The ECCSSA Journal

Special Issue

Education for Mobilization and Action: Leading Transformational Change

The ECCSSA Journal

Founded in 1986

Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Dr. Rosalyn M. King
Professor of Psychology
Northern Virginia Community College

Associate Editors
Dr. Irene Dabrowski
Associate Professor of Sociology
St. John's University

Ms. Maureen-Ellis Davis
Associate Professor of Sociology
Bergen Community College

Ms. Monica Mallini
*Associate Professor of Electrical
Engineering Physics*
Montgomery College

Design Editor
Ms. Patricia Thiel
Publishing Specialist

Editorial Board

Dr. Satarupa Das
Professor, Economics
Phi Theta Kappa Chapter Advisor
Montgomery College

Dr. Gene Grabiner
*SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus,
Social Sciences*
Erie Community College

Dr. Frederick D. Harper
*Professor Emeritus, Psycho-Educational Studies and
Counseling*
Howard University

Dr. Elizabeth Wilcoxson
*Professor and Dean Emeritus, Human Services,
Social Sciences and International Studies*
Northern Essex Community College

Contents

Preface

This issue of *The ECCSSA Journal* has a focus on education, mobilization and action that can lead to transformational change. It is based on a continual unifying theme calling for research, theory, innovative models and dialogue that has been at the center of the Association's focus for more than a decade.

Critical inquiry has been made into the steps involved in planning and developing national and global networks for action that could lead to innovation and forward thinking in the 21st century. The necessary networks and coalitions would include citizens and professionals at all levels. Toward that end, ECCSSA called for research and theoretical understanding, as well as identification of critical obstacles and problems. Several scholars responded to the call and two critiques are provided in this issue of the Journal.

In addition, ECCSSA called for unique and innovative program models already moving in the direction of mobilizing students, community, nation and world. Several professionals answered the call and provide models they are implementing at leading institutions of higher education.

We hope you enjoy this volume of *The ECCSSA Journal* and contribute to the dialogue in future issues to come.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rosalyn M. King and Editors
The ECCSSA Journal

Education for Mobilization and Action: Leading Transformational Change

Dr. Rosalyn M. King

Professor of Psychology and Chair, Board of Directors, ECCSSA
Northern Virginia Community College
Loudoun Campus, Sterling, Virginia

Abstract

This paper was the opening commentary that presented the framework and rationale for the 2015 ECCSSA conference theme, providing continuity in dialogue from the previous year's conference on new frontiers as well as conference themes from the past decade. Discussion includes critical questions for the social and behavioral sciences relative to leading transformational change in higher education and society, and initial development of a blueprint for change. Exploration, research and discussion centers on: the purpose of education; definitions of transformational change and types of leadership models as compared to transformational leadership; guiding theories for change; research, visionary models and ideas on the horizon relative to higher education; as well as, innovations and bold new models of leadership being implemented in higher education, worldwide.

Keywords: Education, Higher Education, Mobilization and Action, Transformational Change, Leadership, Leading Change, Transactional Leadership, Models of Change, Transformative Teaching, Transformative Learning, Technology and Change, Organization for Action, Global Action Network, Teaching and Technology, New Models of Leadership in Higher Education.

Introduction

The ECCSSA 2015 Annual Conference Roundtable was devoted to exploring strategies for education, mobilization and action leading to transformational change in the 21st Century. The goal was to begin development of a blueprint that will lead to the implementation of needed transformations in various aspects of the social and behavioral sciences, higher education and all aspects of society.

Making Connections from Past to Present

Developing Unifying Themes

For the past several years, ECCSSA has been calling for a renaissance in societal institutions and humanity, nationally and globally. The Association has been engaged in dialogue and exploration on new ways of thinking about national and global social and public policy issues and seeking solutions.

In 2012, ECCSSA engaged in scholarly dialogue and research on the challenges, visions and strategies to renew a fragmented society, nation and world. There was a call for a *Great Renewal*—with the ultimate outcome of remembrance and recapturing of the human spirit; and, with the goal of rebuilding, revitalization, access, advancement and transformation. The discussion included such topics as: transformational governance and rebuilding of the nation's infrastructure; development of human potential and the creation of opportunities for growth; and, the need for transformational paradigm shifts at all levels of social and public policy; and, in higher education.

In 2013, ECCSSA continued the dialogue and explored ways to usher in a renaissance similar to that of the 17th century—an age of intellectual enlightenment, visionary discoveries, productive thinking, strategies and models for implementation. The primary objective was aimed at defining a new framework for teaching and leadership; and, promotion and development of a creative class of learners, thinkers, and professionals.

In 2014, ECCSSA moved further in the discussion with an exploration of new paradigms and effective models for redesign to replace old paradigms no longer working. The focus included an examination of theoretical frameworks and constructs, strategies and programs in all aspects of the social and behavioral sciences pertinent to society, nation and world. We explored redesign of models creating anomalies and unworkable solutions; and, strategies no longer able to resolve current problems. Scholars engaged in creative and critical dialogue about possible new and emerging ideas and revolutionary discoveries and thinking toward resolve and transformational change. The goal was to examine novel and unconventional scientific, revolutionary and innovative models—and not the reinvention, with a twist, of the same old constructs and models. ECCSSA sought productive, divergent, innovative and creative thinkers developing or piloting new models for teaching, learning, human development, human service, public service, instructional technology, research, and leadership; as well as those promoting and advocating for the advancement of a creative class of citizens.

Moving Forward with Mobilization and Action

As a result of the findings emerging from the aforementioned conference proceedings, ECCSSA began to ask critical questions which led to defining our 2015 conference theme on *education for mobilization and action and leading transformational change*. Three major critical questions were raised:

- How do we organize to put ideas and proposals generated from past conferences into action?

- Can we develop a blueprint for transformational change?

- How do we lead the change that is necessary?

Thus, in 2015, ECCSSA continued the dialogue but explored strategies and plans for educating the public, mobilizing for action and implementation. We sought proposals,

research, models and thinking that could begin to assemble a blueprint of action-oriented strategies for design and implementation; as well as programs, theories and ideas currently being piloted or tested.

Critical Questions for the Social and Behavioral Sciences

Critical questions to be considered include:

- How do we educate, prepare and mobilize social and behavioral scientists, secondary and higher education professionals and practitioners, policymakers, community based organizations, and other related institutions and professionals for action and implementation of programs and models that lead to transformational change in the 21st century?

- What are the collaborative models for preparing students as learners and future leaders for successful outcomes?

- How do we build leadership at all levels which would be important to successful transformations?

- How do we establish and strengthen collaboration, cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary partnerships?

- How do we increase civic engagement and build bridges and connections to the community?

- What are the roles to be played by key contributors from each aspect of society toward this end?

- What is the role of technology and the media in mobilization, action and leading transformational change?

ECCSSA called for forward thinking scholars developing or piloting visionary models in teaching, learning, human development, human service, public service, instructional technology, research, leadership and policy, working toward the promotion and advancement of a creative class of socially responsible citizens. These were scholars and professionals who would be seen as socially responsive transformational leaders of the 21st century.

The Purpose of Education

Education is the force of the future. It is the mechanism by which we can shape the world's future. Educated minds are needed in every walk of life. Education alone is not the entire answer but in its broadest sense is a major part of all efforts to imagine and create new relations among people and foster greater respect for the needs of the environment. Education includes formal and informal modes of instruction and learning, including what is traditionally acquired in the home and community (UNESCO, 1997).

Who are the community of educators? UNESCO describes this community of educators as including all aspects of society: *"teachers, lecturers, curriculum developers, administrators, support staff, industrial trainers, countryside rangers and staff, environmental health and planning officers, education officers with NGOs, community educators, youth leaders, parent association members, media people, representatives of learners in all contexts – and even more."* This could also include any members of society who perceive a need or duty to inform and educate people regarding the requirements of a sustainable future. This then would include international organizations, government departments and institutions, foundations, firms and corporations in the private sector (UNESCO, 1997).

Goal of Education

According to a United Nations report on the importance of education toward a sustainable world, they state:

The goal of education is to make people wiser, more knowledgeable, better informed, ethical, responsible, critical and capable of continuing to learn. Were all people to possess such abilities and qualities, the world's problems would not be automatically solved, but the means and the will to address them would be at hand. Education also serves society by providing a critical reflection on the world, especially its failings and injustices, and by skills, for bringing about desired changes in behaviors, values and lifestyles, and for promoting greater consciousness and awareness, exploring new visions and concepts, and inventing new techniques and tools.

Education is also the means for disseminating knowledge and developing public support for the continuing and fundamental changes that will be required if humanity is to alter its course, leaving the familiar path that is leading towards growing difficulties and possible catastrophe, and starting the uphill climb towards sustainability. Education, in short, is humanity's best hope and most effective means in the quest to achieve sustainable development. (UNESCO, 1997)

What is Transformational Change?

Transformation is an overused term and many misinterpret its meaning. Often, people confuse transformation with any kind of change, a technological breakthrough, innovation, process improvement or transition. However, it has been pointed out that few changes are truly transformational (Daszko and Sheinberg, 2005).

> **While all transformation is change, not all change is transformation.**
> (*Daszko and Sheinberg, 2005*)

Transformation is the creation and change of a whole new form, function or structure. To transform is to create something new that has never existed before and could not be predicted from the past. Transformation is a "change" in mindset. It is based on learning a system of profound knowledge and taking actions based on leading with knowledge and courage. (Daszko and Sheinberg, 2005, p. 1).

Transformation begins with the individual and comes from a base of knowledge. As a result, the individual is transformed. As a result, the individual that is transformed will have a new perspective and meaning of life and will apply its principles to every aspect of life. The cognitive shift will provide the basis for the person wanting to transform every organization that he or she interfaces with. They will have a basis for their judgment or assessment of every situation they confront.

The Greek word "*metanoia*" captures the meaning of transformation well. It literally means "*beyond the mind*." "It's an idea of stretching or pushing beyond the boundaries with which we normally think and feel. It means a profound change in mind, a radical revision, a transformation of our whole mental process, a paradigm shift." It is characteristic with a mind transplant (Daszko and Sheinberg, 2005).

Transformation can occur in individuals, organizations, industries, societies, etc. For more than a decade now, ECCSSA has been attempting to propel forward transformational change for our society and world. It is about leading a journey into the unknown, but based on knowledge and study. Daszko and Sheinberg (2005) describe it this way:

Transformation occurs when leaders create a vision for transformation and a system to continually question and challenge beliefs, assumptions, patterns, habits and paradigms with an aim of continually developing and applying management theory, through the lens of the system of profound knowledge. Transformation happens when people managing a system focus on creating a new future that has never existed before, and based on continual learning and a new mindset, take different actions than they would have taken in the past. (p. 1)

> Transformation is what happens when people see the world through a new lens of knowledge and are able to create an infrastructure, never before envisioned, toward the future. It is an urgency and drive to create the future. Transformation happens through continuous learning and taking new actions. It includes reaching for the unknown.

One View: Tradition, Transition, Transformation

Daszko and Sheinberg (2005) describe another way to look at transformation:

So what does it take to transform? Simply stated, our thinking is mostly what it is today. And then we have a choice. If we want to hold on to our tradition, (see Table 1) we will make incremental process improvements and not "rock the boat." In this mode we are content, complacent, arrogant, or unaware. If the world is changing in any significant way, it's only a matter of time before we do not survive. The timing of irrelevance (death) depends upon our industry or competition, whether that be global terrorists or another company. But we will not know if we have three months, three years, or 30 years to survive. If we want to move to the next level of change, yet be safe, we make transitions and change from State A to State B. We know where we are going (we go from manually taking inventory to bar coding). There is comfort in certainty. In transition, we can plan the change and work the plan. But

if we want to create a better future, we have to let go and reach for the unknown. We need transformation. We adopt the most difficult and challenging strategy because we must. (p. 3)

Table 1. Three Types of Change

Three Types of Change

	Traditional	Transitional	Transformational
Motivation for Change	Better, Faster, Cheaper	Fix a problem	Survival, Environment, World Changes, Breakthrough needed
Degree of Change	Incremental improvements	Transition from old to new; A to B	Revolutionary, Necessary
Thinking	Improve	Change management; strategic planning	Radical shifts in mindset/thinking/actions
Actions	Manage and control processes	Design the plan; implement the plan	Whole system change, complete overhaul of mindset, paradigms, culture, communications strategy, structure, actions, systems and processes, use of data, System of Profound Knowledge, cycles of Plan Do Study Act (PDSA)
Destination	Improvements; can be limited to improving the wrong things	Projects completed	Continually transforming; no end state
Change Requires	Improvement of skills, practices and performance; often limited to focusing on individual performance rather than the Whole system to make significant differences	Controlled process / projects managed / assigned	Senior leadership committed to new thinking, learning and actions; coaching from outside: "a system cannot see itself"
Outcomes	Improvements, limited	Changes, limited	Sustainable change (with leadership and continual learning and new actions) new system: agile, adaptable, flexible, intelligent, emerging, connected, involved, creative, moving forward; ability to sense and respond

Daszko, M. and Sheinberg, S. (2005). *Survival is optional: Only leaders with new knowledge can lead the transformation.* Online: *http://www.mdaszko.com/theoryoftransformation_final_to_short_article_apr05.pdf.*

The point being made from the work of Daszko and Sheinberg is that transformational change goes deeper and beyond incremental improvement or fixing a problem, to strategic and cognitive change that leads to whole systems change.

Transformation Requires Vision

Vision is an ever-evolving picture of the future. It is the search for the way of return. Vision has to be collaborative. Research from leading experts indicates that the journey is difficult and fears abound. Some of the challenges include: the fear of change, of loss, of the unknown, of making mistakes, of failure, of "not getting it," etc. On the other hand, as others awaken and join the transformation process, barriers and "silos' will break down, collaboration and synergy will be incredible; the creativity and innovation will be staggering.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

"We must transform, not merely change or improve if we are to create a viable future. It will take leadership with profound knowledge and courage to have the stamina and commitment that transformation requires. Transformation is not easy, but it is critical to the health of our families and global society. Transformation is not for the other person to do, but for every individual to take personal responsibility to help create new futures, to ask questions, to take risks, and to make a difference." (Daszko and Sheinberg, 2005, p. 10)

Waddell (2013) describes transformational change as large systems change that can occur at several levels: geological, historical and human scale. Geological transformations can involve massive geological events and mass extinction, such as shifts in physical composition of the earth, or in organisms and species; and the impact of human activity on the earth's natural systems.

On *historical scales*, transformation is associated with changes in technologies (bronze to iron), belief systems (pantheism to monotheism), governance systems (monarchies to democracies) and economies (feudal to capitalist). These are analytical frames that can be applied to the same period since transformation in one dimension has an interactive relationship with others (Waddell, 2013). Historical transformation reflects a basic realignment of structures and ways of life (Malia, 2008 as cited in Waddell, 2013). Another example provided would be our energy systems, moving from carbon-based to a renewable energy base. But the structures of these transformations are closely intertwined with our economic, governance and other structures.

The interrelationship between historical and human scale transformation is best associated with Kuhn's concept of a "paradigm shift," as he describes in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn however, was applying this concept to the revolutions that occur in the scientific community (Kuhn, 1962).

According to Waddell, *human scale* transformation focuses on organizations and social institutions within relatively short time frames. It is associated with the idea that

changes can be controlled, or at least consciously influenced, since the driver is human action. This is the basis for much organizational decision-making, management science and development economics. A cross-disciplinary review compared six revolutionary change theories and summarized their focus as changes in "deep structure." These systems go through revolutions just like the ones described by Kuhn. There are periods of equilibrium and periods of upheaval or revolution.

ECCSSA's unifying themes call for systemic, historical, and human scale transformations. Revolutions and the resulting transformations take place when there is an anomaly. There are many anomalies today that mandate a paradigm shift and creative vision in all of society and in higher education.

Another View: Incremental, Reform and Transformation

Waddell outlines three different types of change required for transformation: incremental, reform and transformation. According to him, these transformation descriptions fit well with the growing "transition management" knowledge theme that is developing with a categorical focus on pathways to a sustainable future. Transition is defined as *"a radical, structural change of a societal (sub)system that is the result of a coevolution of economic, cultural, technological, ecological, and institutional developments at different scale levels"* (Rotmans and Loorbach 2009, p. 185). Table 2 outlines these types of change as described by Waddell.

Table 2. Types of Change

Types of Change
(Adapted from Wadell, 2013)

Type of Change	Incremental	Reform	Transformation
Type of Learning	Single Loop	Double Loop	Triple Loop
Core Question	How can we do more of the same? Are we doing things right?	What rules shall we create? What shoud the goals be?	How do I make sense of this? What is the purpose? How do we know what is best?
Purpose	To improve performance..	To understand and change the system and its parts..	To innovate and create previously unimagined possibilities.
Power And Relationships	Confirms existing rules. Preserves the established power structure and relationships among actors in the system.	Opens rules to revision. Suspends established power relationships; promotes authentic interactions; creates a space for genuine reform of the system.	Opens issue to creation of new ways of thinking and action. Promotes transformation of relationships with whole-system awareness and identity; promotes examining deep structures that sustain the system.

Waddell, 2013, *Online: http://networkingaction.net/2013/11/what-is-transformational-change/.*

Incremental: This is the easiest of change types. It follows identification of one or more models…often the product of pilot projects…and applying the knowledge developed from them on a much larger scale.

Reform: This is change of moderate difficulty. If follows recognition by stakeholders of the need for change and agreement upon some new ways of organizing. The reorganizing can be done within current power structures, but requires new rules and processes.

Transformation: This is the most difficult of the types of change. Stakeholders recognize that there is a need for significant change that involves basic shifts in values, beliefs, relationships, and power. But the stakeholders do not know what those shifts are, and undertake a process of exploration.

Identifying the type of change needed is critical to success, because different types of change require different methodologies, tools and strategies. For example, negotiating tools are important in scaling up and reform; however, transformation requires re-visioning methodologies.

Global Action Networks

Global Action Networks (GANs) are distinctive because their work involves all three types of change. Often one geographic location or sub-issue requires one type of change, while others are dealing with a different type of change.

According to Waddell (2013), one useful unifying theme for building strategies across these change types is learning; and the concept of societal learning and change. Just as we learn as individuals, and we have the concept of organizational learning, so too can we have learning by societies when they create new capacity to realize new goals. One great example of this, according to Waddell, can be seen with South Africa as they moved to post-apartheid rule. South Africa's model was transformational change fostered by scenario development methodologies. This example illustrates the importance of planning, research and design.

Mobilization for transformational change requires delineation of the strategies and steps on a variety of systemic levels. It also requires a theoretical framework.

Mobilizing for Transformational Change: Some Guiding Theories

Organization for Action

Two critical questions that emerge when calling for mobilization and action is: *how do we mobilize for action?* And, *what is the power of collaboration and the recurring phrase, "it takes a village?"*

According to Waddell's theoretical perspective relative to transformational change, creating a network is key. It is also necessary to be able to assess a network's success and guide its development. One must have a clear understanding of the task at hand beyond the broad terms, and the importance of the network in accomplishing its goals.

Dialogic change processes are necessary. According to Waddell, dialogic change establishes the overarching objective of transforming people, relationships, and systemic patterns. Dialogic captures the central role of human interaction through conversation in achieving those transformations. Dialogic change is not problem solving. It involves *"initiatives addressing issues by promoting change in human behaviors and the systemic relationships they create, and mobilizing a broad range of system actors as issue owners and decision makers in the change process"* (Pruitt and Waddell, p. 2).

Dialogic conversation is deeper and more strategic dialogue than what one usually engages in. It includes 4 fields of conversation: talking nice-we say what we are expected to say; talking tough-the conversation moves into debate and is about making and winning a point; reflective dialogue-allowing participants to be authentic and confront reality and eventually see the others' perspective—listening without resistance, suspending and being respectful; and, generative dialogue—a yet even deeper level of dialogue, allowing one to move beyond one's perspective to see the whole, which allows for the emergence of *moral imagination* (Pruitt and Waddell, 2005). To be more specific, Pruitt and Waddell define generative dialogue as *"conversation that brings forth creative energy and collective intelligence out of a personal sense of connection to the whole"* (p. 8). Table 3 describes a basic approach toward organization for action and dialogic change.

Table 3. Moving Toward Dialogic Change

Goal	Rationale
Greater efficiency	Strengthening ties supports reduced duplication of efforts.
New benefits of scale	Strengthening ties supports ability to aggregate linearly for greater impact/leverage.
Innovation	Creating networks with diverse voices, perspectives and resources supports emergence of new ways to approach issues and integrate resources.
Enhanced coherence	Strengthening ties supports actions on behalf of "the system," the potential for asserting goals of the broader system, and reducing "friction"
Improved coordination	Creating networks broadens the options for action and enhances exchange of information and knowledge.

* Developed from 2005. *Dialogic approaches to global challenges: Moving from "dialogue fatigue" to dialogic change processes*. With Bettye Pruitt. Generative Dialogue Project. August. Online: http://networkingaction.net/networks-change/.

