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An Analysis of Service-Learning and Applied Anthropology

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People think of others in comparison to themselves, and what they know. Anthropologists study a wide variety of things, this includes all different societies: simple and complex, ancient and modern, and in different locales. The perspective of an anthropologist tends to take on a unique cross-cultural nature, with comparisons oftentimes being central to the research. When anthropologists become engaged in a project and begin their fieldwork they experience a unique sense of understanding from living in such close proximity to another culture.

Experiences of the anthropologist are unique in and of themselves. Even while they are living and learning in a certain society they never can become a part of that culture. They may always feel alienated because of their role. Sometimes this alienation can become a catalyst for great work to be produced. Anthropologist, Ruth Behar, in *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* addressed some of these concerns. In this feminist ethnography she also writes about how her own experiences, perspectives, and feelings helped to shape her experience. She not only told the story of one Mexican woman, named Esperanza, throughout the book she told her own story, and how she changed from the experience.

Translated Woman helps to tie anthropology to service learning through some fundamental themes; one's perspective is colored by the lens they use. Anthropologists struggle with how to interpret their own feelings and experiences with their research. Esperanza's life story changed the perspectives of Behar, as she learned from the woman about life, hardships, and determination, to name a few. Behar told the senora that she would take her story across the border so that Americans would understand. The interactions between the two women changed

them both. The mutuality, both parties benefiting, seen here is what service learning practitioners are striving for in their efforts.

People assume that *all* humans have the same opinions, values, and feelings that we Americans do. Measuring people against our North American culture can get in the way of greater understanding of people in general and certain cultures in particular. To be effective in learning we must acknowledge our biases and where they come from. Behar did this effectively in *Translated Woman*.

Much learning occurs in the world away from universities and outside the walls of our parents' homes. As human beings we learn the most when we leave the comfort zone we have created for ourselves and enter into the unknown. Service learners tend to look at new, unfamiliar places as bi-lateral. For them, two structural systems exist: the self and the other. People like the self (with similar backgrounds, ethnicity, or body shape, etc.) fit into that category, the rest are the other. It is in this unknown environment that we meet "the other," a construct that is problematic to anthropologists. They have been reinventing anthropology to get rid of the construct of the other, since it creates a sense of ethnocentrism. It was first utilized during colonization when governments wanted to justify to their citizens taking over foreign lands. By othering the current inhabitants they made them subhuman, or alien.

Anthropologists are consistently involving themselves with cultures and people different from their own, in order to make known new information and knowledge to themselves and the world. On that same note, service learning practitioners delve into their projects to meet people for personal growth, social awareness, and particular learning outcomes depending on the course lessons. The fields of anthropology and service learning have a lot to say to one another. In

theory and practice there are many commonalities that draw these fields closer. By utilizing each side's strong points they can both benefit.

Relationships are often made while engaging with people. At the heart of Cultural or Applied Anthropology is the concept of making relationships with people, in order to work with and understand them. All of this tells the anthropologist something about their own place of origin, and gives them a basis of comparison. Paul Rabinow (1975) clearly states the purpose of anthropology as "the comprehension of others in order to return, changed, to ourselves" (p. 100). The nature of Anthropology is at the core based on humans and human involvement with one another. Change is at the heart of service learning, in fact, Rabinow could be talking about service learning in the previous quote and be totally accurate. He continues on explaining more about anthropology:

> Anthropology is a humanistic discipline and a science. But it is a dialectic science of reflection whose advancement (obviously not inevitable) consists in the expansion and deepening of its discourse. At its most abstract level, this discourse is between cultures, but concretely it is between a specific researcher and the people of a particular culture (Rabinow 1975, p. 100).

The work that anthropologists are doing can be seen in the public sector, private businesses, internationally, and in the United States; they are working in educational systems, mostly at the college level, and independently. Advertising firms use anthropological studies to best sell their product, especially for internationally recognized companies and products. Human resource departments are utilizing anthropologists to maximize their employee relations. Medical anthropologists consider the sociocultural context and implications of diseases. Forensic anthropologists work for police identifying crime victims. Not all anthropological work is under the title "anthropology," in fact, much work and research can be classified as

anthropology that is not labeled that way. Bilingual education teachers use anthropological techniques and tools to interact with students and their families, but this type of work would not be considered direct anthropology.

Anthropology has a lot to offer, and yet, still lacks a good method to engage students in fieldwork unless they are at an advanced level. Seldom are undergraduate students privy to the kinds of research methods necessary to accomplish competent work.

HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology, as we know it, has a vast history. It developed as an academic discipline in the late 1800s. During the time of Charles Darwin, increasing exploration and discovery of new places was occurring from the epicenter, Europe. The field of anthropology developed out of the compilation of all the new data being brought back to Europe. "The anthropologist is a prototypical global researcher, dependent on detailed data about people all over the world. Now that these data had suddenly become available, anthropology could be established as an academic discipline" (Erikson & Nielson, 2001, 2).

"While most major nineteenth-century sociologists were German or French, the leading anthropologists were based either in Britain (the greatest colonial power, with plentiful access to "others") or the USA (where "the others" were close at hand)" (Erikson & Nielson, 3). Anthropology specifically in the United States developed out of efforts to recover disappearing Native American cultures. Ironically, one of the factors that led to the disappearance of Native American cultures originally was because of colonial governments and individuals wanting to rid "their" new land of these subhuman savages, in effect "othering" them to the full extent.

