"The hand is the cutting edge of the mind"

The role of the service partner in service learning

Clive Bruzas

November 2004

Declaration

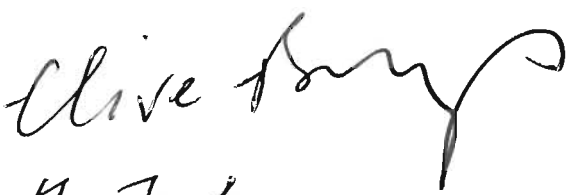
This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Commerce (CHESP)

from the University of KwaZulu Natal, and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning.

It is my own, original work, inspired and informed by the writings, work, and participation of many other people engaged in service learning and development; I have acknowledged these sources of inspiration and information to the extent that I am aware of them.

Clive Anthony Bruzas

Signature: 

Date: 17th February 2005

Contents

List of figures

The inclusion of contour drawings and a colour exercise may appear puzzling at first sight. However, they are directly related to the research processes which I used, and represent an invitation to the reader to engage with me on this journey of learning...

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank the many people who contributed so generously and in so many different ways during the course of this research process; I apologize if anyone has been inadvertently omitted from the following list.

- Firstly, the Joint Education Trust (JET), and in particular Mr Jo Lazarus, for initiating the CHESP programme, and for supporting and encouraging the participants throughout the process. I would also like to thank JET for providing the funding which supported this research. My thanks, too, to Steve Anderson, who provided so many references.

- Secondly, the Ford Foundation, which has supported my participation in the CHESP programme for several years.

- Thirdly, The Valley Trust, and in particular Dr Keith Wimble, for encouraging my participation in the CHESP programme, and for supporting my studies. I would also like to thank my colleagues: Glen Jager, Itumaleng Polori, Mumsy Myeni, and Lungile Mchunu, for helpful discussions and for practical assistance in locating reference material and checking transcripts.

- Fourthly, my partners on the CHESP Durban Core Group, Frances O'Brien and Victor Mkhize, for the richness of shared experiences along the journey of service learning.

- Fifthly, all those partners who participated in both individual and focus group interviews; I trust that I have done justice to the experiences which you shared with me, and that where possible, I have let you speak for yourselves through the extensive use of direct quotes. Those who participated in the interviews were:

  Associated with the University of KwaZulu Natal: Prof Astrid von Kotze; Mrs Frances O'Brien; Ms Kirsty Trotter; Miss Carol Mitchell; Mr Victor Mkhize; Mr Richard Haigh; Mr David Gengan; Ms Cheriê Pascoe; Mr Prem Singh; Mrs Fiona Bell; Mr Guy Caws.

Associated with the University of the Free State: Dr Mabel Erasmus; Prof Basie Wessels; Mr Joe Serekoane; Miss Luzelle Naudé; Mrs Julie MacKenzie; Mrs Ielse Seale; Mr Kagisho Moeca; Mr Isaac Tshehio; Ms Lydia Silingile; Mrs Doreen Medupe; Mr Kesiame Mancoe; Mr Kebitsamane Malotle; Mr Lebogang Mogotsi; Ms Lolly Tlhomola; Mr Prosper Mosime; Mr Benedict Mokoena.

- And then, my supervisor, Mr Stan Hardman, for his support and for several important insights stimulated by our conversations.

- And finally to my family, who endured my many absences during the CHESP programme, and more recently tolerated my disappearances to write up my research. Yes, I *have* finally finished my dissertation – thank you Anne, Rachel, Ben, and Nat.

Foreword

To allow the reader to fully engage with this dissertation, I must explain from the outset that my experience of service learning, and of service, has been located within two specific contexts:

The Community, Higher Education, and Service Partnership (CHESP) programme . Details of the programme may be accessed at the CHESP website: http://www.chesp.org.za, but a summary is provided here for convenience. The programme was initiated in 1999 by the Joint Education Trust (JET) and, according to the website, the programme took its cue from the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education 1997. The programme has as its aim

> *"To support South African Higher Education Institutions to engage in the development of historically disadvantaged communities through the development of appropriate institutional policies, strategies, organisational structures, and accredited mainstream academic programmes. Central to the CHESP approach is the development of partnerships between communities, higher education, institutions and the service sector".*

It is worth noting that when the programme started, the aim was somewhat different:

> *"To contribute towards the reconstruction and development of South African civil society through the development of socially accountable models of higher education, research, community service and development. Central to these models is the development of partnerships between higher education institutions, historically disadvantaged communities, and the service sector".*

Indeed, it was the potential for enhancing and transforming development paradigms and processes which first attracted me (and, I'm sure, many other service and community partners), to the CHESP programme. The transition to a more academic focus has been a disappointment for many of us who participated in the programme, but that is not the subject of this dissertation.

Initially there were eight participating campuses, and each campus was represented by a "Core Group" comprising an academic partner, a community partner, and a service partner. These Core Groups were responsible for "carrying" and institutionalizing the

CHESP service learning impulse on their respective campuses and within their respective partnership groupings.

A central feature of the programme was the building of the capacity of the Core Group members to implement the CHESP programme: this capacity building was facilitated through the Leadership Capacity Building Programme (LCBP), comprising 13 modules:

Module 1: The theory and practice of development.
Module 2: The operational context of higher education institutions.
Module 3: Developing a university-wide policy for integrating community service into teaching and research.
Module 4: Community situation analysis for development.
Module 5: USA case study of civic engagement (conducted in the USA).
Module 6: US CHESP partner university study visit (conducted in the USA).
Module 7: Scenario building.
Module 8: Development through partnerships.
Module 9: Community development and empowerment.
Module 10: Development of community-based academic service learning sites.
Module 11: Service learning.
Module 12: Service learning curriculum development.
Module 13: Learning log.

The above modules were presented over a two year period, from July 1999 to August 2001, on a block release basis, allowing the Core Groups to engage with the practical dimensions of service learning between modules. All the work of our Core Group has been well documented in our assignments, various progress reports, and a video.

The CHESP Durban Core Group worked with partnership groups on the implementation of six projects within participating communities, and fulfilled the reporting requirements which, along with the information supplied by other participating campuses, has enabled JET to advocate for the recognition of service learning at both the institutional level (university campuses) and macro level (national policy formulation relating to higher education).

Regrettably, the CHESP initiative on the Durban campus became a victim of the merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban Westville in April 2003, when it was agreed by the University (with minimal consultation with service and community partners) not to accept further funding from JET for the CHESP programme. However, pockets of support for service learning remain on campus, and there are hopes that the new vision of the University of KwaZulu Natal may promote a second look at the benefits which service learning could bring to an institution of higher learning striving to engage more meaningfully in development processes in the African context.

The service context.

My participation in the CHESP programme has been as the service partner on the CHESP Durban Core Group. As such, I have approached service learning from the perspective of a "service provider" although, as I have attempted to show in this dissertation, there are many different understandings of "service" and "service partners". My own position within a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) has provided a specific context and no doubt a specific bias, based on my 20 years of experience in this sector and at The Valley Trust in particular.

Perhaps one of the most interesting debates currently emerging within the sector is that around the roles of the various service providers in "service delivery". While there are extensive backlogs in the provision of services, there is also a noticeable tension between the various roleplayers who, in a sense, "compete" to deliver services; this "competition" may take the form of competing for funds or competing for "turf", or it may take the form of competing paradigms of development. An example of the latter point relates to the inclusion or exclusion of the corporate sector as "service partners": all the participants in the interviews which I conducted were willing to include the corporate sector as "service partners", whereas for me, the underlying paradigms which motivate the business world are incompatible with the paradigms of the non-profit sector. I have not expanded on the question of "corporate partners" to any great extent in my dissertation, as it is an issue to which I would like to give more thought. However, I keep coming back to the importance of paradigms, and agree with the observation of Richard Bawden (quoted here from an undated documented included in the LCBP Module 7 course pack) that

> *"A vital relationship exists between the way each of us views the world about us, and how we act in it. The beliefs and values that we hold as individuals, act as a sort of template or bounded framework for the various techniques and practices that we adopt in going about our daily affairs".*

I have presented the different understandings of service and service partners at some length in my dissertation, and will not expand further on the subject here. My purpose in emphasizing these two contexts is simply to alert the reader to the fact that my own paradigms, the *"set of beliefs and values"* which I hold as an individual, have been to a considerable extent influenced by my experiences in the CHESP programme and as a staff member of a non-profit organization.

Abstract

This study explores the role of the service partner in service learning. The reason for choosing this topic is its relevance to one emerging model of service learning in South Africa (that of a three-fold partnership approach), as well as its relevance to my own life and work in the "service sector".

Given my own passionate engagement with service learning since 1999, and my participation in the CHESP programme as a service partner, I chose to use a process of modified heuristic inquiry for my research. This approach acknowledges the experience of the researcher as an integral (if not central) part of the research, and allows the voice of the researcher to be heard clearly throughout the unfolding research process. It also allows the voices of others who have an intimate involvement with the research topic to be heard, hence my engagement with others through both individual and focus group interviews. Heuristic inquiry also encourages the presentation of findings in the form of a "creative synthesis", which may take different (usually artistic) forms. For the synthesis of my findings, I created a palimpsest, a painting in mixed media which incorporates the dimensions of both space and time, thus allowing me to express visually my emerging understandings of the role of the service partner over the course of my engagement in the CHESP programme. The creation of the palimpsest also allowed me to engage with an aesthetic way of knowing.

Central to the presentation of my findings (in both visual and narrative form), has been the idea of "new ways of knowing", initially brought to my attention by Richard Bawden during the CHESP Leadership Capacity Building Programme (LCBP). I have drawn extensively on the four types of knowing presented during the LCBP: propositional; practical; experiential; and inspirational, and have related these to my deepening understanding of the role of the service partner and associated questions.

In the final chapter I suggest ways in which service partners may better prepare themselves to play a more meaningful role in both service learning and in the facilitation of services, and briefly consider my own future role in service learning.

The Way It Is

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread.

William Stafford

Chapter 1

Introduction

"In my beginning is my end"
T. S. Eliot, from *"East Coker"*

"But if you don't write of things deep inside your own heart,
What's the use of churning out so many words?"
Ryokan

This research is about the role of the service partner in service learning. I have chosen this topic because I hold the questions which surround it deep inside my own heart. In this dissertation I will explain why these questions are so important to me, and unfold the story of how my understanding of the service partner's role has grown and changed over the past six years; I will also describe how my own understanding has been enriched through learning from the experience of others who have also been closely involved in service learning.

Although the central question which I set out to research was "What is the role of the service partner in service learning?" I found that other questions suggested themselves as the research progressed. Indeed, I found that the central question could not be addressed without locating it within the context of these other questions. It seemed that while I set out to research a small part of my service learning experience, the whole kept appearing to remind me that service learning is a complex system, and must be approached as such.

I thus found it necessary to introduce the following questions as part of my research:

- What do I understand by the term "service learning"? and then, in the context of service learning,
- What do I understand by the term "service"?
- Who should be included as part of the "service sector"?
- What do I understand by the term "partnership"?

In working with these questions, I have come to recognize that a wide diversity of views exist about the role of the service partner, as well as about the other four questions. I therefore intend to weave these various views together to form the "whole" of this story, in accordance with the approach which I have adopted for this research, that of heuristic inquiry. I will also present a synthesis in the form of a painting, more specifically a palimpsest, in which I attempt to portray my understanding of the whole in a creative way.

Why do I hold the questions about the role of the service partner deep within my heart? One reason is that I was the service partner in the CHESP[1] Durban Core Group, from 1998 until its demise at the University of Natal in 2003. Again and again I found myself seeking to clarify my own participation in the almost total absence of any defined role for the service partner in the programme. Another reason is because in trying to clarify my own role, I discovered that very little has been written about the role of the service partner in service learning. This is not surprising, as the model of service learning which is evolving in South Africa (at least as far as the CHESP programme is concerned), is a unique one, based on the idea of a three-way partnership. Gelmon (2003, p. 44), describes the uniqueness of the South African model as follows:

> *"An alternative approach to conceptualizing partnerships is currently being developed and tested in South Africa funded in large part by the Ford Foundation. In the Community-Higher Education-Service Partnerships programme (CHESP), the partnership is viewed as the unit of transformation and consists of a three-way interaction among historically disadvantaged communities, higher education institutions, and service providers including nonprofit organizations and government agencies".*

In the above quote, Gelmon is contrasting the South African model to the American service learning model, which is characteristically a *two-way* partnership between communities and higher education institutions, although my own view (based on my reading and our CHESP Durban visit to Michigan State University), is that in the American model the role of service partners is "hidden" rather than absent; service

[1] CHESP is an acronym for Community, Higher Education, and Service Partnerships, and will be referred to in more detail later in the dissertation.

partners are more commonly referred to as "agencies", and can take the forms of either community-based organizations or government bodies or non-profit organizations.

A third reason is that, as an employee of a nonprofit organization[2] (NPO) engaged in "service", I am concerned that the role of such organizations in general is unclear (often to the organizations themselves), and that their contribution to civil society is undervalued; with reference to this latter point, Pieterse (1998, p. 13), has suggested that

> *"In real terms, the contributions and role of NGOs[3] are relatively inconsequential to the everyday existence of the 53 percent of the South African population (approximately 20 million people) below the poverty line".*

Such views concern me deeply, implying as they do that the dedication demonstrated by so many in the NPO sector is not matched by measurable outcomes, and throughout my service learning experience I hoped that a new and more significant role for NPOs would emerge, one that would enhance the value which they add to society.

However, my most important reason for choosing this research topic is that my journey into service learning brought me to a new place in my own life, a place from which I realized that one of my greatest interests lies in exploring the process of learning (which includes the research process), and specifically new or different ways of learning which can contribute to right action. This interest arises out of my experience of working in several different sectors, and from the way in which this work has, over the past 25 years, gradually shed light on my own learning experience during my time as a student at the University of Natal. I must describe this experience in some detail in order that the reader may engage more fully with my story.

---

[2] I currently hold the post of Manager of Organizational Development at The Valley Trust, an NPO founded in 1953, which describes itself as "A centre for comprehensive primary health care".

[3] In South Africa, the term "NGO" has historically been used in preference to "NPO", but changing legislation is tending to bring the term NPO into more common usage, and I have therefore chosen to use NPO in this dissertation.

I graduated from the University of Natal in 1977 with an Honours degree in entomology. I had chosen to study the biological sciences because of my deep interest in the natural world, in the beauties and mysteries of life. Although I was relatively content as a student, I have come to realize that what I studied was not life, but death, as expressed so clearly in the following poem by the South African poet Beni Kleynhans, cited in Pullen (2002, p. 14):

> *"On my left a bird which is dead*
> *On my right a bird which flies*
> *Which is the bird? The flying bird!*
> *Which do we study? The dead bird!*
> *What do we study? Life?"*

One of my strongest memories of the Zoology Department at the University is the museum, with row upon row of dead animals in bottles, insects impaled on pins and the severed heads of cats in a jar. I did my share of pinning and dissecting insects, but it wasn't until I started work in 1977 as a researcher in the Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Research Institute that I realized how poorly my studies at university had prepared me for a "real life" working situation. In saying this, I do not wish to imply that I had been poorly prepared in an academic sense: rather, I realized that my education had not helped to prepare me for the realities of the world and my engagement with those realities. My research focused on the biological control of the American bollworm, considered a serious pest of cotton, but I was physically located within a unit dedicated to the chemical control of cotton pests. My concerns about the widespread use of pesticides date from this point, as I witnessed the extensive and apparently thoughtless use of biocides in the agricultural sector. Around this time I started to read widely in the "alternative" literature, and wondered why I had never been exposed to such writings as a student. In particular, I read E. F. Schumacher's inspiring "Small is beautiful" and later his "Good work", as well as a journal which became (and has remained) a strong influence on my work: "The Ecologist". My work for the Department of Agriculture was interrupted by two years of military service, most of which I was fortunate to serve in my professional capacity. While in many ways I considered these two years to be a terrible waste of time, they were, paradoxically, two years of vitally important learning, in the sense that I emerged from the experience a changed person. I had had the opportunity

during these two years to travel widely in rural areas, and had observed for the first time the challenges faced by rural communities, including challenges of access to potable water, health facilities, food security, and schools. As a science student at the University of Natal I had never been encouraged to confront social issues such as these, so when I returned to my research after two years, my questions about agricultural practice had broadened into questions about society in general, and South African society in particular. After working for the Department for a further three years, my wife and I found that we could no longer busy ourselves with research which seemed to have so little relevance to the questions which increasingly nagged away at us, and so started a search for the type of work which we thought could contribute to addressing the social challenges which surrounded us.

This search led us back to the University of Natal, where for one year I worked as a technician in the Horticulture Department on the Pietermaritzburg campus. To be honest, I had accepted this post as an interim measure, knowing that it was not where I wanted to be, but hoping that while I was engaged in relatively undemanding work I would gain some clarity as to where I should be focussing my energies. However, the work presented a fresh set of challenges, as I observed the way in which students were taught. It seemed to me that there were few attempts to expose students to the sort of questions which had arisen for me during my time with the Department of Agriculture: lecturers promoted the use of biocides as standard practice, and what was then referred to as "subsistence agriculture" was ignored on the grounds that "there was no money in it". Instead, high-tech, high-input agriculture was promoted as the solution to increased food production. Around this time I also discovered a book by Fritjof Capra, "The turning point. Science, society, and the rising culture", which confirmed for me that there had to be alternative approaches to the challenges confronting society. Towards the end of my year at the University, I was offered a post with The Valley Trust as Natural Resources Officer. This work explored the links between health and environmental issues, and brought together my growing interests in health, environment, agriculture, and education.

An important aspect of everyone's work at The Valley Trust was to interact with students from universities, technikons, and nursing colleges, especially medical students and nursing students. As my work related mainly to the links between health

and the environment, I endeavoured to create stimulating, thought-provoking learning opportunities for these students, incorporating field work, reflection sessions, films and videos, and directed reading. Some students responded with enthusiasm; others, especially medical students, tended to be arrogant and disinterested, as they perceived environmental issues to be "irrelevant" to their studies. On one occasion I became irritated when a group of final year medical students failed to arrive for one of my sessions, and eventually found them playing cards behind the clinic. When I asked them why they had failed to report for the session, I was informed that, in their view, the topic could safely be skipped.

From around 1996 my engagement with higher education became more formal, through a close link with the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Public and Development Management: I attended a certificate programme in Primary Health Care Service Management, and after negotiation with the School, The Valley Trust offered this same programme in partnership with the School. I was responsible for designing and coordinating the programme, and taught on some of the modules. Following this work, I co-facilitated on the Community Studies Module[4] at the University of Durban-Westville, a one-semester module for first year health science students.

My deepening involvement with students and with universities led me to read around the subject of higher education, and I encountered an essay which remains, for me, the single most important reading which has influenced my thinking on the transformation of higher education, an essay entitled "The loss of the university", by Wendell Berry (1987). In this essay, Berry (a farmer and a poet), points out that *"The thing being made in a university is humanity"*, but in a related essay entitled "Higher education and home defense" suggests that what in fact universities produce is *"a powerful class of itinerant professional vandals"*. He draws attention to the fact that

> *"Their vandalism is not called by that name because of its enormous profitability (to some) and the grandeur of its scale. If one wrecks a private home, that is vandalism, but if, to build a nuclear power plant, one destroys good farmland, disrupts a local*

[4] The Community Studies Module was part of another three-way partnership programme, the Natal Institute for Community Health Education (NICHE). It was in some ways a forerunner of the CHESP programme.

community, and jeopardizes lives, homes and properties within an area of several thousand square miles, that is industrial progress".

The case of a nuclear power plant may seem an extreme one, but I have witnessed a similar thing happen with the construction of the Inanda Dam near Durban, when many residents of the area lost their homes with little or no compensation. Berry concludes his essay on the loss of the university with the following powerful statement:

"If, for the sake of its own health, a university must be interested in the question of the truth of what it teaches, then, for the sake of the world's health, it must be interested in the fate of that truth and the uses made of it in the world. It must want to know where its graduates live, where they work, and what they do. Do they return home with their knowledge to enhance and protect the life of their neighborhoods? Do they join the 'upwardly mobile' professional force now exploiting and destroying local communities, both human and natural, all over the country? Has the work of the university, over the last generation, increased or decreased literacy and knowledge of the classics? Has it increased or decreased the general understanding of the sciences? Has it increased or decreased pollution and soil erosion? Has it increased or decreased the ability and the willingness of public servants to tell the truth? Such questions are not of course, precisely answerable. Questions about influence never are. But they are askable, and the asking, should we choose to ask, would be a unifying and shaping force".

Thus by the time CHESP came along in 1998, my experience and my reading were prompting me to ask what, for me, were important questions about the seemingly destructive role of higher education in many spheres of life: agricultural, environmental, health, education, and research. Why, I asked, did higher education seem to be promoting approaches which did little to alleviate social problems, but indeed seemed to worsen them? Why were health professionals unable to make a notable difference to the health of communities? Why were agricultural extension officers promoting the apparently thoughtless use of toxic chemicals? Why was education so unimaginative and soulless? Surely, if most of the professionals and decision-makers had passed through the institutions of higher learning, then there must be something seriously wrong with these institutions. My own experience had certainly not been as positive as I had initially believed, and my experience since then

had reinforced my sceptical perceptions of higher education. Of course, it may well be argued that the political situation in South Africa did not permit the changes and innovations which would have made a difference; that indeed, much of the blame could be laid at the door of the political system. Yet my reading indicated that many of the challenges which I had experienced were by no means unique to South Africa, although South Africa did represent a unique context. Indeed, many of the challenges appeared to be of a global nature, and manifested in different forms in other countries, even in the so-called "developed world". What I have since come to realize is that the challenges which confront society do not exist in isolation; rather, they are all manifestations of a single crisis, which Bockemühl (1986) has characterized as *"A crisis in consciousness"*. It therefore seems to me that these challenges or crises need to be addressed holistically, in terms of developing human consciousness, and what better place to do this than at institutions of higher education?

Then in 1998 I was invited to join CHESP, a programme which aimed to contribute to reconstruction and development, to influence higher education, and to work in partnership. It seemed that my participation as a service partner in CHESP would enable me to engage positively with higher education in an effort to address at least some of things which had become of such concern to me. The aims of service learning resonated with what I had come to see as the main purpose of a university (that of contributing to "the making of humanity"), and over the five years of my involvement the theory and practice of service learning became (and remains) an integral and passionate part of my life.

I have described[5] at some length the journey which has brought me to this Master's research, in order that the reader may understand something of the depth of my interest in the topic. My passionate involvement is also the reason that I selected heuristic inquiry as my research approach. Patton (2002, p. 107) proposes that the foundational question for heuristic inquiry is *"What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?"* He adds that *"Heuristics is a form of phenomenological*

[5] The description of my work at The Valley Trust and the influence which it has had on my thinking have been extracted largely unchanged from my Learning Log assignment (Bruzas, 2003a), submitted as part of the coursework for this degree.

inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher". Given my participation as a service partner, and given the significance of service learning in my life, I considered heuristic inquiry to be the most appropriate approach for this research: I wanted to share *my* story and *my* learnings, using *my* voice. However, in the spirit of partnership, I acknowledge the enormous influence that others involved in service learning have had on my own experience, and the heuristic approach allows me to honour that influence by including their voices.

There is another reason that I chose the heuristic approach, an intensely personal reason. Along with my love of the natural world, I have an abiding love of the arts: drawing and painting, sculpture, and both the spoken and written word. It has always seemed unfair that I could not structure a formal qualification that allows me to bring together these two loves, so I have attempted to do so in this dissertation, and in so doing transform the research process and its presentation into a creative work of art. Heuristic inquiry encourages this; Moustakas (1990, pp. 31-32), in describing the process of heuristic inquiry, points out that

> *"Once the researcher has mastered knowledge of the material that illuminates and explicates the question, the researcher is challenged to put the components and core themes into a creative synthesis. This usually takes the form of a narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples, but it may be expressed as a poem, story, drawing, painting, or by some other creative form".*

In this dissertation I have combined narrative (including the use of verbatim material) with drawing and painting, the latter forming the central part of the synthesis; more specifically, the painting takes the form of a palimpsest.

From here, my dissertation will proceed as follows:

- In the second chapter I will build a theoretical base for my research topic through a review of relevant literature. As noted earlier in this introduction, there is almost no reference to the role of the service partner in service learning, although many service activities are described. I will therefore draw mainly on the literature pertaining to the four related questions which I have described.
- The third chapter will describe my research methodology, and present the heuristic approach in more detail.

- Chapter four will describe the processes which I used to gather data and introduce the painting which creatively synthesizes my findings.
- In the fifth chapter I will discuss the findings in relation to the guiding questions, and will in particular describe the painting which forms the core of the synthesis.
- In the final chapter I will reflect on my learnings, with particular reference to the implications for my own sector in the service learning partnership: the service sector. In this closing chapter I will propose a way in which service partners can more meaningfully contribute to service learning, and what this might mean in terms of a change in paradigms about service in the context of service learning.