Therefore, there is a need to build a community of dialogue practitioners who would work to develop the potential of dialogue for addressing societal and global challenges.

Strategies and Structures of Networks

Most often network categories are simply descriptive, such as degrees of centralization. However, according to Waddell, categories should connect to the purpose and strategy of a network. Table 4 describes networks by their core strategy that should determine structure.

Table 4. Networks by Core Strategy

Strategy	The Driving Need
System Organizing	There is an emerging system of diverse stakeholders working on and affected by a specific issue or opportunity. A key role of the network is to bring them together and generate coherence in strategies.
Learning, Research, and Development	To realize the network goals, new knowledge and capacity must be developed. A key role of the network is to develop and disseminate new knowledge and tools with research, piloting new approaches, and training.
Shared Visioning	There are diverse stakeholders with diverse perspectives on an issue and what should be done about it. A key role of the network is to create events and interactions that generate shared understanding and alignment of strategies.
Measuring	There is need to quantify and measure a phenomenon, in order to advance a network's vision. A key role of the network is to develop indices, assessments and/or certification processes.
Advocacy	There is need to mobilize voice and increase pressure upon specific stakeholders who are blocking (actively or inactively) change. A key role of the network is to develop this pressure.
Financing	Sometimes people see that availability of funding is holding back a critical goal. Stakeholders combine forces to aggregate their impact and create a more efficient funding vehicle than any one on its own.

Table drawn from 2009, *Strategies and structures of global networks: Learning for global knowledge partnership 3.0.* A report to the Board of the Global Knowledge Partnership. June. 3. Paris, France. Online: *http://networkingaction.net/networks-change/*.

All of the above strategies use collaboration, dialogue, knowledge and planning toward action and the creation of effective networks. This includes creating learning communities, incorporating consensus building, promoting real collaboration, strengthening diverse actors, system organizing—creating connections and a systems consciousness among diverse actors. The model also calls for engaging stakeholders as true partners. Figure 1 outlines a graphic model of the major components of a Global Action Network.

Figure 1. A Network Typology
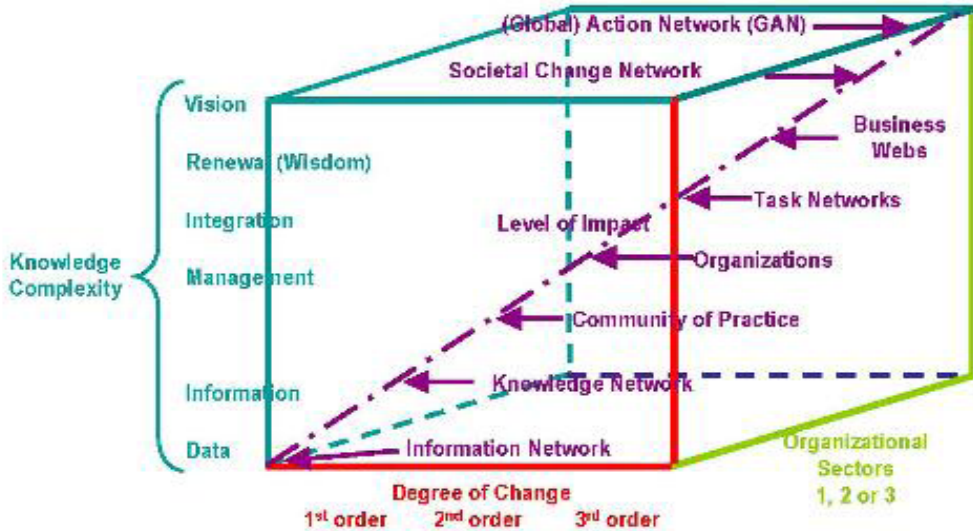
A Network Typology

Developed by Verna Allee and Steve Waddell
Online: http://networkingaction.net/networks-change/.

Four key activities can influence a network's structure:

- **Knowledge Complexity:** Does a network aim to simply generate data, or share information, or generate new visions that embed the knowledge?

- **Degree of Change:** Does a network aim to simply replicate a proven approach (1st Order Change – Scaling Up), implement a new approach (2nd Order Change -Reform), or develop a new approach (3rd Order Change –Transformation)?

- **Organizational Sectors:** Does a network aim to engage organizations from one, two or three of the following sectors: business, government, or civil society?

- **Geographic/Cultural Complexity:** Does a network aim to be local, national, regional, or global?

The center diagonal in Figure 1 above aims to suggest that combining these activities in different ways can produce a range of networks. A "higher" network must be proficient at all the "lower" network activities. For example, a Knowledge Network must also be an effective Information Network. The most complex of networks — one that is global, aiming for transformation by engaging all three sectors and developing new visions — is called a "Global Action Network" (GAN).

Creating a Global Action Network

Global Action Networks (GANs) are a specific type of network. These are a new, innovative network that are addressing critical global issues like climate change, poverty, health, education, and human security. They do this by integrating seven characteristics. GANs are:

1. Global and multi-level…local, regional, global;

2. Entrepreneurial action learners…developing new tools, processes and relationships;

3. Public goods producers…producing for public benefit;

4. Diversity-embracing…collaborating across sectoral (business-government-civil society), linguistic, ethnic, north-south and other boundaries;

5. Inter-organizational networks…individuals have a role, but organizations are the key participants--neither hierarchy nor markets provide the principles, values or capacity;

6. Systemic change agents…working on transformation, reform, and scaling up; and,

7. Voluntary leaders…participants make commitments to push the boundaries of enhancing environmental, social and economic outcomes.

These global, multi-stakeholder networks are organized around specific issues. Some examples of programs that have used this model include such large-scale programs as:

- Transparency International (corruption)

- The Forest Stewardship Council

- Social Accountability International

- The Marine Stewardship Council

- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS

- Tuberculosis and Malaria

- The Microcredit Summit Campaign

- The Global Water Partnership

- The Sustainable Food Lab

(See Waddell's work on GANs, 2011). Table 5 shows the analysis of change by type of strategy.

Table 5. Analysis of Change by Type of Strategy

	Incremental	Reform	Transformation
Purpose	To improve the performance of the established system.	To change the system to address shortcomings and respond to the needs of stakeholders.	To redirect the system and change its fundamental orientations and core relationships.
Participation	Replicates the established decision making group and power relationships.	Brings relevant stakeholders into engagement in ways that enable them to influence the decision making process.	Creates a microcosm of the problem system, with all participants coming in on an equal footing as issue owners and decision makers.
Process	Confirms existing rules. Preserves the established power structure and relationships among actors in the system.	Opens rules to revision. Suspends established power relationships; promotes authentic interactions; creates a space for genuine reform of the system.	Opens issue to creation of new ways of thinking and action. Promotes transformation of relationships with whole-system awareness and identity; promotes examining deep structures that sustain the system.

Source: Pruitt, B. and S. Waddell. 2005. *Dialogic approaches to global challenges: Moving from "dialogue fatigue" to dialogic change processes.* Generative Dialogue Project. August.

Making an assessment and measuring results is also vital to mobilization and transformation. Waddell provides the following summation as to the steps in the process of mobilizing for action and measuring results. Network success depends upon developing competencies or skills as summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Steps in Mobilization and Action and Measuring Success

Waddell. (2015). Success competencies-Key network competencies. Online: networkingaction.net/networks-change/success-competencies.

Assessing the presence of these competencies according to Waddell is best done with tools that possess a specific set of characteristics.

Education and Preparation

Roles and Responsibilities

The critical question being raised by our Association is: *what kind of preparation do we need to lead change?* In addition, related questions include: *what should models of teacher education look like in undergraduate and graduate programs in teaching? What are*

the necessary skills needed? What are the particular roles and responsibilities of professionals in the social sciences, of college faculty, staff and administrators, of related institutions and organizations; and, the community at large?

Discipline Priorities

Relative to subject disciplines in higher education, some critical questions include: *What would be the priorities of each discipline in the social and behavioral sciences to define the change that is needed and then to lead the change? What would be the strategies? How do you begin to plan for making transformational change in direction and hopefully in outcome? How would each discipline think about transforming teaching and learning, with the ultimate outcome of transforming the thinking, mindsets and lives of the people we teach as well as our own?* The resulting effects of reaching individuals in our classrooms and changing their mindsets would be a major step toward transforming the world.

The Search for Visionary Models

What Types of Transformations Should We Be Thinking About?

Envision, Encourage, Create, and Implement!

ECCSSA outlined in the 2014 conference, a myriad of issues in society and globally that particularly impact higher education and the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Among these issues include: transformations and redesign in higher education and policy; new roles for the behavioral sciences, including the eradication of mental illness and pathology, racism and discrimination; improving racial understanding and issues relative to diversity; redesigning leadership overall, but particularly in higher education; the role of technology in leadership, teaching and learning; impacts on human development; the promotion of an ethical society; transforming consciousness; and the promotion of a positive mindset.

ECCSSA has also highlighted new paradigms and models on the horizon. Therefore, based on these discussions the question emerges: Where do we begin and what should be the focal point of our action for leading change?

A decision was made to focus on four areas in the first phase of our work: *transformative teaching; transformative learning, including the use of technology; new models of leadership in higher education; and, new and visionary models of higher education.*

Transformative Teaching

What is transformative teaching? It is teaching that changes people, altering fundamentally the way learners understand themselves and others, the way they engage in and contribute to their larger world.
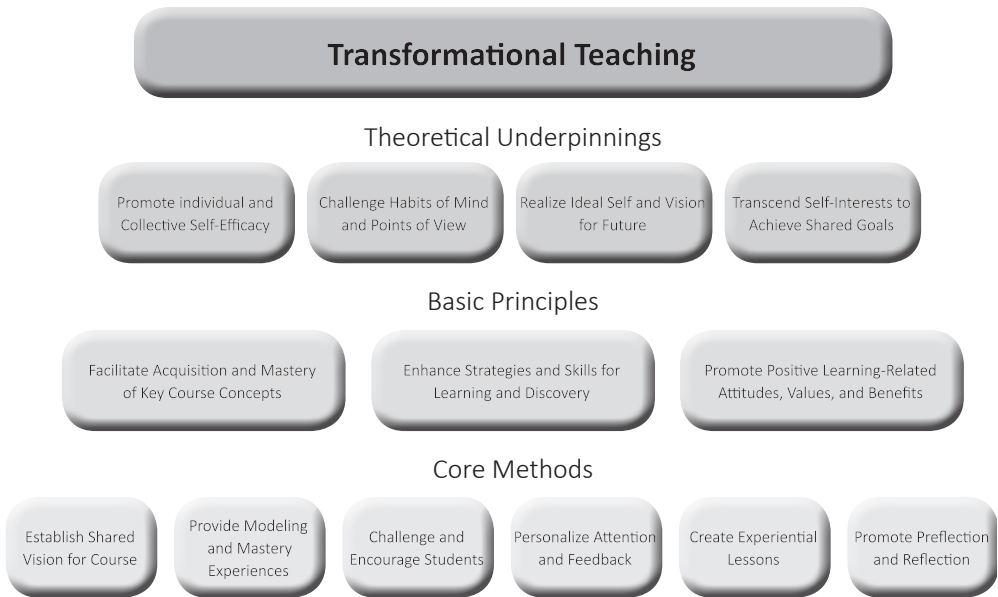
Slavin and Zimbardo (2012) defines transformative teaching as "the expressed or unexpressed goal to *increase students' mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning-related attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills*" (p. 576).

Transformational teaching involves creating dynamic relationships between teachers, students, and a shared body of knowledge to promote student learning and personal growth. From this perspective, Slavin and Zimbardo views instructors as intellectual coaches who create teams of students who collaborate with each other and with their teacher to master bodies of information. Teachers assume the traditional role of facilitating students' acquisition of key course concepts, but do so while enhancing students' personal development and attitudes toward learning. They accomplish these goals by establishing a shared vision for a course, providing modeling and mastery experiences, challenging and encouraging students, personalizing attention and feedback, creating experiential lessons that transcend the boundaries of the classroom, and promoting ample opportunities for preflection and reflection. They believe that these methods are synergistically related; and, when used together, maximize students' potential for intellectual and personal growth (Slavin and Zimbardo, 2012). According to Slavin and Zimbardo, a transformational teacher is one who not only achieves transformation in their students, but who also models a willingness to be transformed by the learning themselves.

Slavich and Zimbardo outlines six core methods of transformational teaching as cited below. (See also Figure 3.)

1. Establishing a shared vision for a course.

2. Providing modeling and mastery experiences.

3. Intellectually challenging and encouraging students.

4. Personalizing attention and feedback.

5. Creating experiential lessons.

6. Promoting preflection and reflection.

Figure 3. A Model of Transformational Teaching

Transformational Teaching

Theoretical Underpinnings

Promote individual and Collective Self-Efficacy	Challenge Habits of Mind and Points of View	Realize Ideal Self and Vision for Future	Transcend Self-Interests to Achieve Shared Goals

Basic Principles

Facilitate Acquisition and Mastery of Key Course Concepts	Enhance Strategies and Skills for Learning and Discovery	Promote Positive Learning-Related Attitudes, Values, and Benefits

Core Methods

Establish Shared Vision for Course	Provide Modeling and Mastery Experiences	Challenge and Encourage Students	Personalize Attention and Feedback	Create Experiential Lessons	Promote Preflection and Reflection

Slavin and Zimbardo, 2012, p. 597.

Teaching and Technology

The call for higher education to create an environment for learning technologies is in the forefront. According to Soares (2013), learning technologies and the educational approaches they enable, are among the tools that can spark innovative educational strategies to address U.S. educational priorities including access, affordability, and completion. But, the current state policy environment does not encourage the adoption of these technologies in a generative way in which proven practice informs policy formation. Current practice still promotes the assumption that faculty and students in the classroom interact to produce learning. But technology and the incorporation of technology into teaching has changed the scenario.

"Learning technology is, thus, the capability to help students master new knowledge and demonstrate its use, facilitated by the interaction of four components: hardware (e.g., micro¬chips, computers, telecommunications equipment); software (e.g., digital books and learning tools, intelligent programs that interact with learners to help them master content and with faculty to help them manage the learning process); the Internet/web (which allows for real-time access and collaboration among learn¬ers and faculty); and the best research in learning science (the study of how people learn)." (Soares, 2013, p. 72)

Such learning technology includes:

- **Interactive courseware** which is low-cost, high quality software that delivers instruction by actively engaging the student with content and applications of knowledge, ideally linked to learning maps that visualize the journey to completion;

- **Diagnostic assessment** that provide granular data on student knowledge and performance paying particular attention to college readiness;

- **Learner relationship** management software that provides students, faculty and staff with tools to monitor learning progress in real time and flags them when intervention is needed.

These technologies help to personalize the learning experience of students and adapt institutional resources to learners' needs, thus optimizing the quality of the learning experience. *"Together these tools, with their ability to personalize instruction, are enabling the development of alternative, low-cost higher education models that enhance quality, increase student persistence, and reduce costs"* (Soares, 2013, p. 72).

Learning technologies supported by the teaching faculty can help students master the knowledge and obtain the outcomes necessary for learning. Many faculty are not using or incorporating learning technology in instruction in the college classroom. The use of e-books and online portals among other software is invaluable to learning and allows students to interact in ways that the written textbook does not allow.

In addition, non-institutional education is emerging as another opportunity for an educational experience for some students. This education is being offered by some traditional colleges and universities through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Many of these courses can be taken for credit if people are willing to pay for them. The presence of this technology changes tremendously the face of education (Eaton, 2013).

Bridging the Three Cultures: Interdisciplinary, Cross-disciplinary and Multidisciplinary Collaboration

It has been observed that collaboration or co-teaching at the collegiate level is rather rare. There is a call for more collaboration in teaching at the college level. The research cites the fact that this may be a consequence of attempts to retain academic freedom and the fact that faculty want to attend to their sole engagement with their students. This is unfortunate, since collaboration supports the premise that learning should be socially created (McDaniel & Colarulli, 1997 as cited in Patel and Herick, 2010).

There is a need for increasing collaboration in teaching at all levels of higher education and across the three cultures: The natural sciences contribute to our material comforts and health and clarify puzzling natural phenomena. The humanities articulate changes in the public mood produced by historical change and implicitly defend an ethical posture that seems appropriate for their society during a historical era. The social sciences try to evaluate the claims of both groups. (Kagan, 2009, p. 265).

Transformative Learning

Education systems that incorporate human interaction and multidimensional learning are poised to change what and how we learn (Abrams, 2014). These new models which are emphasizing human interaction and multidimensional learning are experimenting beyond the capacity of traditional higher education and producing valuable insights into what the future of education will look like.

These new programs and models are designed to cultivate 21st century skills, including intercultural communication, systems thinking, social and emotional intelligence, empathy and social entrepreneurship. In these newer models, grades are not at the core.

In some transformative learning programs such as the Open Masters Program, it is a tuition free self-directed learning community where individuals support one another in developing and executing personally customized learning plans. According to the research, since its inception in 2012, students have pursued learning in diverse fields such as: art for social change; urban farming; and, chair design. These self-organizing learning networks have now spread to San Francisco and the Netherlands (Abrams, 2014).

> *"New learning models emphasize human interaction and multi-dimensional learning."*
>
> New models are designed to cultivate 21st century skills, including intercultural communication, systems thinking, social and emotional intelligence, empathy and social entrepreneurship. In these newer models, grades are not at the core; and some programs are tuition-free.

Open Master's Program

- Complete a final project and public presentation showcasing strengths, skills and knowledge to the community.
- Submit work for open peer review.
- Receive letters of endorsement from peers and mentors.
- Create and follow individualized plans and routines for self-directed learning.
- Complete many different types of learning projects.

Future Directions in the Behavioral Sciences

There is a need to eradicate mental illness and non-nurturing environments. It is reported that psychological and other health-related problems stem largely from being in non-nurturing environments. Major chronic health conditions are influenced by psychological and behavioral problems and disorders.

Numerous experimental evaluations of family and school interventions show that the prevention of these problems can be enhanced by the development of prosocial behavior in nurturing environments that promote, teach, and reinforce it. These environments would also set limits on opportunities to engage in problem behavior (Biglan and Taylor, 2000).

Extensive recent research reports in clinical psychology reveal that environments that encourage psychologically flexible behavior are beneficial for ameliorating a wide variety of psychological, behavioral, and health problems. Psychological flexibility involves the mindful pursuit of valued action while taking an accepting, nonjudgmental stance toward one's thoughts and feelings (Biglan, 2013).

Reducing poverty and economic inequality are also essential for achieving large increases in the prevalence of well-being. Poverty is a major risk factor impacting psychological health and well-being, violence and more. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), show that countries with greater economic inequality have higher rates of social, behavioral, and health problems. Poverty is also a predictor of poor treatment outcomes.

As a proposed model, The Oregon Research Institute calls for the creation of a Center for the Support of Healthcare Reform and Comprehensive Prevention. Such a center would provide the following: information to the public and policymakers about the evidence relevant to improving the health and wellbeing of the population; consultation and training to states, communities, and organizations working on any area of public health outlined in the program; programs, policies and practices that could assist in achieving the client's goals; the development of research to support the efforts of the client; and, the formation of coalitions with other behavioral science organizations and advocacy organizations to further the goals of the program and public health (Biglan, 2013).

New Models of Leadership in Higher Education

It is the task of leaders to raise consciousness on a wide scope. James MacGregor Burns was one of the first scholars to assert that true leadership not only creates change and achieves goals within the environment; but also changes the people involved in the necessary actions for the better as well: both followers and leaders are ennobled. Burns became famous among alternative leadership scholars because his model of transformational leadership included an ethical/moral dimension that, prior to 1978, had not been infused into any leadership theory.

Transactional Leaders vs. Transformational Leaders

- **Transactional leadership** seeks to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interest.

- **Transactional leaders** use conventional reward and punishment to gain compliance from their followers.

- **Transactional leaders** accept the goals, structure and culture of the existing organization. They must do so because this type of leadership is ineffective at bringing significant change.

- **Transactional leadership** can be active or passive.

Passive Leadership

To influence behavior, the leader uses correction or punishment as a response to unacceptable performance or deviation from the accepted standards.

Active Leadership

To influence behavior, the leader actively monitors the work performed and uses corrective methods to ensure the work is completed to meet accepted standards.

Transformational leadership requires a high level of authenticity, self-esteem, motivation, morality, and self-actualization. Transformational Leadership inspires wholeness of being, so your thoughts, feelings and actions are consistent. It is about leading with an integrity and authenticity that resonates with others, and inspires them to follow. Not only does it inspire others to follow, but to become leaders themselves.

Transactional Leadership

"…occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things." (p. 19)

Transformational Leadership

"…occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality." (p. 20)

(Burns, 1978)

Visionary Models of Higher Education

Leading Change

What are the characteristics of a leader of change? According to the research these characteristics of leadership include the following:

- Must be inspired in heart and mind, and show it.

- Must be connected to self, the world and the people around them.

