting the community may exist as positive and negative at the same time. For example, 'youth' was considered an important benefit by the community because they felt it made the student better able to empathise with the learners, and that it would aid in relationship development because

the student were similar to the learners. However, at the same time the 'youth' of the students was the reason why the learners felt they did not have to respect the students undermining the potential benefits that the programme could have had. This was because the relationship between the students and learners failed to develop. This finding is important as it highlights that the community experience of service-learning is complex and intricate, and thus, community experience should be considered more salient on the research agenda of service-learning.

Time was also an important factor affecting the service-learning experience for the community. The community members felt that the students could not have a significant impact on them because the students did not spend enough time in the community setting. The community felt that had the students been in the community setting for longer, the benefits may have had more time to accrue. This claim supports the theory that service-learning needs to be institutionalised in order to maximise its potential (Werner, 1998).

The relationship between the learners and the students was a highly salient factor affecting the experience of service-learning. The community wanted to have a relationship with the students but for some this did not occur. The important variables affecting whether or not a relationship developed between the two partners were time, trust, the consistent implementation of student-learner developed rules and norms. The importance of relationship development within service-learning can be observed by the way in which certain learners had a more positive experience of the service-learning programme because they had developed a relationship with the students. Those students who had negative personality traits and were less inclined to develop a relationship with the learners received more negative evaluations from the learners.

Many of the research finding related to the technical aspect of a service-learning programme (Butin, 2003). Technical aspects of a programme such as frequency of interaction were lacking, and the community felt that this was a short coming of the programme (Butin, 2003). The student personality traits were also a technical aspect of the programme that influenced the experience of service-learning for the community, and the findings suggest that certain students may be more effective 'service-learners' than others. Finally, an important finding is that although service-learning research posits student-community difference as an important influence on the learning experience of students, this research found that there was a lack of

difference between the learners and the students (Butin, 2003). In fact the learners felt that the students were more 'like them' than their educators. This implies that within a South African society, characterised by multiculturalism, being the 'cultural other' may not influence the community perceptions.

It was interesting to find that the relational components of the service-learning programme had a more significant effect than the content of the programme. The learners reported concern with the experience and knowledge of the students, reporting that their knowledge was inferior to that of the educators. However, the learners hoped to establish a relationship with the students, and the characteristics of the students became the single most important variable throughout the duration of the service-learning programme. Thus, the effect of service-learning appeared to be situated within the interaction between the community and the students rather than in what 'expertise' the community hoped to gain from the students. It appears that a large part of the utility of service-learning may lay in the fact that students may be perceived as being more able to relate to the target community, especially in programmes where the students are similar to the target population. It was interesting to find that the learners hoped to learn more about the students, and identified with the students. The learners recognised the similarities between themselves and the students and did not see the students as a cultural 'other'. Therefore in the context of multi-culturalism the importance of interacting with diverse others (a commonly reported benefit of service-learning) may become void.   This research advocates that service-learning practitioners need to remain sensitive to how they interact with their community partners and recognise that the relationship established between the partners may have the most significant effect on how useful their programme is.

7.2 The limitations of the research

The research did have some limitations. Firstly, the learners were aware of the fact that the researcher was from the university, although the use of participatory research techniques appeared to minimise these effect, it still raises some bias concerns. Secondly, the researcher had to limit the number of focus groups because the community gate-keepers would only allow the learners to participate in the research for a given amount of time. This meant that it was impossible to even consider using a complete participatory approach for the research. In

future projects it would be beneficial to conduct more focus groups with community members from more schools that are part of the service-learning program. The sample was also all South African and the participatory techniques emerged from rapid rural appraisal techniques (Van Vlaenderen, n.d), therefore the results may not be generalisable to service-learning communities from other countries. However, the results raise important issues that warrant further study and validation. Finally, the methods used to assess community perceptions have not been adequately used in service-learning research, and so further studies using these methods would increase the generalisability of the results.

Also in the participatory exercises the community showed disparity in their views concerning certain topics. The factors had negative and positive aspect that where often embedded in the same experience. This finding requires further research, and it will be important for future research to separate these experiences for study.

7.3 Implications

The implication of each finding for service-learning was discussed in chapter 6. This section will give a brief description of the key implications that the research has for service-learning research, practice and policy.

7.3.1 Implications for Research

The implications that this research has for research in service-learning is that it highlights the need to ensure that research into the impact that service-learning has on communities is made more prominent on the research agenda. It is important for tertiary institutions to evaluate what effect their students are having on the communities that they work in. If tertiary institutions want to claim that they are positively benefitting the community by working within it, they must conduct research that directly evaluates this.

The research also highlights the participatory techniques are a useful methodology for studying the impact and elements that effect how a community experiences a service-learning programme. The methodology needs to be adopted and used so that a body of knowledge can be built concerning the community impact, this would aid tertiary institutions in streamlining

their programme to benefit their students as well as the community partner. The research techniques are also an effective method for accessing the 'community voice' as the techniques allow the community to take over the research process (Theis and Grady, 1991) and discuss the factors important to them and not those prescribed by the researcher.

Another implication for research is that the community should be an integral part of the evaluation process. The community should be involved in evaluating the quality of the service as they are the recipients of it. Their evaluation may provide valuable insight into what factors influence service-learning, and challenge the mainstream theoretical frameworks that govern service-learning.

7.3.2 Implications for practice

The implications for practice include that service-learning advocates must realise the importance of student characteristics in the service-learning programme. Students must want to engage in service-learning in order to benefit the community they work in, and not be singly motivated by wanting to have their own growth experience. Students must be aware that they are potential change agents and that they must use the benefits afforded to them (for example, being external to the community) to initiate a meaningful relationship and experience of service-learning for the community partner as well as themselves.

The university must also be aware that communities are unique, and the actors affecting their experience are often context specific. An appreciation of this uniqueness must be built into the practice of service-learning by ensuring open communication between partners, and that the community and students engage in evaluations of the programme throughout the duration of the programme. This will allow the university to respond to changes in the service-learning experience for those involved. It is important for the university to be involved in the selection of students before they participate in a service-learning programme. The research suggests that not all students may be suitable for service-learning and that selection criteria need to be more closely monitored by university service-learning facilitators.

7.3.3 Implications for Policy

The implications that this research has for service-learning in the South African context is that it highlights the need for service-learning to be reterritorialised for the South African setting (Le Grange, 2007). It is important that service-learning policy makers understand that service-learning needs to be tailored for the African context and that the concepts and processes that influence service-learning in the Western world may have variable utility in the South African setting. Thus, service-learning needs to move beyond a political slogan, used by advocates to try and ensure tertiary institutions engage with their communities, to a practical educational pedagogy that has utility for the community and the university.

This study was a great learning experience with important findings, and highlighted how important the 'community voice' and relational factors are when evaluating what elements effect how service-learning is implemented and what impact service learning can achieve. It illustrated how a service-learning program is best implemented through the joint co-operation of all the programme stakeholders. The findings of this study conclude that research into the impact that service-learning has on the community is both warranted and necessary.

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