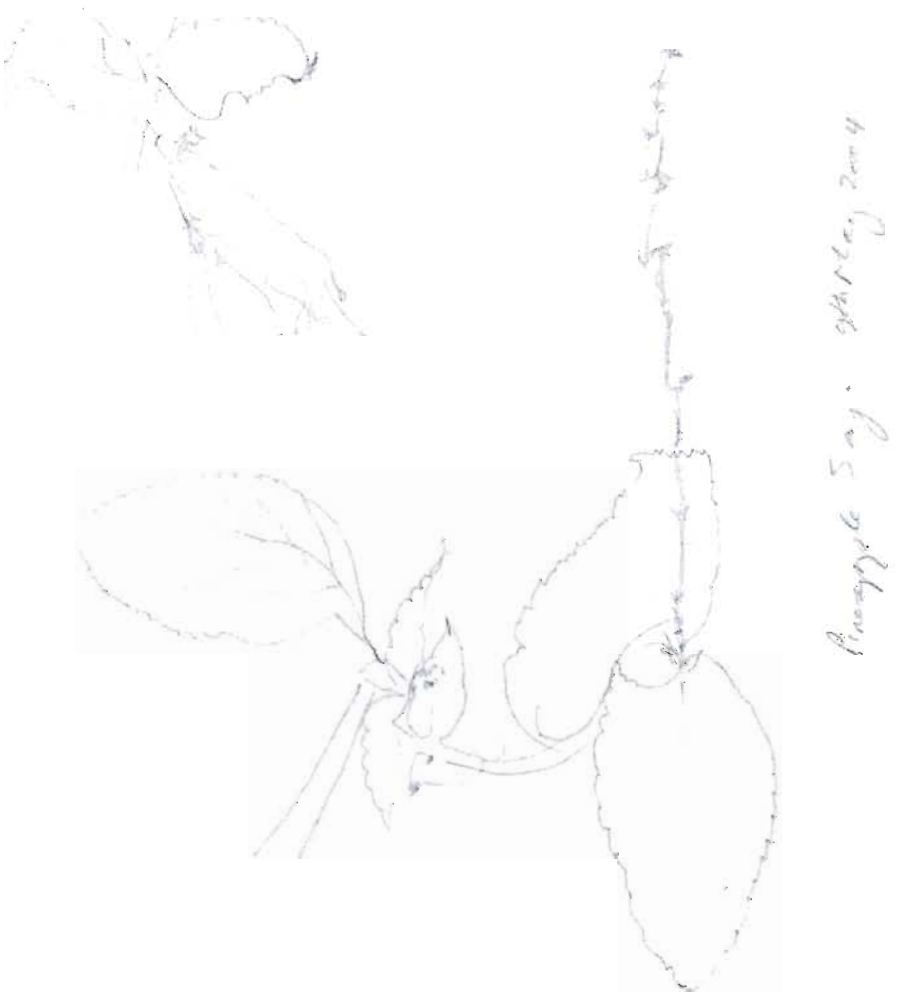


Figure 1: Contour drawing of a pineapple sage plant.

Chapter 2

The theoretical basis

"Researchers themselves – humans suspended in webs of significance of their own making – have contexts and purposes far beyond the immediate scope of their studies. Time now to expand the gaze, to look at research as a social act and to the multiple purposes (note the plural) we seek in pursuing it as a professional calling. How do we link up our research – and ourselves – with others?"

Wolcott (2001, p. 71)

My preference for covering the literature related to my research topic is to follow the suggestion of Wolcott (2001), who states (p. 74)

> *"My proposed alternative to devoting an entire chapter to examining the underpinnings of your inquiry is that, other than presenting a brief justification for your study, you draw on the relevant work of others on a when-and-as-needed basis....Such detail seems more likely to come after the presentation of new research than in anticipation of it".*

This approach also makes sense to me, given the extensive reference to the relevant literature already undertaken for the 13 assignments which preceded this dissertation. In this chapter I will therefore not attempt an extensive coverage of the literature, but will rather present the key references which have informed my thinking about my research topic. I will then proceed with the dissertation, drawing on the work of others to enrich and strengthen my story as it unfolds. For this introduction to the literature, I will start with service learning, the broader context within which my research is located.

Service learning.

According to Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999), the earliest definition of service learning dates back to 1969, when it was described as *"The accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth"*. Throughout the CHESP journey, our Core Group[6] struggled with the terminology of service learning, and debated the merits of referring to the pedagogy as "community based learning", or "community based service learning". Finally, we decided that the

[6] The Core Groups were the meso-level partnership group which carried and coordinated the CHESP programme on each participating university campus. The groups comprised a representative from each of the partnership constituencies, namely academic, community, and service.

benefits of settling on a well-known and well-documented term outweighed the need to find our "own language"; in addition, we recognized the importance of emphasizing the *service* aspect of the pedagogy, given that learning can easily take place within a community context in the total absence of any service.

We therefore explored several definitions of service learning from the voluminous literature, and described these in our Module 11 assignment (Bruzas, O'Brien, and Mkhize, 2003). In the context of this research, and bearing in mind my concerns for learning which can contribute to right action in the world, I favour the formal definition from the American Association for Higher Learning (1993):

> *"Service-learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience".*

I especially like three things about this definition: the strong emphasis on community involvement (as opposed to viewing community merely as a site or venue for experience); the stated desire to foster civic responsibility; and the explicit incorporation of reflection as an important (in my view, critical), component. However, it does demonstrate one significant shortcoming which I have found common to most definitions of service learning: it seems to indicate that learning is the prerogative of the *students*, whereas in the conception of service learning developed by the Durban CHESP Core Group and articulated in our Strategic Plan (2000), service learning is not only a pedagogy, but a method of transformation (through a process of *mutual* learning), for *all* partners. The importance of reciprocity related to learning is emphasized by Jones (2003, p.152), when she states that *"Reciprocity exists when all involved in the service-learning partnership are teaching and learning, giving and receiving".*

Having noted my preference for the above definition, I must say that my favourite definition is an informal one, provided by Harkavy (2002) during the production of the CHESP Durban video:

> *"I think that there is actually a classic definition of service learning, one in which students are involved in working with communities and then in fact take back what they've learned after providing service and reflect and learn from that experience. I don't think that's the most* robust *definition. I think the definition of service learning that's best, involves a much more serious issue in relationship to the actual work with communities and what that entails. Actually the term that we've been using at Penn. emphasizes the academic and community connection by using the phrase 'academically-based community service'. And what that entails is the actual integration of research, teaching, and service, in which service is intrinsically tied to the research and teaching experience. What that also involves is the notion of not just serving and learning from the service, not just in fact engagement in which the student becomes a better citizen from learning from the experience, but actually involves trying to help solve, with communities, the structural problems which communities face. To differentiate that, it would be the difference between tutoring and trying to help change and reform a schooling system".*

For me, the beauty of this description lies in its emphasis on *systemic transformation*, in addition to the inclusion of other characteristics of "good" service learning.

Within the context of service learning, a lot of emphasis is placed on definitions and methodology (the *how* of service learning): this was certainly the case during the CHESP Leadership Capacity Building Programme (LCBP)[7]. To my mind, it is equally important that the reasons for adopting service learning as a pedagogy be well understood (the *why* of service learning). Unfortunately, this latter aspect of service learning was largely glossed over during the CHESP LCBP, with its focus on "how to do it". No doubt we assimilated much of the discourse on the need for service learning through our reading, our visit to our American partner institutions, and our Core Group work; however, the need for service learning was not explicitly addressed. Block (2002, p. 37) has pointed out that

> *"Whatever our destination, it is letting go of the practical imperative that is most likely to guide us to a larger sense of where we want to go and which values we want*

[7] The CHESP Leadership Capacity Building Programme was a 13 module programme designed to familiarize members of the CHESP Core Groups with the principles and practice of service learning, and equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to guide the introduction of service learning at the participating institutions of higher education.

to embody in getting there. What matters is the experience of being a human being and all that this entails".

(And remember my concurrence with Berry's view that what is being made in a university is humanity). While Berry writes of problems afflicting American society and of the American university's apparent inability or unwillingness to address these problems, a similar situation exists in South Africa. Von Kotze (2004, p. 3), referring to the South African higher education system, suggests that

"This system is designed for maximum efficiency in terms of measuring output (or 'excellence') – it has developed point systems and tick-lists that facilitate the allocation of 'value' by bureaucrats: so many points for a research article translate into x number of units in terms of cash flowing into the researcher's account. The message to her/him is clear: 'quality assurance' and self-appraisal must happen in relation to financial worth. Whether the work of the researcher makes any contribution to averting poverty or empowering women to prevent abuse or infection is beside the point".

Vilakazi (1999, p. 205) has written of the "crisis" in African universities, and linked it to a broader crisis:

"Like African civilization itself, African universities are in deep crisis. Indeed, the crisis of African civilization, and of contemporary African societies, cannot but influence, in a larger sense, the shape, direction, and mental and spiritual life of African universities. However, as producers of well-thought out and debated knowledge, universities must become more and more the dominant source of the guiding light of society...So far, most African universities have not lived up to their responsibilities and challenge as the dominant guiding light to the continent and to the societies within which they are located".

In the South African context, the development of service learning, at least in the form of the CHESP programme, has been informed by two publications which explore the possibilities and implications of introducing or strengthening this approach at institutions of higher education. The first is a concept paper by Perold and Omar (1997), and the second a final report by Perold (1998). According to the executive summary in the latter document, phase one (the concept paper) attempted to clarify the concept of community service, while phase two (the final report), drew on the

ideas developed in the concept paper and examined the impact of community service on the process of institutional transformation in higher education.

Through my reading and my experience, my interest in service learning has become clear: while I recognize that service learning is a pedagogy, to me it is far more than this. It is far more than teaching and learning the same old things in new, more exciting and interesting ways. It is about transformation, and especially the transformation of paradigms. Given my conviction that the modern university is a destructive and alienating force in modern society, my chief concern when I started the CHESP programme was for the transformation of higher education, but I came to realize that in order to facilitate this process, change in all partners is required. In my view, it is only through transforming the paradigms[8] out of which all partners act that deep and sustainable change for right action in the world will emerge. The following words of Chambers (1993), while referring specifically to rural development, therefore ring so true for my understanding of service learning:

> *"The challenge is to upend our thinking, to turn values on their heads, to invent and adopt new methods, and to behave differently. The frontiers are personal and professional, requiring changes which are radical but quite surprisingly practicable: to question our values; to be self-critically aware; to see simple as often optimal; to offset our spatial and seasonal biases; to help rural people to do their own analyses; to stay in villages and learn from and with rural people; to test and use participatory approaches, methods and procedures; to encourage decentralization and diversity; to put people before things, and poor people first of all.*
>
> *To face these challenges both threatens and exhilarates. It threatens the snug security of citadels of learning with their traditional textbooks, treadmill teaching, conservative curricula, and assurance of timeless knowledge. It exhilarates because these citadels are also prisons. To break out, learning to unlearn, embracing doubt, and welcoming uncertainty, is a liberation. The shifts from things to people, from central control to local initiative, from standardization to diversity, open up new opportunities and potential".*

It is this challenge to the "snug security of citadels of learning", indeed, to *all* partners engaged in the difficult process of transformation, that service learning can provide. It may allow the experience of higher education to transform according to Tompkins' (1996, p.223) description:

---

[8] During the CHESP LCBP module on scenario-contextualized strategic planning, Richard Bawden suggested that there are three requirements for paradigm change: (i) being aware of one's own paradigms; (ii) knowing about other paradigms; and (iii) (the critical one) being shocked enough to want to change.

> *"Higher education, in order to produce the knowledge and skills students need to enter certain lucrative professions, cuts students off from both their inner selves and the world around them. By not offering them a chance to know themselves and come into contact with the actual social environment, it prepares them to enter professional school but not to develop as whole human beings. Although parents might object – what, all that tuition and no ticket to financial security and social success? – it would be more helpful to students if, as a starting point, universities conceived education less as training for a career than as the introduction to a life".*

Partnership

The ideal of partnership is important to any service learning initiative, but especially so in the South African situation. This is exemplified by the aim of CHESP: *"To contribute to the reconstruction and development of South African civil society through the development of socially accountable models of higher education, research, community development, and service. Central to this approach is the* partnership *between higher education, community, and service".*

This centrality of partnership is echoed by Jacoby (2003a, p. 6), when she states that

> *"As a programme, a philosophy, and a pedagogy, service-learning must be grounded in a network, or web, of authentic, democratic, reciprocal partnerships. By necessity, service-learning involves a range of partnerships within and across the institution; with other institutions, schools, community service providers, and community members; also with governments on all levels, national and regional associations , foundations; and in some cases, with governmental and nongovernmental organizations around the world".*

Early in the CHESP process, our Durban Core Group explored ideas of partnership and documented these in our first LCBP assignment (O'Brien, Mkhize, and Bruzas, 1998). We adopted the definition of partnership put forward by Tennyson (1997), in which she proposed that

> *"Partnership is a cross-sector relationship between individuals, groups or organizations who: (i) work together to fulfil an obligation or to undertake a specific task; (ii) agree in advance what to commit and what to expect; (iii) review the relationship regularly and revise the agreement as necessary and (iv) share both the risks and the benefits".*

While this definition proved to be an appropriate and useful one, given our commitment to mutuality and equality in the partnership development process, it omits any reference to what emerged as two significant aspects of partnership in our CHESP context: that of the accountability and legitimacy of a partnership. Our CHESP Core Group, as a meso-level partnership, was accountable to a CHESP Steering Committee which itself had only self-defined authority. In spite of attempts to introduce a CHESP constitution which would have ensured sustainability and continuity, the partnership eventually collapsed when the future of CHESP at the University of Natal was decided largely by the University's senior management with minimal consultation with community and service partners; in this decision, our Core Group partnership appeared to carry no weight in terms of honouring the principles of equality. Such situations may be what prompted Jacoby (2003b, p. 318) to state that

> *"In order for partnerships for service-learning to survive in the long run and to enable the partners to reap their rich potential benefits, the partnerships must be integrated into the missions, policies, and practices of higher education institutions".*

I would agree with this recommendation, which was indeed part of the CHESP strategy, but would extend it to include the need for partnership principles to be integrated into the guiding statements of service and community partners as well.

Unfortunately, the term "partnership", especially in the context of initiatives aimed at contributing to development, has become overused to the point where it can describe almost any association between individuals or organizations. Taylor (2002, p.1) has described this tendency and pointed out that

> *"We have learned that 'partnership' and other words like it are vitally important terms to serious development practitioners. They are important because they describe the nature and quality of relationships. And development is ultimately about relationships and how they evolve over time".*

I think that true partnership is, at this stage in the evolution of human consciousness, an ideal. In many ways it is analogous to the level of "interdependence" on the maturity continuum, as described by Covey (1989, p.49), where he states that

> *"As we continue to grow and mature, we become increasingly aware that all of nature is interdependent, that there is an ecological system that governs nature, including society. We further discover that the higher reaches of our nature have to do with our relationships with others – that human life also is interdependent".*

These "higher reaches" of human nature are surely what we are striving for in our partnerships, where the principles of mutuality and equality take precedence over partnership initiatives entered into for personal gain or institutional manoeuvring for competitive advantage. Our striving for these higher reaches surely represents a part of the *"making of humanity"* (Berry again), and the reason why development of partnerships based on honesty and trust is such an important model, especially for the students in whom we are trying to strengthen consciousness of civic responsibility and social awareness. After all, as Palmer (1998, p. 2) so simply yet so eloquently expresses it, *"We teach who we are".*

For me, therefore, an evolving understanding and *practice* of partnership is essential for the work which I am trying to do. Although I accept that we are far from the ideal, it is the striving that matters. When our partnerships are going through difficult times (as they inevitably will), it is important to hold the *image* of partnership in mind, for as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke has urged

> *"Speak and proclaim. More than ever*
> *things we can live with are falling away, for that*
> *which is oustingly taking their place is an imageless act".*

Service

One of the questions which I found myself asking during the course of my research was "What do I understand by the term 'service'?" The answer to this may seem obvious, but my experience in the NPO sector, and certainly within The Valley Trust, is that there is no easy answer to this question. The answer might appear more straightforward for, say, a government department; a visit to the South African Government's new "test" website (http://www.gov.za/) on 20th July 2004 revealed that the site is organized according to the *services* which government offers: services for the people; services for organizations; and services for foreigners. That part of the website dedicated to "services for the people" informs visitors that *"Government*

offers the following services to South African citizens. The services are organised according to life events from birth to death rather than according to the functions of government departments". It therefore seems that the South African Government rates the provision of services as a priority, and indeed the promise of improved delivery was a cornerstone of the ANC's 2004 election campaign.

While governments may be mandated to provide services, the role of NPOs is less clear. For example, my experience of service has been with The Valley Trust, and we have been debating the meaning of "service" since 1994, when the changes sweeping through the country caused many NPOs to reconsider their purpose. By 1994, the main activity of The Valley Trust (and of many other NPOs) had become the delivery of "services"; in The Valley Trust's case this included coordinating the construction of roads, classrooms, small dams, woodlots, and sports fields, and the reticulation of piped water. For The Valley Trust, the delivery of services was a logical extension of the basic needs approach to development which the organization had adopted since the mid 1970s. The basic needs approach was informed by the work of Maslow (1968), who contended that people could only develop at the "higher" level of "self actualization" once their basic needs had been addressed. The Valley Trust's approach was modified in the 1980s by incorporating the thinking of Max-Neef (1992), whose work advocated a more holistic and less linear approach to human development. Work modelled on the basic needs approach could be termed "*service as product*". What made the work of The Valley Trust special was the inclusion of efforts to promote democratic processes and the formation of community structures around the delivery of services, thus introducing an element of "*service as process*" (for details, refer to The Valley Trust Annual reports published during the period 1985 to 1991). With the advent of a democratically elected government in 1994, The Valley Trust recognized that its purpose would have to change, but how that has happened is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

What did happen, for The Valley Trust and for other NPOs, was that a period of introspection was precipitated by political and social change. The importance of this should not be underestimated; according to Swilling and Russell (2002, p. 15) the NPO sector was, by 1998, a major force in the South African economy with the total operating expenditure of all NPOs estimated to be R9.3 billion. The sector had also

become a major employer. What the sector does, and what value it adds to civil society, is therefore a pertinent question, and I have already drawn attention to the opinion of Pieterse (1998) that NPOs contribute relatively little to those living below the poverty line.

I have briefly divided service into two categories, "service as product" and "service as process", and have pointed out that the term "service" is open to a range of interpretations. I must also point out that service is not always seen to deliver positive benefits. McKnight (1995) has written passionately about the damage that service is capable of wreaking on communities, and titles one of the chapters of his book (p. 36) "Professionalized service and disabling help". In McKnight's view, one of the origins of "disabling" help has been the *professionalization* of service and the labelling of those being helped as "deficient" in some way. He adds (p. 46) that

> *"The service systems communicate three propositions to the client:*
>
> - *You are deficient.*
> - *You are the problem.*
> - *You have a collection of problems."*

The service provider then becomes the one with the knowledge, skills, and expertise to solve the problems of individuals and communities, in the process disabling these "clients". As a counter to this focus on deficiencies, the assets-based approach was developed (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993) and this approach played a significant part in the evolution of the CHESP Durban Strategic Plan, emphasizing as it does the strengths and assets of a community as the foundations for developmental interventions.

The idea of disabling help is also taken up by Gronemeyer (1992), who posits (p. 54)

> *"And finally, it is no longer true that help is the unpredictable, anomalous instance. Instead it has become institutionalized and professionalized. It is neither an event nor an act; it is a strategy. Help should no longer be left to chance. The idea of help, now, is charged with the aura of justification. A universal claim to help is derived from the right to equality, as is an all-encompassing obligation to help".*

In spite of the possible negative consequences of an uncritical approach to service, it remains the cornerstone of service learning. However, even in this context, the definition of "service" is not clear. Driscoll and Lynton (1999, p. 5), point out that

> *"Teaching and research are activities universally understood and accepted. By contrast, service or outreach (usage varies among institutions) is a vague and excessively inclusive term, which has different meanings for different individuals and across different institutional and disciplinary cultures. No widely accepted typology or categorization exists of the kinds of service. To some, service is primarily understood to mean good institutional or professional citizenship. To others, it is active participation in community-based philanthropic activities".*

For me, the two critical questions to ask about service are (1) whether the activity will result in a sustainable improvement in the lives of those benefiting from the service; and (2) whether the service was planned, implemented, and evaluated in a participatory way. It is important to add that I do not see service as a one-way flow of resources; while I do not doubt that that there is a time and place for charitable activities, I am convinced that most service should be essentially *developmental* in nature. In saying this, I acknowledge the profound effect that contact with the Cape Town-based NPO, CDRA[9], has had on my thinking about the developmental nature of service, and indeed on the nature of development. In their 1997/98 Annual Report (p. 18), they observe that

> *"Real – and read here also 'honest' – development work cannot be done to others on behalf of third parties. (Third parties being those with a vested interest – however benign – in the future of others whom they resource, influence or control). Development interventions have to flow out of the developmental processes of those seeking to develop. If development interventions are designed by third parties, and not through the free interaction between development worker and client, then it must categorically be stated that the result is not development work; it becomes at best a patronising collusion, at worst, a cynical manipulation".*

The CDRA followed up their excellent 1997/98 critique of development with recommendations for a true development practice in their 1998/99 Annual Report, in

[9] CDRA is the Community Development Resource Association. Module 9 of the CHESP Leadership Capacity Building Programme was facilitated by Doug Reeler of the CDRA, and I remain indebted to Doug for the new insights which he brought to my understanding of "development".

which they described a development process comprising the four phases of (1) building relationships; (2) gaining mutual understanding; (3) facilitating transformation; and (4) supporting implementation. An understanding of service as a developmental process brings to the fore the importance of true partnership as the foundation of meaningful service, and for this reason I chose to explore the understandings of those involved with service learning as part of this research.

The service sector

Closely associated with the lack of clarity about the role of the service partner within the context of service learning is the question of *who* should be included as part of this sector. Taylor (2002, p. 70) recommended that *"The definitions of 'community' and the 'service sector' in CHESP need to be better developed"*. It seems obvious that government departments, at all levels from the national to the district, are part of the service sector, mandated and keen as they are to "deliver services". It also seems reasonable to include NPOs as part of this sector, although these organizations form a diverse and sometimes uncomfortable grouping; Swilling and Russell (2002, p. 20) report that their 1999 study revealed the presence of 98 920 NPOs in South Africa, with 53% of these classified as less formalized community-based organizations; the balance were made up of Section 21 non-profit companies, trusts, religious institutions, trade unions, and cooperatives.

Perhaps the most difficult decision to make is whether or not to include business as part of the service sector, a decision which may rest largely on judging motivations. It may be argued that with a motivation geared largely to the generation of profits, the business sector is not a natural member of a group which appears to have altruism or development as its primary motivation (although see the reservations expressed by McKnight and Gronemeyer, referenced above). However, many businesses channel significant portions of their profits into social responsibility programmes, and may therefore be justifiably included within the sector. In the 1998 Campus Compact publication "Service matters", edited by Rothman, the following description is provided (p. 76) of "partners in service"

> *"From nonprofit organizations, to corporations, to state, federal, and local government, various organizations bring their own unique approaches to solving*

community problems. By partnering with these organizations, diverse institutions can share resources and expertise to more effectively address needs".

It therefore seems to me that an overly rigid definition of the sector is not helpful in practical terms. The guiding question when forming a partnership to address an identified developmental challenge might be "What sustainable outcomes are we striving for, and who can best engage in a process to achieve the desired outcomes?". In this way, the most contextually appropriate service partners could engage with communities and higher education according to the principles of good partnership described earlier in this chapter.

The role of the service sector in service learning

As I noted in the introduction, this topic is poorly covered in the literature, due probably to the American two-way model which has underpinned the evolution and documentation of service learning. This lack of clarity is echoed by Mitchell (2002), in her paper on partnerships in the context of CHESP Pietermaritzburg, and by Taylor (2002, p. 58), in her evaluation of the CHESP LCBP.

The exploratory nature of the South African three-way partnership has introduced a new level of complexity. Traditionally, it is accepted that there is a three-fold function of the Western university: teaching, research, and service (Fourie 2003, p. 31). However, as Fourie points out, research and teaching have usually superseded the service function. This is partly because of the tensions inherent in fulfilling the service function. During a conversation which I had with Prof Ahmed Bawa while he was Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Natal, he remarked that there is a fine line between a university offering a service *function*, and a university becoming a service *agency*, a role which it is clearly not mandated nor equipped to fulfil. However, service agencies *are* mandated and equipped to do so, hence the importance of the service sector in a partnership-centred approach to reconstruction and development.

In the American model, the service function is fulfilled either by what are often termed "agencies", or more specifically "community agencies" (Jones, 2003, p. 152). In addition, the university itself, especially in the case of land grant universities, may

fulfil a service role, as may community-based agencies which, in the context of the emerging South African model, we would probably classify as part of the community sector. In all cases, the service *function* is present although the apparent exclusion of service agencies from the American partnership model is curious.

