STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND A COMMUNITY PARTNER IN THE CONTEXT OF A SERVICE LEARNING PSYCHO-EDUCATION PROGRAMME

SUBMITTED

BY

Gillian Sibiya

In partial fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Art in Clinical Psychology

Department of Psychology

Rhodes University

2016

DECLARATION

I am the sole author of this thesis.

No part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

To the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights. Any ideas, techniques, quotations, or any other material from the work of other people that I have included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines.

This is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my supervisor.

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

_____

Gillian Sibiya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deciding on whether to embark on this journey was one of the most challenging things I have ever had to do. I still cannot believe that I am almost at the finish line. Indeed he "Who dares wins". This remains one of the greatest achievements of my life.

Firstly I would like to thank my family (a special thanks to mum and dad) for their unwavering support and encouragement, you guys complete me. To my friends, thank you for the ears and constant reassurance.

To my supervisor Dr Jacqui Marx, thank you for your continuous guidance and support.

Many thanks to the class of 2014 for walking this road with me; you guys have been superheroes.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my research participants, without whom this project would not have been possible.

Lastly, to my guardian angel (Timothy Kabuku), thank you for always watching over me. I love you always.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study aims to understand students' perspectives of the relationship between the university and a community partner in the context of a service-learning programme. The study explores the experiences of three postgraduate psychology students that were involved in a service-learning programme at an under resourced school in the Eastern Cape. The data gathered was analysed thematically and major analytic themes were identified. The findings highlight the usefulness of service-learning for the student participants. However, student participants also argued that structural difficulties can make it harder for the community partner to enjoy the same benefits. The analysis brings forth the students' concerns about managing stakeholder perceptions and the importance of broad-based participation and constant communication to ensure a good working relationship between partners. The findings highlight the students' awareness of some of the difficulties of working in resource-constrained settings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The origins of community psychology lie in the social and political changes of the community-based civil rights, anti-poverty, and de-institutionalization movements and programmes of the 1950s and 1960s. Community psychology and community development share a concern for addressing social problems. Community psychology and community development both aim at advancing and understanding "the value of human diversity, proactive focus on self-help and the common good" (Perkins, Hughley & Speer, 2002, p. 35).

Although community is mainly associated with positive connotations in society, the concept of 'community' still remains highly contested. Caroline Haworth postulates that:

> Community, as a concept, is problematic in both everyday discourses and in academic research. The social problems we live, witness and research, such as conflict, social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, addiction, homelessness, crime, mental illness, all relate to various aspects of community life. Applied psychologists and community psychologists are aware of this, and yet, social psychologists have still to address the issue of community adequately (Haworth, 2001, p. 223).

She further states that although we can all agree on the importance of community, we cannot all agree on a common definition of what a community is and what it is made of.

In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid has left many communities destitute and in need of urgent intervention. Violent crime, high unemployment and HIV continue to plague previously

disadvantaged communities and as such, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) has identified Service-Learning (SL)as one way in which social responsibility can be promoted amongst students.

Service-learning (SL) is fast becoming an integral part of the educational landscape. According to O'Brien (2005), advocates of SL assert that it is "well-placed to meet the multitude of social and educational demands on higher education" because it advances the growth and holistic development of society, while also promoting "critical consciousness" of the student (O'Brien, 2005, p. 73). As a Clinical Psychologist in training, I was interested in this potential of service-learning and decided to make it the focus of my research paper. In particular, it interested to know if my peers viewed their involvement in a service-learning programme in this way. The aim of this study is thus to understand students' perspectives of the relationship between the University and a community partner in the context of a service-learning programme. In choosing to focus on this relationship, my study aims to understand the ways in which service-learning programmes are understood to benefit community and university partners.

The Service-Learning programme took the form of teaching Life Orientation to pupils attending a rural school in the Eastern Cape Province. The student involved in this service-learning programme conducted a need analysis at the school prior to providing this service. This was done to ensure a deeper grasp of the situation of learners within this school.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In the next chapter - the literature review chapter – I contextualise community psychology within the South African context. Here I discuss Community Engagement (CE) literature and campus-community partnerships. This discussion therefore sets the groundwork for an examination of relations of power in the context of

Service-Learning partnerships. The methodology chapter describes the qualitative methodology that was used to meet the aims of the study; it also describes the process of data collection and the processes followed when analysing data. Consideration is given to issues of reliability and validity, as well as key ethical issues arising in this study. The data analysis chapter provides an overview of key analytic themes; the four themes that highlight the findings of the study are usefulness of practical experience, managing stakeholder perceptions, working in resource constrained settings and responsibility for maintaining the relationship, while the limitation and recommendation of the study are discussed in the final chapter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a discussion of community psychology in the South African context and carry on to define the concept Community Engagement (EC) and its characteristics. It further explores literature on the relationship between universities and their community partners in the context of service-learning training. It also undertakes a critical review of the concepts of Service-learning (SL). The intended and unintended outcomes of SL are also addressed, while the different power dynamics that arise in this relationship are also discussed.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN CONTEXT

South Africa experiences high levels of unemployment, HIV, poverty, social inequality and violent crimes (Collins & Freeman, 2009). For these reasons there is a need for interventions that will promote social and economic development, and it has been argued that psychology has a role to play in this regard (de la Rey & Ipser, 2004). This requires, in part, dealing with a perception about psychology that is related to its role in the political history of South Africa.

It has been argued that, prior to the democratic elections in 1994, psychology in South Africa was often characterised by racism and sexism – a microcosm of the broader socio-political landscape (de la Rey & Ipser, 2004). This led to a perception of the discipline as representing the interests of "an elitist group of middle-class white men", which de la Rey and Ipser argue has raised doubts about its usefulness in post-apartheid South Africa (de la Rey, 2004, p. 54).

During apartheid, the discipline of psychology was generally aligned to the ideology of the National Party government (Nicholas, 1990; Seedat, 1998). It was not until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when social and political change started to happen, that South African psychologists started to question how psychology could become relevant in a new socio-political landscape (e.g. de la Rey & Ipser, 2004). The question of relevance sparked interest in community psychology.

Community psychology originated in the United States of America in the 1940s (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011). Its emergence and development in the 1960s came as a response to:

> …growing concerns about the influence of social systems on the individual and the lack of resources and treatment facilities for dealing with problems of everyday life (Butchart & Seedat, 1990, p. 1096).

In post-apartheid South Africa, this response seemed to be particularly appropriate. Historically, the term 'community' has had political connotations in South Africa. This is because during colonialism and apartheid, notions of community were used to divide the South African society across racial, ethnic, tribal and socio-economic lines (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). More recently however, the term has been re-appropriated in discussions about social change and transformation (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). In the post-apartheid South African context, the term community is often used by individuals, organisations and institutions committed to advancing progressive political and social change (Butchart & Seedat, 1990). Thus, community has come to signify a commitment to working toward development and empowerment of previously marginalised social groups (Butchart & Seedat, 1990).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Psychology is a discipline in which success is contingent on a collaborative effort (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). In community psychology it is important that the process of development and empowerment is one that ensures full buy-in and participation of community partners (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000), and this requires the adoption of a participatory and consultative approach (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000). Botes and van Rensburg argue that while there are "no blueprints or ready-made recipes for participatory processes", there are standard practices that psychologists working in communities should observe and be sensitive to at all times (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000, p. 53). They therefore argue that collaboration and sensitivity are essential to providing appropriately responsive services. In the same light it is also argued that the role a community plays in the process of empowerment has to be one that allows members freedom to make decisions and take initiative. This encourages diversity in ideas and response (Rappaport, 1981).