Anthropology during the nineteenth century was more closely associated with museums than with universities (Frantz, 1972). Anthropologists have partially earned the image of "lone fieldworkers working slowly on exotic irrelevant problems, as naysayers against change, as professionals who seldom simplify issues" (Van Esterik, 1985, p. 77). Complex issues can be simplified so laypeople can understand the relevance and importance, at the same time connecting these themes to all of humanity. Historically there is some truth to these stereotypes that permeate the image of an anthropologist even today (several recent movies include this representation, for example, Disney's "Tarzan"). Released in June of 1999, this Walt Disney adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' novel, *Tarzan of the* Apes, tells the story of a young man raised by gorillas who discovers his humanity when he meets an English woman (Jane) on an expedition in the jungle. Jane's father, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter, is the quintessential anthropologist leading the expedition. On a determined search for gorillas he forgets all else that is important.

The early formative years were plagued with discrimination, without a sound core in which to work from, scholars paved their own paths. Laden with prejudice, ideology and theory developed from personal rather than scientific motivation. Many people do not know the scientific basis for eugenics and the ideology of Nazism came right out of early American anthropology. Racism ideology formed the framework for these first anthropologists. In fact, anthropologists of today have taken the field to a whole new level as they struggle to fight against racism and prejudice.

Anthropology as a discipline did not truly develop until the late 19th century and, even now, developments are still being made. Names like Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas are common to any introductory anthropology class. These men introduced new methods of doing

anthropology to the world. Malinowski is credited with creating and documenting the method of fieldwork called participant observation. He spent part of the early 1900s in the Trobriand Islands, putting his methodology to work. By interacting with the research subjects on a new level, created by the method of participant observation, a new way to look at subjects emerged. Ideally, an insider's view is achieved by living closely with the community.

Beginning in the 1920s anthropology materialized as a serious professional and scientific discipline. The focus and practice of anthropological research developed in different ways in the United States and Europe, as each had different interests in mind. It was in the 1920s and1930s that anthropology assumed its present categories; Franz Boas (1858-1942) was an influential character in creating the four subfields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, linguistics, physical anthropology, and archaeology. These have changed and developed as the field itself has changed, and is indeed still transforming. As anthropology had traveled a difficult road Boas wanted it to be a well-respected science. Firsthand observation and experiences took on a new importance. Previously, anthropologists utilized books and other materials to complete their research without ever seeing their subjects. Boas also opposed racist and ethnocentric evolutionary theories that were commonplace in the United States and Europe (as mentioned above).

Applied Anthropology did not come into its own until the 1920s and 1930s, eventually bringing a more relevant anthropology to the public. British officers were dubbed anthropologists and government appointed anthropologists were recruited to complete work in the colonies. At the onset it did not differ much from general anthropology; colonial governments simply wanted full reports on the people they governed. But because of the broad areas that anthropology covers, many applications developed. Applied anthropology, in a very

general sense, includes "any use of the knowledge and/or techniques of the four subdisciplines to identify, assess, and solve practical problems" (Kottak, 1994, p. 11).

During the first half of the 20th century colonial governments utilized anthropologists to form research that forwarded their causes, particularly creating a positive response to expansion and exploitation, at times undermining the reality of the situations. Nowadays there are many specialties materializing out of the main four categories, and continuous development and transformation is occurring within the field. Because of the scientific yet subjective form that much of anthropology takes there is room for change, and change is needed. Leading American anthropologists of the early 20th century were oriented towards cultural history, linguistics and even psychology rather than sociology, like the first European anthropologists. The early 19th century yielded many popular theories that continued to be influential into the 20th century.

The 1970s produced a new kind of thought. Anthropologists were encouraged to detach themselves from the colonial governments that they had previously worked for and join the side of the "natives" in their anti-colonial struggle. Peter Pels explains the anthropology of colonialism as:

> ...an anthropology of anthropology, since in many methodological, organizational and professional aspects the discipline retains the shape it received when it emerged from (if partly in opposition to) early 20th century colonial circumstances. Studying colonialism implies studying anthropology's context, a broader field of ethnographic activity that existed before the boundaries of the discipline emerged, and that continues to influence the way they are drawn (Pels and Salemink, 1994: 5)."

Critical issues were raised which are relevant to the way anthroplogy (and other social sciences) developed, and are put into practice today. These issues include: what is the relevance of anthropology, how might it be made more relevant, what is the responsibility of social

scientists, what is the nature of the anthropologists committment, and should fieldwork be carried out abroad or at home (Caplan, 2003). These concerns are still crucial to anthropologists in the 21st century, and will not cease to be important to the work that anthropologists do.

Feminism and postmodernism rose to popularity in the 1980s, infiltrating anthropology departments, public spheres and literature worldwide. Postmodernism raised questions about some of anthropology's fundamental methods and objectives. Also, with the rise of feminism and postmodernism came an increasing concern with ethics. "The rise of postmodernism was signaled most notably in the discipline of anthropology by Clifford and Marcus' influential book *Writing Culture* (1986)" (Caplan, 2003, p. 13.) Postmodernism called for ethnographers to examine themselves, revealing their own culture and their influence on other societies. They also argued "for a shift from observation and empirical methodology to a more communicative and dialogical epistemology" (Caplan, p. 13.)