- Must be grounded in reality.

- Must have a vision and communicate it with passion and purpose.

- Must allow emotion and commitment to speak to others in a way that transcends the mind, and speaks to the heart.

- Must pay personal attention to others in a way that engages them and generates trust and commitment.

- Must genuinely care about others, what they want, and how you can serve them.

- Must access the awesome power of the mind.

- Must be curious, open to new ideas and learn constantly.

- A transformational leader is authentic.

(www.transformationalleader.net. 2015)

Visionary and New Models of Higher Education

There are not many diverse models in higher education. But those institutions making the attempt offer a different perspective on education—a lens that provides a glimpse of what higher education might look like in the future. Some interesting innovative models of change for the structure of higher education are on the horizon.

Models include:

- Quest University, Canada;

- Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom;

- University of Technology, Sydney, Australia;

- Minerva Project, United States; and

- Duke-Kunshan University, Kunshan, China

Quest University, Canada. This university opened in 2007 with 73 students and small class sizes. There are no lectures. All classes are seminar-discussion format. All students complete the same foundational courses in the first two years that cover the humanities, math and sciences. The latter two years are unique with individual

learning paths chosen and directed by the student. There are no grades and students receive check marks to indicate if they are engaged in learning (Morrison, 2013).

Liverpool-John Moores University, United Kingdom. Is one of the UKs new generation universities. It is a research university with a global model that stresses work-related learning and skill development. The University's program, *World of Work*, is a support and skill development program for all students involving input from national and international employers and business experts. Students not only gain work experience with top companies, but also develop a skill-set labeled *World of Work* skills. Students' abilities are also verified through an employer-validated Skills Statement and Interview during their undergraduate course of study (Morrison, 2013).

University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. Is one of the largest universities in Australia with the goal of being a world leader in technology education. The focus is on global practice-oriented learning where students undertake research, professional and community work experiences. The program is heavily focused on collaborative learning that integrates institutional research. The institution's learning strategy includes student-generated learning goals, personalized learning paths that integrate online sources, faculty feedback, and development of a personal learning network using digital platforms and tools.

Minerva Project, United States. The Minerva Project strives to become an Ivy League institution. The core of study is through technology that encourages students to access content and resources online, along with face-to-face interaction (Morrison, 2013).

Duke-Kunshan University, Kunshan, China. A collaborative partnership between Duke University and the Kunshan government has resulted in the creation of a new university grounded in innovation and world class methods of inquiry and teaching, with a new and innovative model of higher education. This new innovation helps China achieve its goals related to expansion and reforms of higher education. In late 2010, Wuhan University, China's oldest modern university, and consistently ranked within the top 10 comprehensive institutions in the country, became Duke's academic partner for the creation of DKU. Through DKU, Duke will play a leadership role in creating new models of world-class higher education in China, introducing students and faculty to Duke's signature strengths of education and the interdisciplinary study of contemporary problems (Huang, 2014).

Who Can Lead Change?

It is the role of many to be the leaders of change. It should be a collaborative and collective effort. Coordinating change requires very wise and knowledgeable transformational leaders. Inclusion and diversity are essential in the process. Diversity of skills, knowledge and talent is critically important. This should be a global effort.

In summary, to begin to ponder the question as to who should be the change leaders, the following suggestions are offered for future discussion, consideration, mobilization and action:

- Working Coalitions representing diversity on all levels, by race, ethnicity, culture, age, education, areas of expertise, and more. These individuals would also be cognizant of or understand the pulse of the community. They can lead because they are equipped with a set of guiding principles of respect and fairness.

- They can see and feel the inner nature and beauty of the human psyche, without judgement, without terror and without being punitive to another person.

- These coalitions would comprise the community of educators and citizens, coming together to have deep dialogue about critical issues affecting their lives and others. They would seek remedy by finding new solutions toward creating a better world for all. Only those individuals with a foundational knowledge and base of understanding, along with clarity of moral principles can lead the change that is necessary for all humans to become whole and flourish in society and world.

References

Abrams, M. (2014) New models for higher education. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Online: www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/new_models_for_higher_education.

Biglan, T. (2013). Future directions in the Behavioral Sciences: Implications for Oregon Research Institute. *Nurturing Environments*. Online: http://nurturingenvironments.org/?p=448.

Biglan, A. & Taylor, T. K. (2000). Why have we been more successful in reducing tobacco use than violent crime? American Journal of Community Psychology, 28, 269-302.

Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. New York: Harper & Row.

Daszko, M. and Sheinberg, S. (2005). Survival is optional: Only leaders with new knowledge can lead the transformation. Online: http://www.mdaszko.com/theoryoftransformation_final_to_short_article_apr05.pdf.

Eaton, J.S. (2013). A quality platform for non-institutional higher education. Educause Review, September/October. Online: https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm1354.pdf.

Huang, C. (2014). Duke-Kunshan University-A bold innovation. Sanford Journal of Public Policy, (Commentary). Online: http://sites.duke.edu/sjpp/2014/duke-kunshan-university-a-bold-innovation/.

Kagan, Jerome. (2009). The three cultures: Natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities in the 21st century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kuhn, T. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Lohe, D. (2013). What is transformative teaching and how do I do it? Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning. Online: http://www.slu.edu/blogs/cttl/2013/06/19/what-is-transformational-teaching-and-how-do-i-do-it/.

Malia, M. 2008. *History's locomotives: Revolutions and the making of the modern world.* New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press.

Morrison, D. (2013) Four radically different models in higher ed. worth considering. Online: https://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2013/12/17/four-radically-different-models-in-higher-ed-worth-considering/.

Pruitt, B. and Waddell, S., et al. (2005). Dialogic approaches to global challenges: Moving from "dialogue fatigue" to dialogic change processes. Working paper. Generative Dialogue Project. Online: Online: http://networkingaction.net/networks-change.

Rotmans, J, and Loorbach, D. (2009). Complexity and transition management. *Journal of Industrial Ecology* 13(2):184-96.

Slavin, G. and Zimbardo P. (2012). Transformational teaching: Theoretical underpinnings, Basic principles, and core methods. *Educational Psychology Review*, (24)4, 569-608.

Soares, L. (2013). Creating an environment for learning technologies: Toward a generative model of state policy and institutional practice. Educause Review, September/October. Online: https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm1354.pdf.

The Transformational Leadership Report. (2007). Online: www.transformationalleadership.net.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (1997). Educating for a sustainable future: A transdisciplinary vision for concerted action. Online: http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_a/popups/mod01t05s01.html.

Waddell, S. 2011. *Global action networks*: *Creating our future together.* Bocconi University on Management. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Waddell, S. 2013. What is transformational change? Blog Online: http://networkingaction.net/2013/11/what-is-transformational-change/.

Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2009). *The spirit level: Why more equal societies almost always do better.* London: Allen Lane.

Oppressive Structures in the Postmodern Era: A Conceptual Analysis

Nabil Marshood, PhD

Professor of Sociology,
Hudson County Community College

Abstract

This paper explores the notion that structural hegemonic powers, and the preoccupation of the state with force and militarization of society have contributed to new and intensified forms of oppression in the postmodern era. Old and new colonial patterns of oppression and their consequences on the Native Americans, African Americans, and Palestinians are highlighted. By examining the interconnectedness between oppressive structures and their impact on these three groups, this paper identifies a consistent pattern of structural oppression that, within the context of domination, is predictable and goal oriented.

Keywords: Oppression, oppressive structures, hegemony, Native-Americans, African-Americans, Palestinians, postmodernity, militarization, colonialism, comparative analysis, critical analysis, settler nation-state, domination, dominant-subordinate relations, cultural change, structural change, history, sociology, power, minority group, marginal group, dominant classes, interconnection analysis.

Introduction

The Martians have arrived and are very inquisitive. Listed below are only a few of their questions:

1. After the many accomplishments of the Civil Rights movement, why are young black men still targeted and killed by the police? And, why do they constitute a significant share of the prison population in the U.S.?

2. After more than 400 years, why do many Native Americans remain trapped on reservations and isolated from the rest of the nation?

3. After more than 60 years, why do Palestinians remain trapped in refugee camps?

4. Why do black and minority inner-city ghettos remain standing in the United States?

5. Why are Palestinians angry? Why don't we hear their story? And, why don't we believe them?

6. Why don't we hear about or from the Native Americans? What ever happened to their anger and loss of land and culture?

7. Why does the U.S. Congress appear to be occupied by Israel? How did the Zionist Israeli agenda become an American one?

The Martians have many more questions. They are curious, those Martians. They have discovered that people on earth have the answers to all their questions, but they lack the courage or political will to discuss them. Those same people would rather have the Martians, their questions and the reality they depict, disappear. They would rather live in denial of a reality which they, themselves, have constructed.

For the keen observer however, these are not questions but facts that may on the surface appear disconnected. But, as it is the tradition of the sociological method, a deeper and critical analysis may shed some light on the connectedness between them and the underlying structural conditions that maintain them. Consistent with the sociological tradition, a deeper examination will highlight the causes of oppression and the meaning of experiencing it. This paper discusses the notion that structural hegemonic powers, and the preoccupation of the super power with force and militarization of society have contributed to oppression in the postmodern era. The intention is not to answer the Martian's questions but to set a conceptual and analytical framework that would set the stage for further exploration.

Comparative analysis would bring about analogies between various oppressed groups of people and highlight the dynamics of powerful oppressive structures and their impact on such groups. The focus of this analysis will center on the Palestinians, the African Americans, and the Native Americans without taking away the unique histories and the rich literature relevant to each group. And while recognizing their individual narrative of history and struggle for liberation, this paper suggests that an examination of the connectivity between them is limited. It also suggests that interconnected analysis would offer a new paradigm of scholarship and consciousness.

As we pursue this line of scholarship, it behooves us to be cognizant of the fact that oppressive structures have touched and impacted a large number of the world's populations throughout history. The fact that this analysis centers on the three groups mentioned above, does not and should not diminish its relevance to other oppressed groups such as Mexican Americans and others. On the contrary, such analysis should be treated as a starting point for future examination of analogies and interconnectivity.

One question that is highlighted in the title of this paper is related to postmodernity. The fact that society has moved into such a stage begs the question as to whether oppressive structures have also changed with it. Does this era in human change bring about new horizons for liberation of oppressed groups? Or, does it bring about intensified and increased levels of oppression? The literature on postmodernity, on power and oppression, on minority and marginal groups is very rich, but connecting the dots and illuminating these groups and their issues together under a critical examination is almost absent.

Understanding structural oppression with all its forms and manifestations requires a sociohistorical perspective on the matter. Comparative analysis from a sociohistorical

context may in the long term suggest a new frontier in scholarship that would bring about a deeper understanding of the genealogy of oppression and human desire for freedom.

Power and Oppression

Power is always present in all human interactions and exists between individuals, couples, and between groups, communities and nations. The question that sociologists and social scientists in general are concerned with does not center on the absence of power but on its distribution, application and the exercise thereof. Understanding how some people effectively control the actions of others is the central theme of sociological inquiry. Max Weber defined power as *"the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against the resistance of others"* (1968, p. 212).

"…history teaches us that power is used to maintain the status quo and may never cease to exist."

One of the questions before us is to distinguish between the intent and consequences of power. Parents, for example, have more power over their young children. So do teachers over their students. In these and many similar cases the intent is to promote a healthy and independent child, and in the case of the teacher, an independent thinker. In other words, in a healthy parent-child or teacher-student relationship the intent is maturity, independence, and freedom. In such cases, the holders of power gradually transfer their power to their dependents for the purpose of growth and freedom. In the end, the equation shifts from inequality to equality.

In the case of competing political interests however, history teaches us that power is used to maintain the status quo and may never cease to exist. In this context, power is associated with dominance and inequality. Dominant classes do not intend on relinquishing their power over their subordinates. Consistent and persistent forms of domination are the embodiment of oppression.

Oppression has been part of human history for as long as humans have lived in groups or in any socially organized forms. John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1878) makes a very poignant observation when he remarked, *"Was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it?"* Social institutions and their structures such as religion, family, education, governments and politics are oppressive by nature. They demand obedience and conformity from their members. But individuals and groups have struggled throughout to bring about a greater degree of freedom to themselves and liberation to their groups.

Despite its persistent presence, we hardly hear the term oppression in our public discourse. And despite the fact that the term oppression is likely to be discussed by the oppressed, oppressive structures work very hard to silence them. History points

out a deliberate pattern in which the more attempts made by oppressed populations to share their narratives; the more likely they are to be forced into stillness.

> *"Oppression is designed to strip the oppressed from their humanity and render them invisible."*

Oppressive structures are likely to describe their own action in virtuous terms. Their actions, violent as they may be, are framed in the context of lofty ideals including freedom, liberation, civilization, and democracy. The encounter of the Native Americans with the "White Man" and their experience of subjugation is a good reminder of the civilized-savage narrative. And, from a more recent history, consider the case of the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq which was framed in the context of the free and democratic West bringing freedom and democracy to Iraq and the region. History is replete with such examples pointing to the fact that the framing of aggression by oppressive structures and actors in such fashion serves to provide justification for their aggression and, at the same time, renders the narrative and just causes of the oppressed illegitimate.

To oppress refers to the act of pressing down, to flatten and to construct a reality of one dimensional identity. It is an act of repression, of tyranny and coercion. It is an act that also includes subjugation and domination. In essence, oppression is a multidimensional construct. It is not a binary one, but its consequences are. It is both a cultural and structural term. In other words, for oppression to be operative structures must exist that would make its cultural manifestation possible. Stated differently, oppression is designed to strip the oppressed from their humanity and render them invisible. In this case, force is not sufficient to achieve this objective. Cultural apparatus such as language, the media, education, and the like are also needed. The classic novel *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison (1947) makes the link between oppression and invisibility so very real and undisputed.

Hegemony according to Gramsci (Hegemony, 2015) means *"the success of the dominant classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it is accepted by other classes as 'common sense'. The general 'consensus' is that it is the only sensible way of seeing the world. Any groups who present an alternative view are therefore marginalized"* (Para.1).

The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and 'moral leadership' and the 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. (Hegemony, 2015 Para. 2)

Consent is achieved, therefore, through all the intellectual means available to the dominant classes ranging from schools to the media to entertainment shows and language. And, in the case of opposition or resistance to their power, force is readily available. The scenes of police officers cracking down on demonstrators during

the "The Occupy" movement of 2011 are still vivid in most people's minds. That movement was depicted by the mainstream media and most public officials as being dysfunctional and lacking a common purpose. The demonstrators were portrayed as criminals, lazy and unproductive citizens. A year later, Naomi Wolf, writing for *The Guardian* newspaper, reported on how the FBI had coordinated with other agencies, including the Office of Homeland Security, the violent crackdown on the movement. She also reported that the protesters were referred to by those apparatus as terrorists. This case serves a simple illustration of how dominant classes use their power by both force and propaganda to maintain the status quo and to also entrench their hegemony over minority and oppressed groups, independent of time and space.

An examination of the terms "minority group" and "oppressed group" suggests that they appear different in language but synonymous in their intent. The term "minority" could certainly be defined in numerical terms, but the deficiency of a numerical definition is made evident in cases such as Apartheid in South Africa, and many others. To better understand the term and the status of minority groups in relation to the majority, it must be positioned in the context of dominant-subordinate relations. A sociopolitical definition, grounded in the unequal distribution of power, is more suited to the actual real nature of their status in society. The term minority is derived from the word "minor" implying that minority groups are not politically mature enough to determine their destiny and to take charge of their political affairs. The term is also associated with the notion of subjugation and marginality.

Moreover, minorities are subject to the rules and language of the dominant class. They and all oppressed groups suffer from essentialism. That is, the notion that one characteristic is essential, necessary and sufficient to describe the group and its members. Terms such as lazy, savages, illegal immigrants, terrorist, thugs, criminals and the like are used to refer to such groups with the obvious purpose of discrediting and delegitimizing their causes. Hence, a crime committed by a member of any of these groups implicates the whole group and its culture, while a crime committed by a member of the dominant class is usually referred to as an act of a lone, deranged person. Put in this context, language is a powerful instrument of persuasion that has the potential to construct a reality that may ultimately suit the interest of the dominant class. By using different terms to describe similar conditions, we tend to construct ideas and images that will penetrate the cultural psyche and maintain the status quo of hegemonic domination. This condition also leads to the construction of duality and double standards of cultural norms and expectations.

Minority groups and oppressed groups also suffer from liminality and, borrowing from W.E.B. DuBois (1903), "double consciousness." That is to say they are in between two conflicting and opposing forces. The following exchange between two African-American students in my *Sociology of the Family* class is a vivid illustration of such reality in the human spirit of the oppressed.

> **Student A:** *I have a great relationship with my white boyfriend.*

> **Student B:** *You are in love with your slave master.*

Student A: *No! Love is color blind.*

Student B: *You are wrong. By falling in love outside your own race, you don't preserve our heritage and culture.*

Moreover, the following quote by Vine Deloria, Jr. in his classic, *Custer died for your sins: An Indian manifesto* (1969) gives even a stronger illustration of the loss of humanity: *"The more we try to be ourselves the more we are forced to defend what we have never been"* (p. 2).

From Modernity to Postmodernity

Modernity brought about a significant transformation of human societies and cultures. Its consequences are obvious in the rise of science and secularization, democratization, individual freedom, enlightenment, capitalism, and progress. Modernity is now clear to all. Its categories and conceptualization of reality are in place. This was an era in which scientific evidence was valued and had its role in guiding human behavior.

At the same time, modernity was mainly a Western way of life that had served the interests of the ruling/dominant classes in Europe and the United States. The rest of the world and minority groups in the West were simply the "Other." No wonder that Edward Said and other postcolonial scholars had associated modernity with colonialism. From that perspective, postmodernity opens the door for a change into a new reality in which these two forces are dissociated from each other. It also opens the door for recognition of the rights of the colonized and the oppressed. Eduardo Mendieta (2008) and Batstone, Mendieta, and Lorentzen, (2013) refer to postmodernity as an era of global fragments that is characterized by a liberation theology of the non-person over against the imperial theology of Europe.

Postmodernity refers to a process of social transformation that followed the modern era. Some may argue that it was a reaction to modernity. The exact starting date is difficult to pin down, but it is generally accepted that it had emerged around the middle of the twentieth century. This was the time of the start of globalization and global capitalism, the start of the computer technology and the information age, the proliferation of the media, and the time of ethnic differentiation and ethnic-identity politics.

We come back to the Martians and revisit their questions. If society has indeed transformed itself, why do Native Americans remain increasingly invisible and segregated? Why do African Americans continue to constitute a significant share of the prison population? And why do Palestinians remain a military target for Israel and the United States? If postmodernity represents a stage of progress, why does oppression of these peoples and others remains intact, or even intensified? These are not rhetorical questions. These are questions that aim at exploring the underlying causes of such conditions and also causes behind the lack of motivation or intent in finding a just resolution. In other words, such questions lead us directly or indirectly to the core of oppressive structures.

Michel Foucault describes postmodernity as an era characterized by the weakening of institutions and the rise of power everywhere. In fact, a closer look at some of the most intimate institutions like marriage, family, education and religion reveals that they all have experienced a significant structural shift marked by cohabitation and the rise of single-parent families. This era is also marked by a significant transformation of the education system at all its levels. And is also marked by the decline of religious affiliation and the rise in what some refer to as spirituality as opposed to religiosity.

Postmodern theorists, Anthony Giddens (1990) among them, claim that the very foundation upon which classic social thought is based has collapsed, and that there are no longer any grand narratives or metanarratives – overall conceptions

> *"…such questions lead us directly or indirectly to the core of oppressive structures."*

of history or society – that make any sense. They (Baudrillard, 1988; Bauman, 1997; Dunn, 1998; Lyotard, 1984; and others) argue that postmodernity is an era marked by globalization, fragmentations, marketing, consumption, ethnic differentiation, ethnic identity politics, and increased levels of individual freedom. Postmodernity is grounded in the belief that society is no longer governed by history or progress. Postmodern society is highly pluralistic and diverse, with no grand narrative guiding its development.

Richard Sennet (1976) talks about the fall of public man; and, Robert Putnam (2000) highlights the decline of community and group solidarity. Putnam points out that Americans are no longer "joiners," as they were once described by Alex de Tocqueville, and as the title of his book describes them to be, "*bowling alone*." At the same time, Charles Derber describes in great detail in *The Wilding of America* (1996), the role of greed and violence in the erosion of American character. He makes it very clear, with much concern, that in this climate, both the individual and social institutions are now corrupt.

Given such enormous shifts in our social and political structures, Andrew Charlin (2015) asks, "*When is a fact a fact?*" He argues that, *If you are a postmodernist, the answer is clear: never. Postmodern critics of standard social science argue that the conclusions we draw are not, and cannot be genuinely objective*" (p. 12).