According to Botes and van Rensburg (2000), some of the considerations when working with a community include: Demonstrating an awareness of their own status as outsiders, while also respecting the community's indigenous contributions, thus encouraging them to become good facilitators and catalysts of development that aid and stimulate community based initiatives instead of hindering a community's progress. A respectful relationship is one where co-decision-making in defining needs, goal setting, and formulating policies and plans is promoted at all times. It is also important to acknowledge and listen to community members, especially the more vulnerable, less vocal and marginalised groups, while at the same time guarding against the domination of interest groups. The aim of most if not all partnerships between community and professionals should be to empower communities to share equitably in the

fruits of development. It is through such collaborations and acknowledgments of human capital in a community that services will be relevant (Botes& van Ransburg, 2000).

Psychology training in South Africa has unfortunately been skewed towards practice methods that favour urban and more individually orientated settings. This type of training model maybe appropriate for psychologists who work in a private practice in an affluent urban or suburban environment (Pillay & Kometsi, 2007). It is therefore important at this point to acknowledge that the majority of South Africans are not familiar with a worldview that is individualistic and as a result, such approaches may be out of step with client expectations. In such circumstances, practitioners may also be inadequately prepared to provide appropriate (culturally sensitive) counselling (Pillay & Kometsi, 2007).

Harowski, Turner, Vine, Schank and Leichter (2006) suggest that psychologists that work in resource-constrained environments should be taught how to effectively select appropriate methods of engagement and interventions that will effectively address challenges encountered in these contexts. Students should also, in the same vein, be trained in developing, identifying and mobilising a variety of appropriate resources available to them (Gibson & Swart, 2004 cited in Pillay and Kometsi, 2007).

Unlike in urban and more developed communities, rural communities are generally characterised by severe infrastructural underdevelopment and poverty, thus presenting psychologist, with added challenges. Therefore, the delivery of psychological services and training programmes in these contexts must accommodate for a more flexible approach (Pillay & Kometsi, 2007).

Pillay and Kometsi (2007) argue that the absence of facilities can prove to be quite challenging to students trying to provide psychological services in resource constrained settings. Although challenging and frustrating at times, students working in these settings are challenged and encouraged to be more flexible, accommodating and creative in their thinking.

A study by Mouton and Wildschut (2005) concludes that it is absolutely essential that students be properly briefed about what is expected of them once they start interacting with the community and service providers. They further argue that it is not enough for students to only receive the appropriate knowledge and skills to benefit the community; they also need to be prepared emotionally and politically for interaction with community members. Furthermore, Mouton and Wildschut (2005) contend that it is equally as important to properly brief and prepare members of the community that will be part of the SL intervention. This prevents, minimises and guards against unrealistic goals and expectations from everyone involved. In this light, Pillay and Kometsi have argued that:

> Despite the significant challenges, students whose training has involved working in non-urban settings almost always report positively on the experience. The main reasons for this appear to relate to the wide range of experience they gain in these contexts (Pillay and Kometsi, 2007, p. 374).

CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

According to a study by Leiderman, Furco, Zapf and Goss (2002) community partners are of the opinion that a good community campus relationship is one that is characterised by "careful preparation, excellent implementation, and meticulous follow-through" (Leiderman, Furco,

Zapf and Goss, 2002, p. 6). The Higher Education Quality Committee defines Community Engagement (CE) as:

> initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the higher education institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to address issues relevant to its community (CHE, 2004, p.15).

Bringle and Hatcher (2002) argue that, like other human relationships, campus-community partnerships can be complicated. However, the authors argue that these relationships can be especially complicated because of the cultural differences that often exist between the two entities. This has implications in terms of how knowledge is generated and the ways in which problems that arise are handled and resolved. Botes and van Rensburg (2000)suggest that most community-based projects are initiated by outsiders (such as the university partner)and are rarely the idea of a community. Bringle and Hatcher (2002) argue that, when building a relationship between the two different entities, there has to be effective communication about the partnership; including its possible benefits and expected costs and how the partners plan to meet each other's expectations, in order to ensure that the partnership that is being created will be beneficial to all of those involved. Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon and Connors (1998, p. 107) describe effective partnerships as: collaborations in which all partners have things to teach each other, things to learn from each other, and things they will learn together and that: "an effective partnership is one where the capacity of both partners is enhanced to accomplish its own mission while also working together" (Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon and Connors, 1998, p. 107).

The definition above alludes to the idea that for a successful partnership to occur, both parties need to understand the importance of the role they play in the partnership to ensure mutual benefit. Gelmonet al. (1998) suggest that:

> Effective partnerships require a shared commitment to on-going, comprehensive evaluation from the earliest stages of the relationship. A commitment to evaluation helps build trust and confidence between partners, especially when the community sees that the campus is open to criticism and that there is an authentic commitment to improvement (Gelmon, et al., 1998, p. 107).

According to Botes and van Rensburg (2000), transparency and on-going evaluations by the community for which the project is intended is essential and thus should be treated with the utmost sensitivity. It is only through such measures that partners will know the opinions the community holds of them. It has however been observed that one of the stumbling blocks of CE initiatives is that the successes are celebrated and acknowledged to a greater extent than the failures. This in turn undermines the importance of failure, or un/intended outcomes, in CE initiatives and what lessons can be learned from these outcomes (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000).

Some of the unintended outcomes in CE that may sometimes be overlooked include the reinforcement of a paternalistic approach to political, economic and social challenges. Botes and van Rensburg (2000) suggest that some methods of CE are not genuine in that they do not allow communities the opportunity to choose between options freely; rather they are aimed at selling preconceived proposals. This may result in a CE programme giving priority to some community problems (technological, financial, and material) also known as 'hard issues' and marginalising or completely ignoring problems that are considered less important 'soft issues' (community involvement, decision making procedures, capacity building and empowerment).

Botes and van Rensburg further argue that because community development introduces scarce resources to communities it also increases the likelihood of development as a "divisive force" (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000, p. 47). Here some community needs may enjoy priority while other interests suffer. A natural consequence to this is the possibility of conflict arising among community members. This can easily result in different interest groups opposing or not participating in community development projects.

Campus-Community Partnerships for Health (CCPH 2000, cited in Mitchell & Rautenbach, 2005) outline that; for a partnership to be successful, it is essential for partners to observe some basic principles to ensure a successful relationship. Firstly, partners have to agree on a common purpose for the partnership prior to embarking on any other activities – this ensures that all partners have the same goal in mind. Accompanying this aspect is the relationship dynamics between partners, which always be characterised by mutual trust, respect, transparency and commitment. The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets but also addresses areas that need improvement. The partnership should also ensure that power is equally balanced and that resources are equally and easily accessible to all members of the partnership and that proper and accessible channels of communication are in place. In this light too, all partners should make sure that roles, norms and processes for partnership are established with their input and agreement and that feedback is given to all partners with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes. Furthermore, it is important that they be equally credited for the partnership's accomplishments and failures of the partnership. Lastly it is important for all partners to acknowledge and understand that partnerships take time to develop, and that they evolve over time.