After World War II ended in 1945 the field of anthropology expanded. Colonialism essentially ended when most of the colonies gained their independence within two decades after the war. Anthropologists were now needed in these newly established countries under a new pretext, that of promoting development. They were even hired to help the indigenous people protect their heritage, land, and resources.

In the 1960s the Student Movement had a tremendous pull on events. A group of mostly white college students joined efforts to fight racism and poverty, increase student rights, and to end the Vietnam War. At the core of the student movement was a belief in participatory democracy, or the idea that all Americans, not just elite bourgeoisie, should decide the major economic, political, and social issues that shaped the nation. They demanded that faculty and

administrators stop all research and activities that contributed to the Vietnam War. The pull that these motivated students had on issues including racism and poverty affected much more than their local campuses. In Lansing, at Michigan State University, 10,000 students marched to the State Capitol; the emphasis that this and similar types of activity had on the nation caused many changes in the method and subjects that were being taught at public institutions. Anthropology began to be taught in many public universities across the country in the following decade.

Applied Anthropology has become more popular but continues to take the backburner to traditional, theoretically-based work. This specialized field utilizes much of the same methodologies and theories as traditional anthropology but is not viewed on the same level. Jobs in the world of academia are highly desired and coveted by traditional anthropologists. While applied anthropologists are criticized for working in the public sector, they are viewed as not good enough to get into a university. Historically, anthropology has been dominated by opinion, research, and writing of white (male) Europeans and Americans. However this has already begun to change; more and more people from diverse cultural backgrounds are working in anthropology (and other social sciences, including a relatively new discipline—cultural studies.) Applied anthropology is very expansive, outside of teaching at universities it involves helping cultural groups, organizations, businesses, and governments. However it is important to note that elite universities do not teach applied anthropology; traditional anthropology reigns king at these institutions.

Some critics doubt that anthropology will ever move far away from colonialism, as that is where its roots lie. Peter Pels (1994) suggests, "if we are ever going to be capable of disengaging anthropology from colonialism, we first need to reflexively blur the boundaries between colonialism and our present anthropology." Even in the 21st century there are close ties

to history that prevent changes in the field. Some anthropologists who are doing well resist these changes, too.

Anthropology has taken on new challenges with the rise of globalization in the 1990s. Culturally aware people are being recruited by large companies to interact with foreign purchasers. Advertisers are pumping product information to Japan and China and India at new highs. I have often heard "the world is getting smaller," although this statement is absurd if taken literal, technological advances are making it true. We are getting connected all across the globe; I personally used e-mail in Tibet, and have since Instant-Messaged someone in China. This type of interaction does not lessen the need for anthropologists but increases it in my mind. Cultural differences still remain and they can act as a social liaison; of course, there are social issues right in our own backyards that are calling the attention of anthropologists as well.

ENTHNOGRAPHY

The main component of social anthropology is ethnography. The published ethnography is usually the end result of months or years of fieldwork. During research the anthropologist as ethnographer becomes the observer. Modern day ethnography is largely informal and direct, as opposed to older techniques, giving researchers the most natural setting possible. Michael Kearney (2004) discusses the anomaly of anthropologists not reflecting on their biographical selves. Many times keeping their own experiences out of print and although their biases may come through they may be subtle and unnoticed. This kind of behavior was characteristic of the past but more recent anthropology tends to involve an internal look at the anthropologist. Kearney specifically states, "In the case of anthropology, its most important instrument of observation is the ethnographer, who makes observations and interprets and presents them as scientific and humanistic contributions to knowledge" (2004, p. 2.) Anthropologists like Ruth

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Behar do take into account their selves, and even make that a focal point of their published work. Self-reflexivity is as much a part of anthropology now as ethnography; not every professional is doing it but the majority of professionals have at least attempted to make it a part of their work. Much like a biologist uses a microscope to look at cells an ethnographer uses his/her own eyes to see the community being studied. A scientist would never consider his findings without revealing what type of lens he was using.

Modern practices in anthropology include an ethnographer's personal qualities and characteristics in the resulting ethnography (Dresch, James, & Parkin, 2000) considering many features affect what information is collected and how it is interpreted. It has not always been this way, as anthropology as a science in the 1950s and before did not allow for considerations to be made for personal characteristics. It is important to remember what Rivière (Dresch, James, & Parkin, 2000) says: a very large part of our experiences, as anthropologists, can "be attributed to the people's experience of and attitude towards the society from which [we] came and their assessment of it vis-à-vis their own" (p. 27-28.)

COMBINING SERVICE LEARNING AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Modern educational systems are looking for innovative ways to inform students, this involves not only educating them but emotionally engaging them in the work that they are doing. By involving them on this level the students will be more apt to learn and remember the curriculum. One method utilized in recent years is Service-Learning, a multi-faceted approach to learning which encompasses a service component and a learning or reflective component.