As I pointed out in the introduction, this lack of clarity is one of the reasons that I chose to research the role of the service partner in service learning. My own intimate involvement as a service partner allowed me to develop my own understandings of the service partner's role, and I will describe these understandings as part of my description of my research process in the following chapters.

Figure 2: Contour drawing of an oyster shell.

Chapter 3

Heuristic inquiry in the context of my research topic

"Who was that research
I saw you with last night?
That was no research
That was my life!"
Reason (1988, p.18)

While the verse quoted above has a light-hearted note, the idea behind it has, for me, a serious side. As I penetrated more deeply into the experience of service learning, largely in the form of the CHESP programme, I had the "academic component" in general, and this Master's dissertation in particular, in mind. My service learning experience raised many questions for me, but foremost amongst them was the meaning of my own participation. If I was to undertake a research project for a Master's degree, then surely my experience as a service partner would be the best subject for my research? However, I felt ambivalent about tackling a research project with such personal dimensions; my own background in the sciences had limited my knowledge of research to the largely quantitative and the "objective". However, over the past few years I have been exposed to the writings of a number of researchers who have radically changed my understanding of research, and I would like to describe these so that my reasons for choosing an heuristic approach are clear.

Perhaps the greatest stimulus to my exploration of "new" ways of research came with my appointment to the post of Manager of Organizational Development at The Valley Trust at the beginning of 2001. Housed within this department was the so-called "Research Office", which implied that, theoretically at least, I was responsible for coordinating research and evaluation for the organization. I soon realized that quantitative, statistical approaches to researching and evaluating the organization's work in health and development would take us only so far. Coupled with this realization was my growing experience of CHESP and the questions which that experience was raising for me about research; for example, I was hearing community representatives expressing their frustrations with conventional "academic" research, and how such research yielded few or no practical benefits for communities. Indeed,

researchers seldom even returned to share their findings with community members who had "participated" in the research.

In my expanding reading on research, I came across authors whose opinions about "conventional" academic research echoed the opinions expressed by community members: Stoecker (1997, p.1) asks *"Are academics irrelevant?"* and quotes a participant at a 1996 meeting on participatory research as saying *"I think if the academic does the research you are doing a disservice to the community"*; Axel-Lute (2000) has pointed out that *"Academic researchers who do study poor communities have become notorious for treating them like growths in a petri dish"*; and Levin and Greenwood (2001, p104) have stated that

> *"Most of the theoretical conceptualizations and practical applications that shape the current international language about knowledge generation and learning organizations have emerged outside university boundaries or in marginal pockets within large universities".*

Around this time I came across an article by Reason (1998), which he concluded (p. 44) with the following extraordinary statement:

> *"To heal means to make whole. We can only understand our world as a whole if we are part of it. As soon as we attempt to stand outside, we divide and separate. Making whole necessarily implies participation. One important characteristic of a participatory world-view is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the natural world. To make whole also means to make holy. In a participatory world-view meaning and mystery are restored to human experience. The world is once again experienced as a sacred place".*

I found this statement extraordinary because here was a highly respected researcher (as my subsequent reading of his work revealed), who was comfortable writing about wholeness, participation, the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world, meaning and mystery, and the sacred nature of life. In one short article, Reason seemed to have brought together the questions with which I had been grappling for years, and moreover in a way which suggested an approach that could result in healing, or at least initiate a healing process.

Shortly after this discovery, I attended the CHESP LCBP Module facilitated by Richard Bawden, and was excited to hear Richard refer to CHESP as essentially being about "new ways of knowing", in partnership. I was fascinated by Richard's presentation of four "ways of knowing": the propositional; the practical; the experiential; and the inspirational. Here again was someone who was not afraid to talk and write about "inspirational knowing", and I found his article describing these different "ways of knowing" highly stimulating (Bawden, 1999). I was especially taken with his assertion (p. 4) that meaning arises out of the intersection between experiences in the concrete world (experiential learning), and insights gleaned from the spiritual world (inspirational learning). The realization that "inspirational knowing" was accepted as a legitimate approach, at least within a certain segment of the research community, was important to me, as for several years I have been working with the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, who writes extensively about the different dimensions of spiritual knowing (see, for example, Steiner, 1983, for his exposition of knowledge related to "imagination", "inspiration", and "intuition").

Another experience which strongly influenced my rapidly developing interest in new ways of knowing and new approaches to research was a four-day workshop on advanced methods of evaluation, which I attended in 2002. This workshop was facilitated by Michael Patton, and again I was enthralled by his presentation of qualitative research and the use of story and metaphor as ways of enhancing the research process and the documentation of results. I purchased two of his books at the workshop, and it was while I was referring to his "Qualitative research and evaluation methods" (2002) that I first read about heuristic inquiry.

Patton presents a variety of approaches to qualitative research through what he calls their "foundational questions". The foundational question for heuristic inquiry is, according to Patton (2002, p. 107), *"What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience the phenomenon intensely?"* This question immediately seemed appropriate for research into my own experience as a service partner in a service learning programme. Not only that, but it allowed me to bring in a participatory dimension, in that I could incorporate the views of others who had also engaged intensely in CHESP or other service learning programmes.

Using this approach, I could legitimately focus on my own experience, for as Moustakas (1990, p. 9) has pointed out

> *"The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge".*

What are the origins of heuristic inquiry? Hiles (2001, p. 3) records that heuristic inquiry was developed by Clark Moustakas, who used the approach extensively to explore the phenomenon of loneliness. Hiles (p. 3) adds that heuristic inquiry *"...bares some striking resemblance to the idea of lived inquiry developed by John Heron (1998) and mindful inquiry developed by Bentz and Shapiro (1998)".* He adds that *"The heuristic inquiry paradigm is an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher, to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research".* This focus on the lived experience and learning process of the researcher appeals to me, for while I wish to avoid any tendency towards self-absorption, I do think that the involvement of the researcher with his or her research topic is a pivotal aspect of the research experience and deserves to be approached as such. Given, too, the intensity of my involvement with CHESP, I think that any insights into the role of the service partner in service learning are to a large extent attributable to my *reflective experience* as a service partner. I will return to the importance of reflection later in the dissertation.

Patton (2002, p. 107) describes how the personal experience of the researcher is enriched through exploring the experiences of others:

> *"There are two focussing or narrowing elements of heuristic inquiry within the larger framework of phenomenology. First, the researcher must have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study. Second, others (coresearchers) who are part of the study must share an intensity of experience with the phenomenon".*

With regard to the first focussing element I have, in the introduction to this dissertation, attempted to share with the reader my depth of interest in service learning and my reasons for this interest. With regard to the second, I found during the course

of my research that the personal experience of others was variable: some participants[10] had obviously experienced an intense involvement in service learning, while the involvement of others appeared almost peripheral.

The process of heuristic inquiry is clearly described by Moustakas (1990), and summarized by Hiles (2001, pp.3 and 4). The process consists of six phases, and I will present these in some detail, as knowledge of the phases is important for an understanding of heuristic inquiry. To do this I will draw heavily on the writings of Moustakas (1990). In the next chapter, I will relate the phases to the unfolding of my own research.

Initial engagement. This is the phase during which the researcher starts to develop a research question. As Moustakas (p. 27) puts it

> *"The task of the initial engagement is to discover an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications. The initial engagement invites self-dialogue, an inner search to discover the topic and question. During this process one encounters the self, one's autobiography, and significant relationships within a social context".*

Immersion. In this phase, the researcher becomes deeply involved with his or her research topic, in a sense becoming one with the topic to refine and understand it. Moustakas (p.28) states that

> *"Once the question is discovered and its terms defined and clarified, the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even dream states. Everything in his or her life becomes crystallized around the question. The immersion process enables the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question – to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding of it".*

Incubation. This is the phase which, for me, has strong parallels with Bawden's "inspirational learning process" (1999, p. 10). It is the phase which incorporates "disengagement" (Bawden), or, as Moustakas (p. 28) puts it:

---

[10] For reasons which I shall explain later, I prefer the term "participants" to "coresearchers".

> *"Incubation is the process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question....During this process the researcher is no longer absorbed in the topic in any direct way or alert to things, situations, events, or people that will contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon. Nevertheless, growth is taking place".*

Illumination. This phase of the process occurs as what Moustakas refers to (p. 29) as a

> *"...breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question. The illumination process may be an awakening to constituents of the experience, thus adding new dimensions of knowledge".*

Again, there is a parallel to Bawden's assertion (1999, p. 5) that meaning arises out of the intersection or "dynamic" between the processes of experiential learning (a more conscious process), and inspirational learning (a more meditative process, or one undertaken in a *different* state of consciousness).

Explication. The fifth phase involves the exploration of the *meaning* of what has arisen during the process up to this point. This dimension of meaning is significant in heuristic inquiry; Douglass and Moustakas (1985) have pointed out that *"Heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behaviour"*. Moustakas (p. 31) explains that

> *"Numerous heuristic approaches are utilized in pursuing a full elucidation of the descriptive qualities and themes that characterize the experience being investigated. A comprehensive elucidation may also include the recognition of new constituents and themes. In the explication process, the heuristic researcher utilizes focussing, indwelling, self-searching, and self-disclosure, and recognizes that meanings are unique and distinctive to an experience and depend upon internal frames of reference. The entire process of explication requires that researchers attend to their own awarenesses, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and judgments as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from conversations and dialogues with others".*

Creative synthesis. In the sixth and final phase of heuristic research, the heuristic researcher weaves all the threads together in a creative expression of the whole. Although this demands a thorough familiarity with all aspects of the research, *"The*

creative synthesis can only be achieved through tacit and intuitive powers" (Moustakas, p. 31). He adds that *"Knowledge of the data and a period of solitude and meditation focusing on the topic and question are the essential preparatory steps for the inspiration that eventually enables a creative synthesis"*. As I noted earlier, I have chosen to present my creative synthesis in the form of a palimpsest, defined in The Concise Oxford Dictionary as *"Writing material or manuscript on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for a second writing"*. While the drawing together of the threads in the creative synthesis is intended as the culmination of the heuristic inquiry process, I found that the process of creating the palimpsest called forth new insights, and I equate this with the process of aesthetic knowing, described by Eisner (1985), a process which I will return to in a later chapter.

While I have immersed myself in the process of heuristic inquiry and have found it an ideal approach for my research, I am aware that it is intensely personal, and that concerns about the validity of results will inevitably arise. Questions about validity are of course not confined to heuristic inquiry: Anderson, Braud and Valle (1996, p.3) point out that one of the attractions of quantitative approaches to research is that they *"...provide the greatest feelings of confidence in our conclusions, and they yield the least ambiguous findings"*. The authors immediately add that *"For this payoff, however, they sacrifice depth of understanding and lose knowledge of the contexts, complexities, and richness of what is being studied"*. Patton (2002, p.14) also points out the different approaches to validity in quantitative and qualitative approaches, and notes that

> *"Validity in quantitative research depends on careful instrument construction to ensure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. The instrument must then be administered in an appropriate, standardized manner according to prescribed procedures. The focus is on the measuring instrument – the test items, survey questions, or other measurement tools. In qualitative inquiry,* ***the researcher is the instrument****. The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great*

extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork – as well as things going on in a person's life that might prove a distraction".

In drawing attention to these differences, I am not arguing for a less rigorous approach to research. Indeed, Douglass and Moustakas (1985, p. 40) emphasize the discipline and rigour required to make heuristic inquiry a success:

"Because heuristic inquiry challenges the extremes of perceptions, passionate yet disciplined commitment is vital if the search is to attain to scientific credibility....Heuristic inquiry is not guided by rules or mechanics, yet it is not a casual process. It is a dedicated pursuit, inspired by hunger for new insight and revelation".

I would like to end this brief excursion into the question of validity with a quote from Moustakas (1990, p. 32). I have used the term "meaning" on more than one occasion in this dissertation, because meaning is important to me. I am not particularly interested in superficial or easy explanations for the experiences with which I am passionately engaged; I am interested in depth, understanding, and knowing in as many different ways as possible. Hence I appreciate the view of Moustakas when he states that

"Since heuristic inquiry utilizes qualitative methodology in arriving at themes and essences of experience, validity in heuristics is not a quantitative measurement that can be determined by correlations or statistics. The question of validity is one of meaning : Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience? This judgement is made by the primary researcher, who is the only person in the investigation who has undergone the heuristic inquiry from the beginning formulation of the question through phases of incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis not only with himself or herself, but with each and every cooresearcher".

Chapter 4

How I applied the principles of heuristic inquiry to my research topic

"Heuristic inquiry is an extremely demanding process, involving disciplined self-commitment, rigorous self-searching and self-reflection, and ultimately a surrender to the process. It does not suit a fixed time-frame for research, and should not be attempted lightly".

(Hiles, 2001, p. 2)

"My story is not a sequence of events like knots on a string...all of it happens at once and it goes on happening; all of it is happening now and any part of it contains the whole of it, the pictures needn't be looked at in any particular order".

The Head of Orpheus in Russell Hoban's
The Medusa Frequency (1987, p. 39).

Having described the process of heuristic inquiry at some length in Chapter 3, I must now say that my own research did not follow exactly the sequence of events described by Moustakas (1990). However, all the elements, all six phases, were present, although not necessarily in the same order as presented in Chapter 3. My experience was that the phases tended to run in parallel, and that the process has been an iterative one. In addition, it is my view that some aspects of the phases, for example the meditative nature of the incubation phase and the artistic activity of the creative synthesis, are best applied throughout the research process to create a "supportive condition" for the process as a whole. I therefore found it preferable to work with the phases in the form of interweaving, interconnecting elements rather than as a series of linear steps. Does this invalidate the process? I do not think so. Janesick (2000, p. 390) cautions the qualitative researcher against "methodolatry" (*"a combination of method and idolatry"*), which she describes as *"...a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told".* In addition, if it is true that the *"researcher is the instrument"* (Patton 2002, p. 14) then development of the research "instrument" must imply that the researcher modifies the process where necessary as he or she grows and develops in response to the process with which he or she is engaged. This is especially so given the widespread acceptance of the fact that a researcher cannot objectively stand aside from the research process, particularly in qualitative research. As the poet Kabir expressed it, *"If you have not lived through something, it is not true".*

I will now describe how I found the phases of heuristic inquiry unfolding in my research.

Initial engagement:

When I first became involved in service learning, my interest was almost entirely focused on the possibilities which service learning held for my work in the NPO environment, and for influencing higher education, as I have described in Chapter 1. While the invitation to participate in the CHESP programme had mentioned a study component this was, in the initial stages of the programme, an unknown dimension, and the process of selecting a research topic was introduced only much later in the LCBP. However, a number of processes with which I was closely involved allowed the role of the service partner to emerge as a research question, and I have already described in Chapter 1 how I came to work at The Valley Trust, and how my experiences had led me to view higher education as a destructive and alienating institution in modern society.

Before going any further, however, I must acknowledge that I have encountered, within the enormously complex systems that make up the modern university, individual academics who feel just as passionately about the need for change in higher education as I do. One academic on the Durban campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal responded to my question as to whether different ways of knowing could flow back into a university and change "conventional" academic paradigms by stating that

> *"I think it can. That's why I'm still here. I think it can and I think it must, but it's a long hard process and I think that it's always going to be individual-based. I think it's about particular individuals particularly invested in doing that, putting pressure on the mainstream knowledge".*

Although such comments reinforce my views that a desire for change *is* carried by some individuals within higher education, they nevertheless have prompted me to strive for a sense of balance in my views about higher education as an institution, and to also recognize that I cannot stand on the outside of what is essentially a thoroughly interconnected system of learning and practice; for me this has come to imply that I, along with others in the service sector and the community sector, must also change if a *"world worthy of human aspiration"* (Reason and Bradbury 2001, p. 1), is to come

about. Such views as the one quoted on the previous page also draw attention to the tension between the role of creative and committed individuals, and the need to institutionalize more widespread change, a tension to which I shall return towards the end of this dissertation.

To return, then, to the element of initial engagement; while I was finding my way into the CHESP programme, I was also engaged with two other "partnership initiatives". The first was the Community Studies Module, a NICHE[11] initiative for all first year health science students at what was the University of Durban Westville. This second-semester module was (and still is) facilitated by a variable number of partnership teams, each comprising one academic partner, one community partner, and one service partner. For three years I participated as a service partner on a facilitation team, after which I retained an involvement through helping to plan and, more recently, research the module. The second partnership initiative was the Collaborative Group, a loose association of health-oriented NPOs in KwaZulu Natal. The aim of this partnership has been to *"strengthen management capacity for the District Health System in KwaZulu Natal, using the Primary Health Care approach"*, and the Group's perceptions of its own experiences have been documented by Bruzas (2003a). My participation in the Community Studies Module was leading me to ask uncomfortable questions about my role as a service representative, because it seemed to me that the module would run just as well in the absence of the service representative; and my involvement with the Collaborative Group was, in many ways, giving rise to a sense of frustration as the Group grappled with the question of the role of NGOs in the light of government's stated commitment to equity and service delivery. I must say that initially these questions were quite vague, more akin to the sense of unease described so perceptively by Okri (1997, p. 8) in the following evocative passage:

> *"We get out of bed. We wander around the house, to see if everything is all right. Nothing stirs. Everything sleeps. The world snores gently. We try to return to sleep, but the question nags us: why have we woken up? When was the last time we woke suddenly like this for no visible reason? And then gradually, if we are lucky, we realise that something seemingly silent in our lives is trying to speak to us".*

[11] The Natal Institute for Community Health Education (NICHE) programme was in some ways a forerunner of the CHESP programme. It was also based on a three-way partnership (community-higher education-service), but was limited to the health sciences. It was funded by the Kellogg's Foundation.

And so I count myself lucky: after years of working diligently in the "service sector", I found myself waking up. Gradually at first, then with growing consciousness through my involvement in these various partnership initiatives, I found myself asking "What am I really doing here? What has *changed* for the better as a result of my participation?" These questions were finally precipitated into consciousness during the CHESP programme when I realized that while the roles of the community and higher education partners were becoming increasingly well-defined, the role of the service partner remained obscure. Indeed, none of the 13 modules of the LCBP addressed the role of the service partner. Many of us on the LCBP felt intuitively that the participation of the service sector must be desirable, but were unable to say exactly how, beyond a few ideas about logistical support. My concerns deepened when I gave thought to the fact that, as a service representative in a Core Group, I was expected to somehow "share" my growing understanding of service learning, and "prepare" the service sector to participate in this approach. This expectation (or what I perceived to be this expectation), left me feeling rather intimidated, and certainly unsure about how to proceed.

As part of an early attempt to "mobilize" the service sector, our Durban Core Group convened a meeting[12] of service sector representatives, and after introducing them to the idea of service learning, asked them how they viewed the possible role of service partners. The following suggestions emerged during the discussions:

- Provide sites/links to sites.
- Provide field mentors.
- Provide skilled personnel.
- Facilitate community entry.
- Training and capacity building.
- Coordinate internships.
- Facilitate action plans.
- Influence higher education to direct education programmes towards community development.

[12] This meeting was held at The Valley Trust during the first year of the CHESP programme, and was attended by representatives from the Departments of Health, Education, and Water Affairs and Forestry, as well as the Mvula Trust, Medical Research Council, Independent Projects Trust, the Ilembe Regional Council, and the Community Based Organization Network.

- Lend legitimacy to community-based partnership programmes (for example, Department of Education support for work done in schools).
- Intersectoral liaison.

While these ideas gave some initial sense of direction, they did not satisfy my growing concern that there had to be something more to the service sector's role than providing logistical support as a sort of "back up" to the *real* partnership, which at that stage appeared to be between community and higher education. This intuitive knowing that there must be "something more" is for me a manifestation of "tacit knowing", as described by Polanyi (1967), who posits (p. 4) that *"...we can know more than we can tell"*. This recognition is important, for as Moustakas (1990, p. 20), has stated,

> *"Underlying all other concepts in heuristic research, at the base of all heuristic discovery, is the power of revelation in tacit knowing".*

Thus, by the time I had to choose a research topic for this Master's course, the question of the service partners' role was already one that was at the forefront of my thinking about service learning, and was, moreover, a question located at a *"frontier both personal and professional"* (to somewhat rephrase the quote from Chambers cited earlier). The phase of "initial engagement" in the heuristic research process therefore spanned a number of years, but the question which finally surfaced was one which meets Moustakas' requirements for a *"...passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications"*.

Immersion:

The CHESP LCBP was an intense, transformative experience. I have attempted to document some of this experience in my Learning Log assignment (Bruzas 2003b), but must repeat some aspects here for clarity.

The design of the LCBP was such that our Durban Core Group joined the core groups from other participating campuses on a regular basis for the 13 modules which made up the programme. The term "modules" is somewhat misleading, for while some of them were quite straightforward and delivered from a very academic ("propositional")

perspective, others were experiences in which I was able to immerse myself for four or five days at a time; experiences which continued to exert an influence on me long after the end of the modules. Indeed, some of the experiences were so powerful that they continue to influence not only my thinking, but my practice, to this day. I refer specifically here to the modules facilitated by Jodi Kretzman (on the assets-based approach to community development); Richard Bawden (which introduced the concepts of systems thinking); and Doug Reeler (which was ostensibly about community empowerment but which was about so much more). The introduction to Kolb's experiential learning cycle during Tim Stanton's module was also significant, laying as it did a foundation for exploring various models of experiential learning. Here then, were opportunities to focus on fascinating yet useable ideas relating to the questions which had assumed such importance for me. Not only were the topics relevant and the conversations stimulating, but the environments in which the modules were held lent themselves to the experience of immersion. The physical beauty of the two main venues (Monkey Valley on the Cape West Coast, and the Salt Rock Hotel on KwaZulu Natal's Dolphin Coast), shared a sense of seclusion and timelessness which created an ideal setting for thinking and talking and reflecting. On top of this, our visit to the United States for modules five and six brought our Core Group and our two additional academic partners into close proximity with experienced and passionate practitioners of service learning for ten days of intense interaction.

In addition to the time spent on the modules, there were many other opportunities for me to immerse myself in service learning. For example, there were our weekly Core Group meetings, usually on campus, which focused on our ever-deepening involvement in the approach. These meetings were not always comfortable, but if anything, this served only to intensify the experience and created opportunities for *"self-dialogue and self-searching"* (Moustakas 1990, p. 28). For example, after one particularly difficult meeting on 8th October 2001, I wrote an e-mail to my two Core Group colleagues which concluded with the following words:

> *"The above points also raise the issue of trust – was the intensity of yesterday's meeting and the feelings which it aroused because we share great trust, or are there areas where we need to be aware of the need for greater trust building – an important question in terms of assignment 8's focus on partnership building and partnership*

dynamics. In a sense yesterday's meeting took us to a place we haven't been to before – how did we handle the test?"

Then there were the many readings which accompanied the programme, readings which opened up new ways of seeing and thinking. I listed these in some detail in my Learning Log assignment, and will not repeat them here.

I will now move on to describe the experience of talking to others who have been more or less intensely involved in service learning, as part of the immersion phase.

A key component of the research process has been listening to the views of others who have also been intimately involved in service learning. Given that it is more important in heuristic inquiry for "co-researchers" to be passionately involved than it is to interview large numbers of respondents, I decided to limit my interviews to "co-researchers" associated with only three campuses, the Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses of the University of KwaZulu Natal, and the University of the Free State. Another reason that I selected these two universities is that the University of the Free State has managed to institutionalize service learning to a remarkable degree, whereas the University of KwaZulu Natal has largely ignored the pedagogy at the institutional or meso level[13].

However, before I describe my interview process, I would like to clarify my use of the term "co-researcher", and explain why I have chosen to enclose the word in quotation marks and, in fact, replace it with the word "participants". I understood, from reading the literature on heuristic inquiry, that co-researchers - those who in other research approaches might be termed "respondents" or even "subjects" - tend to be much more deeply involved in the process. In my study, this has been true for only a small handful of those whom I chose to interview, those to whom I feel especially close and with whom I have ongoing conversations. Having said that, I would regard other CHESP colleagues, who I was unable to interview but with whom I held many long

[13] Again, the intention here is not to gloss over attempts at the University of KwaZulu Natal to adopt creative approaches to teaching, research, and service. Rather, the distinction is based on the fact that whereas the University of the Free State has established and funded a formal infrastructure to promote community service, the University of KwaZulu Natal has failed to adopt even a policy on service learning; indeed, the need for a policy was vigorously disputed by some senior academics during the CHESP programme.

and challenging discussion during the course of the LCBP, as my true "co-researchers", even though they were not part of my structured interview process: their thoughts and insights have stayed with me and have also informed my thinking.