The role that community partner takes on in a community-campus partnership has to be one that allows them the freedom to make decisions and take initiative as this encourages diversity in ideas and response. Rappaport (1981) contends that:

> Empowerment is a sensible social policy, but one which requires a breakdown of the typical role relationship between professionals and community people. Empowerment needs to be based on divergent reasoning that encourages diversity (Rappaport, 1981, p.19).

In other words, empowerment initiatives through campus-community partnerships should at all times allow the parties involved the space and privilege to equally share and embrace each other's ideas. Some CE initiatives are brought to the community by students as part of their service-learning curriculum. This aspect of community engagement and campus-community partnerships is discussed in the next section.

SERVICE LEARNING

The concept of Service-Learning (SL) was first used in the United States of America in 1967 and introduced to South African universities in the late 1990s. In 1999, the Joint Education Trust (JET) introduced the Community-Higher Education-Service Partnership (CHESP) to higher education as an initiative that was aimed at promoting and supporting SL (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005). According to Le Grange (2007), the concept of SL was initially introduced with the aim of accelerating change and transformation on the Higher Education agenda. In other words, SL was largely aimed at bridging the gap between intuitions of higher learning and the communities in which they found themselves by encouraging higher education institutions (HEIs) to be more democratic and responsive to community needs and challenges through

building partnership with different stakeholders within the community (Le Grange, 2007). Although largely based on the American model, the SL concept was adopted and then adapted to suit South African society. Furthermore, the concept of the "engaged" university was retained for the South African model (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005, p. 117).

According to Lazarus et al., (2008):

> Service learning has its roots in experiential education. To ensure that service promotes substantive learning, service-learning connects students' experience to reflection and analysis in the curriculum (Lazarus, et al., 2008, p. 64).

Therefore, if experiential learning is applied accordingly, it aids in the transformation of students ways of thinking and broadens their interpretation of the world (Lazarus, et al., 2008), which is essential in a world where change is constant. The increased popularity of service learning on campuses of institutions of higher learning during the 1990s suggests a renewed emphasis on campus community partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

Fourie (2003) describes service learning as an organised academic based programme where students provide services to meet the identified needs of a particular community. He further states that the aim of service learning is to:

> provide students with a better understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility, while at the same time responding to the development needs of South Africa (Fourie, 2003, p.32).

Bringle and Hatcher (1995) also stress that the bridge between students learning and the real world in their definition of SL. For them it is:

> A credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community need. These experiences provide a connection between the students' studies and the real world in a way that would not be otherwise achieved (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995, p. 112).

It is important to note that what distinguishes SL from other kinds of campus-community partnerships is the intention "to benefit equally the provider and the recipient of the service" – in other words, reciprocity (Bender &Jordaan, 2007, p. 635). However, some critics (e.g. Camacho, 2004; Weerts&Sandmann, 2008) argue that the idea of reciprocity in campus-community partnerships masks unequal relations of power and may simply be used to encourage communities to participate in these partnerships. According to Hammersley (2012), if SL initiatives are not evaluated, they have the potential to be exploitative, perpetuate dependency, and objectify the community as poor and helpless. Hammersley (2012) concludes that SL "may not result in mutual benefit and in some cases may have negative effects for community partners" (Hammersley, 2012, p. 176). Furthermore a lack of research to support the claims made about "mutual benefit" in campus-community partnerships contributes immensely to the under-representation of community partner opinions within academic research. This makes it difficult to assess the aspect of mutual benefit in community engagement partnerships (Hammersley, 2012, p.176).

While the above definitions suggest that SL should serve as an agent for sustainable development of the self and the community by addressing community and academic needs, it is also important to note that, in South Africa SL is aimed at encouraging civic responsibility, transformation and redressing inequalities of the past. This is what makes SL in the South African context different from the rest of the world (Mitchell, 2008). With this in mind it is

therefore important that our approach to SL is one that encourages students to think critically about the types of services within which they engage (Mitchell, 2008). It thus follows that when we approach SL with South African communities in mind, we ought to think of interventions that not only address the issues at hand but curricula that challenge students to think about and understand the root causes of social problems, and how they can challenge the structures that perpetuate those problems (Mitchell, 2008).

Mitchell (2008) postulates that it is essential that SL programmes are designed in a manner that challenges students to critically question the role they play within a community. She therefore contends further that SL programmes should allow:

> Service-Learners' to critically analyse their work in the community, while at the same time supporting them in "understanding the consequences of service" which may themselves perpetuate systems of inequality (Mitchell, 2008. p. 53).

OUTCOMES OF SERVICE LEARNING

Teaching, research and service have been regarded as the three core functions of a university (Fourie, 2003). Over the years, most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have struggled to keep a balance between the three. However, the development of the concept of SL around the world has succeeded in uniting the three core functions of universities (Fourie, 2003). HEIs, like all other aspects of society undergo change, regardless of their geographical location (Bringle & Hatcher, 2007) and as such it is important for them to stay updated and relevant. Another reason for them to be updated is because Community service learning:

> … serves as a vehicle for connecting students and institutions to their communities and the larger social good, while at the same time instilling in students the value of

community and social responsibility (Neururer and Rhoada, 1998, p. 321 as cited in Mitchell, 2008).

SL has become an intricate part of most learning programmes across the globe and in the last decade has become popular among educational institutions in South Africa (Bender & Jordaan, 2007). According to Mitchell (2008), research has shown that traditional SL programmes have been well known for their transformative nature that produces students who are "tolerant, altruistic and culturally aware" (Mitchell, 2008) – they have stronger leadership and communication skills and have stronger critical thinking skills than their non SL counterparts. Morgan and Streb (2001) argue that in order for service learning to be effective in boosting civic involvement among the participants, it is essential that SL programmes take on an approach that is inclusive and allows the students to be involved in leadership and directing of the programme. It is however important to note that every SL programme has intended and unintended outcomes for both the student and the community, but for the purpose of this thesis I will only address SL outcomes for the student.

Intended outcomes of service-learning

According to Mitchell (2008), one of the most important outcomes of SL learning programmes should be to encourage students to think of themselves as agents of social change and transformation. In order for democracy to remain strong in a country like South Africa, it is important that citizens have trust in the government, be politically engaged and connected to their community, while also being tolerant of the diversity presented by society (Morgan &Streb, 2001). As such, SL programmes should not only serve as a link between institutions of

higher learning, communities and the larger social good, but should encourage students to value community and social responsibility.

Furthermore critical SL pedagogy should be one where the "goal of education is to challenge students to become knowledgeable of social, political, and economic forces that have shaped their lives and the lives of others" (Rhoad, 1998, p.41 as cited in Mitchell, 2008). This is aimed at encouraging "civic-mindedness" amongst graduates. From the perspective of higher education, a civic-minded graduate is a person who has completed a course of study and has the capacity and desire to work with others to achieve public good. "Civic-mindedness" thus refers to a person's inclination or disposition to be knowledgeable of and involved in the community (Bringle & Hatcher, 2007, p. 84).