In my opinion, higher education is in dire need of Service-Learning, to better accomplish a humanistic approach in the social sciences. In some academic departments and institutions of

higher education there has been some hesitation and doubt about using Service-Learning, as there has not been much literature published about its success until recent years, particularly because limited research has been done on the matter. However, sources are now becoming widely available to those interested in using this tool, written from a variety of perspectives, including educators in many arenas and additional researchers. This educational tool can be employed in many disciplines, especially the social sciences. "The opportunities to connect service-learning to theories in psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, education, and so on, are seemingly boundless, yet too few of these opportunities are seized" (Billig & Waterman, 2003).

Anthropology and Service-Learning may seem a world apart to conservative scholars of Anthropology. However, it is an effective and useful application for the field of Anthropology; stemming from an infiltration of communities by both Anthropologists in search of ethnographic research and those doing the service work. Authors Eyler and Giles state that, "The learning we saw in our service-learning students was deeper than merely acquiring and spitting back a series of facts about a subject; it engaged our students' hearts as well as their heads and helped them understand the complexity of what they were studying" (1999, p. xiv). What better tool for anthropologists, specifically professors, to actually engage their students in ethnographical work?

Undergraduate students rarely learn methodological techniques for the field and even fewer engage in field research (Schensul & Berg, 2004). Field methods are many times left by the wayside, even when considering improvements that could be made to Anthropology. Schensul and Berg say of the American Anthropological Association in regards to improving the ways that anthropology is taught, that "field research for social transformation" is not yet included in discourse, nor is method instruction. In addition, "it focuses on how better to

introduce core anthropological concepts and introduce students to cross cultural experiences." (2004, p. 85) Logically, there should be a structure set up to include these methods. Students engaging in post-undergraduate field work may not know the full extent of what they are getting themselves into, thus the potential for trial and error field research is high. Schensul and Berg explain that a lack of shared interest between service-learning and anthropology results from "lack of attention to pedagogical theory and methodological instruction, especially in undergraduate anthropology, anthropologists' iconoclasm (at worst), and an emphasis on an advocacy rather than a service perspective in the field." (2004, p. 85)

There is a bit of confusion created by the complexity of service learning. There is a lot of diversity in the programs created under the premise of service learning, lending to this issue. Variables included are length of the experience, depth of involvement, classroom curriculum, service choice, and planning involved. "All service learning activities, regardless of their overall design and programmatic goals, involve a complex interaction of students, service activities, curricular content, and learning outcomes" (Furco, 2003, 13). Indeed, there are a variety of experiences to be had, and for each person they will end with different results. No two experiences are alike. They are dependent on personality, background, experience, etcetera.

The use of service-learning may be hindered by anthropologists who are intent on viewing anthropology as a hard science, this perspective held fast by some who continuously try to improve their work, in a scientific fashion leaving out room for the "social" aspect. When working with people it is exceedingly important to allow space for communication, reorganization and change. To be unwavering in service work is generally unproductive as others will be dissuaded from making suggestions, and without this flexibility there will be no room for improvements to be made.

Giving power to the people is an essential part of both service-learning and activist anthropology. There are many ways that this can be accomplished. If community members make important decisions concerning their own communities (where they live and work) it will directly impact the way the community operates and feels. This type of structure works for the community members to keep their dignity and pride where otherwise they might feel bitter or resentful. Ethnographies have even been written by the subjects, rather than only by the anthropologist.

Anthropologists have access to resources that community members do not. Sometimes this amounts to a level of education, of the anthropologists and of the community members. It is important to realize the amount of education the anthropologist has is not better but different than the community members. But more importantly by working with the community leaders one can gain accurate pictures of the community as well as the resources available. Some resources the community has access to are community members, formal and informal leaders, and community agencies. These resources would certainly be beneficial to researchers, students, volunteers, and more.

In the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* (2004) Arthur Keene and Sumi Colligan suggest that, "In the past, both anthropology and CSL have been critiqued for a lack of sensitivity to the needs of their subjects/partners" (p. 9). A call for better research methods and project organization is necessary, although easier said than done. Anthropology has been plagued with problems of subordinating others, using overt and covert methods. Problems within the field of anthropology are not new. Hymes states, "Anthropology must lose itself to find itself, must become as fully as possible a possession of the people of the world" (1974, p. 54). This source is somewhat dated but the same still applies to today. Anthropology has been

moving into a new realm, one that focuses on real problems near to home. The stigma of working in the United States for Americans is dissipating as there are real concerns and work for anthropologists here. Commercial, political, or social avenues have taken anthropologists away from the colonial background and into the 21st century.

A congruent method to service learning has surfaced in anthropology; it is called rather simply, "ethnography from below." Loosely defined, it describes "ethnographic work that sheds light on the way that state-level processes shape social and economic realities at the level of the neighborhood and the community." (Hyatt & Lyon-Callo, 2003, p. 141). Ethnography from below builds a community up by informing them of the systemic processes taking place affecting them, and changing the mentality of the citizens. Education. Awareness. Information. By including the people that are directly affected by decisions and choices of others (whether in local political office, federal, or other) positive outcomes are inevitable.