In order to incorporate the experience of others involved in service learning, I decided to use both focus group interviews and individual interviews. According to Patton (2002, p. 385) focus group interviews are conducted to *"...get a variety of perspectives and increase confidence in whatever patterns emerge"*. However, Patton also lists nine limitations of focus groups; important amongst these (in my view) is the fact that confidentiality cannot be ensured, and also that the dynamics between individuals may either promote a free and honest flow of information or limit the contributions of individuals who might perceive their views to be unpopular or in the minority. In addition, because of the dialogue which can develop between the participants, the number of questions which can be asked tends to be limited. This implies that the focus group interview requires careful planning and a degree of skill. At least one group appreciated my facilitation skills: I received the following comment in an e-mail from one of the participants in the Free State academic focus group: "*The sensitive way in which you handled the FGI set a good example to us and we look forward to a session with you on the topic of the (a?) heuristic approach to research*". The following table summarizes the types of interviews which I conducted and the number of participants involved in each interview:

Campus	Focus groups	Individual interviews	Total participants
UKZN Durban	1 academic (2 participants)	1 community	5
		2 service	
UKZN Pietermaritzburg	1 academic (3 participants)	3 service	6
UOFS	1 community (6 participants)		17
	1 service (6 participants)		
	1 academic (5 participants)		
Totals	22	6	28

I must point out, in relation to Patton's (2002, p. 107) requirement that participants in heuristic research be others "*...who also experience this phenomenon intensely*", that my experience during the focus group interviews was that many of the participants seemed to struggle to answer my questions; my sense was that while some participants have been intensely and passionately engaged in service learning, others are operating at the periphery. I noted in my journal after the focus group interviews at the University of the Free State that

> *"The last group this afternoon (service), seemed utterly baffled by my questions. One participant had also been part of the community focus group!"*

This particular instance can perhaps be partly explained by the fact that there was some uncertainty as to whether the group would get together at all: a visit by the South African President to a nearby area during the weekend prior to my visit had resulted in the intended focus group participants (mainly from government departments) having to provide answers to certain questions which had been raised by the President during his visit. For this reason, it seems that some of the focus group participants had come in at the last minute and may not have had adequate experience of service learning. However, attendance at the Free State "community" focus group was also interesting in that it was made up largely of community members working for the Mangaung University Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP). I therefore question whether they provided a "community" perspective, or a mixed "community-academic" perspective. I note this for clarity, but what emerged during several of the interviews was that there is in reality a large degree of overlap between partner groups. One academic partner noted that the boundary between sectors "*...blurs all the time*", while another academic partner commented that "*It varies in different situations, where sometimes they are very distinct, other times they're not*".

I commenced each focus group interview by explaining to participants the nature of my research, and emphasizing that I would be using the data for purposes of writing a dissertation and possibly a paper for publication. I asked permission to record the interview, and requested participants to sign an attendance register which also documented the purpose of the interview and confirmed permission to record. I then asked each participant to introduce themselves, and explain briefly the nature of their involvement in service learning. I had hoped in this way to learn something of the

depth of their involvement, but most participants spoke so briefly that very little of this was useful, beyond capturing the wide variety of service learning projects represented. I then asked a series of questions, allowing a variable amount of time for each question depending on the quality of the responses which I received. I usually asked the questions in the following order:

- What is your understanding of "service"?
- What is your understanding of the "service sector"?
- What do you understand by "service learning"?
- What do you understand by the term "partnership"?
- What is the role of the service partner in service learning?
- Is the service sector currently able to respond appropriately according to your understanding of their role?
- What do service partners need to do in order to participate more meaningfully in service learning?

Why did I ask *these* seven questions? As I noted in the introduction, my growing understanding of the role of the service partner in service learning has proceeded within the wider context of my understanding of service learning and what it sets out to achieve, and in the critical context of partnership. I therefore thought it essential to contextualize my key question (that of the role of the service partner in service learning) within the broader service learning experience of interview participants. It also provided a means of finding our way into each interview and putting participants at ease.

By comparison, I found the six individual interviews far more satisfying. In two cases, the individuals who I interviewed had been closely involved in service learning through the CHESP LCBP, while another is passionately involved in service learning although in a non-CHESP context. In all cases the individual interviews allowed me to follow through on responses to my questions, and in so doing, penetrate more deeply into the experience of the participants. However, I must also add that I found myself to be more relaxed in the individual interviews, and this may have influenced the participants and helped to establish a more trusting environment in which participants felt freer to express themselves. In fact, during the course of one

interview, the participant indicated a desire to share with me a very personal observation relating to partnerships, and to honour that trust, I switched off the tape recorder to allow the participant to speak freely.

As noted above, I recorded all the interviews, usually on standard 60 minutes audio tapes. Initially I used a Sanyo recorder/transcriber equipped with Sound Grabbers; these extension microphones are intended to pick up the contributions of focus group participants widely scattered around a table. However, in practice they proved unreliable, and the poor sound quality resulted in a difficult and frustrating transcription process. I later switched to a Marantz recorder with a built-in microphone; this equipment proved to be far more reliable and sensitive even in focus group situations. I also took notes during interviews, mainly as a way of capturing my own observations and feelings about the process of the interview rather than as a record of what participants were saying, although my notes also served as a basic back up to the recordings. Transcriptions were undertaken by a typist skilled in audio typing, and in all cases checked by myself against the original recordings, and where I had difficulty hearing what was said, I asked a colleague for assistance. I was initially quite concerned and disappointed by the lack of clarity in some of the tapes; however, through my readings I have come to realize that this is a problem commonly encountered when tape recording interviews. Where the recorded comments were not clear, I noted this on the transcripts in brackets, ie: [not clear].

In addition to noting instances of lack of clarity, I also made basic notes in the transcripts to indicate where participants had emphasized a particular point by typing the words in italics, for example

> "Hugely, *hugely*. You are working with people's lives; you're giving them materials that in itself is shaping…"

I also indicated where there had been a pause for thought by using three full stops, thus …, or by typing [pause], or where there had been laughter as [laughter]. I also tried to ensure that the transcripts included the personal spoken mannerisms of participants, for example, the frequent use of terms such as "you know", as well as "ja", "um" and "phew!". I found, as I listened to the tapes again and again, that the *way* in which participants spoke came to take on an importance of its own, both

related to the content and independent of it. As the enthusiasm of some participants grew during the interviews, the intensity of their speech and the passion which came through in their voices came to be (for me) as indicative of the meaning of what they were saying as the words themselves. As Atkinson and Heritage (as cited in Silverman 2002, p. 830) note

> *"The production and use of transcripts are essentially 'research activities'. They involve close, repeated listenings to recordings that often reveal previously unnoted recurring features of the organization of talk".*

However, my attempts to indicate the nuances of speech were primitive compared to the amount of detail noted by researchers such as Baker (2004) and Silverman (1997), who have developed intricate shorthand notation for use with transcripts.

Once the transcripts were as accurate as I felt it was possible to get them, I e-mailed or posted copies to interview participants with an invitation to give me feedback on the transcripts, or any other aspects of the interview process; unfortunately, no one responded to this invitation. I also offered, while conducting the interviews at the University of the Free State in early March 2004, to return and present my findings to participants, both as a courtesy and as a way of validating my emerging understandings of the experience of others involved in service learning. I worked with an academic partner at the University of the Free State to coordinate the feed back presentation which I gave on 13th August 2004. Unfortunately, this presentation was attended largely by academic partners (eight out of ten participants), and yielded very little in the way of feed back to me on my findings.

The next step in working with the transcripts came in the form of analyzing them for common themes and patterns. For this activity, I managed the transcripts with the help of Nvivo 2, a qualitative data analysis software package. I specifically use the term "managed", for as Weitzman (2000, p. 805) points out

> *"Simply put, software can provide tools to help you analyze qualitative data, but it cannot do the analysis for you....Thus it is particularly important to emphasize that using software cannot be a substitute for learning data analysis methods: The researcher must know what needs to be done, and do it. The software provides the tools to do it with".*

While I taught myself the basics of Nvivo, my ability to use the programme more effectively was enhanced by attending a course facilitated by Patsy Clarke of the University of KwaZulu Natal's Information Technology Department.

For this stage of the analysis I used a coding system which incorporated both pre-planned "organizing ideas", as well as categories which emerged from the data itself. For example, I knew beforehand that I was interested in "views on partnership", and therefore actively *looked for* data relating to this category; however, as I read through the transcripts, other ideas *suggested themselves*, and in this way became categories.

Thus my immersion consisted of my own journey along the CHESP LCBP path and the way in which this related to my ongoing organizational practice at The Valley Trust; it also consisted of my extensive readings (which I shall elaborate on in the next section); it also included the insights which I gained from interviewing others who had been (more or less) intensely involved in service learning; and it included working with the transcripts and their detailed analysis.

All this has served to reinforce for me Moustakas' assertion (1990, p. 28) that

> *"Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion, for staying with, and for maintaining a sustained focus and concentration. People, places, meetings, readings, nature – all offer possibilities for understanding the phenomenon".*

Incubation:

In between the periods of intense engagement described above, there have been periods of "retreat" from the intense focus of modules, meetings and readings. Moustakas (1990, p. 28) states that during these periods of incubation, when

> *"...the researcher is moving on a totally different path, detached from involvement with the question and removed from awareness of its nature and meanings, on another level expansion of knowledge is taking place".*

While I found that learning was indeed taking place on "another level", I cannot really say that I was "detached from involvement with the question". Given that the question

which was emerging for me was such an intimate part of both my personal and professional life, I found myself aware of the broad issues on a daily basis, but not in the intense way that occurred during modules and meetings. It was as if I was holding the emerging question (or perhaps better, *questions*) in my consciousness, but without looking directly at them. I can best describe this by comparing the experience to looking at a distant star: the star is there, but gazing directly at it is somehow not as effective as looking a little to one side, when the star appears clear and bright. My experience of holding the emerging questions was akin to this: they have been present in my consciousness, but moving "in and out of focus", requiring a sidelong glance to bring them into clear view.

I must also, here under the heading of "incubation", start to describe what for me have been amongst the most important ways of allowing an understanding of the both the questions and the growing resolutions to emerge. These ways are intimately bound up with the idea of tacit knowing - with intuitive knowing - and they are ways which I have struggled to speak openly about during the course of the CHESP LCBP, enmeshed as it largely[14] seemed to be in a very positivist approach to knowing.

I have, for as long as I can remember, been fascinated by the idea of wholeness, although until fairly recently I would not have been able to name it as such. On reflection now, I think that it has been this organizing idea of wholeness which has been at the core of my love of the natural world: the expression of wholeness in the cycles of the seasons, the rhythms of day and night, of light and dark; the teeming secrets of ponds and soil; and the mystery of what lies at the boundaries of things: the seashore, the river bank, the forest edge. The same organizing idea of wholeness seems to me to lie at the heart of my more recent interest in the way in which organizations function, the way in which people come together (often with great struggle) to work together for the common good. It has also been a constant thread in my concern about the reductionistic and divisive approach of higher education, manifesting in my personal frustration at never having been formally able to bring together a study programme drawing on both the sciences and the arts. Thus while my

[14] As I have mentioned previously in this document, the inclusion by Richard Bawden of "inspirational knowing", and by Doug Reeler of colour work and a highly experiential approach, were exceptions to this generalization.

formal studies have been mainly in the sciences (usually in their more mechanistic form), my own explorations have been largely in the arts, in the form of drawing and painting, writing, music, and photography. It is this more holistic approach which I have tried to bring to this dissertation, and in particular it is the more artistic aspect which has allowed any inspiration to emerge during the entire process. Thus although I have used the term "incubation" as a heading for this section, the artistic processes have been a constant practice which have permeated my ever-deepening journey of learning. What are these artistic processes?

For some years I have practiced a form of active meditation based on meticulous observation expressed through the medium of drawing, a process sometimes referred to as "contour drawing". Although this way of drawing was popularized by Edwards (1979) in her book "Drawing on the right side of the brain", there are to my mind better expositions. Foremost amongst these is the work of Franck (1973), a remarkable man with degrees in medicine, dentistry, and fine arts, who worked for several years with Albert Schweitzer in West Africa. Franck states (pp. 3-4) that

> *"We do a lot of looking: we look through lenses, telescopes, television tubes...Our looking is perfected every day – but we see less and less. Never has it been more urgent to speak of SEEING. Ever more gadgets, from cameras to computers, from art books to videotapes, conspire to take over our thinking, our feeling, our experiencing, our seeing. Onlookers we are, spectators... 'Subjects' we are, that look at 'objects'. Quickly we stick labels on all that is, labels that stick once and for all. By these labels we recognize everything but no longer SEE anything. We know the labels on the bottles, but never taste the wine".*

One way of learning to SEE again (which, in my view, goes hand-in-hand with coming to understand and to make meaning), is to slow down through a process which Franck calls seeing/drawing. Franck goes on to add (p. 8) that

> *"When seeing and drawing become SEEING/DRAWING is that awareness and attention become constant and undivided, become contemplation.*
> *SEEING/DRAWING is not a self-indulgence, a 'pleasant hobby', but a discipline of awareness, of UNWAVERING ATTENTION to a world which is fully alive....It is a discipline that costs nothing, that needs no gadgets. All I carry is a pen in my pocket, a sketchbook under my arm. This eye is my lens. This eye is the lens of the heart, open to the world. My hand follows my seeing".*

The results of my hand following my seeing are not, in the usual sense, works of art. Indeed, Franck cautions against overly-valuing the physical results of the process. Nevertheless, I have included some of these drawings in this dissertation, not as an end in themselves, but to illustrate what has been an important part of my process of coming to know.

A slightly earlier description of this way of drawing was given by Nicolaïdes (1972), although the context was not meditation or slowing down, but rather for the development of artistic skills. He states (p. 5) that

> *"Learning to draw is really a matter of learning to see – to see correctly – and that means a good deal more than merely looking with the eye. The sort of 'seeing' I mean is an observation that utilizes as many of the five senses as can reach through the eye at one time. Although you use your eye, you do not close up the other senses – rather, the reverse, because all the senses have a part in the sort of observation you are to make".*

Then there is the view of Eisner (1985), who also draws attention to the importance of the aesthetic dimension. He suggests (p. 30) that

> *"The aesthetic, then, is motivated by our need to lead a stimulating life. Related to the need to explore and play, the aesthetic is part and parcel of what these processes are intended to yield, not only practical outcomes related to premeditated goals, but the delights of exploration. The aesthetic is also inherent in our need to make sense of experience. This sense-making is located in the choices we make in our effort to create order. Both scientists and artists, to take paradigm cases, are makers of order – the former through the relationships created within theoretical material and the other through the ordering of the qualitative. Our sense of rightness, like our sense of justice, is rooted in that ineffable experience to which the word 'aesthetic' is assigned".*

In addition to the practice, the discipline of drawing, I have worked extensively with colour exercises in watercolour, in an attempt to explore emergent patterns and gain an understanding of emergent processes.

Then there is writing, reading and music. Bawden (1999, p. 10) alludes to the importance which *"...a life-time's reading of poetry and listening to great music"*

have had for him in proposing four domains of inspirational learning. For me, reading has played a central role: in addition to the texts which were required reading on the CHESP LCBP, my reading has roamed over a wide field, including literature on both personal and organizational development, systems theory, and the so-called "new sciences". Poetry has also played a significant part in creating a more meditative state of mind, and in particular I have worked with the poetry of T. S. Eliot which, in ways difficult to grasp, weaves backwards and forwards, playing with time and mystery and paradox, and creating wholes. In particular, the Four Quartets have been a source of endless inspiration:

> *"At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;*
> *Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,*
> *But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,*
> *Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,*
> *Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,*
> *There would be no dance, and there is only the dance".*

I have been intrigued to discover how many writers have been inspired by Eliot: Wheatley (1999) has written about the influence of his poetry on her thinking; Tompkins (1996, chapter 9) has described how she came to admire his work; and Dawson (2003) has suggested that Eliot's Four Quartets can usefully inform our understanding of lifelong learning. However, it is not only Eliot, but several other poets who, in using words creatively, have been able to induce in me the more contemplative state required for the process of incubation: E. E. Cummings, Rainer Maria Rilke, Kathleen Raine, and Rumi come to mind. In the realm of the novel, I must also mention the writings of Russell Hoban, who claims (1992, p. 1) that

> *"The real reality, the flickering of seen and unseen actualities, the moment under the moment, can't be put into words; the most that a writer can do – and this is only rarely achieved – is to write in such a way that the reader finds himself in a place where the unwordable happens off the page".*

For me, this sounds very much like the difficulties of writing about many aspects of heuristic research: the difficulties of describing the intensely personal, the emergent, the tacit, the influence of a piece of music, a line of poetry, the voice of the wind and the reflection of light off a leaf.

The practice of writing has also played an important role in supporting the process of incubation: both the more structured forms required in assignments and reports, but also the more creative approaches offered by Goldberg (1986) and Matthews (1994). And then this section on incubation would not be complete without a reference to music, a crucial part of the retreat which is not a retreat, but *"...a moving into another intensity"* (Eliot: from East Coker). I cannot begin to describe the importance of music to my life and work; let me just say that, as I write this, the music of Debussy is playing softly through the speakers of my laptop, and nestled on my desk, awaiting their turn, are CDs of Schubert, Górecki, Chopin and, seemingly in contrast but of equal importance, Leonard Cohen, Van Morrison, Jackson Browne, and Bob Dylan.

Have these last few pages been an indulgence? I do not think so. The process of incubation is central to the whole approach which I have adopted for this research, and it has therefore been necessary for me to attempt to share the unsharable with my readers. After all, as May (cited in London, 1989) asks:

> *"What if imagination and art are not frosting at all, but the fountain head of human experience?"*

What if indeed?

Illumination and explication:

Moustakas (1990) says of the illumination phase (p. 29) that it *"...may be an awakening to new constituents of the experience, thus adding new dimensions of knowledge"*, and of the explication phase (p. 31) that its purpose is to *"...fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning"*. As my engagement with the questions has deepened, and as I have interviewed those people who have been more or less intensely involved in service learning, worked with the transcriptions and analyzed the data; and as I have read, drawn, and listened to music, patterns and images have emerged.

I would like to leave a discussion of these aspects to the next chapter, because they are really so closely interwoven with my findings. However, in order to be able to present my findings, I must introduce the sixth phase in some detail, as it provides the

reference point for both the presentation of my findings and for a discussion on the implications of these findings.

The creative synthesis:

Here, then, is the final phase of the heuristic research process, according to Moustakas (1990, p. 31). However, again I found that I started to work with this "phase" around the time that I became absorbed in the analysis of the data. As patterns and images started to emerge, a series of pictures began to suggest themselves to me. Central to this series of pictures was the image of the hand. It is hard for me to say why this should be so, except perhaps to note that the metaphor of the hand was used during one of the interviews. While interviewing one of the service partners who has indeed been intensely involved in service learning, he remarked that

> *"...I think the service partner must bring a taste of the real world, and our trick is really, if we took it from, we as a service partner must create a situation where our helping hand is there".*

This image of the "helping hand" stayed with me, quite why I cannot say, because I have always understood my own role as a service partner as far more than "lending a hand". However, the image stayed and started to grow and resonate with other ideas and images. In particular, it started to come together with two other pictures which I carry in my mind: the one is recent and conscious, the other is from further back and is one which I must have been carrying subconsciously. The conscious picture is of the small triangular shape in the very centre of the three overlapping circles of the CHESP logo, that space which Bawden (1999b, p. 10) has referred to as the *"zone of systemic (integrated) learning"*. This reference aside, I have a clear memory of a question which Richard Bawden asked during the CHESP LCBP module which he facilitated: pointing to this small triangular zone in the centre of the diagram, he asked us to consider the *meaning* of this zone, this place of overlap, and asked "What if this space is really about new ways of knowing?" An almost passing question, but one which must have burnt deeply into my memory, setting off as it did a whole range of ideas and realizations and connections. Could this be part of what I am doing as in my work as a service partner? Is it really possible to create new ways of knowing (or to perhaps *renew* "older" ways of knowing) together, in partnership? Could this be one

form of the *"dance at the still point of the turning world"* in Eliot's poem? The possibilities seemed endless.

As I have developed this research, Richard Bawden's question and his four "ways of knowing" have merged in my mind with the second key picture, the one which I had been carrying unconsciously from further back. This is a word picture from Bronowski's BBC television documentary "The Ascent of Man", which I viewed while I was an undergraduate student at the University of Natal in 1976. In the third episode (and the third chapter of the book which followed the series), Bronowski (1973, p. 116) tells us that *"The hand is the cutting edge of the mind"*, referring to the role which the use of finely made tools have played in the evolution of humanity. However, it has come to mean far more to me, especially in relation to propositional, practical, experiential, and inspirational learning and knowing. I will develop these ideas further in the next chapter, but I wanted to introduce the image of the hand here because of its central place in my dissertation.

The creative synthesis of my research then, is a painting, specifically a palimpsest, which really makes it a series of paintings. I first encountered the idea of a palimpsest while reading Umberto Eco's novel "The name of the rose", and the idea of a document or painting which presented ideas not only in space but in time (albeit that the time dimension is partly hidden) fascinated me. It was while I was experimenting with prints of my own hand that the idea of presenting my research as a palimpsest came to me, and while it is a synthesis, it has also been a way of knowing, as new insights emerged during the various stages of creating the painting.

A palimpsest is defined in The Concise Oxford Dictionary as *"Writing-material or manuscript on which the original writing has been effaced to make room for a second writing"*, while Carter, Churchill, Denoue, Helfman, Murphy and Nelson (2003, p.1) define a palimpsest as *"A manuscript, typically of papyrus or parchment that has been written on more than once, with the earlier writing incompletely erased and often legible"*. My parchment was a piece of canvas-covered board, and my writing materials a mixture of different media: water-based oil paints, water colours, tissue paper, glue, and marker pens. I scanned each stage of the palimpsest so that I would have a record of its development, and so that the reader could engage with me as I

described the growth of my understanding of the role of the service provider. The three stages of the palimpsest now follow in reverse order, from complete to first.