Bringle and Hatcher (2007) identify and outline seven intended outcomes of most SL programmes. Some of the obvious outcomes of most SL programmes include *academic knowledge and technical skills* which speaks to the knowledge and practical skills that a student acquires and applies to helping a community address its needs. SL programmes also create and enhance a knowledgebase of *volunteer opportunities and non-profit organisations*– a 'civic-minded' graduate will have a broadened understanding of how they can contribute to and mobilise society through non-profit organisations and other community resources available to them. Once a student starts engaging in SL programmes it is also intended that they will acquire *knowledge of modern social issues* and have better understanding and sensitivity of issues and problems encountered by modern day society, both at a local, regional and international level (Bringle & Hatcher, 2007).

Listening and Communication Skills are some of the basic skills that one has to poses and learn when working with a community. Therefore, in order to assist a community solve its problems, civic-minded graduates need to have the ability to communicate well. This includes written and spoken proficiency as well as the art of listening and accepting divergent points of view. In a country like South Africa, graduates need to be aware and sensitive to the political, racial and religious *(diversity)* landscape at all times. This can be seen in students engaging with people of different racial, economic and cultural backgrounds as themselves (Bringle& Hatcher, 2007).

In terms of self-efficacy, SL programmes encourage graduates to have the capability to take personal action and responsibility and to understand the effect their actions, good or bad, have on society as whole. Self -Efficacy is a key component of personal empowerment and growth. A self-aware graduate will in turn be better able to demonstrate that they value civic engagement by stating their intentions to be involved in community service in the future and display different forms of civic involvement. One of the clearest ways that students can manifest these characteristics is by choosing a service based career or displaying civic dimensions to a career in any sector. Other intended outcomes for SL programmes include; leadership skills, teamwork, consensus-building and general problem solving skills (Bringle & Hatcher, 2007).

Unintended outcomes of service-learning

SL programmes like other learning programmes have planned and unplanned outcomes. Some of the unintended outcomes are those that impact the student positively by challenging their worldviews and equipping them with new skills and ideas that will in the long run help them understand their profession and diversity in society better (Mitchell, 2008).

It is important to note that some of the lasting effects of SL remain undocumented and unrecognised by both the students and their institutions. Morgan and Sterb (2001) postulates that through SL programmes students are able to develop a concept of the self in relation to the others in society, while at times students are seen to be more self-serving. For example, Tyron and Stoecker (2008) avers that "the lack of commitment exhibited by short-term service-learners sometimes can even lead them to exploit the goodwill of the community organizations" (Tyron and Stoecker, 2008, p. 51). Furthermore They contend that although service-learning students contribute immensely to their respective service-learning institutions, some students are not as invested as others and as such will leave their placement before fulfilling their obligations; leaving organisations and community members feeling used or even exploited (Tyron & Stoecker, 2008).

According to the University of Minnesota's Centre of Community-Engaged Learning, some of the unintended outcomes of SL may include: growing a professional network of people that one can reconnect with at a later stage in life. In the same vein, SL also creates a space that allows and challenges students to be more aware of social issues and their root causes – this may see students cement, explore, challenge and at times even act on their values and beliefs. In the psychological context, SL allows students gain insight into new avenues that may broaden their understanding of society and the discipline in ways that were not initially anticipated.

RELATIONS OF POWER IN SERVICE-LEARNING

According to Mitchell (2008),"traditional service-learning programmes seldom acknowledge the power differences inherent in service-learning experience" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 56). Butin (2003) argues that looking at SL critically makes it possible to identify and to challenge:

> … the normative, ethical, epistemological and ontological grounds of this innovation by asking important questions such as "whose voices are heard? Whose are silenced? Who makes the decision and by what criteria? Who benefits from such decisions and who loses? To what extent is the innovation a repetition, reinforcement, or a revocation of the status quo? (Butin, 2003, p. 1681)

It is therefore important that the adopted approach is one that identifies, addresses, and is sensitive to power dynamics that may arise. Mitchell (2008) suggests that a critical service-learning pedagogy should be one that clearly outlines the differential access to power experienced by students, faculty and community members and further encourages all parties involved to actively partake in analysis, dialogue and discussion of foreseeable or existing power dynamics, while at the same time empowering all parties involved with the necessary skills to question the dynamics as they stand.

Power in community-campus partnerships can sometimes be subtle and easily overlooked by everyone involved. Hammersley (2012)argues that power by one over the other (university over community) can easily be perpetuated in the language used – for example, in assumptions about 'doing for', rather than 'doing with'(Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000).Hammersley (2012) acknowledges that this has the potential to perpetuate the idea that communities are not self-sustaining and that it undermines their existing knowledge, skills and expertise. Plit and Daughter (2011) argue that this does not challenge but rather reinforces the idea of academics

as experts, and this perpetuates unequal relations of power with community partners. It is therefore important that HEIs be cautious when asking students to engage in partnerships without challenging the unjust structures that create differences in the first place (Mitchell, 2008).

Botes and van Rensburg (2000) argue that development projects initiated by outsiders may further encourage and reinforce the paternalistic role of development practitioners. They further argue that often professionals dominate decision-making and manipulate instead of facilitating the development processes. Furthermore, it is also important that the power dynamics within a community itself are critically evaluated as:

> Very often it is the most visible and vocal, wealthier, more articulated and educated groups that are allowed to be partners in the development without serious and on-going attempts to identify less obvious partners thus limiting the power to make decision to a small and self-perpetuating clique (Gate keepers), which may act in its own interests (Botes& van Rensburg, 2000, p.45).

CONCLUSION

The literature covered in this chapter has primarily aimed at outlining the concept of service-learning and community engagement and how the two relate to each other, while also highlighting the different dynamics that exist within this relationship. Although considered beneficial to all parties involved, this chapter focused on looking at the short term and long-term benefits of SL programmes and how they shape and challenge the values and beliefs of the individuals involved. The concept of power was also looked at in terms of the relationship

between campus and its community partners and how SL programmes can be sensitively designed to challenge it.

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is aimed at providing an overview of the methodology used in this study, while also outlining the approach taken to achieve the aims of the research. It further discusses and justifies the decision to use a qualitative case study. In this chapter a detailed description of how data was collected is discussed. The method of data analysis that was used is also be explained. The chapter concludes by discussing the validity and reliability of the study, as well as ethical considerations.

RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of this study was to understand student's perspectives of the relationship between the university and a community partner in the context of a service-learning psycho-education programme. This study seeks to understand students' understanding of the role they play in the relationship between the university and its community partners. Furthermore, it seeks to explore and understand the meaning students attach to their experiences of service-learning and the direct and indirect benefits of service-learning for the student.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study took the form of a qualitative case study. The 'case' is a service-learning programme. Qualitative research allows the researcher to study issues in-depth with a view to understanding the meanings that people attach to their experiences (Terre Blanche, Durrhein & Painter,2006). Qualitative research is considered to be interpretive and open-ended; it allows participants to present a detailed account of their experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

Case studies also provide us with a means of investigating complicated social units (Welman & Kruger, 1999). This qualitative case study examined postgraduate students' perspectives of the relationship between the university and a community partner in the context of a service-learning psycho-education programme. Case studies are appropriate for in-depth study of a particular phenomenon in the context within which it occurs (Zainal, 2007). Case studies tend to be characterized by the collection of information from multiple sources. My study was limited to student perspectives based on their involvement in a service-learning programme. While my study focused on students' perspectives, another student chose to focus on community partner's experience of the SL partnership.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Participants in this study were drawn from a group of postgraduate psychology students who were involved in a psycho-educational service-learning programme. A purposive sampling strategy was appropriate for this study, in line with Henry (1998) viewpoint that it is necessary to obtain information from participants who have experience of the issue under study (Henry, 1998). According to Babbie (2008), on occasion it is better to select a sample on the basis of

knowledge. This is because purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately select participants in order to provide information that cannot be attained from other respondents.

In this research therefore, the three participants for this study were purposively selected from the Masters in Clinical and Counselling Psychology programme who were involved in one service-learning programme. A small sample was selected in order to produce data that is rich and detailed (Snape & Spencer, 2003). The service-learning site was a high school in a small rural community in the Eastern Cape. The school is exclusively attended by black pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data for this study was collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews. In-depth interviews are a useful method of data collection for obtaining participants descriptions of their experiences and the way in which they make sense of those experiences (Kvale, 1996). The questions were open-ended allowing participants to elaborate on an issue using their own words. I used an interview schedule and so, the interviews had a semi-structured format. Although the questions were pre-planned, I aimed to make the interviews conversational, with questions flowing from previous responses wherever possible.

Participants were contacted individually by the researcher and the study was explained to them. Interviews were scheduled and consent forms were signed on the day of the actual interview. Participants were interviewed at a time and place that was convenient for them. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Recorded interviews were deleted once transcribed and the transcripts will be kept for analysis purposes only. In the process of

transcribing the interviews, all identifying information was changed or removed in order to maintain confidentiality.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The collected data was analysed thematically. According to Braun and Clark,

> Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in(rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6).

This particular method of analysing data was used in this research because it reports the experiences and realities of participants whose views on the topic are not known, thus giving the researcher a greater understanding of the issue understudy. The process of analysis followed a six step guide outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006)as follows;

Familiarizing myself with the data

This is the first stage of analysis. Here the researcher needs to immerse themselves in the data to a point of knowing the depth and breadth of the content. This essentially requires for the researcher to actively interact with the data; "searching for meanings and patterns" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.17).

Generating initial codes

This phase entails the initial generating of codes by the analyst. Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst and can be assessed in a meaningful way. Here it is important to note that codes differ significantly from the analytic themes which are almost always broader (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Searching for themes,

This stage of data analysis begins when all data have been coded and collated; it is here where interpretative analysis of the data occurs. This phase re-focuses "the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes. It further involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.19).

Reviewing themes

Phase 4 begins when you have put together a set of possible themes; it involves the refinement of those themes. During this phase, it will become evident that some themes are not really themes and that they might have to be merged while other themes may have to be discarded all together. Other themes might need to be broken down into separate themes. In essence, data "… within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 20). At the end of this phase, one should have clear idea of what the different themes are and how they fit in together.

Defining and naming themes

At this point, there is a refining process, which will clearly define and name all the themes that will be presented for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Producing a final report

This is the last and final phase and involves the write-up of a final report in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the study. It is important that extracts from the data are included as to support themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

One of the biggest challenges of qualitative research is that it is almost impossible to prove the reliability and validity of a study. However, there are key aspects that (Silverman, 2000) outlines that, when carefully observed may increase the quality of quantitative research. These aspects were carefully considered and observed to ensure that the quality of this research.

The first aspect that had to be considered from the beginning of the data collection process to the end of the writing up of the findings was ensuring the originality of information. Silverman argues that "as the researcher abstracts data from raw materials to produce summarised findings, the original form of the material is lost" (Silverman, 2000, p. 176). To mitigate this, the interviewing, analysis and transcribing process were treated with great sensitivity and all data was treated fairly. Secondly, the researcher was aware of the possibility of bias and as such guarded against being overly defensive during the analysis and reporting stages by remaining objective during all the stages of the research.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study conformed to the standards of the Rhodes University Research Ethics Committee. Ethical approval to conduct the study was granted by the Psychology Department's Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC). Permission to conduct the study with Rhodes University students was requested in writing from the Rhodes University Registrar, who provided such permission.

This research involved minimal risk and did not require the participation of vulnerable individuals. Participants were informed about the nature of the study. Participation in the study was completely voluntary and signed consent was obtained from participants. Consent was given in their personal capacity and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point should they have felt uncomfortable. Participants were also informed that data collected would be kept confidential by using pseudonyms rather than participants' real names in the write up of the research. Participants were also informed that other potentially identifying information would be omitted. Moreover, the researcher also made provision for anticipated distress during or after interviews and students were reminded of the resources available to them should they need debriefing after their interviews. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) state that the basic principle of research is that participants should never be harmed (intentionally or unintentionally) by participating in a research project during or long after. This was catered for in this study.

Prior to when permission for the research to be conducted was granted there were concerns by the RPERC about the relationship of the participants and the researcher being peers (classmates) and how this relationship would affect the quality of data. Because of the potential ethical

dilemmas raised by the RPERC the researcher decided to interview students from a previous cohort as participants in this research.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the methodology used in this study to collect and analyse data that is required to answer the research question. It also discussed the usefulness of applying qualitative research methods and the rationale behind the use of a qualitative case study. This chapter also presented the sampling and recruitment procedures as well as the methods of collecting data, and also describing the approach which will be used for analysing data in the next chapter. Finally, reliability and validity issues for the study were briefly discussed, while ethical considerations relevant to the study were also addressed.

RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the interview data is presented in this chapter and is divided into four parts. The first part deals with participants perceptions of the usefulness of the service-learning programme for their own learning development. The second part deals with the participants' initial engagement with the community partner and the insights gained with regard to managing stakeholder perceptions. The third part examines challenges related to service-learning in resource poor settings, and the fourth and final part of the results and analysis deals with the issue of continuity in service-learning partnerships.

THE USEFULNESS OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Participants argued that the Service-Learning (SL) component of their community engagement course differed to the other courses making up the degree programme. The main difference being that the community engagement aspect of the SL programme meant that students were expected to learn to engage at a group rather than an individual level.

Extract 1: The other modules were very much focused on working with individuals

> Thandi To be honest, it felt a little bit removed from the other modules. The other modules were very much focused on working with individuals, like cognitive behavioural therapy and psychodynamic therapy. It felt very different in some ways.

Participants also argued that their involvement in the SL programme allowed them to broaden their understanding of the discipline.

Extract 2: This project allowed me to see another side of psychology

> Noma For me, this project allowed me to see the other side of psychology. It helped me to understand that, as psychologists, our work extends further than the therapy room. I always asked myself how we are supposed to make a difference if we work with just one person at a time, but now I understand that being a psychologist is more than just doing one on one work. I can actually work with communities and that kind of thing, which I didn't know before.