Haider Eid (2014) looks at postmodernity as a development but not a complete break from modernism. He points out to the penetration of global capital in almost all spheres of life as well as the disintegration of the liberal public domain. He argues that postmodernity is an era in which words, traditions, and history are no longer meaningful and can no longer be trusted. In his words, *"What deconstruction has led to in its application is a nihilistic reduction of meaning to non-meaning, not to say nonsense"* (p. 33).

Change of this magnitude cannot go on without leaving its mark on the individual. Robert Dunn (1998) emphasizes the power of identity politics and suggests a theory of identity that is grounded in a relational framework of interactions between groups. He highlights the significance of social relationality and identity construction. For him, identity and difference are interlinked and for marginal groups, it should also take into account *"the interrelationship between self-definitions of the marginalized and the ways the powerful perceive and define themselves"* (p. 36).

Identity in the postmodern world is diffused and not grounded in the social institutional structures of the self. It is also fragmented and guided by subjective forces of the self as it is perceived to exist independent of the social reality that had shaped it. Some, Jean Baudrillard (1988) among them, argue that with the new media technology, aggressive mass media, and a growing recreational industry, we witness innumerable simulations of reality. All the signs that surround us contribute to undermining our sense of reality. Young people of today are intimately connected with their personal communication devices and social media to the extent that their perception of history and of the social and political realities around them may be absent. For them, everything is "up to the individual." Their consciousness of social, political, historical and cultural forces is reduced to a micro psychological framework of inter-subjectivity. This is an era in which entertainment and media programs have replaced the family, education, and the sermon as a guide for conduct. This is an era in which the neighborhood has lost the neighbor and become a HOOD. This is a community from which the neighbor has disappeared, suggesting a decline in human intimate, empathetic, and authentic behavior.

Along with these cultural changes, the state, as the main political body, has replaced the same institutions by becoming the agent, perhaps the sole agent, of social control. In short, young people of this generation experience conflicting realities of freedom and alienation and weak degrees of solidarity. They are *socially silent*. Roberts and Yamane (2012) refer to this young generation as the *"Homeland Generation, the New Silent Generation"* (p. 102). It could be argued that the dramatic realization is that this generation is also oblivious to such contradictions and feel liberated and free. But are they truly free?

The words of Alex de Tocqueville in his classic, *Democracy in America,* (Bridge, G. and Watson, S., 2010) make a poignant insight into such patterns of social indifference. He states:

Each person withdrawn into himself, behaves as though he is a stranger to the destiny of all others. His children and his good friends constitute for him the whole of human species. As for his transactions with his fellow citizens, he may mix among them, but he sees them not; he touches them, but he not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone. And if on these terms remains in his mind a sense of family, there no longer remains a sense of society (p. 269).

Markers of Shifting Power Structures

There is little doubt that a cultural shift is at hand. Postmodernity represents a fundamental transformation of the human experience, and what it means to be human. Consequently, the power structures have also shifted in so many ways. For the purpose of clarity, two markers of such transformation are highlighted with the objective of exploring their impact on the new hegemonic oppressive structures.

First, postmodernism is a culture that introduced a language of tolerance and exclusion. Both terms are used simultaneously as if they are not mutually exclusive. Perhaps they are not as mutually exclusive as they are expected to be. The term tolerance is associated with pain and deviation from the norm. It is in fact an exclusionary term and is often used by dominant groups in their relations to the oppressed. It is a term that places the onus of integration or lack of it on the individual while dismissing or minimizing the role of social structure in the construction of a culture of integration. Dominant classes demand tolerance but never advocate for acceptance or justice.

> *"This is precisely why a movement like 'Black Lives Matter' is so powerful…"*

While tolerance is being highlighted in the main stream culture and by dominant groups, the terms of justice and inclusion are absent from public consciousness. These terms represent the aspirations of oppressed groups, which have no "permission to narrate" (Said, 1984). In the postmodern psyche, oppression is expressed by and experienced only in the individual. This is a language that has removed all forms of empathy from the public lexicon. This is precisely why a movement like "Black Lives Matter" is so powerful—it claims equality and demands inclusion. In essence, it points to a serious social deficiency marked by injustice and a lack of empathy. It is obvious then that while dominant classes demand and advocate for tolerance, minority and oppressed groups demand and advocate for justice. This is a state of two trains moving on two separate tracks, where each is filled by its own narrative and aspirations. The chances for them joining together do not seem high, but on occasion, they collide.

Second, while culture is changing right before our eyes, so is the hegemonic structure of power. Although power may seem diffused and differentiated, the state as an institution intended on serving mainly the interests of the dominant classes has also changed its actions. In a climate in which marginal, historically colonized groups are demanding their freedom and competing for power, the state of dominant groups and previous colonial powers has acquired a greater monopoly on the use of force. It hesitates not to use it indiscriminately and with impunity. The decline of the intimate social institutions was accompanied by a decline of informal social control that historically was exerted by those same institutions such as the family and the community. This void gave rise to the formal state apparatus of social control that is associated with a rise in the militarization of the state and the blending of the military industrial complex with the prison industrial complex both domestically and

internationally. The explicit objective was to expand the state's imperial reach.

> *"Freedom in the post-modern era is merely an illusion."*

The following two cases might shed some light into the imperial hegemonic project. The first is a quote attributed to Henry Kissinger during his tenure as the U.S. National Security Advisor (1973). He said: *"The illegal we do immediately; the unconstitutional takes a little longer"* (Jasper, 2010). The second is the publication of and the reactions to the *Torture Report* by the U.S. Senate in 2014. This report acknowledges that the U.S. has actually used illegal measures of torture, but what is more astonishing is that the discussion following its dissemination centered on whether those methods of torture were effective or not. However, a discussion about the morality of the techniques used is nowhere to be found. What is even more astonishing is that high ranking members of the American Psychological Association have contributed and endorsed such illegal acts of torture (Risen, 2015; Hoffman, et al. 2015). And contrary to the mission of their Association, those same members seem to have violated its policy and collaborated with the Bush administration at the time to also legitimize the torture program and make it ethically and morally acceptable.

When culture and structure move incongruently, the state increases its power and hegemony on marginal groups, and takes more control on the individual and their choices. Needless to say, minorities and oppressed groups around the world suffer the most in this reality because they represent the core of intersection between oppression and freedom. It is no wonder that powerful nations like the United States along with NATO and Israel carry on with ongoing attacks and slaughter of poor and weak nations, people and countries. These weak communities may pay a heavy toll and may become increasingly marginalized, dispossessed, and alienated. They are likely to experience the pain of what Marshood (2010) describes as the *"imposed status"* of the oppressed. Yet, and despite the aggression aimed at them, they remain standing to remind all of their rights and their demands for justice and freedom. They also remind their colonizers of their inhumanity and hypocrisy. While the colonizer works very hard to demonstrate their claims of the virtues of their aggression, oppressed groups render those same colonizers, their claims, and their actions immoral.

Colonialism remains as powerful as it has ever been. In this postmodern era, colonialism has not diminished, but, rather, changed its face. The new colonial era is marked by the rise of the American empire as a representative or a replacement of the old European empires. It is also marked by the U.S. plans to dominate the world economy, and by a significant increase in the use of force. One of the main differentiating features of this new colonial face is that it appears to demonstrate "tolerance" of ethnic groups and their culture. But E. San Juan, Jr. (2007) suggests

that ethnic and oppressed groups in the postmodern era are useful for a number of functions, chief among them their contribution to the labor force needed for the expanded global capitalist system.

Recent research by Jules Dufour (2015) of Global Research, a center for research on globalization suggests that the U.S. sponsored strategies ultimately consist in a process of global subordination. He points out:

The U.S. has established its control over 191 governments which are members of the United Nations. The conquest, occupation and/or otherwise supervision of these various regions of the World is supported by an integrated network of military bases and installations which covers the entire Planet (Continents, Oceans and Outer Space). All this pertains to the workings of an extensive Empire, the exact dimensions of which are not always easy to ascertain. (Para. 8)

Deriving his data from a variety of sources, this report points out that with the expansion of the U.S. military installations to more than 1000 bases, "the major elements of the conquest and world domination strategy by the U.S. refer to: 1) the control of the world economy and its financial markets; and, 2) the taking over of all natural resources (primary resources and nonrenewable sources of energy)." (Para. 8)

Under these conditions, the notion of individual freedom in this postmodern era requires special attention. While one may feel free from the shackles of family, tradition, community, and religion, they are increasingly under the surveillance of the state. People have lost control of much of their affairs to the state and have become increasingly dependent on international corporations. Put in this context, freedom in the postmodern era is merely an illusion. While individual freedom, although illusionary, may be attainable, group liberation remains a dream deferred.

Convergent Histories: Dynamics of Oppression and Subordination in the Postmodern Era

What do Native Americans, African Americans, and Palestinians have in common? These are three distinct groups or nations with unique histories, traditions, and national origins. These groups differ in culture, geography, and history, but their experience with the violent face of oppressive structures is analogous. The following list of common experiences and similarities, although not exhaustive, provides a glimpse into the impact of oppression on these groups.

1. Forced removal from their ancestral land

2. Colonialization – domestic and international

3. Dispossession from their property

4. Essentialism, negative stereotypes and constant humiliation

5. Segregation: Physical, social, and psychological isolation

6. Social and political fragmentation

7. Political and economic marginalization

8. Poverty and deprivation

9. Imprisonment

10. Denial and/or rejection of their political and human rights

11. Suppression of their resistance by force and propaganda

12. Cultural extermination

More attention and detailed analysis are required for each of these features. However, for the purpose of this paper, it is worth recalling Edward Said's points from his classic *Permission to narrate* (1984) in which he argues that *"Facts do not at all speak for themselves, but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain and circulate them"*(p. 34). He further points out that *"the unique thing about [Palestine] is its unusual centrality, which privileges a Western master narrative…"* The same account could certainly apply to the narratives of the Native Americans and African Americans. Along the same lines we find Howard Zinn (2005) reminding us of the power of history when told by the oppressed and by the people rather than by the state.

The sociopolitical reality of each of these groups is grounded in a structure of oppression. Both Israel and the United States are colonial settler nation-states that shape the daily lives of all subjugated groups. These groups experience daily aggression of militarized colonial states. Their poverty, mass incarceration, dispossession and the like, are not isolated events. They are interconnected under the hegemonic violent power of these states. Franz Fanon (1961) describes the character of such colonial structures in terms of *"Spatialization of Occupation"* in which the space is divided into compartments – the boundaries and internal frontier, checkpoints, police stations, design of roads and infrastructure and the like. The following is a brief description of only one narrative from each group.

Mass Incarceration of African Americans

Michelle Alexander (2010), on the prison-industrial complex and the new Jim Crow, states:

What has changed since the collapse of Jim Crow has less to do with the basic structure of our society than with the language we use to justify it. In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was

once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination— employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it. (p. 2)

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

Ilan Pappe (2007), an Israeli historian provides a systematic and detailed analysis of the Zionists plans for a future Jewish takeover of the country and the expulsion of the indigenous Palestinian people. The ongoing military attacks on Palestinians and their constant daily dehumanization by Israel, alongside the settler colonization movement, have resulted in a forced dispossession of Palestinians from their land. A closer look into the map of Palestine since 1946 to the present (Background: *Promoting Truth and Justice for Palestinians*) highlights the land grab by Israel with the violent and funding support of the United States.

Dehumanizing the Native Americans

The following quote from President Obama (McGreal, 2010) is poignant and reveals much of what has been discussed in this paper. It is also important to note what is not being said:

Few have been more marginalized and ignored by Washington for as long as Native Americans, our first Americans. You were told your lands, your religion, your cultures, your languages were not yours to keep. I know what it means to feel ignored and forgotten, and what it means to struggle. (Para.16)

> *"Would the U.S. President ever return the land to the Native Americans?"*

This is a great statement of empathy and understanding. It acknowledges the pain of the Native Americans and their loss, but it does not point out those responsible for this suffering. It does not extend an apology or acknowledgement of their right for reparation. It is also doubtful that this sentiment will ever translate into any tangible action. Would the U.S. President ever return the land to the Native Americans?

It is worth mentioning that U.S. President Obama has also used a language of sympathy (not empathy) when referring to the Palestinian people while at the same time supplying Israel with military equipment to kill occupied Palestinians and destroy their properties. Mr. Obama and the American administration seem to ignore the fact that occupation is a constant state of war and a form of state terrorism.

In both cases (for Native Americans and Palestinians), an oppressive pattern that highlights the gap between words and action emerges. Behavior in general and of the state in particular, is structured, patterned, predicable, and has a context. This gap also

> *"We are fated people."*
>
> Moshe Dayan

illustrates the point made earlier that powerful groups in postmodern era might speak of tolerance but not of justice. To recognize justice, one must first listen to the pain of the oppressed and also accept the historical realities of these conflicts. On the other hand, to act justly is a different matter altogether. It takes courage and political will to change course.

The reality of the African American is that they were forced to leave their ancestral homeland in Africa. That they were shackled and transported on board slave ships over the oceans. They were sold in the market to the highest bidder in servitude for their masters. They were forced to change their names, their language, and their religion, and to take on the features of their slave masters. They had no control over their destiny and when they were finally recognized as human beings, they were referred to as *niggers, Negroes*, and people *of color*.

For the Palestinians, the reality is that their land/nation was colonized by Europeans who gave it away to other Europeans as it was declared by the British government in Balfour Declaration of 1917. They forced the Palestinians out of their homes and property and made them homeless, stateless refugees. The colonizers denied the existence of Palestinians as a people and referred to them as terrorists. They killed their families, insulted their religion and culture, and have mounted a campaign aimed at dehumanizing and delegitimizing their existence and their rights to the land.

The similarities between these three groups are striking. In making these analogies, it is important to note that Palestinians were not forced to change their names, religion, and culture as was the case for the Native Americans and the African Americans. This is because the Palestinians were colonized in the postmodern era in which colonization centers on the control of resources while claiming "tolerance" of ethnic and cultural identities. The experience of the Native Americans and the African Americans was a product of the old colonial hegemonic system that controlled both peoples' culture and their resources.

The U.S. expansion to the western territories, the removal of the Native Americans, the war with Mexico, and the annexation of Texas and Oregon were grounded in the ideology of Manifest Destiny. The Israeli ideology behind its expansion to the West Bank and Gaza and annexation of much of that territory with no clear map or final borders set for the State of Israel, is very similar to the American narrative. It was referred to by Moshe Dayan as "We are Fated People." Uri Avnery (2008) quotes Dayan in two separate speeches in which he made that claim and used that slogan. The first speech was delivered in 1956 at a Kibbutz facing Gaza:

Before their [the Palestinians in Gaza] very eyes we turn into our homestead the land and villages in which they and their forefathers have lived. This is the fate of our generation, the choice of

our life – to be prepared and armed, strong and tough – or otherwise, the sword will slip from our fist, and our life will be snuffed out. (Manifest Destiny and Israel, Counterpunch, 2008)

Avnery points out that Dayan did not mean only his own generation. The second speech he delivered in August 1968, after the occupation of the Golan Heights. This is what he told the youth:

We are fated to live in a permanent state of fighting against the Arabs. For the hundred years of the Return to Zion we are working for two things: the building of the land and the building of the people. That is a process of expansion, of more Jews and more settlements. That is a process that has not reached the end. We were born here and found our parents, who had come here before us. It is not your duty to reach the end. Your duty is to add your layer to expand the settlement to the best of your ability, during your lifetime … (and) not to say: this is the end, up to here, we have finished. (Manifest Destiny and Israel, Counterpunch, 2008)

Consequences of Oppression

The conflict imposed by oppressive structures is so vivid and heart wrenching. It highlights the struggles of oppressed groups over diversity and pluralism on one hand vs. ethnic identity politics on the other. The writer, Bell Hooks, stated the tension astutely. She stated:

"The postmodern critique of "identity," though relevant for renewed black liberation struggle, is often posed in ways that are problematic. Given a pervasive politic of white supremacy which seeks to prevent the formation of radical black subjectivity, we cannot cavalierly dismiss a concern with identity politics. Any critic exploring the radical potential of postmodernism as it relates to racial difference and racial domination would need to consider the implications of a critique of identity for oppressed groups." (Para. 7)

In her discussion, she referred to Cornel West who attributes the conflict to class struggle. Hooks states:

Cornel West describes our collective plight: There is increasing class division and differentiation, creating on the one hand a significant black middle-class, highly anxiety-ridden, insecure, willing to be co-opted and incorporated into the powers that be, concerned with racism to the degree that it poses constraints on upward social mobility; and, on the other, a vast and growing black underclass, an underclass that embodies a kind of walking nihilism of pervasive drug addiction, pervasive alcoholism, pervasive homicide, and an exponential rise in suicide. (Para. 8)

It is obvious that Bell Hooks is not in full agreement with Mr. West. For her, the issue is much more complex and must be put in a larger context of struggle, decolonization, and liberation.

The consequences of oppression are too numerous to count. But for illustration purposes, *The Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2015) provides a vivid account of the conditions of Aborigines in Canada that resulted from their systematic structural oppression. The Commission describes the acts of forcibly

removing children from their families and placing them into residential schools, as oppressive actions or aptly as "Cultural Genocide."

Going beyond the question of identity and culture, one important feature that all these groups have in common is the loss of land. Take land away from the people and they will become pariah. Take the land away from people and their families will be scattered. That has been the reality for the Native Americans, African Americans, and the Palestinians alike.

Land is where people build their homes, raise their families, plant their vegetables, and raise their animals. Land is where their survival, identity, and dignity are intertwined. The Palestinians have a maxim that goes along this spirit. They argue, *"Ardak A'rdak"*, which is Arabic for *"Your land is your honor."* They also remind us of their tragedy, *"Eddar Dar Aboona, Wajo Alghroob YaThuna." (The house belongs to our father but strangers came to kick us out).*

For the Native Americans, it is obvious that despite the passage of time, the pain of losing their land has not ceased. Note how the pain is described by Satanta, Kiowa Chief (Native American Quotes About Land Ownership, 2015.):

I love this land and the buffalo and will not part with it…I have heard you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don't want to settle. I love to roam over the prairies. There I feel free and happy, but when we settle down we grow pale and die. A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up to the river I see camps of soldiers on its banks. These soldiers cut down my timber, they kill my buffalo and when I see that, my heart feels like bursting. (Para. 8)

Land is the root system for its people. It is like a tree, when the roots are removed, it will dry up and die. For many in these groups, hope is evident in their belief that if the root system is strong enough, new roots and new trees will certainly rise and become green again.

Conclusion

Oppressive colonial power structures operate in similar manners and bring about similar consequences independent of time, place, and group. Examination of the dynamics of domination and subordination in the postmodern era suggests that history does in fact repeat itself – it is the same emperor in new clothes. Or better yet, it is the same game with a new name. And from a sociological perspective, oppressive behavior is predicable, structured, goal oriented, and has a context of domination. The settler, colonial nation-state remains active and well militarized to exert its domination over those who stand in the way of their expansive project.

One of the outcomes of postmodernity is the rise of ethnic-identity politics, which has contributed to a greater awareness of the plight of oppressed groups and peoples worldwide. This paper highlights the plight of the African Americans, the Native Americans, and the Palestinians, and points out their almost identical experiences with

colonialism and oppression. This interconnected perspective has gained a greater degree of attention from scholars and activists in the last few years. It has also given rise to a new global consciousness of oppressed classes. The work of Marc Lamont Hill *"From Ferguson to Palestine, the Struggle continues" (*2015) is an example of this trend. So is the work of Amiri Baraka who, in his extensive work of varied genre, told the truth as he saw it, stood against oppression, and advocated for freedom of the human spirit. Also, one of the most powerful messages has come from Nelson Mandela (Ebrahim, 2014) declaring: *"We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."* And in August 2015, *Ebony* magazine published a *Statement of Solidarity with the Palestinian People* that was supported and endorsed by more than 1000 black scholars, artists, students, organizations, and activists, chief among them were Angela Davis, Cornel West, Talib Kweli, The Dream Defenders, Hands Up United, and many more.

> *"Take the land away from people and their families will be scattered."*

Positions of solidarity between Palestinians and Native Americans are also present. Both peoples have realized that Native American rights and Palestinian rights are the same and that their solidarity has roots that date back to the 1970s. Recognizing the rights of oppressed indigenous people, Russell Means had argued: *"What the American Indian Movement says is that the American Indians are the Palestinians of the United States, and the Palestinians are the American Indians of the Middle East"* (Toensing, 2012, Para.2).

At this juncture in human history, two opposing forces are taking shape. One is the rise of the militarization and violence of the settler colonial nation-state; and, second is the rise of ethnic-identity politics. Given this reality, one can easily predict the eventual escalation of conflict. At the same time, a new movement seems to be forming in which people are becoming increasingly aware of oppression and the atrocities that are associated with it. This new found consciousness may set the stage for political action and new forms of solidarity. It may also open the door for social scientists to expand their exploration, to employ interconnected analysis, and lend their intellectual weight to that effort.

References

Alexander, M. (2010). The new Jim Crow: mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness. New York: New Press.