For example, prevalent thinking across the country seems to put blame on homeless people for their situation, rather than holding the system responsible. Thinking along these lines tends to be more easily transmitted than broken, creating cyclical effects that build negative stereotypes. The homeless are lazy, do not want to hold a job, and more. These unsympathetic views do not take into account the existing system. Instead, it is easier to start a computer literacy program or other means of educating these poverty stricken people. Thus, the cycle will continue when these low income folks cannot find jobs, even with these practical skills. They may even begin to have symptoms of depression from the continuous pressure on the self. Only perpetuating the system failure further by thinking that the self is the one to blame.

Moral values have been a topic on the minds of several Americans, seemingly important to the recent (2004 Presidential) election results. But there is a gap between the way people

think and the way people live. The National Commission on Service Learning explains it in another way:

> At the same time that academic and civic disengagement is rampant, primary and secondary school students are volunteering in record numbers for community service activities, from tutoring children in low-income neighborhoods to spending time with the elderly. There seems to be a serious disconnection between the volunteer spirit that students are expressing in their spare time and what transpires during the school day.

It is not always clear what students are truly learning (thinking), but we can certainly decipher what they are doing in the classroom, and even outside of it. Effective teaching aids to better understanding and learning. Positive learning outcomes can be directly correlated to organized classrooms. The National Commission on Service Learning explains that "many schools have not been able to organize their teaching and learning in ways that can effectively capture a reassertion of traditional American values of caring for one's neighbors and giving something back to one's community." This is where (applied) anthropology might be able to step in and offer some guidance.

Anthropology can aid the development of service learning, as it comes into its own. "Letting anthropology constitute a theoretical foundation for service-learning pedagogy would also support the desire of service-learning advocates to base the pedagogy on a change versus charity model." Furthermore, "A liaison with anthropology can be a link in the connection between the institutionalization of service-learning and the promotion of systemic change" (McCabe, 2004, p. 25). Important to the development of service learning is a uniform method to prepare students for the field. As it stands now it is solely based on the instructor, there is no methodology that stands across the board for all to follow.

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Because of the broad range of subject matter covered by both anthropology and service learning there are many different projects and opportunities available to these disciplines. Furthermore, they each take on different faces; anthropology can be seen as an ethnography or archeology. Service learning can also take on different forms based on the project. A general form used by InterAction, a service learning organization on Western Michigan University's campus (Kalamazoo, MI) is called a *Critical Reflection*; this single page document (see page 27) calls for reflecting on a concrete experience. It has the ability to work for any experience, and provides the structure some students need in order to reflect. The loose format provides for some creativity, and expansion while keeping it pertinent.

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), a team-based national service organization that provides 18-24 year olds an opportunity to give back to their country, captures the spirit of service learning in another manner. Reflection is also the key component to service learning for this organization, as implied by this single line in the seven-line AmeriCorps NCCC pledge: "I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond." NCCC stresses the importance of connecting the service that its members are providing and the learning and growing that results through that service. On paper they define service learning to their members as educational experiences: directly obtained from project tasks and from orientation to the community/environmental issues that the tasks impact. In reality this plays out in a variety of reflective formats: writing or talking about feelings, emotions, social issues, etc. Concrete examples include writing each team member a list of three positive things about them and one negative, meeting with Habitat for Humanity home owners, researching and sharing information about educational standards, touring a state park with a Park Ranger. Because NCCC covers unmet human needs, environment, disaster relief and education they have a lot of different topics

that may be best learned about in specific ways. Each project may require a different type of service learning, depending on what the experiences of the team members are and even internal team issues.

The role of the ivory tower may play a part in withholding university faculty from infiltrating the community, both from the side of the university and community. Opposition may be received if community members think they are "being helped" when they do not see that they need help. Relationships with the community and university must be made by a working relationship. Continuous communication is essential, as is the notion that the university is "working with" rather than "working for" the community. Imperatively, the two sides must come together as partners and both must have an equal say in the service-learning process. However, different roles will be taken on from each partner as they inevitably will have different resources available. Gugerty & Swezey say, "Effective service-learning respects the dignity and self worth of cultures and individuals, forms multiple partnerships with organizations in the community, and searches for common ground among all involved while gathering resources to be shared by all." (Jacoby, 1996, 96) If this type if relationship is not maintained, as in any relationship, distrust and even hopelessness can occur.

For me, the cultural information provided by anthropology has been an asset in different service projects I have been involved with over the last few years, both abroad and in the United States. A seemingly obvious connection between anthropology and service learning is to prepare students for the culture they will be working with in service by using cultural information. I was joined up with 10 people who were all involved with a service project in southern Alabama. The team was required to repair houses that were in total disrepair. Driving down the road many assumed that some of the houses were abandoned, that is, until we began working on similar

houses where people were living. It was difficult to assess the situation for some, as the culture shock was so great. We used reflection time to help everyone cope with the difficult social situations that we were faced with at work. This particular part of Alabama had a fair share of racial and economical divisions that were apparent by simply walking down the street. Studying the cultural, social, and economical situation made the team more aware of the situation; and when questions or issues came up we had a better idea of how to deal with them.