Figure 3: The complete palimpsest

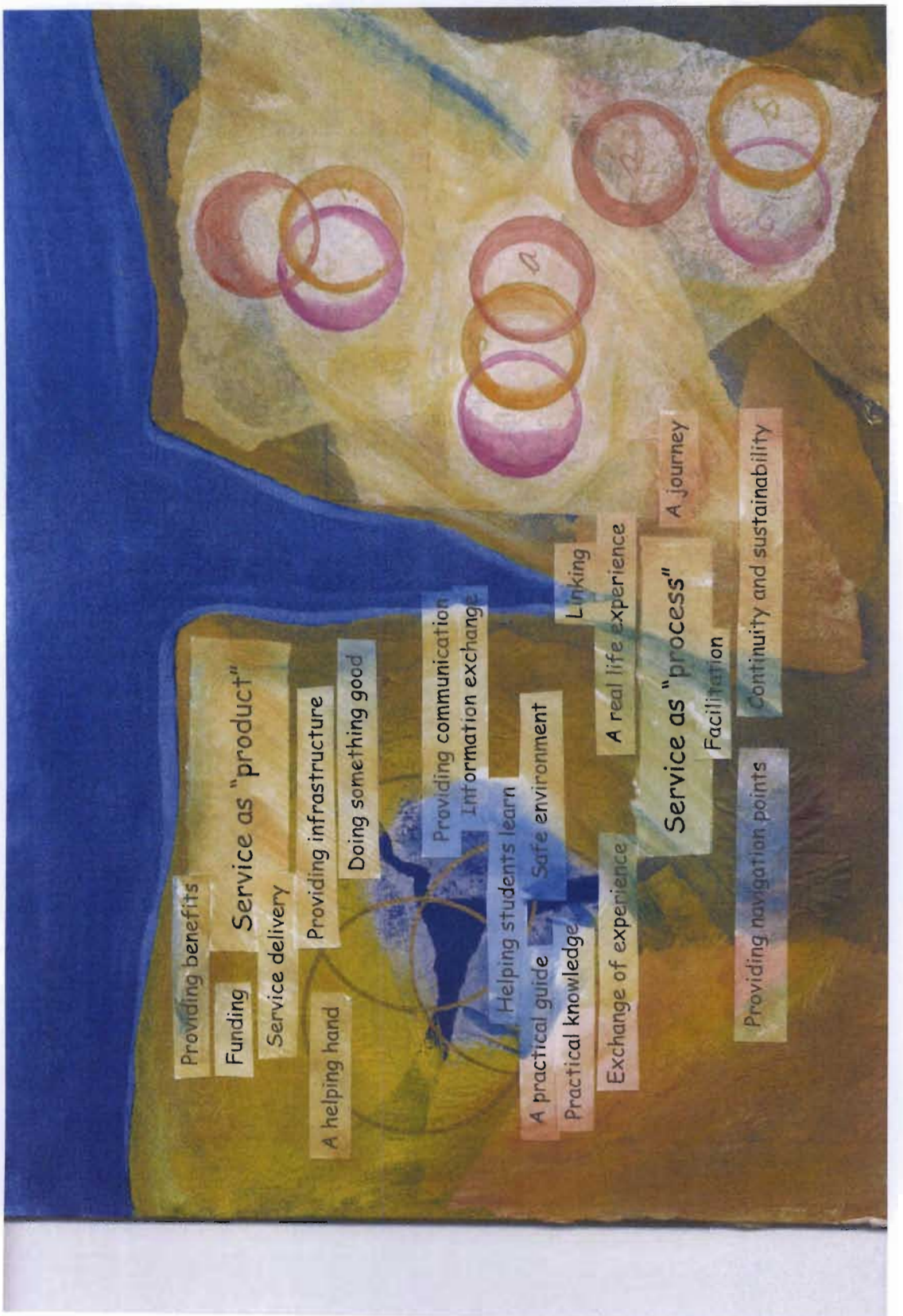


Figure 4: The second stage of the palimpsest

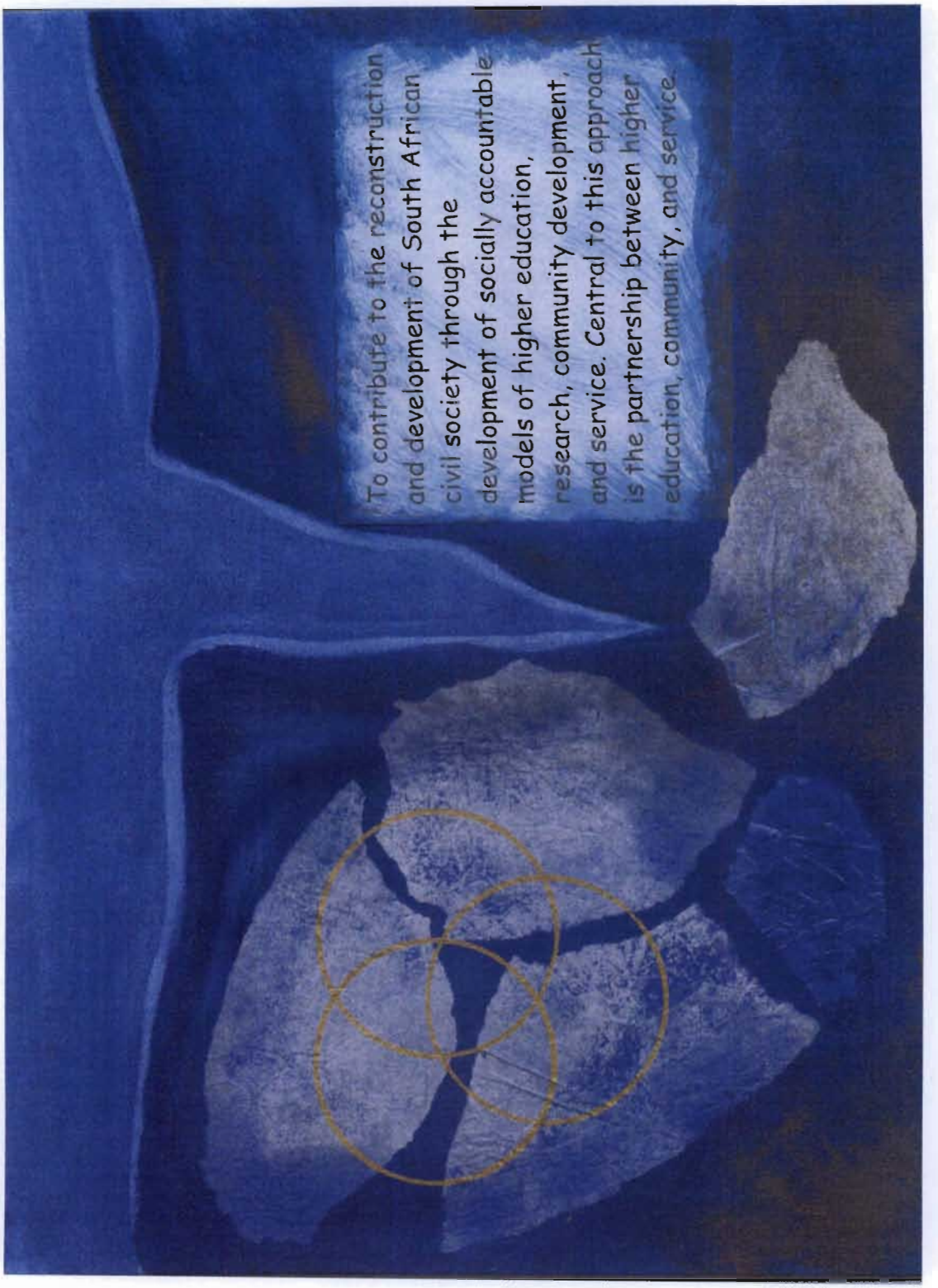


Figure 5: The first stage of the palimpsest

Chapter 5

The role of the service partner in service learning

"Three interconnected, generic activities define the qualitative research process. They go by a variety of different labels, including theory, method, analysis, ontology, epistemology, *and* methodology. *Behind these terms stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective".*

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000, p. 18)

I have attempted, in the preceding chapters, to share something of my own biography with my readers, so that they might understand why I chose the research topic which I did, and why I approached the research in the way that I have. Given that I have a particular biography, a particular way of viewing the world, in all probability a particular bias, I have no doubt that I will present my findings in a way which reflects all these things. I think that I have learned much during the course of this research: firstly about the varied roles of the service partner and the context within which those roles play themselves out, and secondly about myself as a service partner, as a researcher, and as an individual. In this chapter I will present my findings in relation to the set of questions which guided my research, and in doing so, my presentation will weave backwards and forwards in a way which follows the complex manner in which my understanding has evolved. I will then conclude my dissertation in Chapter 6 by exploring the implications of my findings.

What is service learning?

I began my involvement with the CHESP programme with no knowledge of service learning[15], in spite of the many interactions which I had had with students and with higher education. However, I did take with me into CHESP a number of questions and a growing sense of disquiet about the role of higher education in modern society, which I have described in my introduction. My initial exposure to service learning I can therefore best equate to the "propositional level" of learning: as a participant on

[15] The NICHE Community Studies Module which I have described earlier in this dissertation might be called "community based learning", but not service learning as I have come to understand it.

the CHESP LCBP I was introduced to the concept, provided with reading packs, and set an assignment to be completed with my partners in our Core Group. I was also introduced to the idea of partnership in the context of service learning, and while I had an existing understanding of partnership, I was challenged to examine this in new ways in the light of the CHESP context. I have presented this "propositional stage" in the first painting which forms the original layer of the palimpsest (stage 1, p. 55 of this dissertation). The painting is predominantly blue, with the ideal of a three-way partnership indicated without much detail in gold, and with the aim of CHESP included rather starkly in a box that, to me, fairly typically represents the somewhat mechanistic early conceptualizations of what we were setting out to do. There are rock-like formations, indicating that not only was this the foundation phase, but that it was the grounding, the bedrock, on which further growth and understanding would be built. Running prominently down through the centre of the painting is a chasm, an abyss. This is a strong representation of the split in society, the split referred to by Reason (1998, p. 44) when he says that

> *"There is another important aspect of a participatory world-view. It is not so much about the search for truth and knowledge as it is about healing. And above all, healing the alienation, the split that characterizes modern experience".*

This is the split between men and women, humans and nature, races, cultures, religions, and worldviews. It is the split which is both conscious and unconscious, which we face almost every day and in so many situations that we are usually not even aware of it. It is Bockemühl's "crisis in consciousness", and the cry in Christopher Fry's "A sleep of prisoners" (cited in Trevelyan 1980, p. 50):

> *"Where are you making for? It takes*
> *So many thousand years to wake*
> *But will you wake for pity's sake?"*

It is the split within ourselves.

How do we bridge this split? In my view, by striving for what Bortoft (1996, p. 24) has called *"authentic wholeness"* in all aspects of our being. Authentic wholeness arises where things "belong together", but as Bortoft points out (p. 58), we can arrive at two very different places depending on whether we put the emphasis on

"belonging" or *"together"*[16]. Placing the emphasis on "belonging *together*" can yield a situation of "counterfeit wholes" in which parts are, in a sense, forced into an inauthentic relationship; on the other hand, emphasizing the "belonging" in "*belonging* together" gives rise to "authentic wholes". Now, I referred early in Chapter 1 to Berry's assertion (1987) that *"The thing being made in a university is humanity"*. For me, the idea of striving for humanity is about striving for wholeness, but Bortoft points out (p. 24) that

> *"Typically, modern education is grounded in the intellectual faculty, whose analytical capacity alone is developed, mostly through verbal reasoning. One notes*[17]*, for example, that science students are often not interested in observing phenomena of nature; if asked to do so, they become easily bored. Their observations often bear little resemblance to the phenomenon itself. These students are much happier with textbook descriptions and explanations, a fact readily understandable once one recognizes that most educational experience unfolds in terms of one mode of consciousness – the verbal, rational mode. The experience of authentic wholeness is impossible in this mode of consciousness, and a complementary style of understanding could usefully be developed".*

For me, the epitome of higher education's emphasis on (dare I say obsession with?) the intellectual, analytical faculties can be found in the foyer of the Leadership Centre at the University of KwaZulu Natal: one of the works of art on display consists of a series of heads suspended from the wall by metal brackets – heads, with very little detail to indicate the unique, individual nature of each person, staring straight ahead. No hearts, no hands. Just heads. Perhaps I should not be surprised; I have already described the Zoology Department museum which I encountered as an undergraduate student at the University of Natal: the dissected parts of animals, the heads of cats in a jar…

> *"You say I am repeating*
> *Something I have said before. I shall say it again.*
> *Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,*
> *To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,*

[16] In describing this distinction, Bortoft cites the work of Martin Heidegger, and considers the implications of emphasis in considerable detail. I am presenting Bortoft's work in an extremely summarized form, as my intention here is to indicate the significance of "the whole" in my thinking and my work.

[17] Bortoft is able to speak from his personal experience of teaching physics and the philosophy of science.

You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not".

(T. S. Eliot: lines from *"East Coker"*)

When it comes to new ways of knowing, new ways of knowing *together*, new ways of knowing for wholeness: what is this *"complementary style of understanding"* that Bortoft speaks of? What are these paradoxical and Zen-like ways that Eliot refers to?

These are the questions that I was asking myself as I journeyed deeper into the idea of service learning. Yes, I could understand that service learning is about building a sense of civic responsibility in students; that it can make research more relevant to human needs; that it can help to create an "engaged university". All these dimensions of service learning are important, but in my mind, there was something missing, something more…

As we continued into the CHESP LCBP, my understanding of service learning deepened, but my questions remained. I was especially excited by the work of Frank Fear and David Cooper, during our visit to Michigan State University: Frank because of his passionate commitment as a natural scientist to new ways of knowing, and David because of the way in which he introduced the arts into his teaching and research, and included the intensely personal as well as the professional. David showed me his personal journal, which included poetry and photographs alongside his own reflections, but I remember wondering how one encourages, say, a second year medical student to enter into such a complementary style of understanding, and how one might encourage the university to acknowledge that medical students may learn as much about anatomy from life drawing classes as from dissecting cadavers?

So, through my deepening understanding of service learning, I was coming to view it as a process of transformation, rather than as a pedagogy; a process which could help those involved along the path to greater wholeness and all that that has come to mean for me. In some of the interviews which I conducted I started to explore this question of service learning as transformation. For example, in an individual interview with a service partner, I asked

> *"An experience such as the one that the students had at [locality named]: Do you think it has a significant impact on them, almost a transformational impact, so that other things that they do at university, they will in way evaluate in the light of that service learning experience?"*

The response which I received was unambiguous:

> *"Clive, from what I've heard, and maybe you need to speak to [the two academic partners], but from what I've heard from [the one academic partner] in particular, it really has transformed the way people see themselves. It has transformed students, but not with the obvious things. What it has done, it's taught students life skills, that they can cope in a totally strange environment where they can't even speak the language. It's taught students about the value of people and if we look at the history of our country and apartheid and what have you, it's given people an appreciation of other cultures at quite a deep level. It's also supported students in arguments, that they actually have life experience to argue from, 'Well when I was there, I saw this and that's why that doesn't make sense to me'. Or 'You're talking crap'. It enables them to be able to challenge other things in our society and in many ways almost reinvent themselves, in that they wake up to a whole range of things, the placement was really a catalyst for them to learn, assess, rethink, reflect on many of the navigational points of their life. But we also had a series on navigation and how do you navigate".*

So the view of service learning that I have arrived at is that service learning is essentially about transformation towards wholeness, which comes about through exploring new ways of knowing in order to learn together, *in partnership*, about right action in the world. In the end, what we learn must inform our actions, our deeds, in order that we co-create, in the words of Reason (2001, p. 1), *"A world worthy of human aspiration"*.

In the interviews which I conducted, I found that very few participants gave any formal definition of service learning, with the exception of some academic partners. Some participants indicated that the question was a hard one (*"Clive, that's really a difficult question. And I think we could spend the rest of the afternoon talking to that"* [Service partner, UKZN[18]]). The formal definitions which I heard tended to be abbreviations of the many versions available in the service learning literature. For example:

> *"Well from my perspective, it's an opportunity for students to be engaged in some kind of off-campus experience that will illustrate the theory and content that we cover in class"* [Academic partner, UKZN].

> *"I think we define it as credit bearing course-based experiential learning in an organised service situation. What else is in it? Where students apply their theoretical knowledge in a practical situation and reflect on it. It's based on identified needs, that's very important. And we say it has to be done in a partnership context, without that it cannot work"* [Academic partner, UOFS].

What for me was very interesting was that most participants spoke from out of their personal experiences (*"I was speaking from the heart!"* Academic partner, UOFS), and many offered a story or anecdote to illustrate their understanding. Two examples:

> *"Someone asked me at lunch the other day 'What's the difference between service learning and your good old fashion experiential learning?' And I said for me the difference is that what there is an emphasis on is that the students' experience should be, is intended to be, of service to somebody. That it's meant to be useful and not just a learning experience for the students. Secondly that reflection is the key element of that process, that it's practical, not that separate, as [another academic partner] is saying, separate from theoretical but that they are very integrated and that that integration occurs through reflection; and thirdly that it's about social justice and that it's trying to, through the process of their experience and their reflection, it's intending to encourage students to ask questions about the nature of society and sort of it's moving to more ideological kinds of things. A nice lunch time conversation"* [Academic partner, UKZN].

---

[18] In using quotes from the interviews which I conducted, I have omitted the names of participants to honour my promise of confidentiality. However, I have included both the sectoral and campus affiliation of the quoted participant, unless this could in any way be used to identify the person concerned.

> *"You know, I just look at something like, for example, if you look at someone, say, from the sciences doing mathematics, OK, and if we have, say, about five students who go up and do service learning in terms of mathematics ability - very difficult concept - you're going to have to be very creative and say 'How are we going to do that?' and you can say that you go to a primary school and you can look at, say, entrepreneurship and then use mathematics in terms of entrepreneurship, and here you're teaching children about mathematics in the entrepreneurship during the entrepreneur class and you need to sort of find out how to do this, so that requires your creativity. And you're providing a tremendous service because here are children, you know, who are going to get out into the community at large but who are going to see the value of that. So, to me service learning is providing some kind of education in a very, very broad context in terms that people can understand"* [Service partner, UKZN].

What is service?

I noted some of the difficulties which I have experienced with this term in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, and while my understanding has become a lot clearer, I find that there remains a tension within my decision, one which I shall discuss shortly.

In Chapter 2 I introduced a way of thinking about service which has taken root in my thinking and become an important organizing idea for me, that of the two broad categories of "service as product" and "service as process". The distinction is not always clear, but roughly speaking, service as "product" includes activities which provide tangible, usually physical benefits (the *what*) to communities or clients, whereas service as "process" is concerned with *how* development proceeds. There can be no doubt that in many communities, an absence of even the most "basic needs" leads to a serious loss of the quality of life, and acts as a precursor to many problems of health, environment, and social relationships. During the CHESP LCBP, the term "previously disadvantaged communities" was frequently used to refer to those communities who were the intended beneficiaries of the services offered through service learning. By implication rather than explicit definition, this meant Black communities, sometimes rural but also including urban informal settlements, and usually considered to be materially poor. However, this notion of "community" came to be challenged during the course of the LCBP, as it was realized that thinking of "community" in this way perpetuated negative stereotypes and acted as a barrier to

thinking more inclusively. One community partner described a community as *"a web of relationships"*, and taken in this way, the idea of community extends beyond geographical or physical boundaries and links people together on the basis of what they mean to each other.

To take the above concept of service further, I must now refer to the second stage of the palimpsest which is presented on page 54 of this dissertation. This painting reflects my understandings some way into the CHESP programme, when we had started to engage with communities, and my newly-acquired knowledge was prompting me to ask uncomfortable questions about my own practice, as a staff member of an NPO committed to working in health and development. What was developing in my thinking, and what was later confirmed during the interviews, was that there are these two main "groupings" of service that I have already referred to, namely "product" and "process", and associated with these are a wide range of activities and interventions. I have pondered the use of the term "groupings" as I am specifically trying to avoid the suggestion that one grouping of activities is inherently better or superior to another. What I have tried to do in the painting is indicate that within the two main groupings are activities which are more distinctly "product", others which are more distinctly "process", and still others which fall somewhere in between. Thus "service as product" includes: the provision of benefits and providing infrastructure (both tending to be tangible things such as water or roads); the provision of funding; the delivery of services (which may be of a tangible nature or may be more intangible, such as "health education"); and the vaguer notion of "doing something good". The category of "service as process" includes: providing practical guidance and opportunities for increasing practical knowledge (such as an agricultural extension programme); helping to establish linkages (such as may be offered through citizens' advice offices); exchange of experiences (for example, through the establishment of community forums where people come together to share their experiences); and facilitation of various activities. Lying in between these two groupings are others such as: helping students learn (for example, the placing of nursing students with a clinic); providing a "safe environment" for students to engage in learning activities; and offering "a helping hand".

Nevertheless, in spite of my use of the term "grouping" in an attempt to remain unbiased, I must admit that I did, over the course of the CHESP LCBP, find myself looking for very clear categories within which I could locate *myself*. I was becoming increasingly unhappy about my involvement in activities such as "training", which usually seemed to have few lasting benefits, and the provision of physical infrastructures such as health posts, which often seemed to be underutilized and undervalued by the very communities who were perceived to be the intended beneficiaries. In addition to this, I had worked as a "public servant" in the Department of Agriculture for nearly six years, and had resigned because I no longer wished to be a government employee "delivering services" which seemed to result in little observable sustainable change for the better. Yet here I was, immersed in activities of a service delivery nature, working with very technical tools such as "planning by objectives" and "Gantt charts", those activities which according to Block (2002, p. 150) arise from the engineering archetype in us.

Then during the LCBP, my exposure to concepts such as Jodi Kretzman's assets-based approach threw me a lifeline, but at the same time my thinking became quite polarized. I started to see "service as product" as the realm of government and the corporate sector, and "service as process" as the domain of NPOs and perhaps the faith-based organizations. I will return to this when I come to partnerships, but must add that I have now reached more of a balanced view: I no longer see service in an "either-or" light, but rather from a "both-and" perspective. While I recognize that the provision of both the tangible products as well as the more intangible services is essential, I think that a developmental approach to the acquisition of these products is essential if "disabling help" is to be avoided, and if communities are not to become the passive recipients of handouts. This realization was brought home to me through my exposure to two models: the first being the model of development advocated by the Community Development Resource Association, introduced during the LCBP by Doug Reeler. Although I have adapted[19] the model in accordance with my own experience, I think that the CDRA's emphasis on a cycle of relationship building, gaining understanding, facilitating transformation, and supporting implementation is

[19] While I respect the cyclical nature of the CDRA's model of development and recognize that all the stages are important, I think that the stages can overlap, and could even sometimes occur in a different order, although relationship building is no doubt fundamental to any developmental process.

enormously helpful. The second model is Stephen Covey's presentation of another archetype, that of the maturity continuum. In this continuum, the central point (the still point, where the dance is?), is that of *independence*, which in my view, has freedom as an essential requirement for its development. It is of concern to me that so many "development initiatives" bypass this critical aspect of human freedom, and impose solutions which may, in the short term, be necessary, but which, if sustained beyond their immediate purpose, become disempowering by inducing dependency.

What I have come to realize is that while I say I have achieved a more balanced view about the nature of service, I have also realized that, in terms of my own practice, I wish to position myself at the "service as process" end of the spectrum. I emphasize that this is about personal choice and not about any ideas of "right or wrong", but it does give rise to the inherent tension to which I referred earlier, when I encounter people in conditions of desperate poverty or great personal difficulty: at times such as these it seems that the only response, as a human being, is to provide immediate relief. But I know from experience that such "crisis aid" is not sustainable, and that ways have to be found for longer term interventions of a different nature, if sustainable change is to come about. This tension was also mentioned during one of the individual interviews:

> *"If you want to deal with development you have to understand the concepts of* under-development, *because if you don't understand those concepts you might think that you are thinking developmentally, yet in practice you are* under-developing *people. Ja. Now, concept of development is this exclusive kind of planning process which is not inclusive, this kind of urgency kind of processes, you see, this urgency issue, that no,no,no,no, now [names donor] wants us to do this, we need to submit a report, [names himself] so please write down whatever we have done, and so on and so on. So to me, I think that is the...very, very much critical issue"* [Community partner, UKZN].

I must also note that while I have attempted to avoid judging between "service as product" and "service as process", I do think that the two groupings are essentially different: "service as product" tends to operate out of more positivist paradigms which see simple linear relationships of cause and effect, believe that every problem has a solution (often a technical solution), and that results can and should be counted. By

contrast, "service as process" tends to require paradigms which are far more systemic or holistic; it recognizes the complexity of life; and acknowledges that cause and effect relationships are seldom simple and that interventions require deep understanding and bear a heavy burden of responsibility. Results are often similarly complex, and the most important results are often the most difficult to count: more qualitative and participatory evaluation processes are required if understanding is to emerge.

Elements of this difference were described during one of the focus group interviews:

> *"Historically, I'm referring now basically to my years of studying at the university. We were introduced to the concept of community work, then out of that particular concept we were expected to go and deliver a service to a particular kind of a community. It was more of an expert or should I say a passive-somebody relationship. I'm coming with all the knowledge, with all the expertise, with all the skills and all that I need to do is just go and impose or just go and transfer whatever I have to that particular kind of community, and of course some of the people started criticizing that approach of service delivery and they said you cannot really afford to keep on promoting dependency on that particular person that you're delivering a service to. It's high time that we need to really realise that that particular person has a potential in him or her, you cannot grow whatever situation they might be experiencing. Then we were later introduced to the concept of empowerment of which it also boils down to delivering a service to that particular person, but it was just shaped by some of the aspects that they thought were very important. Some of the things that became very clear was the concept of, as you deliver a service, give the people the necessary skills, give them a little bit of opportunity to go and implement or to practically go on a physical level doing something about the skills that you gave them and then also a little bit of motivation, because if the people are not motivated to be part of, then it becomes a little bit difficult. And we started asking ourselves a question: 'But how sustainable is that particular way of doing things?'"*
> [Academic partner, UOFS].

What were some other views of service by partners involved with service learning?

There was frequent reference to what I have termed "service as product", often associated with "meeting community needs":

"Well my understanding when you're talking about service is that there are needs in the community and then those needs have to be addressed by institutions, and then those institutions for me will then render a service to meet those particular needs that you have identified in the community" [Community partner, UOFS].

"Well I'm going to repeat what I said earlier on, in that you can't render a service out of a vacuum if there is no need for such a service to be rendered. So first you have to make a needs analysis and see what are the bottomless pits in the development of a particular community and then you start up maybe a department in the government to address that particular need that is there, or in the private sector, you set up business to address a service that is rampant out there in the community, or to address a need that is rampant out there in the community. So the role is to address particular needs in a form of service rendering" [Community partner, UOFS].

"Providing some sort of benefit to the community. That's what a service is. It's a positive thing, not a negative thing and it can be a tangible thing or it can be more nebulous" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"I think service is quite a, is actually a difficult concept for many people to understand. I think I'm quite clear in my own mind. I see service firstly as putting something into the community, but not actually doing. You know you get good doers and do-gooders and it's not a case of sitting there and doing things for the people but rather sitting there and helping the people to help themselves" [Service partner, UKZN].

By contrast, there were also many references to "service as process", with the process taking various forms:

"Ja, that's a, phew, Clive. Um, I don't know, we do offer services and that at times we have expertise, we offer facilitation, we do have some technical knowledge, we have an ability to link people, so that sort of information exchange and experience exchange that we facilitate, is in a way a service. Um, it's quite narrow, but I guess in terms of my personal experience that's our services" [Service partner, UKZN].

"Clive, I...perhaps I'm going to be biased here, but one of the motivating factors for me to join [names organization] was facilitation and the realization of peoples'

potential, that is unlocking...you are linking people with different...according to their potential in a democratic order, so I've seen that, yes, I've been given this process, to participate in this process, it's a wonderful thing" [Community partner, UKZN].

"Not necessarily a thing. Maybe facilitating a process. That's a service" [Academic partner, UKZN.