Avnery, U. (2008). Hidden agenda manifest destiny and Israel. Counter Punch. Online: http://www.counterpunch.org/2008/04/15/manifest-destiny-and-israel/.

Background: Promoting truth and justice for Palestinians. (2016). Online: http://www.hjfp.org.uk/wordpress/background-promoting-truth-and-justice-for-palestinians/.

Baraka, Amiri. (2011). Somebody blew up America-9/11 Poem. Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUEu-pG1HWw.

Batstone, D., Mendieta, E. & Lois Ann Lorentzen. (2013). Liberation theologies, postmodernity and the Americas. New York, NY: Routledge.

Baudrillard, J. & Poster, M. (1988). Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings. Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1988). Simulations. New York: Semiotext.

Bauman, Z. (1997). Postmodernity and its discontents. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Bridge, G., & Watson, S. (Eds.). (2010). The Blackwell city reader. Malden, MA:

Blackwell Pub.

Charlin, A. J. (2015). *One thousand and forty-nine reasons why it's hard to know when a fact is a fact*. In Barbara J. Risman and Virginia E. Rutter (Eds.). Families as they really are (pp. 12 – 17). New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

Deloria, V. Jr. (1969). Custer died for your sins: An Indian manifesto. New York: Macmillan.

Derber, C. (1996). The wilding of America: How greed and violence are eroding our nation's character. New York: St. Martin's Press.

DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). The souls of Black Folk. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co.; Cambridge: University Press, John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U.S.A.

Dufour, J. (2015). The worldwide network of US military bases: The global deployment of US military personnel. Online: http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-worldwide-network-of-us-military-bases/5564.

Dunn, R. (1998). Identity crisis: A social critique of postmodernity. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ebony Magazine. (2015). 1,000 Black activists, artists, and scholars demand justice for Palestine. Online: http://www.ebony.com/news-views/1000-black-activists-artists-and-scholars-demand-justice-for-palestine-403#ixzz3lXzU2x1K.

Eid, H. (2014). Worlding postmodernism: Interpretive possibilities of critical theory. London: Roman Books.

Ellison, R. (1947). Invisible man. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Fanon, F. (1961). The wretched of the earth. New York, NY: Grove Press.

Foucault, M. (1980). Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Giddens, A. (1990). The consequences of modernity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hegemony.(2015).Online: https://faculty.washington.edu/mlg/courses/definitions/hegemony.html.

Hoffman, D., Carter, D., Lopez, C., Benzmiller, H., Guo, A., Latifi, Y., & Craig, D. (2015). Report of the independent reviewer and related materials. Online: http://apa.org/independent-review/index.aspx.

Hooks, B. (1994, April 19). Postmodern blackness [Bell Hooks]. Online: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Postmodern_Blackness_18270.html.

Jasper, W. F. (2010, November 8). Kissinger: The illegal we do immediately; the Unconstitutional takes a little longer. Online: http://www.thenewamerican.com/usnews/politics/item/3492-kissinger-the-illegal-we-do-immediately-the-unconstitutional-takes-a-little-longer.

Lyotard, J., & Bennington, G. (1984). The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Marc Lamont Hill. (2015). Revolutionary struggle against Israel. Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2yMMdPTQ30 .

Marshood, N. (2010). Voices from the camps: A people's history of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, 2006. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

McGreal, C. (2010). Obama's Indian problem. Online: http://www.theguardian.com/global/2010/jan/11/native-americans-reservations-poverty-obama.

Mendieta, E. (2008). Global fragments: Globalizations, Latin Americanisms, and critical theory. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

Mill, J. (1878). The subjection of women. London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer. Native American quotes about land ownership. (2016). Online: http://archive.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/na_quotes.html.

Pappe, I. (2007). The ethnic cleansing of Palestine. London: Oneworld Publications.

Putnam, R. (2000). Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Risen, J. (2015). Outside psychologists shielded U.S. torture program, report says. *The New York Times*. Online: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/us/psychologists-shielded-us torture-programreportfinds.html?_r=0.

Roberts, K. & Yamane, D. (2012). Religion in sociological perspective. Los Angeles: Sage.

Said, E. (1984). Permission to narrate. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 13(3), 27-48.

San Juan , E. (2007). In the wake of terror: Class, race, nation, ethnicity in the postmodern world. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Ebrahim, S. (2014, February 22). Mandela and the Palestinians. Online: http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/opinion/mandela-and-the-palestinians_21794.

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (2014). Committee study of the Central Intelligence Agency's detention and interrogation program. Online: http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/study2014/sscistudy2.pdf.

Sennet, R. (1976). The fall of public man. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.The Truth & Reconciliation Commission-Canada. (2015). Honouring the truth, reconciling the future. Online: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31 web_o.pdf.

Toensing, G. C. (2012). Palestinians endorse idle no more. Online: http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2012/12/29/palestinians-endorse-idle-no-more-146631.

Weber, M. (1968). Economy and society: An outline of interpretative sociology. New York, NY: Bedminster Press.

West, C. (1993). Prophetic thought in postmodern times: Beyond eurocentrism and multiculturalism. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Who Was Lord Balfour and What Was the Balfour Declaration? - Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. (2015). Online: www.ProCon.org.

Wolf, N. (2012). Revealed: How the FBI coordinated the crackdown on Occupy. Online:http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/29/fbi-coordinated crackdown-occupy.

Zinn, H. (2005). A people's history of the United States, 1492-present. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Student Perspectives of Service-Learning

Chiquita D. Howard-Bostic
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Lisa Carden, Cassidy Griffin, and Rachel Tysor
Students, Shepherd University

Abstract

Service-learning projects help students gain leadership, organizational, and communication skills. Service projects support local communities and serve as a culture of civic engagement on many college and university campuses. Some student organizations participate in extracurricular activities as a form of experiential learning for students. Service-learning involves reciprocity and reflection, and is designed to meet community needs. Service-learning simultaneously relates course objectives and student learning goals. This study explores students' perspectives of the effectiveness of service-learning class activities implemented during two sociology courses. The findings consider whether student participants believe service-learning activities improve academic performance, enhance student interest in Sociological course material, and build a transformational connection within the community in a meaningful way.

Keywords: Service-learning; Civic Engagement; Leadership Development; Community Service; Fraternity and Sorority Service; Homelessness Survey; Community Interaction.

Introduction

Service-learning is civic engagement or engaged scholarship that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection. Service-learning is learning through *action*, learning by *doing*, and learning through *experience*. The key to successful service-learning is a strong collaboration between community, educational institution, and learners using a combination of design, implementation, and evaluation (Kalles & Ryan, 2015). Thus, service-learning initiatives move a step beyond simply sending students out to volunteer. A strategically planned service-learning experience fuses classroom content with hands-on experience linking course objectives with agency goals (Sheafer, 2014). Course objectives should mirror the services provided in the community and the course assignments should allow students to reflect upon those services and academic knowledge. The outcomes of the community engaged scholarship should also offer mutual benefit for the community organization who partner, participating students who support the community, and the institution that trains the student.

Service-learning has become an increasingly popular method of teaching. *"Service-learning assists agencies, contributes to effective partnering between colleges and communities, and, educates students,"* (Kalles & Ryan, 2015, p. 133). According to Scheafer (2014), service-learning activities teach life lessons. When teachers offer students a real-world experience, they offer a hands-on way of conveying academic knowledge. Other benefits of service-learning projects for students include higher grades, enriched

understanding, cognitive growth, and enhanced application of knowledge and skills (Henrich & Anderson, 2014).

This study examines service-learning as a transformational learning process in the sociological study of how human action and consciousness shape cultural surroundings and community development for impoverished groups. Students enrolled in two sociology courses, SOCI 203: General Sociology and SOCI 411: Social Stratification, have completed a survey about their perceptions of two in-person service-learning activities offered at their institution. An overview is provided describing service opportunities and multiple ways they are engaged by student participants at the local institution. This study also includes a literature review of reported service-learning experiences at other colleges and universities.

> "Service-learning is learning through *action*, learning by *doing*, and learning through *experience*."

Service Learning in Academia

In 1862, the Land Grant Act linked higher education and the concept of service in the field of agriculture and industry (Jacoby, 1996). During this time, service to society was both America's democratic mission and the founding purpose of Land-grant colleges and universities. Colonial colleges were largely created to educate ministers and religiously orthodox men to create good communities that were built on religious denominational principles. The intended goal of conducting service was to excite participation in real-world applications of learned material and to create a relationship between the core academics of higher education and higher purposes. Higher purposes are goals to use research and improve the current issues that were said to plague the world (Harkavy, 2004).

From the 1890s to 1920s, the Progressive Era evoked social and political reforms in the United States. Rabin (2009) expressed that, *"Reformers like Jane Addams have had a large influence on the way universities and other American institutions interact with the communities and institutions around them"* (p. 51). Women pioneers, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, were founders of the Hull House in Chicago, Illinois where they assisted in the development of local trade unions, social welfare reform, adult education, peace movements, and women's suffrage. *"Hull House was a constant reminder that service was inseparable from political action"* (Daynes & Longo, 2004, p. 11). The Hull House was a civic space and a mediating institution connecting communities to schools, colleges, and universities by bridging the divide between service and activism. Further, in the 1930's, Dorothy Day evoked a new service message by focusing her attention to moral conversations about values and the just treatment of others (Morton and Saltmarsh, 1997). These philosophers and community service pioneers directed the relationship between community improvement, activism, and new forms of education.

John Dewey recognized the philosophical seeds of service-learning: *"He linked education to experience, democratic community, social service, reflective inquiry, and education for social*

transformation" (Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 13). Dewey believed there was an *"intimate and necessary relationship between processes of actual experience and education"* (Dewey, 1938, p. 20). He judged the quality of an educational experience by its intellectual and moral benefits to the student and the long-term benefits to the community (Geiger, 2004, p. 166).

Dewey also urged that intellectuals play a key role in providing the grist for the emergence of an active public. Participation by intellectuals was instrumentally vital to the success of the community. It was their responsibility to provide tools to help community members make key decisions that affect their lives (Aronowitiz, 2005). Dewey attempted to establish a form of public sociology as a type of professional orientation and democratic reform. Morton and Saltmarsh (1997) explain that Addams, Day, and Dewey *"all came from privileged backgrounds that were infused with a sense of social responsibility, which balanced their views of obligations and individual rights"* (p. 138).

By the late 1970's, Dewey's principles of service-learning had been extended by Robert Sigmon who, like Dorothy Day, served the community. Those who were being served held a significant amount of control over the effectiveness of learning during volunteer-based service projects. Volunteering was transformed into service-learning. Reciprocity was a new service goal to be reached by actually producing mutual goals to help students learn while actually enhancing service delivery for marginalized groups. Morton (1995) describes this service continuum as transitioning from acts of charity to advocacy, and later, from personal to political. Similar models of service-learning highlight individual responsibility to become socially engaged and meet pressing social needs (Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 17).

In the 1960s, organizations like the Peace Corps and Volunteers in Service to America began encouraging college student involvement in community service, a form of voluntary service rather than service-learning. By 1978, the National Society for Experiential Education had also promoted field experience education and service internships (Jacoby, 2009). Many of these programs diminished for three reasons. First, the programs were not integrated into the central mission and goals of the schools and agencies where they were based. Second, there was not a balance of power to train volunteers or clearly define helping behaviors. Third, the services did not ensure a quality learning experience using methods of critical reflection (Kendall, 1993, p. 10-13). These programs did not include original tenets of service-learning pedagogy that were further developed in the 21st century.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, college and university presidents formed "Campus Compact," another call for an increased commitment of institutions to public service (Kendall, 1993). The National and Community Service Act of 1990 and the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 aided the administration and mobilization of service projects (Jacoby, 2009). New civic projects were embedded into the missions of universities, service-based foundations, research organizations, and private institutions.

In the 21st century, service-learning pedagogy became widespread among organizations such as fraternities and sororities on college and university campuses. Most Greek organizations are founded on principles of friendship, scholarship, leadership, rectitude, and service (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). These organizations want members to develop socially responsible and allocentric values. They also encourage or require community service and provide channels for active participation (Cruce & Moore, 2012). Research has shown that participation in service-learning increases after college students join a fraternity or sorority, especially during their first year (Cruce & Moore, 2012, p. 400). Fitch (1991) confirms that, *"the more students engage in service-learning, the greater will be their growth and achievement, satisfaction with their educational experiences, and persistence in college"* (p. 534).

> *"Community service empowers participants during their experience."*

Volunteer work, community service, and service-learning have transformed: *"Over one-half of all college students engage in some form of volunteer activity"* (Ferrari & Chapman, 2014, p. 1). One task of liberal arts education has been to help students cultivate their willingness and ability to learn from material that they might have otherwise rejected or ignored (Roth, 2014). Pelco, Ball, and Lockeman (2014) compared first and second-generation college students' academic and professional development following required service participation. The student population in the 21st century is more diverse than at any other time in American history. It is an opportune time to examine how service-learning benefits the current student population (Pelco, Ball, and Lockeman, 2014). This study examines student's perceptions of in-person service-learning projects and their feelings about the value of service-learning experiences. The study also surveys students about adding service-learning activities as mandatory curricular components.

Service and Leadership

Community service empowers participants during their experience. Community service can broaden a student's understanding of pressing social issues. Many participants also change perspectives or the outlook of how they want to live. A healthy community is filled with people willing to invest their time to create a positive and safe environment. As students coming together to improve neighborhoods and serve others, they show that they are invested in the community. Working towards achieving a common goal is a phenomenal leadership quality.

A basic tenet of community practice is the recognition that service learning is a process of social transformation. Service can alter meaning and ways that a learner interprets symbols. Thus, an integrative service-learning experience applies knowledge and encourages students to lead efforts to engage civic life (Oates & Levitt, 2003). Community service offers a unique starting point for leaders by developing a critical skillset including communicating in a healthy way, problem-solving, decision making,

and engaging others. Community leaders are typically compassionate, change oriented, and willing to learn. As emerging community leaders, students learn to negotiate and to be confident. Service learning may provide a means to understand complex issues and to develop leadership acumen necessary to empower members of the community being served.

Service Learning as an Academic Tool

Service-learning is a pedagogical tool used to implement collaborative classroom and community goals through applied disciplinary knowledge in a real-world setting. The service-learning pedagogy fosters critical thinking, conflict resolution, and cooperative methods (Lopez & Kiesa, 2009). The framework is transformational, allowing students to retain information about a certain component of the curriculum through the hands-on experience.

Poon, Chan, and Zhou (2011) offer four elements of standardization for service-learning pedagogies: *preparation, service, reflection, and celebration*. Poon et al. argue that without these elements, service-learning may not be as effective or influential. The service project should meet learning objectives of a specific curriculum and the interests of community agency partner (Kalles & Ryan, 2015). Faculty are responsible for ensuring that students are well prepared via a formal orientation and review of the relative initiatives offered by the community organization. Faculty must also establish meaningful work assignments (journals, research, and reflection papers), readings, and classroom discussion (group discussion, debates, and oral presentations) that relate directly to conditions of the service work and the cognitive and affective reactions to critical reflection (Kalles & Ryan, 2015). Then, students can use evidence from the experience to promote synthesis, problem solve, communicate effectively, make well-reasoned decision making, and generate new perspectives that lead to maturation (Sheafer, 2014). During reflection, students make and question original or traditional assumptions using evidence to support their current thinking. When students reflect, they have an opportunity to internalize new values, attitudes, as well as academic information. A celebration occurs when students, organizations, and academia benefit from the service experience.

Service learning is also a model for support. By broadening participation, the goal is to also enhance community problem solving. There are three core ways that problem solving occurs. First, through individual empowerment, student service strengthens a student's capacity to solve problems. Second, by bridging social ties, students are better able to identify opportunities that affect the health or well-being of others, such as soup kitchen participants. Third, through synergy, or a collaborative process, participation provides a collective pathway to new opportunities (Lasker & Weiss, 2003).

Service-learning initiatives should ensure meaningful contributions for student participants, the agency/partnership, and the population receiving the service. Service-learning includes the forming of partnerships between educational institutions and the communities, providing help and support to those in need, and facilitating interactions between students and members of the community (Ferrari & Chapman, 2014, p. 6).

Students encounter new learning experiences. The agency establishes a relationship with the school and a context to complete future projects; as well as receives an immediate service. The institution broadens the scope of their curriculum and expands their service delivery options. Other reasons for increases in service-learning programs include *"academic advantages of students benefitting from skill development, workplace experience, and understanding non-profit management and governance"* (Kalles & Ryan, 2015, p. 133).

Benefits to Participants

Service-learning involves organized service activities that further the understanding of course content (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). However, service-learning is much more than volunteerism. Service-learning has become an expedient activity in academia that has tremendous positive outcomes for students, both academic and personal. The planned curricular and extracurricular activities promote cognitive and academic change involving applied knowledge, cognitive processes, and motivation to learn (Scheafer, 2014). Furco and Root (2010) explain that service-learning benefits students in six specific ways: *(1) it increases student engagement in learning, (2) improves performances on exams, (3) surges motivation in school, (4) enhances civic responsibility, (5) develops leadership skills, and (6) improves retention of character assets as students become adults* (p. 17).

Service-learning helps enhance students' career and personal development. Students acquire a set of transferrable skills that lead to an increased sense of social responsibility (Jacoby, 1996). Service-learning can also encourage leadership development. Students develop socially responsible values that prepare them as future leaders (Parker-Gwin, 1996). Longo and Marguerite (2009) argue that *"higher education is perhaps the single most important catalyst for educating the next generation to mobilize institutional resources and engage in collaborative problem solving to address difficult public issues"* (p. 155). Thus, service-learning projects can serve as leadership education that encourages students to actively shape local and global communities.

"Beyond the intellectual understanding essential to democratic citizenship that can be enhanced by community service-learning, there are important civic attitudes and participation skills that can be developed through service-learning" (Battistoni, 1997, p. 152). Liberatory education practices are known to raise consciousness and to create awareness within the individual with regards to oppression and varied effects of marginalization. Service has become increasingly important as government funding to provide social services has decreased (Ferrari & Chapman, 2014, p. 6). Thus, educators and students have sought creative ways to move from "volunteering" to "civic engagement" through social justice-oriented service initiatives (Welch, 2009). Practical experience gained during service-learning may provoke modifications in students' political judgments and reactions to observations (Battistoni, 1997).

Findings in Colby et al. (2009) indicate that service participation contributes positively to self-efficacy, leadership, academic performance, and plans to participate in service after college. Service-learning affords students an opportunity to develop new skills

such as the ability to synthesize information, make well-reasoned decisions, negotiate, and compromise (Jacoby, 1996). Service-learning helps students make connections between abstract theory and personal experience. Ferrari (2014) reports that students tend to improve academic performance following service-learning experiences. Service is a high-impact practice that has a positive impact on retention (Henrich & Anderson, 2014, p. 25).

In this study, student participants apply sociological concepts and principles to experiences gained either in the local community or through knowledge about two service-learning activities. For example, "vagrancy" described using a sociological lens is a term that is much broader than homelessness (Wolch, Dear, & Akita, 1988). In the sociology course, student participants explored the richness of each concept to better understand distinctions between potential life chances of those who reside in a street residence, temporary space of habitation, or are in a state of poverty leading to participation at a soup kitchen. The sociological perspectives presented encompassed broad interpretations rather than singular definitions that could prompt students to believe poverty is "not" one-dimensional. Engaging students around community needs and experiences has a profound potential to transform the institution and deepen learning (Oates & Levitt, 2003, p. 12).

Involvement and exposure to the service-learning pedagogy strengthens most students' understanding of how the sociological imagination informs social experiences. The students are given an opportunity to acquire knowledge about their local community through hands on experience and interpersonal dialogue. Students also have a chance to develop, refine, and expand existing skills. Participants can use the service-learning experience to recognize the significance of their own contributions to the community, thereby increasing their sense of personal social responsibility.

Current Service Learning Activities

Two sociology courses, SOCI 203: General Sociology and SOCI 411: Social Stratification, incorporated a curricular activity involving a service-learning component. SOCI 203: General Sociology is a general education core course elective with enrollment including students with multiple majors and very few sociology majors or minors. SOCI 411: Stratification, is an upper-division elective course offered primarily to sociology majors and minors. Students with education majors are also likely to take SOCI 411 to meet civic knowledge and engagement or multiculturalism and diversity requirements.

The service activity was assigned as a component in course lessons about poverty. The SOCI 203 lesson on poverty explores various uses and functions of poverty in society. The course examines how attitudes about poverty relate to intersecting views about home, family, and community. Students enrolled in SOCI 203 also compare local beliefs, values, behaviors, and worldviews about poverty. In SOCI 411, the lesson on poverty examines and associates attitudes that differ across class position. Students compare attitudes presented from a dominant cultural perspective to those ideas that differ or conflict with functional societal perspectives. The course content examines various reasons why poverty exists. Students enrolled in SOCI 411 examine how individuals

are socialized into behaviors and attitudes that perpetuate class positions. Poverty is explored with reference to both political and economic characteristics (employment, occupational structure, social networks) and characteristics assigned to the poor (skill development, attitudes, motivation).