Miss M. lived in a house off the beaten track. It was in such disrepair we were not sure where to begin. Her foundation was rotted, the toilet had sunk through the floor, and the siding was falling off. Although we were there for just one week the team made a world of a difference to that house, and to Miss M.'s life. She had lost hope that there were people out there that cared; she had been living in hardship so long. My team wanted to tear down her house and rebuild, it seemed pointless to spend time to fix it up, but time, energy, and resources did not allow for such wishful thinking. Unfortunately, there were more houses to be repaired and other people to help. Daily Miss M. would bring out a 12 pack of Coke, handing them out to each of the 12 workers. Without fail the 12 pack was waiting for us every day. For Miss M. who had so little, this was all she could afford to give back to us, yet it meant so much to us. I am not a pop drinker, but those days I did. It would have been rude to reject her efforts to repay us. Little did she know that the pop was meaningless next to the satisfaction that we felt when we saw her shining face. Wearing her emotions on her face, she cried the day we left.

HISTORY OF SERVICE LEARNING

Service Learning is not a new field, it has been evolving since the 1860s, although it is emerging in some places (ex. Elementary schools) for the first time. Early practitioners used experiential education as their base for service learning. Connecting the service to substantive

learning connected the students' reflections and analysis to the curriculum. By making these important connections these pioneers wanted to lend meaning and energy to a variety of disciplines. They pushed that creating socially aware students led to a complete education.

In the 1960s the first national organization that recognized service learning was the National Student Volunteer Program (NSVP), whose name was later changed to the National Center for Service Learning (NCSL). NSVP contributed to service learning by concentrating on one important theme, the partnership between educational institutions and communities. This "notion was a prelude to the reciprocity and empowerment concepts, which came later" (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 51). NCSL was the first organization to promote the concept of service learning. However, it was closed in the 1970s by the Reagan administration (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 2003).

It was not until the 1980s that interest in service learning really began to grow. The change happened due to education reform and public service initiatives; inevitably service learning grew at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Prior to this the only interested people were a small group of advocates in higher education. "What once was a marginal, not-well-understood form of alternative education was suddenly on the front burner of numerous higher education organizations and on the minds of a growing number of campus administrators and faculty" (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 6.)

Originally, there were three areas of concern: connecting education with service, moving from service to social justice, and using experience in communities to prepare effective citizenry. These issues developed as they fit with the educators' interests and available resources. The variety of experiences, different settings, and varied role for students is as wide today as it was in the beginning.

In 1984 a group was formed to promote student leadership in community service on college campuses, the Campus Outreach Opportunity League expanded all across the country. Campus Compact, a group with similar interests was founded in 1985, and is still going strong today. It is comprised of "more than 750 college and university presidents whose membership implicitly declared their commitment to involving students in community work at their respective colleges" (Howard, 2003). This kind of commitment is growing from not only university presidents but also high school principles. The National Center for Education Statistics estimates that more than half of all public high schools are involved in some kind of service learning. In 1994 several journals began to publish special issues devoted entirely to service learning including the *Education and Urban Society*. (Howard, 2003) The emphasis this and other journals have put on service learning shows the growing recognition of service learning as a viable option in education.

It is important to mention that there is a difference between volunteerism and service learning. Many high schools now require their students to complete a certain number of community service hours before they are eligible for graduation. There may be a "service" component but many times the "learning" component is missing. Three things that set service learning apart from volunteerism are mutuality, diversity, and reflection. These key components to service learning help to create an environment that enables students to learn through their service, become socially aware, meet people that are in some way different from themselves, and decipher how they feel and will eventually respond.

PROGRAMMING

Real Life. For some real life is looking through the other end of the lens. It is important for anthropologists and service learners alike to realize that their subjects, the people they are

trying to help, are real. They have feelings; they have dignity, pride, happiness, jealousy, sadness—just like everyone else. That is real life. Individual perspective results from background, education, and experiences; service learning has a lot to offer those that lack the opportunity or capability of engaging with the other.

Service learning can materialize in a plethora of ways. It is a group of three students volunteering at a nursing home (service) and discussing it in the car on the way home (learning). It is cooking lunch for the local homeless shelter once a month (service) and discussion afterwards at the sponsor church (learning). It is weekly Habitat for Humanity workdays (service) and weekly meetings to discuss (learning). It is weekend trips to low income areas to paint fences and plant flowers (service) and classroom discussion afterwards (learning). It is all of this and so much more.

THE OTHER

Engaging students in the other, something which they do not know, is essential to development. Learning occurs when students are introduced to something they do not already know, whether it is in a textbook or a homeless shelter. Three weeks in a homeless shelter will equal one semester of learning. Internally, and externally, learning will happen. Otherness is a term found throughout the social sciences, and in service-learning as well. Of course it is a comparative term, subjected to the people involved, in fact the very dynamic of the concept is its relativity and its application to particular situations of judgment, prejudice and action" (Dresch, James, et al., 2000, p. 272). The Other can only be determined by analyzing the Self. A quote from Trinh Minh-ha, in *When the Moon Waxes Red*, states "If you can't locate the other, how are you to locate your-self?"