In describing these different aspects of service, and the stage of the palimpsest in which they are represented, I have been attempting to represent an understanding of service which I can best locate at the level of *practical knowing* within Bawden's four-level typology. In this sense, service is an essentially practical activity, whether the intention is to deliver a physical output, or perhaps to facilitate a more intangible process. The requirements and underlying paradigms may be very different, as I have indicated, but the nature of the activities remains essentially practical. I have tried to illustrate this by the rather list-like nature of the painting, representative as it is of many boxed and bulleted planning documents associated with "development" initiatives. I will now move on to explore who is part of the service sector that delivers these "services".

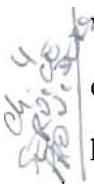
Who is "the service partner"?

When I joined The Valley Trust in 1984, I was pleased to be joining a non-government organization. This was largely attributable to the fact that my three previous experiences of employment had left me with a sense of doubt about whether my work was contributing to any significant change. But I had an image of NGOs – no doubt a romantic one – as small, effective organizations which were able to achieve meaningful results through working in a participatory way with individuals and communities. Moreover, I had an expectation that these results were achieved in creative, often "alternative" ways. To a certain extent, my expectations were fulfilled, at least during my first few years at The Valley Trust. However, in common with many other NPOs, The Valley Trust became increasingly involved in service delivery although, as I have explained in Chapter 2, we attempted (in my view quite successfully), to combine the two broader dimensions of service: product and process. However, with the changing environment in South Africa, and with my own changing

paradigms, the inter-related questions about what I should be doing, and what "my" organization should be doing, grew ever-more urgent: doing what we had always done, even doing it better, was no longer enough for me. Indeed, the urgency of finding an answer to these questions was one of the reasons that I so enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to participate in CHESP. I hoped that my participation, as an NPO representative, would provide new openings to influence higher education, that institution which I perceived to be the origin of many of the challenges which confront society.

As a result of this research, I now have a clearer idea of who I regard as service partners in the context of service learning, but as this issue is intimately bound up with the role of the service sector, I would like to expand on this topic later, when I address the role of the service partner.

At this point, I can state that I recognize government departments and NPOs as the two crucial service sector partners, and will come back to these two partners later. To an extent I would include the faith-based organizations, but my experience of these is extremely limited and I will not refer to them again in my dissertation.



Where I have differed from everyone that I interviewed is that I would not include the corporate sector as part the service sector, whereas with one exception, interview participants all considered the corporate sector as a legitimate service partner. My view is that the profit-centred paradigms which underlie the work of the corporate sector do not sit comfortably with my idea of "service". I emphasize that while I do think that the corporate sector has a role in service learning, and could even be considered a partner, I do not think that their contribution is that of a service partner.

Partnership:

The aim of CHESP states that *"Central to [the service learning] approach is the partnership between higher education, community, and service"*. Certainly the concept of partnership has become pivotal to my thinking about service learning and the role of the service partner. I have described my involvement in the NICHE, CHESP, and Collaborative Group partnerships, and can add that I have also been more peripherally involved in two others: the Children In Distress (CINDI) initiative

(perhaps better described as a *network*), and the Izingane Zethu intervention for children at risk. All these experiences have convinced me that while partnership is an essential form for the future, we are presently in the early stages of understanding the true meaning of partnership, as I described in Chapter 2.

Throughout the LCBP, our Core Group's understanding of partnership has developed, and this development has been portrayed in different versions of the CHESP logo, the three interconnecting circles. I have attempted to illustrate some of these understandings in the second stage of the palimpsest, presented on page 54 of this dissertation. The upper right diagram shows the three circles as they were initially conceived: more or less equal in terms of overlap, with the critical area of "new ways of knowing" in the centre of the diagram. At a later stage, we began to wonder if the service partner was not perhaps the "link" between community and academic partners; this conception is illustrated in the middle right diagram, in which the community and academic partners are linked only through the service partner. An even more extreme version of this can be seen in the bottom right diagram, in which the academic partner is detached entirely from the other two partners, who have formed a close relationship; the thinking behind this version was that, given the fact that faculty and students are constrained by the timetable, their engagement in the community tends to be sporadic, whereas communities and service partners tend to have more sustained, long-term relationships. It might be appropriate to think of the academic partners as "dipping in and out of" this community-service relationship as the need arises, although during my report back visit to the University of the Free State, one academic partner expressed the view that she would not want academics to be thought of as approaching service learning in this manner.

If I now have to draw a picture of partnership, I would go back to the original concept of the three circles, but recognize that at different times the circles may be of different sizes and degrees of overlap. What remains crucial is the central zone, the zone of "new ways of knowing", and I will come back to this towards the end of this chapter.

What I did not touch on in the earlier part of the dissertation was the aspect of power in partnerships, and how this operates as a very real boundary to the effective development of partnerships. In my paper on the Collaborative Group (Bruzas 2003a,

p. 11), I described how, during the reflection on the functioning of the group, it had been noted that while there was a genuine desire to work together, there was *"to an extent also a desire to protect one's own turf"*. This desire to protect one's own organization is, in my view, a deep-seated one that will not change easily. Not unless, that is, we can work within the paradox of retaining an organizational identity (with all our strengths and weaknesses), and the ability to give up that identity to become something new. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, this would require us, as organizations, to struggle with the archetypal maturity continuum described by Covey (1989, p.49), and realize that working together, in true partnership, requires an ability to be both independent and interdependent, with interdependence being yet another manifestation of wholeness: what we cannot do as separate organizations because of our very separateness, we can achieve by combining into a new whole. This was, I think, the idea which Schumacher (1980, p. 4) had in mind when he suggested that human work should be done

> *"...in service to, and in cooperation with, others, so as to liberate ourselves from our inborn egocentricity".*

Can we do this? I would argue that at present it is largely beyond us, mainly due to our individual and organizational concerns with "turf" and power (which often presents as a concern with "reputation" and "standards"). Palmer (1998) talks about the building of "community" and points out (p. 137-138) that questions always arise relating to the possibility of creating community in the presence of divisive dynamics. If we think of a partnership as a community, we can ask the same question of true partnership. Palmer's answer is plain:

> *"If community is to emerge, it will have to be in the midst of inequalities that appear whenever two or three are gathered. To argue that grades must be eliminated before community can emerge is to assume a utopian alternative nowhere to be found: it is to give up on community altogether".*

Like community, partnership is too important to give up on, and so we must engage with the messiness and uncertainties inherent in the struggle for true partnership.

A process approach to establishing meaningful partnership was wonderfully described to me during one of the individual interviews which I conducted. The following quote is a lengthy one, but I think that the idea deserves to be heard in full:

> *"Clive, if I may be honest, I must use this term, a Zulu term, you can spell it for me, it's* u-b-u-l-i-n-g-a-n-i, *ja. It's called ubulingani, that is the direct interpretation of partnership. And I will use this indigenous knowledge system, that when you are proposing to a girl in a local village, you go to that girl and you propose, right? And you propose a partnership that is going to further the objectives of Bruzas family, or [names own family], or whatever. But it's in that village. And if that girl says "Fine, it's OK" what you normally do, you send your representatives who are going now to see the daughter's...the girl's family to now start the process of building this strong partnership. And the first stage is the stage of saying who you are, identifying yourself, defining yourself. You stand there even for one hour if they like, they want you to say it loudly and in a succinct manner, as to who you are. Two, you have to show the respect and the understanding of what is the ...who are these...who is this other family, I'm meaning now the girl's family, who is this other family that you are coming to. But if you enter inside, you start by saying 'We are here to build a good relationship' that is what you say. You don't say 'We are here to give you a lobola' or whatever. We say 'We are here to give you... to build...to propose the building of a good relationship'. And the process goes on, Clive, until it reaches a stage where there is marriage. And when there is marriage, what I like about marriage is that you change your symbol now as a boy only or a girl only. The reverend or the pastor will tell you that you are now one, you see? And if you are now one, so whatever you do you will do it in consultation, in agreement, and so on and so on"* [Community partner, UKZN].

This view emphasizes both the building of relationships and the fact that in a partnership something new is created, something (in my view), more whole.

In fact, it was mentioned during another interview that the importance of relationship is so great that the term "partnership" should perhaps be reconsidered:

> *"I wonder whether the word that I'm taking such exception to, the word doesn't belong to that same language of managerialism. Isn't partnership about contracts? Isn't partnership about saying this is what I will bring and this is what you will bring and then we kind of sign on the dotted line? I'm not saying that contracts in that way are a bad thing; the intention behind it isn't a bad intention. I think the notion of any*

form of contractual kind of agreement is sad because I think it is fundamentally different from notions of reciprocity and mutuality which are informed by trust. People often form trust relationships, and there is no thumb print needed for that, that is a trust relationship and I know I can rely on you just as much as you know that you can rely on me, and there is no need to sign a piece of paper to that. I think it would be really interesting to investigate, and I haven't thought about it that much, but what is the difference between a relationship of mutual trust and how is that different from a partnership. And isn't a partnership by the mere sense that is has become a managerial tool, you can enter into a partnership without any trust, it's a contractual agreement, you don't have to trust each other, you don't have to have a relationship with each other, you enter into a pact for a mutual purpose, supposedly, and that's not a bad thing but that belongs to project, it's project language, it's about 'I will undertake this and you will undertake that' but it doesn't talk about relationships and in that way it doesn't talk about values" [Academic partner, UKZN].

Another participant also expressed caution about the term "partnership", by saying that

"I can only say I've become far more critical in my use of the word and I very seldom use it now and I do tend to talk about relationships more. Just that I've become very much more critical about the word" [Academic partner, UKZN].

Yet another participant expressed the strong view that

"Partnership is my big bug-bear, and so that's way I think [names individual partner] is nodding at me. In my reading around partnership it seems that when people talk about partnership, what's implied is sharing of resources, sharing of power, sharing of decision making, and that in the context of service learning we're actually not talking about partnership, we're talking about a different form of cooperative relationship. Where it seems to me that the university has significant control or significant power. In our CHESP experience, what we also said is that we need to recognise that power is not static, that it moves around depending on the context, you know, of the service learning and which 'partner', in inverted commas, needs to be conducting the activity or what that is. But I have a big problem with partnership.... we say partnership and we don't do partnership, that we do something else. But through saying partnership we mislead people into believing we're offering something different" [Academic partner, UKZN].

In my view it would be a pity to lose the term "partnership" on the basis that it has been misused and even abused. I think it is more important to acknowledge that a true partnership requires exactly the deep trust that characterizes good relationships, but that getting there requires a conscious engagement with the realities of power and organizational politics. We also need to recognize that relationships form between individuals, and that this is where the foundation for partnerships often begins:

> *"And then just to say to you that I think that with the programme we have, the placement programme. Clive, I really, I'm just thinking how much it has to do with the university. And I think the reality is, if I'm really honest with you, is that it works so well because the lecturers at the university and myself, we interact, we socialise together, we are good friends and it does happen that when we're together we talk work. But we're together often and I dunno, I wouldn't want to do that again just with any lecturer and be told 'Well look there's another 40 students, would we run the program again?' Because there was something deeper, it was something I can't quite articulate but it was more than just a placement, it was really the deepening of an experience and a friendship, um, trust"* [Service partner, UKZN].

Jacoby (2003, p. 315) reminds us that *"Partnerships start with and are built upon personal relationships"*. However, the biggest challenge perhaps then becomes to find a way of extending these important relationships of trust between individuals into relationships of trust between organizations and institutions. This requires a movement from "mutual individual trust" to "mutual organizational trust", which in my view is an essential requirement if service is to challenge the dominant paradigms of higher education. In this sense, such an institutional partnership could help to create a "safe space" for the times when partnerships are tested through honesty and openness.

<u>What is the role of the service partner in service learning</u>?

So I come to the key question which I set out to explore, and as T. S. Eliot noted in "Little Gidding".

> *"...the end of all our exploring*
> *Will be to arrive where we started*
> *And know the place for the first time".*

Where, then, did I start from? I started from my own experience, and described my own journey (Eliot again: *"Home is where one starts from"*). On the way I have come to realize that what is central to my journey, the thing that defines my quest, is the search for wholeness. Am I saying that my own journey, my quest for wholeness, and my exploration into the role of the service partner are one and the same thing in my mind? Yes, I am. I realize now that that is why I chose the heuristic approach, why it spoke to me so clearly when I started exploring approaches for this research. It is why this narrative has been weaving back and forth, at times seemingly covering ground that has already been covered, and why this research process has clarified for me both the role of the service partner and where I see my future role as a service partner. I will address the latter issue in the final chapter, but for now I would like to reconnect to my findings about the nature of service.

It would seem that the role of the service provider is, at the simplest level, related to the nature of service. Earlier I divided service into two broad categories: "service as product" and "service as process", and illustrated the difference between the two with examples. I also presented this level in the second stage of the palimpsest, and noted that it was analogous to the "practical level" of knowing. This level represents my earlier understandings of the role of the service partner, and it was also the level articulated (although not in any formalized sense), by the service representatives at the meeting held at The Valley Trust, to which I referred earlier. This is the level at which the service partner is providing a "site" for students to visit; or is liaising with communities to provide learning sites; or is acting as a "linker" between academics and communities. This understanding was frequently expressed during the interviews, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *"What was our role? Our role really was to, we were a critical go between, a link between university and people on the ground, in fact the students and people on the ground. And without us they couldn't have achieved that link"* [Service partner, UKZN].

> *"Um, I don't know, we do offer services and that at times we have expertise, we offer facilitation, we do have some technical knowledge, we have an ability to link people, so that sort of information exchange and experience exchange that we facilitate, is in a way a service"* [Service partner, UKZN].

> *"I can firstly think about practical things, which is not maybe necessarily academic learning but practical learning in the sense that the service provider can help with information that's necessary to provide the service. I can just think of a very elementary example but something like if we want to make a community intervention we always struggled because the people don't show up if we have a meeting. Until the Department of Education told us that Wednesday afternoons are afternoons without extra-curricular activities, so why don't you schedule your meetings on Wednesdays... That type of practical information I think is valuable from the side of the service provider and the community to help with things like that"* [Academic partner, UOFS].

> *"I think that what you said about infrastructure is important in our situation where the first years where we haven't got that accent on services, but the infrastructure is there if we want to refer our patients, we can go to the clinics in the area and link up with that"* [Academic partner, UOFS].

> *"The service partner brings to the process the expertise of that aspect of learning. The difference between an academic lecturing on, say, sanitation, and a municipal worker is their practical knowledge; the latter is also accountable to deliver a product. Learning is good, but communities expect more than just learning"* [Service partner, UKZN].

At this point I would like to reconnect to the question of who should be considered a service partner: I would like to suggest that it is at this "practical level", that government departments and many NPOs are ideal service partners. They can provide sites and expertise for assisting with many aspects of practical learning, and this is especially true for disciplines which require a high level of practical knowledge, for example: the health sciences (nurses, doctors, speech and hearing therapists, pharmacists, and others); engineering; architecture; and teaching. However, I would add that even at this level there is the potential for service partners to introduce a very different dimension to students' learning: that of considering "alternative approaches". This was an area of excitement for me during my early days at The Valley Trust, when I was intensely interested in so-called "alternative" or "intermediate" technologies. I would like to see both government and NPOs providing the opportunity for students to explore a range of different options, whatever their

field may be; for example, engineers could be exposed to the benefits of labour-intensive approaches to construction as well as to the more usual machinery-based approaches; health professionals could learn about traditional approaches to health and the paradigms of wellness which lie behind these ways of knowing; architects could learn about traditional methods of construction, as well as innovations such as compressed earth technology; and teachers could learn about styles which change the climate in classrooms and which move from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches. However, such innovations would depend upon the service partners themselves being proficient in such approaches and using them as part of their practice, and I doubt if this is often the case. I will return to this question in the final chapter.

Some participants also noted that the service partner could help to ensure a "safe and secure environment" for students, and while this can never be guaranteed, the service partner is likely to have more insight into prevailing circumstances in communities and can discuss these requirements with communities.

One role which was unique to the University of the Free State was the role of the service partner as a funder; this is no doubt linked to the particular history of partnerships at this university, and the way in which the Mangaung University Community Partnership Project evolved, with significant financial input from government departments.

Moving on, and building somewhat on the above understandings, is that the service partner has a role in teaching, or better, in facilitating learning. This was my second phase of understanding about the role of the service partner, and was based to a large extent on my experiences with students who have visited The Valley Trust. However, I make a clear distinction here between the involvement of service partners in simply perpetuating propositional teaching or even practical learning, and (ideally) introducing a very different approach. In the former case, students may enter communities or service facilities and be "taught" by service providers who have professional qualifications and practical experience of the field which the students are studying. For example:

"The role of the service partner, in my course, is to help my students to learn something....I use my service partners to get my students to learn what they're meant to learn in my course....Without the service partner there would be no service learning. They would have to find another way to learn" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"In the clinics, because our students get placed in the clinics right through over the whole city, different clinics, MUCPP as well, and others, we know now that three of them can't facilitate sixty students that works twice a week. But they're not placed there simultaneously...(not clear). They're definitely involved in the training and then in facilitating students on what to do, when, where, how and entering the community, I think they play a big role there also to, that first time, if the students don't know what to do, then the service provider is there to help them" [Academic partner, UOFS].

However, the "different approach" to which I am referring here takes us out of the realm of "teaching" and into the process of "facilitating learning" at a much deeper level; this is one of the ways in which I think that service partners (assuming that they themselves have the requisite skills and experience) can bring a new dimension to the way in which students learn. Consider the following anecdote:

"Just on that I can narrate a funny little incident that happened. That when (names colleague) and myself went to the university, we were exploring objectives and what have you; we just assumed that the university would have flipchart paper. Well, we took our few coloured pencils and what have you and off we went, and when we got there, we said, 'Well, please can we have flipchart paper?' And they said, 'Well, we don't have flipchart paper'. And we said, 'What do you mean, you don't have flipchart paper. How can you engage people and not have flipchart paper, for group work, for capturing things'. 'No, no, no we use a writing board'. I said, 'No, it's not the same'. So that was a bit of a shock, which signifies something and then, in terms of the lecturing, we really worked with people in a way, I mean, that we would work with anyone else who came here. But I think that was quite different for students, they weren't used to doing group work. Lecturers weren't that used to doing group work. And also processes, when we were saying, 'Well look, roughly, this is what we were thinking. Let's throw it open and see where this goes to'....Which I think is really facilitation and that's a gift of a good facilitator. And that was also hard, that OK wow! there seems to be a big interest in this, let's just explore this a bit more. And also the idea that students could learn from other students. I think in tertiary

> *institutions it is often the lecturer is looked up at and 'Yes, you have the PhD or the Master's degree or you're the professor'. But when you say 'Well, OK I'm part of this' and you give the student a chance to share, to discuss, to really debate issues, it's a much richer place, the classroom"* [Service partner, UKZN].

I would now like to move on even further from my discussion of the "practical level", and describe how my understanding of the role of the service partner has deepened. To do so, I must return to my own journey, and to some of the issues which I have touched on in earlier parts of my narrative, because the next level that I wish to propose for the role of the service partner is that of engagement at the level of experiential learning. I must also, at this point, acknowledge the enormous part that the CHESP LCBP played in setting me on a new path; this was partly in the form of the people who facilitated the various modules, partly in the form of some of the readings required on the course, and partly by the process itself. All of these stimulated my thinking, feeling, and willing in new directions, and initiated a process in which I have had to re-examine the paradigms which have informed my life and work up until the advent of CHESP.

When I think back on my own journey, I realize that it is only during periods, or even moments, of deep reflection, that the meaning of certain events appears. Such moments of insight usually come after periods of intense engagement with important and perplexing questions, followed by a time of "withdrawal" or active meditation, as described in chapters three and four. I have also noticed that meaning emerges for me when patterns emerge, or when experiences "connect", even if the experiences are widely separated in time. Such connections emerged for me during the CHESP LCBP, especially during the modules facilitated by Richard Bawden and Doug Reeler, and through reading the writings of Wendell Berry, Peter Reason, and Michael Patton, to name but a few. I realized that it was usually not one thing in particular that created meaning, but an "intersection" of experiences which occurred (or was "triggered), by the reflective process. It is this level of "making meaning through reflection", or at least contributing to that process, that I wish to present as the role of the service partner at the experiential level.

The importance of reflection was noted during my interviews by others involved in service learning:

> *"Well, to take it historically, Professor Dilafruz Williams, she came out from the University of Oregon, March 2001, and we got a little invite to go to her talk at the university and, [names person] my boss at the time and myself went along, and [academic partner] was there, and I was particularly impressed with that talk. I can quite remember going to that talk and listening and thinking that it was the same old guff and then suddenly she brought in the whole reflection side of things and with my leadership experience with [mentions another programme] and that it rang true. That's really what set me off in getting involved with service learning, was just learning about that concept of reflection from Dilafruz Williams"* [Service partner, UKZN].

> *"Ja, and for me the learning experience is really important there, that my students have a twice weekly, twice every week, reflection sessions on campus with me. And it's that process of learning that I see happening over time that's really important. In the past before I was running service learning here, students would have like an internship experience. They would spend one week at a place, so basically they would get dumped on people and I really don't think that the quality of learning was anything to speak of. Because there was also no ongoing reflection on what they were experiencing, how it related to the discipline etc".* [Academic partner, UKZN].

However, in spite of the idea of "learning in partnership" which was emphasized throughout the LCBP, it seems that service partners (or, for that matter, community partners), are seldom included in reflection sessions on campus:

> *"We didn't spend a lot of time doing that. We didn't do much. I think normally at the end of each session we would have a get together, sort of a social type of thing. I think that the responses that came from them at the end of it all was a reflection itself, though we didn't sort of sit down and say 'Fine let's reflect on what happened'. A lot of this was put on paper, so the reflection came in writing but I think verbally we...it wasn't well organised in that sense. But we did have a conclusion on what happened and what were the problems and how it could have been done better, and this was at the social type of thing"* [Service partner, UKZN].

> *"Sometimes the service partner will either phone me or through the student bring a question back to the group, for the group to consider. But usually at the end of the*

course, when we have a post-presentation, that's when service partners would attend and will reflect on their experience and what they saw the students learning and what it was like for them. So there are mechanisms during the term, if it's needed, but ja, it's mostly an academic activity" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"Part of me feels like I don't ask my service providers to do that, because I feel like it's like an additional burden....So if I...so in an ideal world, I would say, 'Could we meet every week and chat about this', or fill in a questionnaire or do something in which we can evaluate the process but I feel like in asking them to do that I'm making more of a pest of myself" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"There is reflection on the experience at the end. I usually ask for an evaluation of the students or any feedback about the experience of having the students, or whatever, but there is not participation through service providers in an ongoing academic reflection process" [Academic partner, UKZN].

The fact that service partners (and community partners) are not brought into the reflection process on a regular basis seems to me a serious omission, given that student learning arises out of reflection on the experience of service. If two of the partners are absent from this crucial process, then student learning must surely be limited to the academic or intellectual dimensions, with other perspectives and opportunities for discovering through "new (or different) ways of knowing" excluded. Of course, it is not only the students who lose out: *all* partners lose out, because service and community partners would benefit from sharing in the more intellectual dimensions which the academic partners bring to the process of reflection. (Here I must add that I am not suggesting that the intellectual dimension is limited to the academic partner and missing from service or community; likewise, I would not suggest that a practical dimension is missing from the academic partner. I am merely suggesting that there may be dominant tendencies, and I will return to this in the final chapter).

Of course, it could be argued that there is nothing to stop service partners and community partners from organizing their own reflection sessions, and it is true that I have facilitated reflection sessions, with medical students in particular. However, it is the richness of *joint* reflection - that learning which occurs in the central zone of

overlap of the three circles - that I am advocating, and holding separate sessions does not, in my view, replace the joint approach.

What, then, could service partners bring to joint reflection sessions? For me, what the service partner ideally offers is a "real life experience", and, again depending on where one chooses to place the emphasis, this can be understood in three different ways: a *real* life experience; a real *life* experience; or a real life *experience*. As T. S. Eliot observes in "Little Gidding", *"There are three conditions which often look alike yet differ completely"*, and to me these three versions of the "real life experience" each speak of something different:

- The *real* life experience is important because there is sometimes the tendency to offer students "paper problems" which are meant, in some way, to simulate a *real* life situation. There is no doubt a place for this, especially where students may be required to learn about a situation which would be extremely difficult or dangerous to engage with in reality. However, for the majority of situations, it is surely better for the students to engage in the *real* life situation than to engage with what amounts to another theoretical exercise.
- The real *life* experience relates back to my yearning for wholeness, and my desire to see service learning become one path which all partners can follow in a common search for wholeness. It is therefore important that what students experience is a *life* experience, not something which is "set up" for students, but the genuine, messy "swamp experience" described by Votruba (1992). Often (and I have resorted to this myself), a situation is artificially created to allow students to "experience" an aspect of service or community life, but in the end this amounts to nothing more than a sophisticated role play. Again, such an experience may have its uses, but is really not a substitute for *life*.
- Thirdly, there is the real life *experience*, and this is perhaps the most difficult for me to describe. I sometimes wonder how far one is entitled to go in facilitating learning experiences for others. Increasingly, I think that really significant learning is about changing paradigms, and as Richard Bawden suggested during the LCBP module which he facilitated,

paradigm change requires three things: a knowledge of one's own paradigm; a knowledge of alternative paradigms; and a shock big enough to bring about the desire for change. Is it part of a facilitators role to ensure that the experiences to which students are exposed are "shocking" enough? Or is it enough to trust that the process of reflection will sow the seeds of deeper questions which will, in time, germinate into something significant? Every individual is on their own unique journey, and what for one person may be an insignificant event may be for another a shattering experience; no doubt a facilitator must exercise caution. On one occasion I showed a group of medical students a video about drug trials on animals, and had one student rush from the room in tears. There is a heavy responsibility on facilitators to be sensitive about facilitating experiences, but at the same time the experiences must be ones which students are likely to remember. As one service partner put it during an interview:

> *"Let's work from positive experiences, we really want to maximise good experience which creates synergy and energy rather than dismantle people or institutions".*

However, it is important to realize that some of life's most important learnings come from what seem at the time to be negative experiences; in such cases, the importance of the experience may only become obvious much later in life.