Noma went on to argue that her experience of the SL programme made apparent the limitations of traditional (individual) psychological practice and the possibility of making psychology more relevant in the South African context.

Extract 3: We are so irrelevant at the moment

> Noma ...that different outlook of what psychology is was very important you know. It was such an invaluable experience getting first-hand experience in how psychology needs to change and in what direction psychology needs to move into and that is something I wouldn't have gained anywhere else. I wouldn't have gained it from a text book. The module helped me see how I could make psychology relevant to the South African context. We are so irrelevant at the moment.

In addition to providing a new view of the role of psychology in society, participants also argued that participating in the SL programme provided them with practical experience of working in the community and a better understanding of the challenges of this kind of work.

Extract 4: See how it really is out there

> Sino It was a good experience in the sense that it helped us get a practical sense of what it is like to work with a community and actually experience the challenges that come with it and see how it really is out there. Things don't always go according to plan but it was a good experience for me to actually engage with people.

Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda and Yee, (2000) argue that students develop a heightened sense of civic responsibility through participation is service-learning courses. In this study, participants argued that participation in the SL programme did not only make them more aware of the role they needed to play in community development, but also made them more aware of the constraints within which such initiatives operate and the historic legacy of these constraints.

Extract 5: I became aware of structural difficulties

> Thandi I became aware of structural difficulties and the impact of the apartheid system that's still evident in the school system, and that it's a long process to create some change. I think my perception has changed on what people are able to do.

In Extract 5 (above) Thandi's growing awareness of structural constraints forced her to reassess the enormity of the work that needed to be done and the amount of time it would take to do that. In other words, it made her more realistic about "what people are able to do" in resourced constrained environments.

Extract 6: Not creating too high expectations

> Thandi The greatest skill that I learned was not creating too high expectations for people.

In Extract 6 Thandi goes on to argue that her experience in the SL programme made her understand the importance of being realistic about what could be achieved because otherwise there is a risk of creating false expectations.

According to Mouton and Wildschut, "the distinctive element of SL is that it empowers the community through the service provided" (Mouton and Wildschut, 2005, p.1180). It also has powerful learning benefits for the students and other stakeholders. Thus, from the discussion above (from what participants are saying), it is clear that they derived immediate and direct benefits from participating in this programme.

However, given their realization of "structural difficulties", it is doubtful that the community partners experienced the same (immediate and direct) results from the SL partnership. A study by Mouton and Wildschut concludes that although all partner needs are taken into consideration when designing SL programme, the common "approach in higher education still seems to favour the privileging of student needs to the exclusion of the other partners" (Mouton and Wildschut, 2005, p.32). Another study by Tyron and Stoecker (2008), concludes that some SL projects are seen as problematic by their community partners and this is because the amount of service provided by the students may not provide adequate and sufficient benefits for the community because of time constraints on the student and the complexity and enormity of community needs which may take more time to realize.

MANAGING STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

Participants argued that the biggest lesson learned was that all parties needed to be involved in all of the discussions and decisions right from the beginning.

Extract 7: Mistake number one

Noma Maybe we should have been more adamant to meeting with the whole group. It was exam time when we did the needs analysis but now I think we could have waited until after exam time, until everybody was available so that we could meet with everybody because they felt so insulted when we rocked up with our fancy gadgets and computers saying, "We are here to teach LO" [life orientation]. So I wish they had been involved from the very beginning. And I don't blame the principal; I blame us for not being adamant that we need to meet with everybody... Thandi also thought that not including all the stakeholders in the initial stages of the need analysis was a mistake. We did a needs analysis with the principal and I think that was a mistake from our side, we took it for granted that the principal could represent everyone, so in the beginning we only met with the principal and that was mistake number one on our part.

Botes and van Rensburg (2000) argue that this is important because the community leadership and the actual community members may have different understandings about the service-learning partnership. In the extract above, Noma argues that the teachers were "insulted" by their arrival and the news that the university students would be taking over the teaching of the life orientation classes.

Extract 8: You are not there to replace them

Sino A partnership is a relationship, it's kind of an obvious thing for me because you can't really work with someone without knowing what your intentions or theirs are from the very beginning. So you need to form a relationship from the word go where people would know, community people would know, that you are not there to replace them or trying to impose yourself on them. So you need to have a relationship where there is a common understanding of why you're engaging together.

In Extract 8 Sino argues that because the teachers had not participated in the needs analysis, they were suspicious about the intentions of the university students and the aims of the SL programme. Sino argues that this resulted in the teachers having the perception that the students involved in the SL programme were "replacing" them and "imposing" themselves on their community partner. In Extract 9 (below) Noma argues that this impacted on the relationship between the university students and the school teachers.

Extract 9: The relationship was pretty damaged

> Noma We spent six weeks trying to rebuild the relationship. The relationship was pretty damaged and the teachers were not very cooperative. They would say that us being there was a waste of their time.

In the extract above, Noma argues that the teacher's perceptions about the students resulted in reluctance among these teachers to cooperate with them. Noma's recounting of the teachers' statement about the SL students' presence at the school "being a waste of time" indicates that the students were also being given the message that the value that they brought to the partnership was not being acknowledged. Thus, the consequence of the decision not to involve the teachers in the needs analysis was that they were then in the dark as to the aims of the SL programme. This led to assumptions about being replaced and a sense of being undervalued, and this was communicated back to the students through the teachers' reluctance to get involved in the programme.

According to Forester (1980), professionals embarking on community engagement projects should be sensitive to issues that may influence communication and be aware of the fact that what is being communicated can easily be distorted. Effective communication is therefore very important at all stages of the partnership and as such communication channels should always be

observed. Participants argued that they worked to avoid further misunderstandings from arising by working on establishing lines of communication and by communicating with the teachers regularly.

Extract 10: Just to check that we are all on the same page

> Noma Communication plays a huge role, which is why we felt that it was important for us to only have one liaison person. Because, if we are all going to be calling and communicating, they would get irritated and there would be a lot of room for miscommunication. That is why we felt that for us to keep communication open and on-going, it's best that one person take the responsibility. We made it a point that the person call them after every meeting just to check if we were all on the same page, tell them what's next and if they agreed, and also get their input on what they think needs to happen.

For Noma, clear, consistent and regular communications are an essential part of building and maintaining good community relations. Tryon and Stoecker (2008) have argued that when SL is done with proper input from the community that is being served, it can be a very useful tool for fulfilling community needs while also fulfilling the learning objectives. Like any other human relationship, campus-community partnerships can be complicated (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Therefore, it is important to remember that a good working relationship between partners can determine the success or failure of the partnership, and one of the key building blocks of a good relationship between partners is effective communication (Rivera, Morse, Hunt and Lickers (1998).

WORKING IN RESOURCE CONSTRAINED SETTINGS

The service-learning literature suggests that successful SL partnerships are those that benefit everyone. The SL literature also describes the various benefits characterizing SL partnerships. In much of this literature it is assumed that students will contribute time and knowledge, and will in turn benefit by gaining practical experience and learning how to apply what they have learned in real world contexts. It is also assumed that community partners will invest time and effort in introducing students to the specificities of their local contexts and that they will in turn benefit from the students' contributions in their community development. However, one consequence of working in resource constrained settings is that the needs of the community are likely to exceed what can be provided in the context of a SL programme.