Concepts familiar to service learning practitioners are beginning to infiltrate the outside world. In fact, the affects of service learning have been felt in many different ways. As United States General and founding chairman of America's Promise, Colin Powell said:

> Service-Learning is a particularly fertile way of involving young people in community service, because it ties helping others to what they are learning in the classroom. In the process, it provides a compelling answer to the perennial question: "Why do I need to learn this stuff."
> (http://servicelearningcommission.org/slcommission/index.html)

RESEARCH

There is no single area for research to happen within service learning. Basically, no organization, affiliation, or publication exists thus inhibiting the ability to build a body of knowledge surrounding the field. Research is lacking when considering service learning results. The primary reason to conduct research is to improve practice, and this could be relevant to anthropology and service learning. Research can establish if service-learning benefits students and communities, in what ways, under what conditions, and for how long." (Howard, 2003). A lot of weight is placed on high-quality, solid research, and anthropology has research worth its weight in gold. If clear definitions, outcomes, terminology, and methodology were developed than service learning as a serious tool would be more likely to be applied in higher education.

> Largely due to widespread confusion of academic service-learning with volunteerism and community service, the latter of which is generally perceived as outside the academy's domain, academic service-learning seeks legitimacy in the academy. Research, as the currency of the realm in higher education, enables advocates to provide acceptable forms of evidence about service-learning's benefits (Howard, 2003, p. 5)

Researchers know a great deal about the outcome of service learning on students during their participation in a project, but less about the long-term impacts of involvement. For

example, do students become lifelong civic participants as a result of their involvement in service learning? Short-term influences have a wide range of results, but consistently have a positive impact on students. Even if the least they get from their participation is a greater appreciation for others' situations. It is difficult to fit a service learning experience into the traditional models of research, as so much of it is qualitative, personal, and experiential.

Although it is difficult to come up with a solid method of research based on inconsistent assumptions, constructs, and definitions, there are some results that are undeniable. Service learning has positive results concerning students' personal development, an increased sense of social responsibility, connectedness with their community, greater racial tolerance, and more (Eyler & Giles, 1999). For educators, theories related to conceptions of social justice and/or social action could be used to strengthen collective understanding of motivation to participate and differential impact on student identity formation. Service is important but the primary goal is for students "to learn knowledge, skills, and self-awareness through structured reflection so they would be more effective in their service while in these programs and throughout their lives (Stanton, 1999, p. 110). Above I quoted Rabinow (1975) stating that the purpose of anthropology was to understand others so we could be changed. This is not so different than what service learning is trying to accomplish. Different methods, vocabulary, and arenas are employed by both disciplines but ultimately the goals are the same. T.S. Eliot said in his well-known poem, *Little Gidding* (fourth poem in the series of the *Four Quartets*) "And the end of all our exploring; Will be to arrive where we started; And know the place for the first time. Through the unknown, unremembered gate." Returning to the place where we began, and knowing it for the first time, is what anthropologists and service learners are attempting to do.

Learning so much about the other, the unknown, that you stop knowing the known, because it has changed.

ADVOCACY

Anthropologists have often been ignored when it comes to advocacy. They are potentially a great source of knowledge and resources that is not tapped. As more anthropologists become advocates for other issues they may become better advocates for anthropology. Reforms can be made when the anthropologists themselves are ready.

"Our discourse continues to remain locked up in the university closet" (Paine, 1985, p. 221). Service learners can help open the doors to that proverbial closet by utilizing the information and resources provided by and available to anthropologists.

Over the past several years there has been a call from senior anthropologists to do more public work, advocacy, or similar service type work. There has been a surge from these aged professors yet they do not have to be concerned for their career at that point. These people are calling for this type of work yet there is no credit for this work. On that same note, there is much recognition for publishing articles or books. These types of products give more clout to the professor both from the university, department, and in the wider world of academia. It seems that these professors who are about to retire are realizing the importance of advocacy type of work yet the call falls on deaf ears considering there is not much mobility in that arena. In addition, the decolonization of anthropology has become high on the agenda for some professionals, whereby changing the way anthropology is taught seems to be the first step to completing these modifications.

"We may look forward to legitimizing the advocate role within anthropology for any committed professional, without institutionalizing advocacy anthropology as a subfield and

thereby co-opting and diluting the power of advocacy as an acceptable (and even commendable task)" (Van Esterik, 1985, p. 77). This type of anthropology involves research undertaken in museums, laboratories, libraries, and field settings. However, the use of the collected information or outcome may be different.

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

A few years ago an opportunity with a service learning organization on campus gave me a chance to go to the Navajo Nation, a week of first hand interactions with the Navajo in northern New Mexico is what we got. Classified as an "Alternative Spring Break" trip, about fourteen students signed up to go. The variety of prior service learning experiences varied drastically. For some, this was their first and only encounter with Service Learning. For others it was "old hat," as they had been with this organization for three or four years while they had been at college. Also, the types of service experiences people had previously been doing were diverse. They ranged from working with elementary children, working with Habitat for Humanity, to working in homeless shelters.

No matter how little the students had in common with one another, the backgrounds from whence we came, our interests or academic majors, or the experiences we had, there was an immense opportunity for learning on this trip. Cultural exchange happened immediately in a mixture of contexts, including topics concerning: economics, sociology, religion, language, and even food. Each student dealt with the intense week of learning new world views, lifestyles, and perspectives in a different way. Writing frustrations in a notebook, asking questions, quietly contemplating the new information, interacting with others and long discussions to list a few. The variety of outcomes shows the differences among us, as well as some similarities.