During the interviews, some wonderful stories and images emerged around these ideas, and I record them here in full because for me, they represent a truly important role which the service partner can play in service learning: the facilitation of *real life experiences*:

> *"I think we all have our own journey. But the important thing is to give people exposure so that they can interrogate their journey, their frameworks, their spider webs in life, that they can be sure and confident about why they do, what they do, and be clear about what it is they want to do"* [Service partner, UKZN].

> *"And so I think the service provider should give...they're the link to the big bad world out there. And the big bad world may be communities; it may be other service providers like them"* [Academic partner, UKZN].

"For me, it's giving the students a taste of the real world. If we had to attend lectures, or whatever it was, and we gave them all these idealistic things... I did a 'community development from the grass roots' course, I have a file that I can show you just now, mainly by the [names university] a couple of years ago, and we were going through all these theoretical ideas and one of the younger students, people, on the course said, 'Is it always just easy if you follow these rules?' She had no concept of the curved balls that could be thrown at you, the possibility that it may come unstuck. They have no idea of that. And I think the service partner must bring a taste of the real world, and our trick is really, if we took it from, we as a service partner must create a situation where our helping hand is there. So if the student is weak or new at the situation, our support structure is that much tighter. And then we can, as they grow we can loosen the support structure and let them operate independently, but we've got to give them enough rope to operate independently and to make their mistakes; but at the same time not give them carte blanche, *where they don't know where they are going and it's an absolute disaster from our point of view, as well as from their point of view..."* [Service partner, UKZN].

"It's actually a life experience. Ooh I think that's a good way of putting it! We try to give them a life experience" [Service partner, UKZN].

"I just think that the service learning partner provides the sort of real life engagement with the real world as it were.... Something that we couldn't actually give them in a classroom situation. And so, for us that would be the value of the role of the service partner is to actually show that engagement in a sort of, ja, a work environment, where what we're trying to teach them and what their perhaps future career will involve, will be around that and they will see the hard facts of it" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"It enables them [students] to be able to challenge other things in our society and in many ways almost reinvent themselves, in that they wake up to a whole range of things. The placement was really a catalyst for them to learn, assess, rethink, reflect on many of the navigational points of their life. But we also had a series on navigation and how do you navigate" [Service partner, UKZN].

"Let me try and answer with an example. Same service provider, another group of students. The question from the service provider, and these students are supposed to

do research, that's how we defined it. So the service provider says, 'What we would really like to know and find out, is how all these HIV households, affected households, with infected or affected people in this area, it's a very poor peri-urban area, how do they cope? Because if we could better understand how they cope then we could better know how to provide a service'. Reasonable, containable, it seemed like a good project. The students, I do believe in this case, learnt other ways of learning, and other ways of knowing through the process, this extraordinarily emotional, extraordinarily difficult process of going into households and asking questions that are actually impossible to ask. So what they learnt partially is about what questions you can ask and what questions you can't ask, and why. And then they learnt very tangible things like...

Clive: Sorry, who did they learn that from?[20]

From the households.

Clive: From the households themselves?

From the community, if you want. Because they actually went into the community. So they learnt some coping strategies, they learnt that a large number of the community live off the local rubbish dump. Now, they had to do a radical shift in their heads about seeing a household that was clean and nice and wonderful, and knowing that all this clean and nice and wonderful is based on living off the rubbish dump. So in their minds there had to be a radical shift about preconceptions and prejudice about very poor people and how they live. Many of them had never been in that poor a household. So I think there were new ways of learning, a lot of that was about emotion, they went into a process of debriefing each other, they called in a counsellor to help them because they found it very, very hard. But they also learnt new information and they learnt that some information you only can get intuitively, and some information you have to rely on your sense of observation, you know with all your senses, observing, smell, all of that, in order to get the information because there's some questions you can't ask, so you're going to have to rely on your nose to *get the answer. Now did they articulate it like that? No. I'm articulating it like that. They went half way there, I think. So there's the potential. Why didn't they learn it? I suppose because from my side, that I take the blame because from my side I didn't do enough probing, debriefing, questioning, giving them reading, you know, helping them with the reflection. But I think in terms of the service provider in this situation, there were other ways of knowing and new knowledge. No doubt about it"*

[Academic partner, UKZN].

---

[20] Where my own questions or comments are included as part of an interview quote, I have indicated this in bold.

"Clive: One of my colleagues I interviewed had this lovely image of sort of reference points on the map of life. Maybe what the student experiences through service learning now is a relatively minor thing in their life. But ten, fifteen, twenty years into their life they're going to look back on it and say 'Wow! Now I understand it, that's what it was all about'.
I think that's definitely true and there were quite a few examples which I can't quote now but that came out of this conference with that exact thing. People actually sort of giving testimony to the fact that their service learning experiences affected their choices and their decisions later on in life" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"And I know like, some of them've [students] been at certain places where they got a little bit overconfident and had a run-in and where it's slightly, they sort of got a little bit overconfident. I remember one doing something at a school and they were doing something in this particular storeroom which the principal had earmarked for something else and there was a run-in. But that's fine, because they had their wings clipped a bit, but by transferring that experience, what you got to do, follow the channels, blah, blah, blah, and actually makes it a real situation" [Service partner, UKZN].

"Where basically it was a link between the university, [names NGO], the CBO and community people and then of course students. What was our role? Our role really was to, we were a critical go between, a link between university and people on the ground, in fact the students and people on the ground. And without us they couldn't have achieved that link. But that was the easy part, the hard part was the levels of trust, the levels of risk, the unknown linking to the risk and also that we realised that for students, university was something they do between maybe 8 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon, whereas when you go to community, it's in fact people's life. Yes wherever you are you are learning and you are living, but there is something about the imbalances, the rural, the differences between, the gaps between people and cultures that put quite a lot of stress on us that we really wanted to link in a way that had integrity, that respected people, that not only respected people but enthused people and really was meaningful to them in their life and that's what was quite difficult apart from all the logistics and us then working with the university, with lecturers and look at what possibly could be covered and then sharing that and present that at a community level to community people and then the CBO and it was new experiences for them as well, totally new. I don't think even though we could

have described many times what we thought would happen, I don't think people really knew what would happen until it was happening. It was too far from people's reality. Yet in the end it did touch people.

Clive: When you mention that uncertainty, that unknown, did you find yourself in a way holding that or carrying that on behalf of the program.

Hugely in that, for us we had a relationship with people at a community level on the ground and that was at risk. And that we had spent some years nurturing, and the university, for example with the students, I mean we didn't even know the students, yes, we knew the lecturers and had trust in them and the way they thought, their philosophies, their approaches, which was a critical part otherwise we couldn't get that link. But because there was trust also at that level, we were prepared to try and facilitate and risk, but it was a calculated risk and it did work. But it's very easy to dismantle relationships and it's very, very hard to build them. I don't know if you can really rebuild, they say we can but I guess that's the challenge" [Service partner, UKZN].

I have quoted at length from the interviews, because as I attempt to present my understandings of the role of the service partner at an ever-deeper level, I find myself struggling to find the words to express myself. One solution to this is to simply let the participants speak for themselves, to let their voices be heard. A description of the final stage of the palimpsest (page 53 of this dissertation) will also help me. The final stage (final, at least in so far as this dissertation is concerned, although I'm sure it will evolve further), returns to the central image of the hand which is the cutting edge of the mind. The metaphor of the hand was also used on a number of occasions during the interviews, and the more I work with the image, the more it comes to "speak" for so many aspects of the role of the service provider. Here, in the palimpsest, the hand is positioned *across* the divide, acting as a bridge, a link, in some way a *healing hand.* However, it can only do that in partnership, or at least the full potential of the hand can only be realized in partnership, and in this sense it may be a *hand of friendship.* Indeed, during one interview, the metaphor of the hand was used to describe partnership:

"Maybe what it means, it means joining hands together in a kind of sharing any social concern towards communities in South Africa. Given the previous background of our country in terms of the political situation, which has rendered the certain sector of the country or certain people of the country being excluded in the

> *development of the country. Also economics of the country, so to me partnership means to join hands together and work together in terms of the development of the country"* [Service partner, UOFS].

For this reason, the three circles which represent the three-way partnership also reappear in the palimpsest, with the central zone of overlap represented in gold as the "prize" which we are striving for, the benefits of which then flow out into the world. The role of the service partner in providing a "real life experience", or at least some of the navigation points, is present in the form of the four directions of the compass; the journey of life is also present, although less obviously, in the lines on the hand, one of which is the life line.

I would now like to describe one more level in the role of the service partner, and my understanding of that level I can best describe as inspirational. How did it come about? I have, for the past fifteen years, been engaging with the work of Rudolf Steiner, and have pondered deeply on his description of the human being as a three-fold being, a being capable of thinking, feeling, and willing (and I will return to this picture in the final chapter). I have been describing the role of the service partner in terms of Bronowski's assertion that *"The hand is the cutting edge of the mind"* and, in so doing, trying to unite thinking and willing (doing). However, in the back of my mind was a question: where is the heart in all this? It was only thanks to a comment made by an academic partner that one possibility suggested itself to me. I was describing my excitement at the possibility of The Valley Trust and the University of KwaZulu Natal signing a Memorandum of Agreement, recognizing The Valley Trust as a learning site. I have been attempting to bring this about for some years, and progress has recently been made thanks to a shift within the University. The academic partner expressed the genuine hope that the relationship would evolve into a mutually beneficial one, but cautioned that the university tends to do things primarily for its own benefit, and expressed the view that *"Service learning won't be carried by the 'heart' of the university, but rather through the passion of outsiders. Passionate voices at the university are tolerated rather than carried"*. I found this view rather sobering, and wondered where, then, would the heart be found to carry service learning? With this question going around in my mind I found myself gazing at the imprint of my hand (see page 89) that I have used to illustrate parts of this narrative,

and there, in the middle of the palm, I saw the image of a heart. Can it be, I now find myself asking, that if the hand and the heart are truly one, it will be the heart of the *service partner* that will carry service learning into the future? I find this a hugely exhilarating possibility, but is the service partner able to do this? Are service partners even conscious of the significance of their role?

Before attempting to answer these questions, I must say that my experience of the broad range of service partners is limited. However, from what I heard during the CHESP LCBP, and from what I have read in the reports from the various Core Groups participating in CHESP, and from what I heard during the interviews for this

dissertation, I would say that at the practical level, service partners are able to contribute reasonably well, although some academic interview participants expressed disappointment that their service partners had not really contributed as much as they had hoped; this was attributed largely to time, resource, and capacity constraints. For example, one academic partner reported that

> *"The school would release the learners before my students would get there to run their life skills lessons, they would have an early day, or it would be raining and they would phone and say don't come and it was the students' last session and they needed to go and have closure with their class. So there were those sorts of things that for me that was a lack of capacity at the site to manage this influx from the university"* [Academic partner, UKZN].

Having said that, I must also say that within my own organization, I am increasingly encountering a reluctance to work with students; this is often explained as a consequence of the unreliability of students: arriving late, showing minimal interest, not having the promised transport, or wanting to leave without adequate reflection. However, I think that service partners can sometimes feel themselves ill-prepared to cope with students and the very different requirements of their academic situation. This was pointed out during one interview, when a participant noted that

> *"I would say definitely[the service partners] play a very important role, I think there is a lot of frustration that we all may be experiencing, everybody is overloaded with work. I think with my service provider the problem is time, practical things like there is a time issue. If we try and organise anything to get together, there's transport issues. So I think there's a practical sense that makes us feel disempowered, not because the service provider can't provide that role or play that role, but because there is practical limitations. I think that's one thing, then I think the other thing, maybe it's not an answer to your question completely, as academics we have an academic perspective of how things should be done, and I think the service providers aren't always geared towards our mode of delivery, if I can say it like that. I think they sometimes feel irritated with the fact that they have to write a report about something, because a lot of the service providers don't know how to write reports, they haven't done it before. Or attend meetings and make minutes, so I think a lot of things are academic type of work that we are expecting from service providers that they are not used to or prepared for always. I'm not sure if it is fair to say that that's a need and something that we need to work on, because that's maybe not what a*

service provider is supposed to be doing but I know that is a frustration in my partnership. I think that something like writing a report or writing a letter about something is for an academic institution important, but not always for a service provider" [Academic partner, UOFS].

Other comments which were made about the capacity of service partners to contribute to service learning included the following:

"I think the difficulty is the amount of time required to really make that meaningful in the mentoring of the students. That is what is hugely intense and time consuming, and I think that we should never under estimate the amount of time, not only time, energy that it takes. Be it at work or out of work, in your mental space" [Service partner, UKZN].

"But I think that their main role is they must try and get out of the students what they need to get out of them. And that's quite hard because the service providers I've worked with are not often really able to do that. So I'm finding that we're having to take over some of the roles that the service provider ideally would do. And that has to do with the nature of who we're working with, so maybe we should work with different service providers" [Academic partner, UKZN].

"I think the service partner at times is faced with the bottleneck of red tape internally....But if you work with NGOs there's much flexibility to implement and respond to those identified needs. And that is how I've always found the mutual relationship benefits the service providers" [Community partner, UOFS].

On the other hand, it was suggested during one interview that any challenges which may be experienced with service partners are really challenges of a more systemic nature, and that they can only be addressed as part of the broader issue of relationship building:

"The weaknesses with the services? I don't know if they're weaknesses with the services or more just weaknesses with the relationship that needed to be clarified and only became apparent as you were in the experience. Like this one school just asked me for an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the student, the school and myself and I did it for that school and it proved very useful for any other site that I wished to engage with, just to say this is what I expecting of you, this is what I will do, this is

what the students will do. I don't think there are any weaknesses" [Academic partner, UKZN].

Although I think that some service partners are currently able to contribute in a meaningful way at the practical level, there is the problem referred to above, that of the "influx" of large numbers of students. My experience has been that service partners prefer to work with smaller numbers of older, graduate students who have "something to offer", than with large numbers of undergraduate students[21]. However, at what I have described as the experiential and inspirational levels, I have serious doubts about the ability of service partners to even understand their potential role. I do think that there is a way to address this, however, and will discuss the possibilities in the final chapter.

Figure 6: Meditative colour exercise

[21] Here I do not wish to imply that service partners do not have a role to play in the learning experiences of undergraduate students, but rather that their contributions may take a different form, such as co-facilitating a largely campus-based programme as happens on the Community Studies Module described earlier.

Chapter 6

How can service partners better prepare themselves for their role?

"We must be the change we seek to create"

Gandhi, M. K

"Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals who can go it alone"

Wheatley, M.

And so I come to the final chapter of this narrative, from where I must look back on the path which I have travelled to arrive here, and forward to where the path might lead. I have attempted, through a process of heuristic inquiry, to research my own experience as a service partner intensely engaged in service learning. I have also talked to other partners, academic, community, and service, to draw on their experiences of service learning, and in so doing deepen my own understanding of the role of the service partner. It is also my hope that through the interviews which I conducted I have also contributed to the growing understanding of the participants. Along this path I have explored my understanding of the broader context of service learning within which the role of the service partner is located; the nature of service; which organizations might be considered a part of service; and the meaning of partnership. The journey has become a dance, in which people, places, reading, music and practical experience have joined together to create a rich picture which I have attempted to present in the form of a palimpsest. Above all perhaps, I have learned much about myself and why I am so passionately engaged in this process which I have described as part of a search for wholeness; a search, moreover, in which fellow-travellers co-create a future *"worthy of human aspiration"*. In many ways, the point at which I have arrived is that described by T. S. Eliot (quoted earlier on p. 74 of this dissertation), when he said, towards the end of the Four Quartets, that

> *"...the end of all our exploring*
> *Will be to arrive where we started*
> *And know the place for the first time".*

My research has suggested that the service partner can contribute to service learning at three different "levels", and while I have tried to emphasize that none of these different levels should be judged as "better" than another, I do see an increasing depth from the practical to the inspirational. I also think that because the all-important paradigm shifts can occur at any of the levels, it is important that all three levels are present. I have also described how these levels represent stages in my own understanding of the role of the service partner, and have adopted Richard Bawden's terminology to name the levels. Thus, in summary, I suggest that the service partner can contribute to service learning at the practical level, the experiential level, and the inspirational level. These roles are described, very briefly, in the following table:

Level	Role of the service partner
Practical	To provide sites and creative guidance (including "technical" guidance and supervision), based on the service partner's experience and expertise, at the level of professional learning, including "service as product" and "service as process".
Experiential	To facilitate a "real life experience" upon which students can reflect (ideally in a process involving all three partners), and which can provide "navigational points" for the future life journey, both personal and professional, of the students. At its best, this real life experience can be a transformational one, certainly for students, and ideally for all partners.
Inspirational	To safeguard the "heart" of service learning, and so carry the idea and impulse of service learning, ideally in true partnership with both academics and community.

However, my research also revealed that it is really only at the practical level that most service partners are currently making a significant contribution, and even then that that contribution may be beset by challenges such as red tape, time constraints, lack of resources, and sometimes an inadequate understanding of the "academic way" of doing things.

With regard to improving on this situation, at least at the practical level, it was suggested during an interview that the service partners' contribution could be enhanced through intervention by the academic partners:

> *"What the university can do, perhaps to enhance this kind of interest, is perhaps to train more service persons, people interested in the idea of service learning. I think*

> *that without that kind of training there is a problem, because there isn't that commitment, there isn't that understanding, you know, and it just becomes a kind of internship, it just becomes a kind of community service"* [Service partner, UKZN].

However, one academic partner expressed an opposite view, at least about the "training":

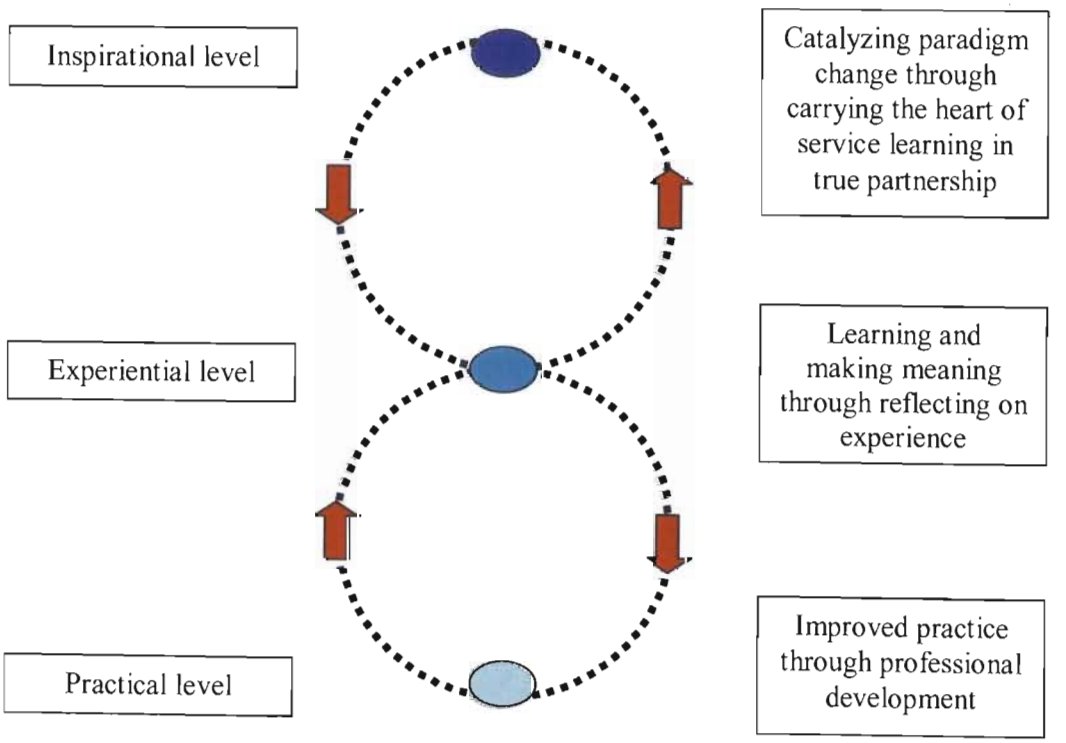
> *"I think that these capacity building workshops are these funny shot-in-the-arm things and because you've now had a capacity building workshop you're going to do it differently. NO. You're still working within the same context and the context isn't going to change that easily, and I think partially what's going to make them better able is history. I think the more you work with the same organisation the more you have experiences together the more you talk about it the more you learn from it together the better the relationship becomes. And it's going back to old relationships rather than partnerships, to trust, to understanding and to, you know, commitment to try and avoid this together. And I really don't think that capacity building workshops are the way"* [Academic partner, UKZN].

In my view it is essential that service partners do not try to become more "academic" (although I will suggest later that they might benefit by becoming more "scholarly"). It is important that service partners retain and contribute the very strengths and characteristics which make them *different* from academic partners, so that they can play a complementary role rather than try in some way to duplicate the academic role.

How do I think that service partners can prepare themselves to contribute more meaningfully to service learning? While trying to organize my thinking around this question, I came across the quote by Gandhi (cited in Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers, 2004, p. 151), with which I opened this final chapter: *"We must be the change we seek to create"*. This quote immediately resonated with so much that I have been trying to say in this dissertation, and in a very real sense pulls together the diverse strands and suggests a way forward. To present what I think needs to be done, I must draw on the work which I have been doing for several years with colleagues at The Valley Trust, and illustrate the essential elements of our approach with the diagram presented on page 96. I have based this diagram on a somewhat simpler version which was used to propose a process of organizational learning in The Valley Trust's 1999/2000 Annual Report.

The three levels that describe the roles of the service partner are again present, but this time I have linked them a process of organizational development which would enable service partners to make a far more significant contribution to service learning (and, in my view, to reconstruction and development in general: remember that I described, in the early parts of this dissertation, my concerns that service play a more meaningful role in development, and that I was myself seeking a "role within this role"). I have given considerable thought to these three levels, and am convinced that they are inextricably interwoven as complementary elements of a learning system; I therefore think that they all exist at the same time, hence the fact that the "learning path" (indicated by the red arrows) takes the form of a lemniscate, in which each level depends on the other levels in a continuous weaving and unfolding of learning. Kutzli (1981, p. 13) refers to the lemniscate as

> *"...the archetypal form of a horizontal* eight*....it also unites the round with the straight, releasing with the binding....and more than that: if you shade in one side of the lemniscate, it becomes evident that the one wing faces* outwards, *whereas the other faces* inwards, *and vice versa....the crossing point becomes also the point of* inversion*".*



At the practical level, I see organizations refining their practice so that their engagement with the communities which they serve is meaningful to all stakeholders, including the organizations providing the service. How can this be achieved? In my view, by taking a people-centred approach which has action research, or action learning, as its organizing framework. Thus all project and programme work would be based on co-created visions of a desired reality, implementation would be co-monitored, and the results co-evaluated through a process of joint reflection out of which learning can emerge. Moving towards a people-centred approach can be challenging: staff of The Valley Trust have been exploring their understandings of development and development practice for two years through a process which came to be called the Development Dialogues. What emerged was the realization that while there is strong congruence in our *thinking* about what people-centred development is, there is a gap between our espoused theory of people-centred development and our practice (Jager, 2004). However, the application of action learning in an ongoing and conscious way is proving to be a powerful means to bring about the changes which we have agreed are desirable. Although I am describing here a process for service organizations, it is one to which students could be exposed through partnerships at the practical level. It could, perhaps, prompt the realization that human striving for a better world is a fragile, enormously difficult process, and by no means one assured of success. It is a process which requires commitment, honesty, and an openness to both learning and unlearning; in other words, it is a part of the path to wholeness. It is also a journey which is better taken in partnership, as Palmer (2004, p. 10) has noted:

> *"...we cannot embrace [the challenge of becoming whole] all alone, at least, not for long: we need trustworthy relationships, tenacious communities of support, if we are to sustain the journey towards an undivided life. That journey has solitary passages, to be sure, and yet it is simply too arduous to take without the assistance of others".*

Another way of expressing this need to come together in order to ensure that the practice of service is meaningful to all stakeholders, is to think in terms of *communities of practice*. The idea of communities of practice has been described by Wenger (1998), and has as one of its cornerstones, the realization that learning is a social phenomenon, and that people therefore learn best in community. This brings together a number of threads which have woven throughout this narrative: the need for a new thinking about "community" which does not perpetuate old stereotypes (as

discussed on pages 62 and 63); the importance of partnership, and specifically of partnerships around practice (*"The hand is the cutting edge of the mind"*); and the hope for new ways of knowing which can emerge when people come together in partnership.