Extract 11: Those one's don't get much attention

> Noma The clinic only has a relationship with places that need our therapy and those kinds of services. Honestly speaking, the only attention we give to the community partners is when we need to go do our community projects. And the people that need you to donate books, to donate underwear and food – well those ones don't get much attention.

In Extract 11 (above) Noma compares the psychological services that the SL programme that she is involved in provides to the community with the very basic needs ("underwear and food") that the community has, and for which they receive no assistance. My understanding of what Noma is saying is that she is questioning the ethics of being a part of a programme in which (comparatively) privileged students obtain practical experience to benefit their career development while the benefits to the community partner do not address even their most basic needs. Arguably, if other service providers were addressing these needs, Noma would not feel so

conflicted about the situation. Unfortunately, extreme resource constraints are characteristic of most communities in South Africa and the results in this study indicate that it impacts students' views of the politics of SL partnerships. In the light of the unequal benefits derived from the SL programme, Noma went on to argue that the University should contribute more to the SL partnership.

Extract 12: Show the community that we have a vested interest in them

Noma Basically, the relationship is now dead, and it will only pick up again when the students want to go and do their projects.

Gillian So, in your opinion, what can be done to improve the relationship?

Noma The University has transport, and so they can send two psychologists maybe once a week, it could be for assessments or therapy, this way the service can run all year round, just to show the community that we have a vested interest in them.

In Extract 12 (above) Noma argues that the University could address the unequal benefits derived from the SL programme by providing psychological services to the school throughout the school term and not only for the period scheduled for the community psychology module in the students' academic programme. Given that South African universities are themselves currently battling to manage extreme financial constraints as a result of funding shortfalls, this suggestion may not be feasible. However, the point is that participants viewed the unequal benefits as problematic and as an issue that needs to be addressed in some way.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP

In addition to the difficulties related to working in a resource constrained setting, participants also voiced concerns about who should be responsible for maintaining ongoing relationships with community partners. This concern is illustrated in the extract below.

Extract 13: We will always serve as the mediator … and we are leaving

> Thandi I do think that it would be nice if there was some kind of contact between the two parties... so that they can function more independently, otherwise, we will always serve as the mediator between the different parties and we are leaving

In Extract 13 (above) Thandi argues that the students participating in the SL programme serve as a communication bridge between the University and the community partner. I argue that Thandi's use of the word "mediator" indicates that students involved in the SL programme are not simply a conduit for communication, but play an active role in shaping and facilitating that communication. Arguably, this is not a problem in and of itself. After all, our formal training means that we are both competent and well placed to facilitate communications between the University and the community partner. However, Thandi raises a concern about the implications of the University relying on students whose involvement in the SL is limited to a short period of time. Arguably, this is likely to impact on the long term relationship between the University and its community partner, and it potentially undermines the establishment of more formal lines of communication between the SL partners. As Thandi points out, "we are leaving". I would argue that in the light of the concerns raised in the previous section, that the maintenance of formal lines of communication between the University and its community partner that does not rely too heavily on the student participants, would go some way in reaffirming the University's commitment to the SL programme both in the eyes of the students involved and the community

partner. More involvement from the university and the psychology clinic in particular could serve to allay doubts about commitment and continuity.

Effective communication is one of the key aspects in addressing doubts and misunderstandings. Effective communication with community members requires a re-evaluation of skills, attitudes, and styles regularly (Santiago-Rivera, Morse & Hunt, 1998). Tryon and Stoecker suggest that, at times "some sources of dissatisfaction or confusion are due to unclarified expectations of roles and responsibilities of the institution or the organization" (Tryon and Stoecker, 2000, p. 55). Therefore communication and especially face-to-face communication is central to creating an educative experience, which helps each partner understand the role they play in keeping the relationship functioning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999).

Forester (1980) contends that a professional embarking on community engagement projects should examine potential barriers that may influence communication. The scholar further recommends that they should recognize, and keep in mind that communication can easily be distorted at any point in the relationship and as such should always remain open and effective.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the students derived great benefits from participating in the SL programme. They learned that psychology is more than individual (one-on-one) therapy and that their roles in the community extends beyond the therapy room, thus giving them a broader perspective and understanding of the discipline and the different ways in which it can be used to respond to community needs. Student participants also learned how psychology can be more relevant to the South African context and how it can remain relevant in an ever changing society. Students get real world experience which prepares and educates them on what to expect when working with diverse communities, and it further equips them with skills required to work with these diverse communities. They also learned to be realistic about their own abilities in terms of what they can and cannot do.

Going further, these students also learned about engaging stakeholders. This included: learning about the importance of including everyone involved in the project from the start so as to encourage trust and transparency throughout the process. They learned that neglecting to have an inclusive process may lead to a lack of interest and disengagement from some members of the community. One of the most important lessons learned was the value of communication and the role it plays in building and maintaining good relations with community partners.

What made student participation in the SL programme difficult was working in a resource poor setting. This was because the students felt that community needs exceeded the support that they were offering, and because it made them question the ethics of deriving most of the benefits when the community partner's most basic needs were not being met. Leiderman, Furco, Zapf and

Fourie (2003) postulate that campus-community partnership should ensure that there is a level of fairness among partner members. They further contend that the resources that are to be shared in the partnership should be discussed and agreed upon at the goal-setting stage as this ensures that everyone in the partnership knows what they will give and receive, and further eliminating other members' feelings of being exploited and ensure success.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CE and SL are fast becoming an intricate part of most learning programmes at institutions of higher learning. It is therefore important for us to mobilise the available resources and invest in research that focuses on the relationship between institutions of higher learning and the communities in which they exist. While conducting this research it was clear that there is limited research that explores the experiences and perspectives of the South African student on the subject matter. This study could also highlight the experiences of students who work in resource constrained environments and how their experience can be used to transform the current curriculum to one that is suitable for the South African context and its challenges.

Furthermore some people may view a small sample as a limitation, however for the purpose of this study a small sample ensured that the researcher was able to get an in depth understanding of each participant's experience which might have not been easy to achieve with a large sample.

The aim of this study was to understand students' perspectives of the relationship between the university and community partner in the context of a service-learning programme. The study revealed that service-learning allows students the opportunity to explore and challenge their

discipline and understanding of the world. Because of the findings of the study I would therefore recommend that a larger study aimed at expanding on the finding of this particular study be conducted across faculties.

One of the findings emphasised on maintaining the relationship between the university and its community partner. Future research could explore ways in which this relationship could be improved upon with the aim of maximising students learning and sustainable community development.

REFERENCES

Astin, Alexander W.; Vogelgesang, Lori J.; Ikeda, Elaine K.; and Yee, Jennifer A., "How Service Learning Affects Students" (2000). Higher Education. Paper 144.

Babbie, E., L. (2008). *The basics of social research.* Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

Bender, G. & Jordaan, R. (2007). Student perceptions and attitudes about community service-learning in the teacher training curriculum. *South African Journal of Education, 27(*4), 631–654.