The service initiative includes (1) course material, donations, and/or participation in service activities, (2) faculty participation in service, (3) critical thinking and reflection via multiple course lectures and discussion, and, (4) related homework incorporating student perspectives, course objectives, and course material relating to local conditions in the community. McGorry (2012) performed a study looking at the differences of experience between online service-learning and service-learning in the community. McGorry found no significant differences in the learning experiences. In tandem, participants in this study could choose to complete service-learning (in-person volunteering), by witnessing others helping (online video), or by donating their own items (giving). Students were encouraged to attend either or both in-person service activities: the Homelessness Count or Soup Kitchen.

Homelessness Count and Survey

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides funding to states and organizations to help end homelessness (Goodloe, 2015). The *Point-in-Time Survey* counts sheltered and unsheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness on a single night. The purpose of the homelessness survey count is to collect data and information by using the Vulnerable Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool. The score produced by this tool identifies the severity of an individual's homelessness. The survey counts are studied by household type (individuals, families, and child-only households) and subpopulation categories such as homeless veterans and chronic homelessness (Goodloe, 2015). The *Point-in-Time Survey* also provides useful information regarding services and assistance programs needed to help end chronic homelessness. The survey is also part of *Zero: 2016*, a national campaign designed by Community Solutions to help a dedicated group of US communities end veteran homelessness in the next two years.

The cities of Parkersburg, Clarksburg, Morgantown, Martinsburg, Beckley, Lewisburg, Huntington, and Charleston, West Virginia organizations participate in the homelessness count and Point-in-Time Survey. Telamon Corporation, WV Coalition to End Homelessness (WVCEH), and other community networks and volunteers help administer the survey. The survey program and number of volunteers has grown over the years to include participants from universities, churches, social service organizations, and the community. Additional services such as basic health and mental health assessments, flu shots, and diabetic testing have also been provided to individuals during the count as a collaborative effort. Student participants in this study contributed to the Point-in-Time Survey process in multiple ways including survey training, data collection, communicating with homeless persons, preparation of hygiene kits, and the distribution of food and products.

Local Soup Kitchen

The soup kitchen is a local community-based ecumenical religious organization. The mission of the organization is to strive to bring justice and peace on earth, responding to God's call to love our neighbor and care for Creation. As part of the proposed mission, they offer healing options based upon their spiritual commitment to serve others. The soup kitchen staff lives and learns by justice and peace, as they share the goal of acting with kindness and mercy. Therefore, providing both worship and meals is a form of ministry work.

Students participating in service projects are likely to encounter guests at soup kitchens who may lack sources of human contact including those granted in work, family relationships, and consumer activities. However, findings indicate that work on community problems prompts students to appreciate external and complex community norms that affect social outcomes (Oates & Leavitt, 2003). Beyond the nutritional functions of soup kitchens, they offer important latent social functions. Soup kitchens provide comfort and a social outlet. According to Glasser (2010), *"soup kitchens function as a symbolic living room for a segment of people in poverty"* (p. 3). Another distinguishable theme that permeates the social interactions of guests is the opportunity for some to become a part of a social network (p. 8). Soup kitchens provide a unique configuration of physical comforts and opportunities for acceptance in ways that are culturally congruent with its diners' lifestyles.

The soup kitchen provides free dinner meals on Mondays for individuals in the community. They serve individuals and families facing economic, social, and spiritual instability. Averages of 50 to 100 people attend the Monday dinners. The soup kitchen also enlists help from community volunteers such as students and faculty. Volunteers cook, clean, and serve food to individuals. Furthermore, other services like clinic day, distributing clothes, blankets, and hygienic items are provided. Student participants volunteered by assisting with all service provisions at the soup kitchen. For example, in addition to operations of the soup kitchen, students helped each patron complete forms to access birth certificates, social services, and housing. Participants also attended the spiritual service. Students also provided clothing donations and conducted fundraising at the university.

Methods and Findings

In the current study, 47 students enrolled in either of two courses (SOCI 203: General Sociology and SOCI 411: Social Stratification) completed a ten-question survey about their service-learning experiences. Each student had an opportunity to participate in an in-person service-learning activity: The Point-in-Time Survey or the Immanuel's House Soup Kitchen. These students were selected because their courses incorporated a curricular service-learning component. They are asked their perceptions regarding the usefulness of service-learning as a learning tool.

The survey included ten questions. One question inquired about the academic status of the participants. Student participants included: 14 freshmen, six sophomores,

ten juniors, 16 seniors, and one graduate student. Seven additional questions were Likert scale-orientated regarding students' perceptions about participation and their beliefs about in-person service-learning activities. Students identified their level of participation in service-learning or community volunteering. They were asked if service-learning activities offered in a class setting were useful. Students were also asked if the service-learning activities were an important component of a sociology class. Another question asked if the course students were enrolled in met the learning objectives associated with the assigned in-person service activities. Students were also asked if they believed the service-learning activities enhanced their interest in course material. Finally, students were asked if service-learning activities could improve their performance in the course or make the course more enjoyable.

Two questions were open-ended, asking about their experiences and feelings about service-learning. Students were asked to describe what their feelings might have been if the service learning activities were required in the course. Also, they were asked to describe any challenges that might occur during a service-learning experience. SPSS was used to calculate mean averages, participation rates, and relationships across responses. Table 1 is a breakdown of participation in service activity by college rank.

Table 1. Participation in Service Activity by College Rank

	Fresh-man	Sopho-more	Junior	Senior	Grad	Total
No, not considered	2	1	1	0	0	4
	14.3%	16.7%	10%	0.0%	0.0%	8.5%
No, considered	6	1	3	5	0	15
	42.9%	16.7%	30.0%	31.2%	0.0%	31.9%
Yes, occasionally	5	4	6	6	1	22
	35.7%	66.7%	60.0%	37.5%	100%	46.8%
Yes, often	1	0	0	5	0	6
	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	31.2%	0.0%	12.8%
Total	14	6	10	16	1	47 (-1)

Survey data revealed the following: a majority (58%) of participants reported volunteering actively in the community—12.8% participated often and 46.8% volunteered occasionally. Upper-class students were more likely to actively participate in service-learning activities. Eppler, Ironsmith, Dingle, and Errickson (2011) showed that freshmen in college who participated in service-learning increased their volunteering over time. In this study, upper-class students were more likely to report active involvement. As reported in Darby et al. (2013), upper-level students were more likely to link the service activity with an agenda for professional development and networking skills. A smaller percentage (8.5%) did not want to participate, none of whom were in their senior-year of college. Other studies have confirmed that some

students are not interested in service-learning, or hold the impression that it is a waste of their time (Kalles & Ryan, 2015).

Table 2. Service Made Class More Enjoyable

Class More Enjoyable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	8.3%
Agree	35	72.9%
Strongly Agree	9	18.8%
Total	48	100%

In this study, 91.7% (72.9% agree and 18.8% strongly agree) of the participants reported positive feelings about service-learning, having the perception that the service activities made the Sociology course more enjoyable (see Table 2, Service Made Class More Enjoyable). However, one freshmen enrolled in the 200-level course did not believe the experience was useful. Other findings reporting students' lack of interest in service-learning argue that students are unable to identify with the actual learning progress (Kalles & Ryan, 2015).

In this study, 8.4% of the population did not believe the service activity would enhance their knowledge of the course material (see Table 3, Service and Student Interest in Sociology). Still, a majority of the students in the current sample agreed that service opportunities make sociology classes more enjoyable. Sociologists deal with social problems, stratification, and issues of inequality. It is an optimal discipline for pioneering service-learning activities. The service-learning activity allows students to participate in the various social movements introduced in class. The service experience offered students enrolled in SOCI 203 and SOCI 411 an opportunity to examine the root of the problem, mainstream viewpoint, and the 'others' perspective. Although this project was a one-day experience for most students, it revealed potential for social change and personal reflection. This finding is consistent with studies reporting that service projects offer hands-on ways of conveying academic knowledge (Darby et al., 2013).

Table 3. Service and Student Interest in Sociology

Enhances Interest	Frequency	Percent
Extremely Unlikely	2	2.1%
Unlikely	3	6.3%
Neutral	5	10.4%
Likely	26	54.2%
Extremely Likely	13	27.1%
Total	48	100.0%

A vast majority of students believed service-learning activities were influential while only two upper-class students failed to believe service could influence their opinions or ideological views regarding needy populations. Similarly, Tryon et al. (2008) found that the most consistent problem in service-learning in the community was the challenges faced with short-term service-learning. They suggested that the experience was not long enough to contribute greatly to the student's educational experience. Tryon et al. suggested that students completing short-termed service assignments were also more likely to be resentful of the experience or unlikely to perform at a quality level.

Eppler et al. (2011) found that service participation at the freshmen-level typically increases student volunteering from monthly to weekly. However, in this study, first year students were more likely than others to believe service-learning activities do not enhance students' interests in needy populations. Three students also reported the belief that service-learning was unlikely to impact student perspectives about community issues. Similar to findings in Kalles and Ryan (2015), students enrolled in the lower-level course may not have had an equal exposure to course material relating directly to the service experience. Conversely, all students enrolled in the 400-level course could align course objectives with the service-learning activities affiliated with the course. Consistent with findings reported in Kalles and Ryan (2015), students enrolled in the 400-level were better able to connect the service experience with relative political, economic, and social conditions presented in their coursework.

Discussion

This study examined student perceptions of in-person service-learning opportunities made available in a Sociology course. Consistent with current research, most participants found service-learning to be a valuable teaching tool (Ferrari & Chapman, 2014). According to open-ended student comments, service-learning was beneficial for most students enrolled in the two sociology courses. Students reported developments in their academic strengths, professional experience, and personal skills. Although students were only asked to select one academic method of understanding service, some students attended the soup kitchen every Monday throughout the semester. Very few students expressed feelings about service-learning initiatives that were negative or they refused to participate in service activities.

A senior-level student stated, *"I think I would have found that service-learning benefited my sociology studies."* The student was impressed with the service-learning experience but thought it would have been even more beneficial had service been pursued earlier in her academic experience. As reported in Weiler et al. (2013) the service experience encouraged students to remain civically engaged in the future. Senior-level students showed an overwhelmingly greater level of support for service and for having required in-class service-learning assignments. Most students described in-person service-learning as "fun, enjoyable, and something they love." They acknowledged service as an opportunity to further their knowledge beyond the classroom and gain awareness of community issues (Pollard & McClam, 2014). In addition, students were likely to increase interpersonal and problem solving skills (Weiler et al., 2013).

> *Most students described in-person service-learning as "fun, enjoyable, and something they love."*

As anticipated by Henrich & Anderson (2014), the service activities promoted personal growth such as increased self-efficacy, identity, moral development, and intercultural competence. A student mentioned: *"Service-learning prepared me for working in the community and with a wide variety of people."* Other students reported feeling well-prepared for the service experience. Prior to assigning the service activities, the faculty member was formally trained to support and guide students through the process of serving the community. Students were offered exercises that allowed them to reflect both before and after the service experience. The faculty member was trained to prepare students, participate in each event, and work alongside each student when it was necessary to bolster their comfort levels.

Sandy and Holland (2006) argued that one of the greatest challenges in previous studies with service projects was faculty participation. Similarly, Worrall (2007) argued that the community-based staff showed concern for the level of commitment the student is prepared to dedicate in a short-term service-learning experience. In this study, faculty acknowledged the importance of the faculty role in supporting the student community engagement. Following recommendations offered by Sandy and Holland, faculty support allowed for more collaboration. Although both organizations were very active in identifying ways that students could be involved, neither could predict the outcome of students' interaction with patrons. Both service activities were often unstructured or had a shortage of supervision, which forced students to engage the patrons, to think critically, and to act independently. Most student participants attempted to fulfill organizational expectations as they are brought to their attention.

Recent studies have found that aligning course objectives with the characteristics of service initiatives prepares students for service (Sheafer, 2014). Study participants perceived there to be a very strong correlation between the course pedagogy in their Sociology courses and the service opportunities. These students learned to connect what they observed onsite with their coursework and apply it. Students were able to benefit others during a first-hand experience by relating academic lessons to real life scenarios (Sturgill & Motley, 2014).

Community service-learning experiences also vary widely from one program to another (Seider, Rabinowicz, & Gillmor, 2012). Reviews among freshmen, sophomore, and juniors were mixed but most argued that they would not enjoy service as much if it were mandatory. Some discussed balancing time. Other comments supported volunteer efforts being optional class assignments. One student stated, *"Required service takes away from the wholehearted effort."* Klink and Athaide (2004) also argue that forcing a student into a service-learning situation against their own voluntary want can jeopardize the success of a service-learning project. *"Students will realize how useful*

they can be helping others," said another participant who posed a contrasting view. Students did not anticipate that the service-learning experience could help them deal with their own problems.

Challenges

While there are many benefits of service-learning, there are also some difficulties involved. Previous studies reported challenges with service-learning experiences such as faculty participation, time, student interest, student commitment, and accidents occurring during the projects. In the current study, the student sample voiced *four* critical challenges during their service experience: time, travel, communication, and service as an unnecessary activity. Outside activities were said to conflict with times for other required courses, employment, and their general schedules. Participants also correlated transportation to off-campus activities and stress related to time management. Some students were not interested in making service a priority given their current responsibilities. See Table 4 for some of the stated challenges to Service Learning.

Table 4. Challenges and the Service-Learning Experience

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Time	18	37.5%
Travel	5	10.4%
Communication	5	10.4%
Unnecessary Component	4	8.3%
Missing Responses	9	18.8%
Total	41 (-7)	100.0%

Time Constraints

While participants in this study tended to favor the service-learning experience, many students commented about scheduling and time constraints. Other required courses, employment, and general schedules were potential conflicts as students attempted to attend the service activities. In addition, a large population of the students did not have access to transportation to the off-campus sites. Both service activities were located within a 20 mile radius of the university campus.

Multiple students referred to their time management processes as "stressful." A few students opted out of the service participation with no interest in making service-learning a priority. *"My challenge would be time management,"* a student said. A non-sociology major or minor enrolled in SOCI 203 reported that she could only do service to the extent that it did not sacrifice the quality of her artwork. Another student mentioned: *"Some people may not be able to find a way to fit it into their class or work schedule, causing conflict and missing out."*

Travel Constraints

Burke and Bush (2013) conducted a study on the student perceptions of service-learning in their undergraduate criminal justice class. While they did find the experience to be beneficial, *"when asked to elaborate on other barriers that impede students from participating in out of class activities, 40% responded that time was an issue"* (p. 64). Burke and Bush also reported family obligations, money, and transportation as other challenges. Overall, most students in this study were concerned about either access or cost of transportation to the service activity. A student said, *"In regards to myself, I don't have a car so I like [activities] in town and would not get to the place."* Some students could not travel to the location because of the location of the service activity. They blamed travel for decreased participation in a service activity. A student noted that, *"carpooling or possibly my expenses"* were reasons why they were less likely to participate in service learning projects.

Communication Issues

Communication skills are critical to performance in a social setting. One challenge during the service experience was the reported struggle for students to communicate with others at the service-learning sites when they were *"nervous, uncomfortable, or unsure of the right things to say."* Many were exposed to different lifestyles of impoverished or homeless persons. Even among students who were outgoing in other settings, perceptions of the patrons challenged the course of conversation. A student mentioned being nervous about *"unexpected reactions of people."* After reflecting, this student said she felt "encouraged to work on her ability to communicate" with different audiences. Another student voiced a similar concern that *"some people [students] won't have the skills to be able to communicate [with patrons]."* These communication challenges can be valuable for identifying literature to help students increase their communication skills through service-learning.

Although some students were eager to communicate and interact at the service-learning site, students reported that some of the patrons *"did not show interest in communicating"* or *"did not attempt to interact"* with student volunteers. Students were encouraged to respect the choices of patrons. In particular, students focused more on nonverbal communication techniques such as use of proximity and space for comfort and smiling as a sign of trust and respect. At first, students reported feeling uncomfortable outside of their "comfort zones." However, as other students communicated their concerns in class, some became more proficient and confident in their communication skills. Another took initiative to participate in a service activity but the student reported feeling uncomfortable in the service setting. *"I have anxiety and being required to do things like this really freaks me out,"* said this student. Further, there were students who were most concerned with *"unexpected reactions"* of the patrons. Although several actions were taken by the faculty to prepare students for the service experience, some students remained anxious or uncomfortable.

Perceptions of Service-Learning as Unnecessary

While some students were eager or curious about service-learning, a small proportion was not interested or willing to participate. Some students who were eager viewed service or volunteering as an extrinsic reward for helping others. Others wanted to learn about diversity or wanted to improve their interpersonal skills. Students holding this view appeared to be frustrated with classmates who downplayed the service experience or when they felt as if the service experiences were a mandate rather than a choice. *"People not taking it seriously,"* or *"some people may not give it their all,"* said two students who had possibly accepted the service experience as a personal responsibility. For those who do not believe the service activity is a priority, *"students may forget to show up, or not enough students sign up,"* a student mentioned. Another student who was a more experienced volunteer argued that *"If they [in-person service activities] were required, I would have not found it as fun because it would have felt like a task, more than helping someone joyfully."* Further, a few students who were already actively involved in other service activities of their choice, said the course activities run the risk of *"overextending those who already volunteer"*.

Although students reported potential fears, concerns, and challenges, there were students who believed service experiences were an "opportunity" to experience life in a way that they had not encountered circumstances before. They were concerned that other students would *"not take service seriously."* During the open dialogue in class, students expressed openly how they believed *"they lacked skills to react or respond in difficult situations."* Some believed there were not ready to participate or that they did not need to see a situation to understand how or why it existed. These perceptions may be attributed to reported "discomfort" with the subject matter or the impoverished patrons. Since the course material was presented using various sociological perspectives, *"students that are not in a sociology major may not value the experience and be able to take from it,"* said a student enrolled in SOCI 411.

Limitations

McDonald and Dominguez (2015) argued that service-learning activities were likely to fail due to there not being a distinction made between volunteering in the community and service-learning. Since this study did not mandate student participation on an ongoing basis, it was unclear as to whether the activities were distinguished as service-learning or volunteer work. Students reporting positive experiences were more likely to refer to the activities as service-learning. Those who did not report the experience as useful claimed that volunteer work should not be mandated in class. Some students argued that volunteer work should be a student's personal choice even when they had a pleasurable experience. One student expressed disappointment with having the assignment but said, *"I am so glad [professor] encouraged us to do the service project. It was so much more meaningful than I expected."*

McDonald and Dominguez (2015) argue that successful attempts at service-learning should entail planning, assessment, and reflection. Since participants in this study were able to choose between the in-person activities and literature about the in-

> *"The dynamic of poor planning had potential for creating relationship issues."*

person activities, there were no specific questions asked in the assessment about the student experience. Instead, homework assignments required students to think critically about the various societal conditions involving poverty. Students were asked to compare theory to practice with a goal of better understanding sociological perspectives of social class. Thus, this study did not follow McDonald and Dominguez's recommendation to directly correlate an assessment and the in-person service initiative. One of the goals of this study was to assess whether students believed the service-learning activities should be mandatory rather than an optional assignment in the future. Most students did not agree that the service-learning projects should be mandatory for all students enrolled in the sociology courses.

According to Klink and Athaide (2004), service-learning experiences should be properly screened to prevent liability issues and circumstances that are not suited for an educational experience. In accordance, students participating in the *Point-in-Time Survey* process were required to attend a two-hour training and sign a contractual agreement on only two separate occasions. However, there were several students who had other employment or course commitments during the training who did not have an opportunity to participate in the survey. Instead, those students baked food or donated items. Restricted training options were a limitation for some students who were interested but were unavailable during the proposed hours of training.

Service programs may also have insufficient planning or lack resources. Liliana-Viorica (2012) points out that *"the more the service-learning environment is sanctioned by the academic institution, the greater the potential for liability to the academic institution"* and *"the less the service-learning environment is sanctioned by the academic institution, the greater the potential for liability to the participating students and agency"* (p. 49). During the soup kitchen, the service experience was under-supervised. Klink and Athaide (2004) suggest that there should be a set level of expectations and some kind of management between the agency, the professor, and the student. During the service-learning experience, some students reported initial confusion since the activities and food types served oftentimes dictated the various responsibilities of the participants. The soup kitchen organization always welcomed new volunteers and services during each meeting, which left volunteers in position to ask many questions and to use more discretion about how they could help. It was also more difficult for the faculty member to coordinate student roles or to control for potential liability for accidents or emotional despair experienced by participants. As reported in Liliana-Viorica (2012), the dynamic of poor planning had potential for creating relationship issues.