At the experiential level, the organization is striving to make meaning out of diverse experience. There is a tendency towards "busyness" in the service sector, as was mentioned a number of times during the interviews which formed part of this research. This can easily develop into a situation where, to quote T. S. Eliot again, *"We had the experience but missed the meaning"*. This process of "making meaning" relies heavily on creating opportunities for coming together to talk about one's work, one's practice. This time for reflection I like to think of in terms of T. S. Eliot's *"still point of the turning world"*: it is here, at the centre of the lemniscate, that we experience the dance of organizational learning. In saying this, I do not wish to imply that learning occurs *only* during times of quiet reflection; rather, I think that learning is a process which is going on all the time. Indeed, Wenger (1998, p. 3) points out that *"...learning is as much a part of our human nature as eating or sleeping"*. However, our purpose as service partners wishing to enhance our ability to contribute more meaningfully to reconstruction and development in partnership, is to learn more *consciously*. To do this, we need to create the time and the space for learning through reflecting together on our practice. And to accomplish this reflecting together requires us to learn to listen to each other in new ways, and to talk to each other in new ways. One way of listening and talking in ways that allow learning to emerge is through the process of dialogue. This process has been extensively described by Bohm (1996) and Isaacs (1999). Dialogue depends on our ability to suspend our assumptions, and to come to the process of thinking together in a spirit of openness and trust. Isaacs (p. 396) points out that such an approach is something we often struggle with, accustomed as we are to a far more competitive way of talking. He states that

> *"We do not know how to participate in such a way that we have not planned in advance what we are going to say, or where we are deliberately inquiring into. We come prepared, well stocked with thoughts, perhaps having sought to prepare others as well. And when the going gets tough, we fall back on argument and debate".*

I like the work of Isaacs: he refers to the need for *"A new language of wholeness"*, and urges us to take wholeness seriously. I also like the work of Wheatley (2002), who has emphasized the importance of talking to each other in simple conversations. She writes (p. 19) that

> *"We have to slow down. Nothing will change for the better until we do. We need time to think, to learn, to get to know each other. We are losing these great human capacities in the speed-up of modern life, and it is killing us".*

So, at the centre of the lemniscate, which is the *"still point of the turning world"*, the place of the dancing dialogue, we find the time and the space for the organization to get to know itself through reflective learning. It is important for service partners to "know themselves": we cannot enter into meaningful partnerships if we do not know who we are, what we do, and how we do it. In a very real sense, coming to know ourselves is a very necessary step on the journey to wholeness. At The Valley Trust, we have been striving to create a time and space in which to know ourselves as an organization by creating a "home week", the last week of every month during which we arrange all our meetings, document our work, and make the time to talk to each other. Our home week is far from perfect: crises happen; donors visit unexpectedly; and important conferences are scheduled years in advance. In spite of these challenges, we are coming together more and more. Two learning opportunities in particular are proving successful: the monthly "Managers' organizational development meeting" and the monthly "Open meeting". During the Managers' OD meeting, managers spend the morning talking around the broader themes relevant to our work as an organization: recently we have been spending a lot of time talking about partnerships. The Open meetings are, as the name suggests, "open"; any member of staff may attend, although attendance is not obligatory. This in itself is seen as a challenge, with one colleague noting in a recent evaluation that

> *"I would like to see people taking Open Meetings more seriously. I fail to understand how people plan for workshops/meetings to be scheduled on the last Tuesday of the month coz everybody knows that it is home week and scheduled for open meetings which are very INFORMATIVE".*

Again I must emphasize that our home week is practice based: our discussions (which in time will hopefully become more like dialogue) revolve around our practice, and we strive to learn from what we do. Of course, we draw on theory to shed light on our

experience, but the conversations are essentially about what we do as an organization. At this level, participation in the process by students placed with a service partner could be a rich experience of a "real life" organizational learning situation, and bring home to the students that action learning can be a vital way of making meaning, not only professionally but personally. It can also show the potential for service partners to research their work, and thereby contribute in a more scholarly way to knowledge creation. As Jarvis (1999) has pointed out, we can be both practitioners *and* researchers, helping to build theory out of practice.

One additional thought before I move on from the second level: I have referred earlier in this dissertation to the hand as an image of service, and to the heart of service, which is, in an imaginative sense, visible in the hand. The introduction of a more thoughtful, a more reflective approach to the practice of service partners, also brings about another form of wholeness, that of the threefold nature of thinking, feeling, and willing, which van Houten (1995, p. 17) describes as being essential to the process of adult learning:

> *"When we learn, we change. In learning however, three barriers become apparent as well, which can mainly be experienced in our thinking, our feeling, and our will activities....In adult education and development we must realize that we are dealing here with three equally important principles of learning that require therefore work on all three barriers".*

As I mentioned on page 27 of this dissertation, I have for many years been inspired by the writings of Rudolf Steiner, and in particular I have been intrigued not only with the idea of the threefold archetype, but also with questions about how such ideas can become a reality in our lives and our work. I now recognize that my interest in this threefold nature of the human being is another manifestation of my search for greater wholeness, and that my perceptions of higher education result, at least in part, from the fact that higher education promotes such an unbalanced perspective on life: largely the thinking dimension, and at best a combination of thinking and willing. This lack of balance is likewise manifest in the service sector, which tends to emphasize the willing (often experienced as "busyness"), and frequently introduces the feeling dimension; what is often lacking is the thinking dimension, evidenced by the reluctance of many service organizations to monitor, evaluate, reflect on, and

consciously learn from their experience. I was therefore delighted (although not a little surprised) to encounter a description of the need for greater threefolding in the recent book by Senge *et al* (2004), where on pages 218 – 219 they refer to the greater integration which will emerge from

> *"...building three integrated capacities: a new capacity for observing that no longer fragments the observer from the observed; a new capacity for stillness that no longer fragments who we really are from what's emerging; and a new capacity for creating alternative realities that no longer fragments the wisdom of the head, heart, and hand".*

At the third level, the inspirational level, I have tried to bring together three crucial dimensions related to the role of the service partner in service learning: paradigm change; carrying the "heart" of service learning; and true partnership. Why is paradigm change so important? I indicated in the first chapter of this dissertation that I view universities as amongst the most alienating and destructive institutions in modern society; for this to change, I believe that the paradigms out of which universities teach, research, and engage with society must be challenged. However, if this role is one which service partners are to play, then it is imperative that we be willing to hold our own paradigms up for review and, moreover, be willing to change our own paradigms when it becomes obvious that they are no longer taking us (and society) where we want to go. Do service partners have a "way of seeing" which could contribute to mutual paradigm change in the context of partnerships? I asked this question during some of the interviews which I conducted, and found that most participants were unable to give a clear answer. I did, however, receive one fascinating response:

> *"Phew Clive, I would like to think that, but I'm not sure it would. I really would like to think that through a small program you can influence a much bigger system but in reality I'm not sure you can. I think it can be, I think in addition to the small program you actually need systems in place to make sure that that's shared, that it's reported back within the university. And they need to be the right people that you're interacting with; otherwise I don't think you'll change. Unless you can engage people and get other faces within the university involved in some way, at whatever level, I don't think you would really influence. But it doesn't mean to say that it's not meaningful for those few students and whatever they engage in"* [Service partner, UKZN].

The scepticism expressed in the above quote had its origins at least in part in the speaker's own experience of studying for a Masters degree. I include this somewhat lengthy quote here because, for me, it so clearly captures the extent of the abyss that exists and which I believe the service partner can help to bridge:

> *"But just one thing on the knowledge I would like to share with you and you have in fact asked me to document this, which I didn't, and maybe I should just tell you. I had been very keen to do a Masters and I went to the university and I knew that it was a half course work and a half research, mini thesis. And I said, 'Well for my mini thesis, I really have an interest in issues around knowledge and traditional knowledge specifically and the environment of bio-diversity' and in my discussion with the lecturer, I said, 'One of the things I would really like to explore, is the relationships that people have to plants'. And to give you an example, there's a grass called Vetiver grass that is widely promoted world wide to stabilise soil and for various other things but mainly to stabilise soil and increase water infiltration. And I visited an elderly woman in the valley, here in the Valley of a Thousand Hills and jumped out the car and thought 'Wow! this woman has a line of Vetiver grass, fantastic, I mean she really understands it's contribution to soil and she cares about the soil and this is wonderful and water harvesting at a household level, fantastic!'. And I asked her why she had this grass and she said, 'No I have this grass to stop the bird from landing on my shoulder', inferring a stroke, that this bird comes and lands and when it lands on your shoulder, it would give you a stroke. So this grass protects her. And when I shared this with the lecturer, the lecturer burst out laughing and said, 'Well that is a very very silly example. Do you mean to say that you would then work with agriculture extension workers and promote Vetiver grass because it stops the little bird from landing on people's shoulders?' And I felt extremely intimidated, from my suggestion and exploration and I nearly withdrew from doing the Masters. And I sort of totally lost motivation and thought 'Well bugger it, obviously I need to fulfil the requirement of the university in order to get a Masters', which I then wasn't so sure I really wanted. But given that I had done a lot of the course work anyway and it had been paid for well, I had a commitment to complete. So, and ja, I still haven't managed to find out what was wrong with what I wanted to do, why was it so funny, why was my idea so irrelevant, if to that elderly woman it had huge significance at very many levels in her daily life"* [Service partner, UKZN].

I am convinced that it is through conversations around such paradigmatic differences that change may be possible. As Wheatley (2002, p. 30) reminds us, we don't necessarily have to agree with each other, but

> *"We try to stay curious about each other. When we begin a conversation with this humility, it helps us be interested in who's there. Curiosity is a great help to good conversation".*

She adds (p. 35) that

> *"To be curious about how someone else interprets things, we have to be willing to admit that we're not capable of figuring things out alone. If our solutions don't work as well as we want them to, if our explanations of why something happened don't feel sufficient, it's time to begin asking others about what they see and think".*

I want to think that the university is truly interested in paradigm change, but I know that in reality, the "university" cannot be interested in anything: only individuals working and studying at the university can be interested. And this brings me to a tension which was present throughout our Core Group's attempts to facilitate an acceptance of service learning at the University of Natal: we found some (not many) individuals who felt as passionately about new ways of knowing as we did, but we failed to find a way to *institutionalize* change. We had learned about the importance of institutionalizing change through establishing appropriate policies, procedures, reward systems, etc, but we encountered a very real resistance to such measures. And in the end, we failed. Or at least, we failed for that stage of the University's evolution. The people who desire change are still there, but perhaps the whole university system requires a shock (to use Richard Bawden's phrase) big enough to precipitate a widespread paradigm shift. For this reason it is crucial that the idea of service learning, the image of new ways of knowing, be carried by the forces of the heart. If it is true that there are too few people at the University to carry these forces, or if the University merely tolerates such views, then it becomes the role, perhaps the duty, of another sector's heart to carry the impulse for new ways of knowing in partnership. And if those individuals from all three sectors who feel passionately about service learning can strengthen their relationships, then perhaps the heart can at least be carried in partnership. I have expressed the view on page 74 of this dissertation that the formalization of partnerships at institutional level would complement the

relationships which exist between individuals involved in service learning, and I wish to repeat that view here. I think that there is a "weight" or a significance attached to an organizational view which is not present in the opinion of an individual, and this can contribute to a challenge being taken more seriously. For example, if the University of KwaZulu Natal is informed that The Valley Trust holds a particular view about a particular issue, it is likely to carry more weight than if the University hears that Clive Bruzas holds a particular view. Therefore, while I agree that relationships between individuals are the foundation of service learning, I believe that we should continue to strive for meaningful institutional partnerships which can work at a different but complementary level.

And the future has to lie in partnership. In this final chapter I have presented ways in which I think that service partners can enhance their own abilities to play a more significant role, and I have suggested that they become better practitioners, become more reflective, and develop their feeling for service learning; in other words, strive for greater wholeness. However, I am not suggesting that this organizational or sectoral wholeness *replace* the need for partnership; I am suggesting that the two exist *together*. I think that the striving for wholeness in service partners is itself a part of the bigger whole reflected in true partnership. As Kaplan (2002, p. 38) expresses it

> *"We have talked of the whole variously as either* underlying *the parts or* emerging out *of the parts...Yet we talk in this way because language itself is a function of the analytic mode of consciousness, not necessarily because it is inaccurate. In fact, it is slightly misleading. The whole does not underlie the parts, neither does it emerge out of them*; it exists simultaneously with the parts*"*.

So the striving for a true, threefold partnership remains an essential component in the search for new or renewed ways of knowing, for wholeness. And the service partner is, to my mind, an essential part of this three-fold relationship. As I have tried to indicate, three-folding is an archetype: in the context of partnership, a two-fold approach has something lacking. This is not to say that results cannot be achieved through a two-fold relationship, but I suggest that without the presence of the third partner, something will inevitably be missing.

And so I am drawing close to the end of this dissertation. I have suggested not *a* role, but *multiple* roles for the service partner in service learning. I have tried to illustrate these roles by using the constantly weaving nature of the lemniscate to emphasize that the three dimensions exist together and constantly influence each other in a dynamic way, and that within this *flow* dwells the potential for knowing in new ways, the potential for co-creating our knowledge and our world *"worthy of human aspiration"*.

I started out on a very personal note, and would like to end in the same way. How do I see my own role unfolding in all this? At this stage, I see several possibilities which I would like to pursue. I would definitely like to remain active in the field of service learning, and especially involve myself more closely in researching the field using participatory approaches, but much will depend on how the relationship between The Valley Trust and the University of KwaZulu Natal develops. And in order to nurture my own sense of wholeness, I would like to work at all three levels: at the "service as process" end of the practical spectrum (and especially with students from the biological sciences); at the central level of organizational learning, where in the still point of reflection we can perhaps learn how to dance, together; and at the inspirational level of the heart forces which can help to carry the future of service learning.

I have written a lot in these pages about depth, and about meaning, and about the journey towards wholeness. One thing seems very clear to me as I approach my 50th birthday, and I can think of no better way than to quote once again from T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets in an attempt to share this knowing:

"Old men ought to be explorers
Here or there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning".

References

Anderson, R., Braud, W., and Valle, R. (1996). Disciplined inquiry for transpersonal studies: old and new approaches to research. Retrieved August 20, 2003 from the World Wide Web http://www.integral-inquiry.com/docss/disciplined_inquiry.doc.pdf

Axel-Lute, M. (2000). Making research serve communities' needs. Retrieved July 23, 2001 from the World Wide Web http://www.loka.org/town&gown.htm

Baker, C. (2004). Membership categorization and interview accounts. In D. Siverman (Ed). *Qualitative research. Theory, method and practice* (pp. 162-176). London: Sage Publications.

Bawden, R. (1999a). Contextualization. Paper presented at a Service Learning Seminar at the University of Natal, 19th April 1999.

Bawden, R. (1999b). The community challenge: the learning response. Paper 2 prepared for the University of Natal Research and Development Workshop, November 1999.

Berry, W. (1987). The loss of the university. In W. Berry *Home economics. Fourteen essays by Wendell Berry* (pp.76 - 97). San Francisco: North Point Press.

Block, P. (2002). *The answer to how is yes: acting on what matters*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Bockemühl, J. (1986). *Dying forests: a crisis in consciousness*. Stroud: Hawthorne Press.

Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue* (edited by L. Nichol). London: Routledge.

Bortoft, H. (1996). *The wholeness of nature. Goethe's way of science*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Bronowski, J. (1973). *The ascent of Man*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation.

Bruzas, C. A. (2003a). Collaboration for health: a reflection on the KwaZulu Natal Collaborative Group. Paper presented at The Valley Trust's 50th Anniversary Conference "Primary Health Care – learning from the past and looking to the future", Durban, South Africa.

Bruzas, C. A. (2003b). Learning log. CHESP LCBP, Assignment 13.

Bruzas, C. A., O'Brien, F., and Mkhize, V. V. (2002). Service Learning. CHESP LCBP, Assignment 11.

Carter, S., Churchill, E., Denoue, L., Helfman, J., Murphy, P., and Nelson, L. (2003). Palimpsests on public view: annotating community content with personal devices. Retrieved November 1, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.quietcalls.com/publications/FXPAL-PR-03-228.pdf

Chambers, R. (1993). *Challenging the professions. Frontiers for rural development.* London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

CHESP Durban Core Group. (2000). CHESP Durban Strategic Plan.

Community Development Resource Association. Annual Reports 1997/98 and 1998/99. Cape Town: CDRA.

Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people: powerful lessons in personal change*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Dawson, J. (2003). Lifelong learning and T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* [1]. *Studies in Continuing Education* 25(1):113-124.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds). *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Douglass, B. and Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: the internal search to know. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 25(3): 39-55.

Driscoll, A. and Lynton, E. A. (1999). *Making outreach visible: a guide to documenting professional service and outreach*. Washington: American Association for Higher Education.

Edwards, B. (1979). *Drawing on the right side of the brain*. London: Souvenir Press.

Eliot, T. S. (1963). *Collected poems 1909 – 1962*. London: Faber and Faber.

Eisner, E. (1985). Aesthetic modes of knowing. In E. Eisner (Ed), *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing: eighty-fourth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 23-36). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fourie, M. (2003). Beyond the ivory tower: service learning for sustainable community development. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 17(1): 31-38.

Franck, F. (1973). *The Zen of seeing. Seeing/drawing as meditation*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gelmon, S. B. (2003). Assessment as a means of building service-learning partnerships. In B. Jacoby and Associates (Eds), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp. 42-64). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Goldberg, N. (1986). *Writing down the bones. Freeing the writer within*. Boston: Shambhala.

Gronemeyer, M. (1992). Helping. In W. Sachs (Ed), *The development dictionary*. London: Zed Books.

Hiles, D. (2001). Heuristic inquiry and transpersonal research. Paper presented to CCPE, London, October 2001. Retrieved August 22, 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/drhiles/HIpaper.htm

Hoban, R. (1987) *The Medusa frequency*. London: Picador.

Hoban, R. (1992). *The moment under the moment*. London: Picador.

Isaacs, W. (1999). *Dialogue and the art of thinking together. A pioneering approach to communicating in business and in life*. New York: Currency.

Jacoby, B. (2003a). Fundamentals of service-learning partnerships. In B. Jacoby and Associates (Eds), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp.1-19). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jacoby, B. (2003b). Building service-learning partnerships for the future. In B. Jacoby and Associates (Eds), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp. 314-337). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jager, G. (2004) Various unpublished organizational reports on the Development Dialogue process at The Valley Trust.

Janesick, V. J. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design: minuets, improvisations, and crystallization. In N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. (pp. 379-399). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jarvis, P. (1999). *The practitioner-researcher. Developing theory from practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jones, S. (2003). Principles and profiles of exemplary partnerships with community agencies. In B. Jacoby and Associates (Eds), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp.151-173). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kaplan, A. (2002). *Development practitioners and social processes. Artists of the invisible*. London: Pluto Press.

Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: a path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. Evanston: The Asset-Based Community Development Institute.

Kutzli, R. (1985). *Creative form drawing. Workbook 1*. Stroud: Hawthorne Press.

Levin, M. and Greenwood, D. (2001). Pragmatic action research and the struggle to transform universities into learning communities. In P. Reason and H. Bradbury (Eds), *Handbook of action research: participative inquiry and practice* (pp. 103-113). London: Sage Publications.

London, P. (1989). *No more secondhand art. Awakening the artist within*. Boston: Shambhala.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being.* New York: Wiley.

Matthews, P. (1994). *Sing me the creation*. Stroud: Hawthorne Press.

Max-Neef, M. (1992). *From the outside looking in: experiences in 'barefoot economics'*. London: Zed Books.

McKnight, J. (1995). *The careless society: community and its counterfeits*. New York: Basic Books.

Mitchell, C. (2002). Service-learning partnerships as a model for development – the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (South Africa) as a case study. Paper presented at the Second Annual International Conference: Advances in Service-Learning Research, Nashville, Tennessee, October 2002.

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: design, methodology, and applications*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies. A South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Nicolaïdes, K. (1972). *The natural way to draw. A working plan for art study.* London: André Deutsch Limited.

O'Brien, F., Mkhize, V., and Bruzas, C. A. (1998). The theory and practice of development. CHESP LCBP, Assignment 1.

Okri, B. (1997). *A way of being free*. London: Phoenix.

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, P. J. (2004). *A hidden wholeness. The journey toward an undivided life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Perold, H. and Omar, R. (1997). *Community service in higher education: a concept paper*. Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust.

Perold, H. (1998). *Community service in higher education: final report.* Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust.

Pieterse, E. (1998). Development and community participation: decoding the "stock in trade" of the voluntary sector. *Development Update* 2 (1): 1–14.

Polanyi, M. (1967). *The tacit dimension*. New York: Anchor Books.

Pullen, N. (2002). But is it water? *Biodynamic Agriculture in Southern Africa* 11(2): 14 – 17.

Reason, P. (1988). The co-operative inquiry group. In P. Reason (Ed). *Human inquiry in action: developments in new paradigm research*. London: Sage Publications.

Reason, P. (1998). A participatory world. *Resurgence* no. 186: 42-44.

Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (2001). Introduction: Inquiry and participation in search of a world worthy of human aspiration. In P. Reason and H. Bradbury (Eds), *Handbook of action research. Participatory inquiry and practice* (pp. 1-14). London: Sage Publications.

Rilke. *Poems*. Everyman's Library Pocket Poets (1960). The Hogarth Press.

Rothman, M. (Ed). (1998). *Service matters: engaging higher education in the renewal of America's communities and American democracy*. Campus Compact: Lessons from the field.

Schumacher, E. F. (1980). *Good work*. London: Abacus.

Senge, P., Scharmer, C. O., Jaworski, J., and Flowers, B. S. (2004). *Presence. Human purpose and the field of the future*. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning.

Silverman, D. (1997). Edited version of Chapter Two of *Discourses of counselling*. Retrieved August 5, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://managingdesire.org/SilvermanStrategies.html

Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing talk and text. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. (pp. 821-834). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Stanton, T.K., Giles, Jr. D.E. and Cruz, N.I. (1999). Helping a "new" field discover its history. In T.K. Stanton, D.E. Giles, Jr. and N.I. Cruz, *Service learning: a movement's pioneers reflect on its origins, practice, and future* (pp. 1-6). *CHESP LCBP Module 11 Reader.*

Steiner, R. (1983). *The boundaries of natural science*. New York: Anthroposophic Press.

Stevens, J. (1993). *Dewdrops on a lotus leaf. Zen poems of Ryokan*. Boston: Shambala.

Stoecker, R. (1997). Are academics irrelevant? Roles for scholars in participatory research. Paper presented at the American Sociologicaal Society Annual meetings, 1997. Retrieved July 23, 2001 from the World Wide Web: http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/papers98/pr.htm

Swilling, M. and Russell, B. (2002). *The size and shape of the non-profit sector in South Africa*. Co-published by the Graduate School of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand, and The Centre for Civil Society, University of Natal.

Taylor, J. (2002). The poverty of "partnerships". Retrieved August 7, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.cdra.org.za

Taylor, V. (2002). *A report on the October and November 2001 evaluation of the CHESP leadership Capacity Building Programme (LCBP)*. An evaluation report prepared for the Joint Education Trust.

Tennyson, R. (1997). The partnership-building process. Conference Working Paper. Fourth International Conference on Health Promotion, Jakarta, Indonesia, 21–25 July 1997.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary 6th ed. (1976).

The Valley Trust Annual Reports published during the period 1985–1991.

The Valley Trust Annual Report 1999/2000.

Tompkins, J. (1996). *A life in school: what the teacher learned*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.

Trevelyan, G. (1980). *Magic casements. The use of poetry in the expanding of consciousness*. London: Coventure Ltd.

van Houten, C. (1995). *Awakening the will. Principles and processes in adult learning*. London: Temple Lodge.

Vilakazi, H. W. (1999). The problem of African universities. In M. W. Makgoba (Ed.), *African Renaissance* (pp. 200-209). Sandton: Mafube Publishing.

Von Kotze, A. (2004). Between excellence and engagement: towards a 'truly African University'. *Ingede* 1(1). Retrieved November 1, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://ingedej.ukzn.ac.za/viewissue.php

Votruba, J. C. (1992). Promoting the extension of knowledge in service to society. *Metropolitan Universities,* Winter.

Weitzman, E. A. (2000). Software and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2nd ed. (pp. 803-820). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice. Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wheatley, M. (1999). Consumed by either fire or fire: journeying with T. S. Eliot. Retrieved September 27, 2001 from the World Wide Web: http://www.berkana.org/articles/fireorfire.html

Wheatley, M. (2002). *Turning to one another. Simple conversations to restore hope to the future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Wolcott, H. F. (2001). *Writing up qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.