The trip to the Navajo Nation involved a few service projects that served different purposes but had the same outcome. One project was tearing down a wooden playground that was beginning to show signs of its age. Afraid of the children getting splinters or hurt even worse on the aged equipment our hosts wanted it dismantled so a new playground could be built. Another project was to clean up a local hiking area, littered with hundreds of beer bottles and other trash, service learning students spent several hours cleaning up the local landmark. These projects and others took up the bulk of the time; evenings were spent reflecting about the days' events. Personal feelings and stories made reflection a time of somber listening, as students revealed a personal side of themselves that was sometimes vulnerable.

Although some learning happened all day long for students as they interacted with our Navajo hosts reflection was a time of sharing and learning from one another. This was a time for forming ideas, contemplating, and discussion. Without this reflection component the trip would have left students with a lot of unanswered questions and an overwhelming sense of wonder and even confusion. "Action, such as community service work, without reflection rings a bit hollow and fails to achieve many of the ideals stressed by critical views of education and society" (Rhoads, 1997, 180). The importance of reflection is stressed over and over again by service-learners. Robert Rhoads explains why:

> Service without a reflective component fails to be forward looking,
> fails to be concerned with the community beyond the present, and
> in essence fails as community service. Community service, ideally
> speaking, is about community building for today and tomorrow.
> This means that service projects ought to have reflective
> components that challenge individuals to struggle to identify
> various forces that may contribute to homelessness, rural and urban
> poverty, and economic inequalities in general (1997, p. 185).

Service learning programs are encouraged to establish in their students more than a charity based understanding; good programs help their students question the larger picture, in the

context of social justice and social policy. By giving students the opportunity to learn from the work they are doing then there is a greater chance that they will be socially aware in the future. Opening the eyes of young people is important, doing it through volunteer work is good but through the work plus the learning it is great.

COMBINATION

As noted above anthropologists are now considering their own positions, cultural baggage, and backgrounds in order to understand their own perceptions and how others perceive them. Anthropology is a unique mixture of objective and subjective methods. And so is service learning; the position is just as important in that case, as they are personally involved. Rhoads states, "traditional views of epistemology are not concerned with the position of the knower, who more often than not is seen as irrelevant to the knowledge itself" (1997, p. 17). He continues to explain that feminists, critical theorists and postmodernists have raised questions pertaining to the position of the "knower." "The knowledge produced is unique because it is relational knowledge tied to the researcher's sense of self, which necessarily is different from all others" (Rhoads, p. 18). Interestingly, knowledge has been traditionally considered as something to be discovered, independent of the knower. In this realm there is much to be discovered but subject to our own biases and interpretation.

Issues relevant to service learning and anthropology are vast, and a novel would be needed to cover them all. Social relations, power, reflexivity, representation, agency, the construction of meaning, sense of self and the world, education, class, ethnicity, gender, race, age, etc. are some of these concerns significant to both anthropology and service learning (McCabe, 2004). In my own experiences I have come across several of these issues. As a young woman gender and age have become apparent tools other people have used to measure me,

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especially on a construction site, mechanic's garage, or any other place where "man's work" is being done. A person does not have to be engaged in service learning to be able to experience any of these issues; they actually come out of regular people's everyday experiences dealing with them. In this way, Service learning students are more than outside observers they are "interactive participants," who become a part of the community just like ethnographers. They have their own experiences and feelings that add to the overall project. "Anthropology strengthens service-learning's ability to bring students to a level of analytical consciousness necessary to understand power structures underlying social relations and make systemic changes in community life" (McCabe, 2004, p. 17).

Anthropology and Service learning have a lot to offer each other, several terms and concepts are even the same. McCabe offers some information that "service-learning can profitably take from anthropology: the distinction between structural features of social life and individual persons' lived reality" (2004, p. 18). She explains that rather than blaming individuals for their poor situations that we should analyze the social system in which they are subject. To incorporate anthropology in a market research class she utilizes ethnographic research and service learning, which pertains to the community in which her students will engage. Methods that work for her include inviting community partners into the class before they begin the project where they engage in discussions about the organization of power. They visit the community for a brief training in observation, and allow stereotypes to surface before the actual service begins. (McCabe, 2004) McCabe's practical experience with both anthropology and service learning is helpful in preparing students for entering the field. "What anthropology can glean from service-learning is a more effective way of negotiating the insider/outsider roles of the activist. This would help the discipline increase its capacity for the practice of anthropology" (McCabe, 2004,

p. 26). Anthropology is contingent on fieldwork, and doing it well can only help everyone involved. Preparing students to enter the field through an anthropological framework can certainly help prepare them for their future placements. In both cases, the community is the laboratory, with much information to glean from it.

Critical Reflection

Students who engage in **Critical Reflection** are more likely

- to **move past the emotional** aspects of the experience

- to **apply what they have learned** to social problems and

- to develop a **transformed understanding** of the problems and issues surrounding them.

What? What was the concrete experience?

So What? What did you feel/think about it?

Now What? What does this mean in the bigger picture?

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