Conclusion

The two sociology courses, SOCI 203: General Sociology and SOCI 411: Social Stratification, provided in-person service-learning opportunity designed for students

to witness important community problems related to poverty. Student interest and involvement were significant with regards to the level of success of the service activities. As reported by Campbell (2012), this service experience entailed planning course assignments as the primary source of the student learning objectives. As mimicked by Prentice and Robinson (2010), the key purpose of the service-learning activities is to "increase students' learning of course material." Student learning indications were not limited to grades. Service-learning made the students responsible for a hands-on experience, which was followed by the application of classroom lectures and activities and written assignments.

Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Wulsin (2008) described the potential that service-learning has in supporting student attendance and engagement. In this study, 81.3% of the participants believed the service-learning activities enhanced their interest in the course material. Although some students opted to learn via video and reading material, they were still exposed to student comments and faculty stories about the service experience. Using a sociological imagination, these students were placed in the context of the service experience during their class lecture. Students mentioned feeling "encouraged to participate once they felt more comfortable with the experience." Students also attributed this positive result to the hands-on application of classroom lectures and use of real-world experiences to make their education more relevant to them.

Another study investigating the relationship between socioeconomic status, academic success, and service-learning found that "service-learning may be an especially valued strategy for student engagement and achievement for principals in schools that are urban, or majority nonwhite, or high poverty" (Scales et al. 2006, p. 53). This study focused its attention on poverty rates in an area that is predominantly rural. Similarly, the service-learning experience related an achievement gap among those with similar and diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Class lectures promoted students to reflect about similarities and differences among the different populations.

Pollard and McClam (2014) applied a similar service-learning method in a specific field and explained that "students can build skills, gain experience, and begin to navigate their chosen field at the professional level" (p. 153). The idea of integrating Sociology and service goes beyond the basic goals of teaching sociological theory. By applying ideas in classroom and real-world situations, the pedagogy allows students to step into their careers in the field of Sociology. For example, students were able to interact with employees from local homeless shelters, community service and social service organizations, law enforcement, nurses, and social workers. Students experienced a more realistic idea of the job's responsibilities prior to being formally employed. Tovey (2001) explains this practical experience in a future career field is necessary preparation for successful entry into the field of study.

Service-learning has proven to aid in a college student's performance. Weiler et al. (2013) found that participation in service-learning that involves mentoring results in a successful outcome for the student and the mentor. These activities motivate and empower both to become more civically engaged citizens. Bringle and Hatcher (1996)

explain that service-learning is a unique opportunity for colleges and universities to involve their students in community service activities. These institutions can use service to place emphasis on the importance of promoting social change and advocating for the rights of marginalized groups.

Service learning can also help participants learn to be community leaders. During the service learning experience, students discover possibilities and workable solutions for communities being served. As part of the service-learning curriculum, students are encouraged to better understand the needs of others. Understanding is inseparable from most qualities of transformational leadership. The student participant who serves is granted an opportunity to develop a vision and to inspire other students to serve.

Service learning leads to transformational change in students. After reflecting about the experience, students often develop new attitudes about social justice. Students who serve the community tend to become more culturally competent and aware of surrounding community conditions. Service learning encourages students to reevaluate their perceptions as they relate to diverse cultures. Most importantly, they build image of public service and civic participation.

References

Aronowitiz, S. (2005). Comments on Michael Burawoy's "the critical turn to public sociology." *Critical Sociology*, 31(3), 333-338.

Battistoni, R. M. (1997). Service-learning and democratic citizenship: *Theory into practice,* 36(3), 150-56.

Boschini, V., & Thompson, C. (1998). The future of the Greek experience: Greek and diversity. *New Directions for Student Services,* 81, 19-27.

Bridgeland, J. M., DiIulio, J. J., Wulsin, S. C., & Civic, E. (2008). Engaged for success: Service-learning as a tool for high school dropout prevention. *Civic Enterprises.*

Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1996). Implementing service-learning in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education,* 67(2), 221-239.

Burke, A. S., & Bush, M. D. (2013). Service-learning and criminal justice: An exploratory study of student perceptions. *Educational Review,* 65(1), 56-69.

Campbell, E. M. (2012). Implementing service-learning into a graduate social work course: A step-by-step guide. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work,* 32(3), 300-313.

Colby, S., Bercaw, L., CLark, A. M., & Galiardi, S. (2009). From community service to service-learning leadership: A program perspective. *New Horizons in Education*, 57(3), 20-31.

Cruce, T., & Moore, J. (2012). Community service during the first year of college: What is the role of past behavior? *Journal of College Student Development,* 53(3), 399-417.

Darby, A., Longmire-Avital, B., Chenault, J., & Haglund, M. (2013). Students' motivation in academic service-learning over the course of the semester. *College Student Journal,* 47(1), 185-191).

Daynes, G., & Longo, N. V. (2004). Jane Addams and the origins of service-learning practice in the United States. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 11(1), 5-13.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Eppler, M. A., Ironsmith, M., Dingle, S. H., & Errickson, M. A. (2011). Benefits of service-learning for freshmen college students and elementary school children. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning,* 11(4), 102-115.

Ferrari, J. R., & Chapman, J. G. (2014). *Educating students to make a difference: Community-based service-learning.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Fitch, T. R. (1991). Differences among community service volunteers, extracurricular volunteers, and nonvolunteers on the college campus. *Journal of College Student Development,* 32(6), 534-540.

Furco, A., & Root, S. (2010). Research demonstrates the value of service-learning. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 91(5), 16-20.

Geiger, B. F. (2004). Teaching about history and science through archaeology service-learning. *Social Studies,* 95(4), 166-171.

Glasser, I. (2010). *More than bread: Ethnography of a soup kitchen.* University of Alabama Press.

Goodloe, S. (2015). HUD awards 1.8 billion for local homeless program: Funding supports goal to prevent and end homelessness." *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.* Online:http://portal.hud.gov/ hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2015/HUDNo_15-006.

Harkavy, I. (2004). Service-learning and the development of democratic universities, democratic schools, and democratic good societies in the 21st century. In M. Welch, & S. Billig, *Service-Learning: Research to Advance the Field* (p. 3-22). Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.

Henrich, A., & Anderson, J. (2014). Service-learning in a quantitative reasoning course. *Peer Review,* 16(3), 24-27.

Jacoby, B. (1996). Service-learning in today's higher education: Concepts and practices. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jacoby, B. (2009). Civic engagement in today's higher education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kalles, S., & Ryan, T. G. (2015). Service-learning: Promise and possibility in post-secondary education. *International Journal of Progressive Education,* 11(1), 132-148.

Kendall, J. (1991). Combining service and learning: An introduction for cooperative education professionals. *The Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships,* 27(2), 9-26.

Klink, R. R., & Athaide, G. A. (2004). Implementing service-learning in the principles of marketing course. *Journal of Marketing Education,* 26(2), 145-153.

Lasker, R. D., & E. S. Weiss. (2003). Broadening participation in community problem solving: A multidisciplinary model to support collaborative practice and research. *Journal of Urban Health,* 80(1), 14-47.

Liliana-Viorica, P. (2012). Risk management in higher education. *Analele Universitatii Maritime Constanta,* 13(18), 49-52.

Longo, N. V., & Marguerite, S. S. (2009). Leadership education and the eevitalization of public life. In B. Jacoby, & Associates, *Civic Engagement in Higher Education* (p. 154-173). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lopez, M. H., & Kiesa, A. (2009). What we know about civic engagment among college students. In B. Jacoby, & Associates, *Civic Engagement in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices,*(p. 31-68).SanFrancisco:Jossey-Bass.

McDonald, J., & Dominguez, L. A. (2015). Developing University and Community Partnerships: A Critical Piece of Successful Service-learning. *Journal of College Science Teaching,* 44(3), 52-56.

McGorry, S. Y. (2012). No significant difference in service-learning online. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks,* 16(4), 45-54.

Morton, K. (1995). The irony of service: Charity, project and social change in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 2, 19-32.

Morton, K., & Saltmarsh, J. (1997). Addams, Day, and Dewey: The emergence of community service in American culture. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 4, 4137-49.

Natvig, D. (2007). Meeting intergenerational needs through service-learning. *Educational Gerontology,* 33(7), 573-586. doi:10.1080/03601270701410934.

Oates, K.K., & Leavitt, L. H. (2003). *Service-learning and learning communities: Tools for integration and assessment*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Parker-Gwin, R. (1996). Connecting service to learning: How students and communities matter. *Teaching Sociology*, 24(1), 97-101.

Pelco, L. E., Ball, C. T., & Lockeman, K. S. (2014). Student growth from service-learning: A comparison of first-generation and non-first-generation college students. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach & Engagement,* 18(2), 49-65.

Pollard, B. L., & McClam, T. (2014). Beyond the classroom: service-learning in human service education. *Journal of Human Services,* 34(1), 153-157.

Poon, P., Chan, T. S., & Zhou, L. (2011). Implementation of service-learning in business education: Issues and challenges. *Journal of Teaching in International Business,* 22(3), 185-192. doi:10.1080/08975930.2011.653746.

Prentice, M., Robinson, G., & American Association of Community, C. (2010). Improving student learning outcomes with service-learning. *American Association of Community Colleges.*

Rabin, L. M. (2009). Language ideologies and the settlement house movement: A New History for Service-Learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 15(2), 48-55.

Roth, M. (2014). *Beyond the university: Why liberal education matters.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Saltmarsh, J. (1996). Education for critical citizenship: John Dewey's contribution to the pedagogy of community service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 3(1), 13-21.

Sandy, M., & Holland, B. A. (2006). Different worlds and common ground: Community partner perspectives on campus-community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 13(1), 30-43.

Scales, P. C., Roehlkepartain, E. C., Neal, M., Kielsmeier, J. C., & Benson, P. L. (2006). Reducing achievement gaps: The role of community service and service-learning. *Journal of Experiential Education,* 29(1), 38-60.

Seider, S., Rabinowicz, S., & Gillmor, S. (2012). Differential outcomes for American college students engaged in community service-learning involving youth and adults. *Journal of Experiential Education,* 35(3), 447-463.

Sheafer, V. (2014). Using service-learning to teach classic learning theories, *Psychology Journal,* 11(2), 77-82.

Sturgill, A., & Motley, P. (2014). Methods of reflection about service-learning: Guided vs. free, dialogic vs. expressive, and public vs. private. Teaching and Learning Inquiry: *The ISSOTL Journal,* 2(1), 81-93.

Tovey, J. (2001). Building connections between industry and university: Implementing an internship program at a regional university. *Technical Communication Quarterly,* 10(2), 225-239.

Tryon, E., Stoecker, R., Martin, A., Seblonka, K., Hilgendorf, A., & Nellis, M. (2008). The challenge of short-term service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 14(2), 16-26.

Weiler, L., Haddock, S., Zimmerman, T., Krafchick, J., Henry, K., Rudisill, S. (2013). Benefits derived by college students from mentoring at-risk youth in a service-learning course. *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 52(3/4), 236-248.

Welch, M. (2009). Moving from service-learning to civic engagement. In B. Jacoby, & Associates, *Civic Engagment in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* (p. 174-195). San Francisco:Jossey-Bass.

Wolch, J.R., Dear, M., & Akita A. (1988). Explaining homelessness. *Journal of the American Planning Association,* 54(4), 443-453.

Worrall, L. (2007). Asking the community: A case study of community partner perspectives. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-learning,* 14(1), 5-17.

An Interdisciplinary Learning Community Approach to Civic Engagement Following Superstorm Sandy: A Call to Action

Marilyn Dono-Koulouris,*

Associate Professor and Discover New York Program Coordinator Staten Island Campus, Institute for Core Studies, and

Roberta L. Hayes

Associate Professor and Scientific Inquiry Program Coordinator, Institute for Core Studies, St. John's University

Abstract

Research consensus has shown that high impact practices like academic service learning and learning communities correlate to deeper learning, increased student achievement, global awareness, social responsibility, civic engagement, the development of problem analysis, critical thinking skills, and a reduction in cultural and racial stereotyping. In the Fall of 2012, the beach regions of Staten Island, NY were devastated by Superstorm Sandy, resulting in a death toll higher than most other areas, the loss of homes and their material contents. Students enrolled in a first year interdisciplinary Learning Community comprised of Scientific Inquiry and Discover New York, Core courses at St. John's University, were assigned a shared academic service learning project, involving research and observation in the severely affected neighborhoods.

Keywords: Learning Communities; Interdisciplinary; Academic Service Learning; Experiential Learning; SENCER; Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibility; Civic Engagement; Scientific Inquiry; Discover New York.

Introduction

This article will illustrate how an interdisciplinary learning community, which used a shared academic service learning project, gave students greater insight into civic responsibility, through participation in a unique learning experience, thus allowing them to become critical thinkers and deep learners. This manuscript responds to the theme of education and mobilization to action following an emerging civic crisis and severe flooding following Superstorm Sandy on Staten Island, New York.

Although pedagogical designs may vary, educational scholars maintain that the purpose of education has remained constant with its primary goal being for the good of society. The school as well as the students' main objective should be to learn to become more responsible, active citizens within a democratic society they may eventually shape (Burton, 2010). Students should be encouraged to take a proactive approach to problem solving, while educators investigate the benefits of incorporating various

programs into the curriculum, such as interdisciplinary experiential learning programs.

"Civic engagement using ASL can foster greater community awareness…"

As Superstorm Sandy devastated many parts of New York, students from St. John's University enrolled in the First Year Seminar-Discover New York and Scientific Inquiry courses in the Institute for Core Studies of the Liberal Arts and Sciences college, were afforded a unique opportunity to discover how the hardships resulting from the storm could be integrated into course materials being studied in their Science and Discover New York courses. St. John's University is a metropolitan university with two additional campuses in New York, and European campus locations in Rome and Paris. A shared academic service learning project was developed in the aftermath of the storm to allow students to better understand real-world problems through classroom-based and experiential learning.

Academic Service Learning (ASL) is an experiential program which gives students the opportunity to contribute to their community by addressing community needs through a reciprocal relationship with their courses and a community partner. Civic engagement using ASL can foster greater community awareness by combining active community involvement and academic instruction focused on critical reflection.

Employing experiential ASL projects, students become immersed in their own education. Through field experiences, and peer discussions in the classroom, students learn to think more critically and reflect on their own way of thinking about the people they are serving. A culmination of these experiences generates a greater understanding of the course content and its requirements resulting in an overall higher level of achievement.

Course Descriptions and Learning Objectives

Discover New York Course Description

Discover New York is an innovative course that encourages students to engage both intellectually and personally with the remarkable global city. Students have the opportunity to "observe" New York City through a particular perspective with an emphasis on critical thinking skills and information literacy as pedagogy of learning, with the city becoming the laboratory for the students' application to the course focus.

The course focus includes the themes of history, environment, immigration, poverty, and leadership through on-campus class sessions, outside lectures, and required participation in field assignments. With an emphasis on Academic Service Learning, students experience the city as a place populated with "real people" some of whom possess "real problems".

Discover New York Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the course are as follows:

- Demonstrate an understanding of selected aspects of New York City history and how they impact on the city today;

- Relate the diversity and contributions of immigrant groups who have come to New York to the development of the modern global city;

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of both information literacy and critical thinking skills;

- Connect the idea of civic engagement to larger social issues and St. John's University's Vincentian mission; and

- Demonstrate awareness and behaviors appropriate to the transition to higher education.

Scientific Inquiry Course Description

Scientific Inquiry & Quantitative Reasoning is a core course developed at St. John's University to promote scientific literacy for all students, including non-science majors. Scientific thinking and evidence-based reasoning are emphasized in a curriculum that focuses on the process of obtaining reliable information through the scientific method, instead of content memorization. Digital information dissemination, allows almost anyone to retrieve factual information within a reasonable time frame using the Internet. On the other hand, critical thinking skills and the ability to understand complex abstract ideas cannot be "searched for." A deeper understanding of how science solves problems, how science influences and is influenced by society, and how to evaluate information to form trustworthy conclusions requires guided training and practice.

Scientific Inquiry Learning Objectives

The primary course objectives are to help students improve their base scientific literacy, quantitative reasoning and problem-solving skills, and to engage students in an appreciation of the every day relevance of science, nature and sustainable engineering as it relates to all citizens.

The aftermath of Superstorm Sandy opened up new levels of discussions about the limits of our scientific knowledge and acceptance of scientific information: "why many people did not heed the storm warnings and evacuate;" "why people did not believe the meteorological scientists' predictions;" "why this may or may not reflect climate change;" and, "how do we know anything for certain?" Specific learning objectives focused on the ability to demonstrate and analyze the limitations of science in predicting a natural disaster and a social understanding of the event in the context of scientific literacy.

Literature Review and Discussion

Research on Academic Service Learning

Academic Service Learning *"is a classroom, experiential site-based program that involves students in some form of required community service that benefits the common (public) good and uses service as a means of understanding course concepts"* (St. John's University, 2016). Several studies have been conducted demonstrating the benefits of academic service learning as it relates to student achievement, global awareness, reduction of cultural and racial stereotypes, increased social responsibility, citizenship skills, positive effect on service commitments, development of problem analysis and critical thinking.

Academic service learning increases student achievement and *"service learning provides culturally relevant teaching and deep experiential learning"* which has been *"effective in exposing students to diversity and positively changing prejudices"* (Goldberg & Coufal, 2009, p. 39). The service learning approach integrates academic content, community partnership, and civic engagement which is designed to increase students' understanding of the environmental, sociological, and political contexts of issues and theories addressed in the classroom." The more time devoted to service, the more of a positive effect it has on students (Astin & Sax, 1998) and the better grade performance than the students' peers who did not participate in academic service learning projects (Balazadeh, 1996).

It is reported that students who participate in academic service learning show a significant increase in their pro-social decision making, reasoning, and occupational identity processing skills (Batchelder & Root, 1994). Moreover, they achieve significantly higher mean final grades than students from the same classes that do not participate in service learning. Further, the findings suggest that students reported a significantly higher level of satisfaction within the assigned course, instructor, and assignments, in turn, stimulating discussions and greater student involvement (Bernson & Younkin, 1998). Academic service learning also strengthens students' understanding of class lectures and readings (Blackwell, 1996).

The results of academic service learning exhibits students' feeling more compassion toward the disadvantaged, are more committed to community work, and hold a greater belief that they could make a difference (Fenzel & Leary, 1997). Professors observe service learning and field experiences as increasing student learning as well as students gaining an awareness of cultural differences, increased student problem solving and a strengthening of a commitment to service. They also note the fulfillment of liberal arts objectives and interdisciplinary learning along with increased problem solving skills and critical reflection (Hesser, 1995).

Research on Civic Engagement

The completion of postsecondary education and the acquisition of twenty-first-century critical thinking skills in the liberal arts and sciences are an economic necessity as well as a social imperative as civic learning and learning in traditional academic disciplines complement rather than compete with each other. Students who participate in civic learning opportunities are

more likely to persist in college and complete their degrees; obtain skills prized by employers; and develop habits of social responsibility and civic participation. (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2012, p. v)

Civic Engagement *"refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future"* (Adler and Goggins, 2005, p. 236). Utilizing academic service learning as pedagogy for civic engagement, students are able to act upon problems in the community, engage in dialogue with those people affected by the problem, connect course content to real-world issues, and learn how to be part of the solution and not the problem (Jacoby, 1996). "*A growing body of evidence indicates that high-quality civic learning and democratic engagement is a win-win proposition in higher education and career preparation,*" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2012, p. 4). "*Civic learning not only promotes civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions, but also builds the twenty-first century competencies which is associated with better school climate and lower dropout rates*" (Gould, 2011, p. 20).

Involvement in civic engagement is a necessity for all students of higher education and a "core skill in preparing students to succeed as employees and citizens" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2012 p. 21). It is disappointing to note that only about twenty-five percent of college seniors reported an understanding of problems within their communities and an increased knowledge of people from different races and cultures. To that end, more and more institutions have created major initiatives to advance civic engagement in undergraduate education developing partnerships with foundations allowing students to tackle social issues both at home and abroad to learn from those experiences (Jacoby, 2009).

Major civic engagement initiatives for the twenty-first century in higher education have been introduced through various organizations. The mission of Campus Compact is to "advance the public purpose of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility." The Association for American Colleges and Universities "advocates a philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind, and cultivates social responsibility. The American Democracy Project through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' purpose is to "prepare the next generation of active, engaged citizens for our democracy" (Jacoby, 2009).

Research on Learning Communities

A learning community within a university environment is defined as learning through a social system whereby the constituents of each community are bound by a joint enterprise mutually engaged in a shared resource. Members within a community share learning defined by knowledge, not the task at hand. One of the greatest benefits of a learning community is its smaller size, which allows greater engagement and student-faculty interaction (Beaulieu and Williams, 2013).

Communities are an integral part of a university's structure in that knowledge is created, shared, organized, and passed on within the organization whereby the

> *"Through the use of micro-strategies within a learning community, teaching faculty encourage retention through student involvement."*

community owns this knowledge. Within the realm of the community, students are exchanging ideas, living through their learning and creating relationships. Communities can be supported by the organization by recognizing the work they are doing and creating an environment in which the value of the work is recognized (Wenger, 1998).