Bless, C., Higoson-Smit, C. & Sithole, S. L. (2013). *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective(fifth edition).* Cape Town, South Africa: Juta& Company Ltd.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006).Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,3*(2), 77-101.

Botes, L., & van Rensburg, D. (2000). Community participation in development: Nine plagues and twelve commandments. *Community Development Journal, 35*(1), 41–58.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2007). Civic engagement and service learning: Implications for higher education in America and South Africa.*Education as Change*, *11*(3), 79-89.

Bringle, R., & Hatcher, J. (2002). Campus-community partnerships: The terms of engagement. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(3), 503–516.

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1999). Reflection in service learning: Making Meaning or experience. *Educational Horizons*, 179, 113-119.

Bringle, R., & Hatcher, J.A (1995).A service learning curriculum for faculty.*Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Fall*, 112-122.

Butchart, A., & Seedat, M. (1990). Within and without: Images of community and implications for South African psychology. *Social Science Medicine, 31*(10), 1093–1102.

Butin, D. (2003). Of what use is it? Multiple conceptualizations of service learning within education. *Teachers College Record, 105*(9), 1674–1692.

Camacho, M. (2004). Power and privilege: Community service learning in Tijuana. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Summer*, 31–42.

Collins, P., & Freeman, M. (2009).Bridging the gap between HIV and mental health services in South Africa. In P. Rohleder, L. Swartz, S. Kalichman, & L. Simbayi (Eds.), *HIV/AIDS in South Africa 25 years on: Psychosocial perspectives* (pp. 353–371). New York: Springer.

De la Rey, C., & Ipser, J. (2004). The call for relevance: South African psychology ten years into democracy. *South African Journal of Psychology, 34*(4), 544–552.

Forester, J. (1980). Listening: The social policy of everyday life. Social Praxis, 7, 7–34.

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

Gelmon, S., Holland, B., Seifer, S., Shinnamon, A., & Connors, K. (1998).Community-university partnerships for mutual learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 5*, 97–107.

Hammersley, L. (2012). *Community based service-learning: Partnerships of reciprocal exchange?* In Australian Collaborative Education Network National Conference (pp. 103–108). Australia: ACEN.

Henry, G. T., (1998). Practical sampling, in L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Higher Education Quality Committee.(2004). *Framework for institutional audits*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Howarth, C. S. (2001). Towards a social psychology of community: A social representations perspective. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *31*(2), 223-238.

Harowksi, K., Turner, A. L., le Vine E., Schank, J. A. & Leichter, J. (2006). From our community to yours: Rural best perspectives on psychology practice, training and advocacy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 37(1), 158-164.*

Kvale, S. (1996).*Interviews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lazarus, S., Erasmus, M., Hendricks, D., Nduna, J., & Slamat, J. (2008). Embedding community engagement in South African higher education. *Education, Citizenship & Social Science, 3*(1), 57–83.

Le Grange, L. (2007). The theoretical foundations of community service learning: From taproots to rhizomes. *Education as Change, 11*(3), 3–13.

Leiderman, S., Furco, A., Zapf, J., & Goss, M. (2002). Building Partnerships with college campuses: Community Perspectives. *The council of independent colleges*. Washington, DC.

Mitchell, T. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service-learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Spring*, 50–65.

Morgan, W., & Streb, M. (2001). Building citizenship: how student voice in service-learning develops civic values. *Social Science Quarterly*, *82*(1), 154-169.

Mouton, J., & Wildschut, L. (2005).Service learning in South Africa: lessons learnt through systematic evaluation. *Acta Academica Supplimentum* (3), 116-150.

Neururer, J., & Rhoads, R. A. (1998). Community Service: Panacea, paradox, or potential. *Journal of College Student Development, 39(4), 321-330.*

Nicholas, L. (1990). The response of South African professional psychology associations to apartheid. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, 26*(1), 58–63.

O'Brien, F. (2005).Grounding service learning in South Africa. *ActaAcademica, 37*, 64–98.

Pillay, A. L., & Kometsi, M. J. (2007).Training psychology students and interns in non-urban areas. *Community Psychology: Analysis, context and action,* 367-379.

Perkins, D. D., Hughey, J., & Speer, P. W. (2002). Community psychology perspectives on social capital theory and community development practice. *Community Development*, *33*(1), 33-52.

Rappaport, J. (1981). In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 9*(1), 1–25.

Santiago-Rivera, A. L., Skawennio Morse, G., Hunt, A., & Lickers, H. (1998).Building a community-based research partnership: Lessons from the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *26*(2), 163-174.

Seedat, M. (1998). A characterisation of South African psychology (1948–1988): The impact of exclusionary ideology. *South African Journal of Psychology, 28*(2), 74–84.

Seedat, M., & Lazarus, S. (2011). Community psychology in South Africa: Origins, developments, and manifestations. *Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(3), 241–257.

Silverman, D. (2000). Doing qualitative research. A practical handbook (pp. 75-86). (Thousand Oaks, Sage).

Snape, D. & Spencer, L. (2003) The foundations of qualitative research, in: J. RITCHIE & J. LEWIS (Eds) Qualitative Research Practice: a guide for social science students and researchers (pp. 1–23) (Thousand Oaks, Sage).

Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., & Painter, D. (2006).*Research in practice* (2nd ed.). Cape Town: UCT Press.

Tryon, E., & Stoecker, R. (2008). The unheard voices: Community organizations and service-learning. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *12*(3), 47-60.

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2000). Community-centered service learning: Moving from doing for to doing with. *American Behavioural Scientist, 43*(5), 767–780.

Weerts, D., & Sandmann, L. (2008).Building a two-way street: Challenges and opportunities for community engagement at research universities. *The Review of Higher Education, 32*(1), 73

Welman, J.C. & Kruger, S.J. (1999). Research methodology for the business and administrative sciences. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. –106.

Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaanbil. 9*, 1-6.

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Question 1

My first question is just intended to get some background information because I have not been personally involved in this programme. So could you begin by telling me a bit about the project you are involved in and what it is that the Masters students are doing there?

Question 2

What is the usefulness of this project for the Masters students? Why are you involved in it in the first place? Do you think the experience you gain here will help you in future practice?

Question 3

How does participating in this project fit in with the other learning activities that you engage in?

Question 4

Do you think that the relationship between the Masters students/you and the community partner important for the success of the project? Explain.

Do you think that the relationship between the Clinic and the community partner important for the success of the project? Explain.

Question 5

How is this relationship maintained? What do the Masters students do to maintain this relationship? What does the clinic have to do to maintain the relationship? What do you think the community partner should do to maintain the relationship?

Question 6

What role do you think communication plays in maintaining the relationship between yourselves and the community partner?

Question 7

In your experience, has anything happened that's made the relationship difficult to maintain, or jeopardized it in some way?

Question 8

Do you think that the relationship can be improved upon? What do you think could be done to improve the relationship?

Question 9

Thank you very much for talking to me, your inputs have been very helpful. Before I end this interview could you tell me…

Is there anything that we haven't touched upon in this discussion that you think is particularly important or relevant to this issue? (relationships with community partners).

Question 10

How has this interview been for you?