The common denominator of learning communities include social and academic features to ensure that students are engaged in common intellectual activities that come in various forms including curricular communities made up of students co-enrolled within two courses linked by common themes; cooperative learning within one classroom; residential learning communities with students living in close proximity, sharing two common courses; and student-type learning communities targeted at groups such as academically underprepared students, honors students, students with disabilities, and students with similar interests. Most of these learning communities incorporate collaborative learning promoting involvement in academic and social activities that extend beyond the classroom promoting positive behaviors, openness to diversity, social tolerance, and personal and interpersonal development as important factors of student retention (Zhao and Kuh, 2004).

One section of students in our St. John's Learning Community was primarily comprised of first year students that had not yet selected a major discipline of study. Literature on entering college freshmen, who have not declared a major, suggests that these students may be considered at greater risk for poor retention compared to students who entered college with a chosen major (Tampke and Durodoye, 2013).

When interventions such as first-year seminars or learning communities have been implemented for undecided students, their academic performance improved compared to a control group. Cuevas, et al. (2013) conducted a study introducing two interventions for incoming freshmen students, with one of the sections of students in a Learning Community who were primarily comprised of first year students that had not yet selected a major discipline of study. Using three academic outcomes – GPA, percent in good academic standing, and retention to the next term it was found that the students within the two intervention groups had a higher GPA than the control group. Observing the retention rates of these students, the findings stated that there were no significant differences between the students within the first-year seminar class and the control group; however, the students enrolled in the first-year seminar and the learning community had a higher retention rate. Learning communities have been shown to increase grade point averages, improve retention, and create a sense of belonging to the university (Cuevas, Campbell, Lowery-Hart, Mallard and Anderson, 2013).

Through the use of micro-strategies within a learning community, teaching faculty encourage retention through student involvement. Peer academic advisors reinforce academic standards, academic service learning, cultural events within the core curriculum, and faculty-student collaboration on academic projects. The resulting effect of such collaboration and partnerships is that students are engaged in their learning as well as in their university, which leads to a more successful student and higher retention (Beaulieu & Williams, 2013). Data suggests that collaborative learning communities with shared assignments improve the chance of successfully teaching courses to underprepared students with the advantage of hearing the different perspectives of the professor involved. (Rodriguez and Buczinsky, 2013).

Research on Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is *"the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combinations of grasping and transforming experience"* (Kolb and Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Various researchers have looked at experiential learning in several situations observing positive outcomes for, not only the students, but also all those involved in the process. The educational philosophy of John Dewey interprets education as *"the scientific method by means which man studies the world, acquires cumulative knowledge of meanings and values these outcomes."* (Dewey, 1938 p. 10). Dewey offers three stages of learning including the underlying theoretical engines that is the idea that people can learn effectively through direct, hands-on experience as long as these experiences are well defined and facilitated. Experiential learning works better to meet learning goals when the experience is packaged together with exercises including thinking, discussing, or creatively processing cognitions and emotions related to the raw experience. Each experience influences future experiences (Dewey, 1938).

If an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way; whereby, every experience is a moving force. (Dewey, 1938, p. 38)

Greater progress is made in life-long learning-related skills through self-directed experiential learning when experiential learning approaches are implemented to effectively meet specific educational goals (Jiusto and DiBiasio, 2006). When non-traditional educational approaches are used to supplement traditional education, connecting academics to the practice of fostering an effective interdisciplinary curriculum, students are more engaged, empowered and their experience can benefit career aspirations (Domask, 2007).

The new direction in student learning is a trend leaning toward collaborative, experiential, service, and integrative learning which can be major themes in educational change in higher education, with an emerging conceptualization of liberal learning. Learning goals include acquisition of intellectual skills, understanding of multiple modes of inquiry, and development of societal, civic, and global knowledge. The developing pedagogy and curriculum includes collaborative inquiry, experiential learning, service learning, research or inquiry-based learning, and integrative learning

(Schneider and Shoenberg, 1998). Experiential learning is a process focusing on student engagement; drawing on students' beliefs and ideas of a topic; the resolution of conflict, which drives the learning process through discussion and critical thinking; and the integration of the whole person in relation to their thinking, believing and actions (Kolb and Kolb, 1984).
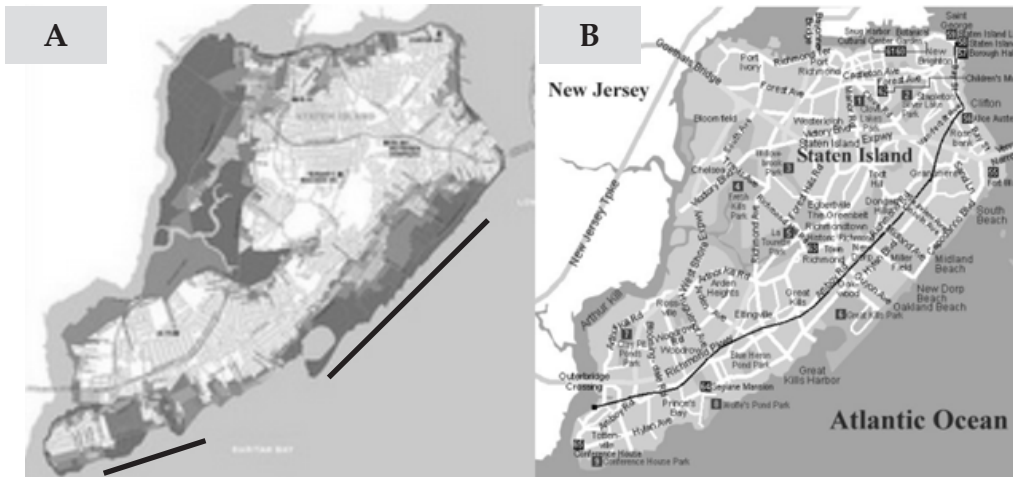
Coordinated Learning Community Assignments

Scientific Inquiry as described in this article embodies the Science Education for New Civic Engagement and Responsibility (SENCER) Ideals (Burns, 2012). SENCER invites students to put scientific knowledge and the scientific method to immediate use on matters of immediate interest to students. SENCER also helps reveal the limits of science by identifying the elements of public issues where science does not offer a clear resolution. Superstorm Sandy presented a unique and immediate opportunity to discuss real-life scientific issues in the context of civic engagement.

Over a period of two semesters, including the semester during which the most horrific hurricane in one hundred years engulfed many parts of New York City, twenty-five students enrolled in Fall 2012 and a different group of twenty-five students enrolled in Spring 2013 who participated in projects, field experiences, learning communities, and civic engagement through academic service learning, worked with the residents of the area as well as several agencies on site who were dealing with the aftermath of the storm. These students studied the effects of Superstorm Sandy in relation to the neighborhood, health factors, and observed ecological changes caused by the storm. Groups of five students, were required to perform between nine to twelve hours of service, and were divided by the coordinating professors, observed and conducted research on the neighborhood areas of Staten Island, New York affected by Superstorm Sandy looking at the ecological issues such as water pooling and plant life, the health factors, mold and lung problems, as well as social issues that surfaced in the aftermath of the storm, what measures had been taken, and which additional measures could be taken to correct any observed problems.

Through their research as well as physical observations, the students became part of the community to which they were assigned, taking pictures, interviewing residents and storeowners of the group's choice, looking into the materials used in the destroyed buildings as well as those buildings that did not sustain much damage. Students from the spring, 2013 semester compared the areas that were still in disrepair to those neighborhoods that were almost completely rebuilt observing if all areas received similar government support services and were responded to in the same manner. Students analyzed the capacity of the city to endure the effects of the storm and ways in which people could affect a recovery and return to basic quality of life. The areas of greatest flooding are depicted as darkened regions in Figure 1, Panel A below, with the areas investigated by students indicated by the black bar.

Figure 1. Map of the Hurricane Evacuation Zones in the Borough of Staten Island (A) Compared to a Neighborhood Map of the Region (B)

Source: Photo credits: (A) NYC hurricane evacuation zones map from http://maps.nyc.gov/hurricane/; and (B) http://uscities.web.fc2.com/ny/information/maps/staten-map.html, respectively.
(Note for Figure 1 above: the darkest shading corresponds to the greatest risk of flooding from storm surge and the black bars represent the Beach areas that the students investigated.)

As part of the scientific inquiry course, students observed trees, plant life and made additional observations of the ecology of the affected areas as well as noting the health factors of each neighborhood (such as mold in flooded homes and areas of standing water). Moreover, in order to further understand what happens to nature (plants and animals) and people's lives when the ocean changes its boundaries, students learned by doing utilizing salt water intrusion modeling and growing pea plants watered with various salt solutions.

Taking into consideration the academic service learning performed by the learning community students in Fall 2012 during the aftermath of Sandy, the final class project in Discover New York in Spring 2013 revolved around sustainability as it relates to the future of New York City, an area that was believed to never endure such devastation that was just witnessed. The students were required to take a deeper look at the area in which they served and investigate the damage incurred by the hurricane noting the proximity to the ocean, the types of buildings in the area, the disaster response and through research note some of the ways presented for the communities to be more prepared for future natural disasters. In the wake of the recent hurricane that hit the East Coast region of the United States it was time for the students to take a deeper look at the sustainability of New York City deciding upon measures that should be taken in case another disaster happened; therefore, they were presented with questions for group discussions for their final projects that included the following:

- Did the hurricane cause more damage in certain areas? Why do you think this was the case?

- Are there areas in New York City that are more susceptible to flooding? And, is there a way to fix this situation to (prevent) harm of future hurricanes?

- Did each affected community receive the same federal and local government disaster response? If not, what factors may have contributed to these observed differences?

- How can communities be more prepared in the future for such acts of nature?

Assessment Measures

In addition to traditional course measures, such as quizzes, examinations, and written term papers, students in the Scientific Inquiry course were asked to voluntarily complete an online Student Assessment of Learning Gains (Carroll, 2010; SENCER SALG site, 2015). This assessment provides formative insight to faculty by empowering students with a voice to positively rate those experiential learning activities they believed were helpful in understanding course materials best. The instructions emphasized to students that they should not select those activities they liked best or thought were easiest, but rather, those that helped them learn and reinforced the content materials and course concepts best.

Table 1 is a summary breakdown of student assessment of learning gains. As the summary of responses reveal, key scientific learning objectives were met by over 50 percent of students in the class, with the majority indicating at least moderate to great gains in skill levels.

Table 1. Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) Summary – (Moderate to Great Gains Reported, 3-5 Likert Scale)

Rank	%	Skill or Objective Realized
1	(61%)	Analyzing scientific data
1	(61%)	Learning how real science is done
3	(60%)	Learning scientific information
4	(59%)	Addressing real-world issues
5	(58%)	Summarizing scientific results
6	(56%)	Interplay between science and civic issues
7	(56%)	Using scientific methods
8	(53%)	Gathering scientific data through demonstrations or in the field

Online: http://www.salgsite.org/instrument/65456

Outcomes

Through research as well as physical observations that had taken place during the relief efforts students presented responses that took into consideration proximity to the ocean, the type of houses destroyed, buildings of the future, community response based on economic factors within the affected communities, preparedness of the city agencies as well as the home and shop owners as to measures to be taken for future hurricanes (natural disasters), as well as ways of potentially blocking floodwaters through the use of sea walls or levees. They looked at the capacity of the city to endure what had happened through this hurricane and ways in which people can move on to achieve a basic quality of life.

"This experience was a turning point for me…"

It was found that by the end of Fall 2012, the majority of undecided students had chosen a major with the majority moving toward the field of psychology or business, some with the aspirations of helping people who have endured the pain of losing everything to those students who could see themselves working within business seeing themselves taking part in the rebuilding of New York City. Quoting one student who stated that *"this experience was a turning point for me, I was overwhelmed by the impact Hurricane Sandy had on the community that it made me realize how geography and economic status can be dramatically altered by external factors like climate."* This assignment led the student(s) to decide that he wanted to become a journalist in order to research and report on pressing economic and social issues.

In observation of the high impact practices of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU, 2008), students looked at the compelling question as to what changes needed to be made to be ready for another hurricane of this magnitude looking at the key factors of the hurricane whereby they could, together offer insight into finding solutions to the problems they had observed. They brainstormed as to ways of advocating for the residents of those areas hit by hurricane Sandy; and, through discussion exemplified a level of excitement to be an integral part of something rather than just reading about it.

Based on their civic engagement experiences in the field during the Hurricane Sandy relief within the fall 2012 semester and their neighborhood projects surrounding the hurricane affected areas of Staten Island completed by the students within the spring 2013 semester, all learning objectives were met, for both core courses, and reinforced within the learning community environment.

References

Adler, R. P. & Goggins, J. (2005). What do we mean by "Civic Engagement." *Journal of Transformative Education.* July, 2005, 3(3), 236-253.

Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2016). High impact educational practices. Online: http://www.aacu.org/leap/hips.

Astin, W. W. & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development,* 39(3), 251-263.

Balazadeh, N. (1996). Service-learning and the sociological imagination: approach and assessment. Paper presented at the National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Faculty Development Symposium, Memphis, TN.

Batchelder, T. H. & Root, S. (1994). Effects of an undergraduate program to integrate academic learning and service: Cognitive, pro-social cognitive, and identity outcomes. *Journal of Adolescence*, 17, 341-355.

Beaulieu, W.A. & Williams, L.B. (2013). Micro-strategies: Small steps toward improved retention. *Learning Communities Research and Practice,* 1(1), Article 12.

Berson, J.S. & Younkin. W.F. (1998). *Doing well by doing good: A study of the effects of a service-learning experience on student success.* Presented at the American Society of Higher Education, Miami, FL.

Blackwell, A.P. (1996). *Students' perceptions of service learning participation in the College of Health and Human Sciences at the University of Southern Mississippi.* Unpublished Dissertation, University of Mississippi.

Burns, W.D. (2012). Meeting the challenges of large scale educational reform: SENCER and the problem of "knowledge inequality," in *Science Education and Civic Engagement: The Next Level;* Sheardy, R., et al.; American Chemical Society: Washington, D.C., *ACS Symposium Series* Vol 1121; Chapter 1, 1-16.

Burton, M.E. (2010). *Experiential education and social justice: Philosophical and methodological considerations for integrating experiential learning in education leadership.* Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 173.

Carroll, S.B. (2010). Engaging assessment: Using the SENCER-SALG to improve teaching and learning, American Chemical Society: Washington, D.C. *ACS Symposium Series* Vol 1037, Chapter 10, 149-198.

Cuevas, M., Campbell, K., Lowery-Hart, R.D., Mallard, J. & Andersen, A. (2013). Using faculty learning communities to link FYE and high-risk core courses: A pilot study. *Learning Communities Research and Practice,* 1(1), Article 8.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education.* (London & New York: Macmillan), 10-59.

Domask, J.J. (2007). Achieving goals in higher education: An experiential approach to sustainability studies. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education,* 8(1), 53–68.

Fenzel, L.M. & Leary, T.P. (1997). Evaluating outcomes of service-learning courses at a parochial college. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL

Goldberg, L.R. & Coufal, K.L. (2009). Reflections on service learning, critical thinking, and cultural competence. *Journal of College Teaching and Learning,* 6(6), 39-49.

Gould, J. (2011). Guardians of democracy: The civic mission of schools. Philadelphia: Lenore Annenberg Institute for Civics in the Annenberg Public Policy Center and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, p. 20.

Hesser, G. (1995). Faculty assessment of student learning: Outcomes attributed to service- learning and evidence of changes in faculty attitudes about experiential education. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2, 33-42.

Jacoby, B. (2009). *Civic Engagement in Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Jacoby, B. (1996). *Service-Learning in Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Jiusto, S. & DiBiasio, D. (2006). Experiential learning environments: Do they prepare our students to be self-directed, life-long learners? *Journal of Engineering Education*, 95(3), 195-204.

Kolb, A.Y. & Kolb, D.A (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

NYC Hurricane Evacuation Zone Finder. (2015). Online: http://maps.nyc.gov/hurricane/

Rodriguez, G.G. & Buczinsky, C. (2013). Linking classes: Learning communities, "high" culture and the working class student. *Learning Communities Research and Practice*, 1(2), Article 6.

Schneider, C.G. & Shoenberg, R. (1998). Contemporary understandings of liberal education: The academy in transition. Association of American Colleges and Universities. ED416811.

SENCER –SALG, Student assessment of learning gains. (2015). Online: http://www.salgsite.org/instrument/65456.

St. John's University. (2016). Vincentian Institute for Social Action. Online: http://www.stjohns.edu/faith-service/social-action/vincentian-institute-social-action.

Tampke, D. R. & Durodoye, R. (2013). Improving academics for undecided students: A first-year seminar/learning community approach. *Learning Communities Research and Practice*, 1(2), Article 3.

The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012). A crucible moment: college learning and democracy's future. Washington, D.C.: *Association of American Colleges and Universities*.

U.S. Department of Education (2012). Advancing civic learning and engagement in democracy: A road map and call to action. p. 20 – 21.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker*, 9(5),1-7.

Zhao, C. M. & Kuh, G. D. (2004). Adding value: Learning communities and student engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, 45(2), 115–138.

---

*Corresponding Author: St. John's University, 300 Howard Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301

About the Contributors

Marilyn Dono-Koulouris, EdD, is a professor and program coordinator for Discover New York program at St. Johns' University. She has a background in the field of education and the corporate world. Currently at St. John's University she works with incoming freshmen guiding them on the path to their college careers as well as instruct elementary and high school teachers as they prepare to move into administrative positions within their school systems. She also has experience in the financial field of mergers and acquisitions, was a Business School Administrator, and began and ran a successful Pre-School for many years.

Roberta Hayes, PhD, is an Associate Professor and the Coordinator of the Scientific Inquiry Program in the Institute for Core Studies in St. John's College. She teaches Introductory Biology and Core Curriculum courses in Scientific Inquiry using different thematic approaches. She is faculty liaison for academic service learning research initiatives and research advisor for the Ozanam Scholars in Social Justice on the Staten Island campus. Hayes received her PhD in Immunology and Microbiology from the University of Colorado. Her research expertise has focused on using the immune system to fight high grade primary brain cancers, stem cell therapy, cancer epidemiology, and medical bioethics. She is a founding member of the Children's Cord Blood Bank and Research Foundation, raising awareness for the need to save newborn babies' umbilical cord blood stem cells for children and adults needing transplants due to genetic illnesses and blood disorders.

Chiquita D. Howard-Bostic, PhD, is a professor, grant writer, and a community mentor. She is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies, and also serves as the Criminal Justice Internship Coordinator at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Her current research and journal publications have advanced the study of online teaching pedagogy, cross-cultural motivations for aggression, and emotive-based treatment for perpetrators and victims of mutually performed domestic violence. Over the past fifteen years, she has generated social change as a university administrator and a community developer. Alongside her research, Dr. Howard-Bostic facilitates university service learning projects, community-based youth programs, and international learning initiatives. She received her PhD in Sociology, teaching certificate in Women's Studies, and a Race and Social Policy research certification at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. She earned a Master's degree in Urban Planning at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Rosalyn M. King, EdD, is professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun campus and Chair of the Board of ECCSSA. She served as Chair, VCCS Center for Teaching Excellence for 16 years providing professional development seminars and opportunities for faculty within the northern Virginia region. She received her doctoral training at Harvard University in Learning Environments and Administration, Planning and Social Policy, with special study at the Harvard Law School (in Constitutional Law, Intellectual Property Law, Commerce and Development) and the School of Design (Youth in the Urban Environment). King has an interdisciplinary background in psychology, education, counseling, anthropology, sociology, administration, planning and social policy. She specializes in cognitive developmental psychology, learning environments, educational psychology and research. She is the author of two books, *Enriching the Lives of Children* (2008) and *Psychology and the Three Cultures: History, Perspectives and Portraits* (in progress), numerous articles, and other publications, reports and research studies. Dr. King is an Oxford scholar with papers presented at two Oxford Roundtables.

Nabil Marshood PhD, is a Fulbright Scholar, an author, and a professor of sociology at Hudson County Community College, New Jersey. He teaches courses in sociology of the family and sociology of religion. Dr. Marshood earned his BA and MA from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and his Ph.D. from Columbia University in NYC. He is the recipient of a Mid-Career Fellowship from Princeton University concentrating on social theory and sociology of religion. He is also a recipient of a number of grants in the areas of religious pluralism, and peace and conflict resolution. His colleagues awarded him the Faculty Senate Excellence Award for his teaching quality and for his contributions to the discipline and scholarship, and to the college at large. Dr. Marshood is the author of *Voices from the Camps: People's History of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan,* 2006 (University Press, 2010), *Palestinian Teenage Immigrants and Refugees Speak Out* (Rosen Publishing Group, 1997), and a coauthor of *Everyday Sociology* (StarPoint Press – a total of seven editions, 1998-2011).

Mission of ECCSSA

The East Coast Colleges Social Science Association (ECCSA) is a professional organization for college and university faculty in the social and behavioral sciences and related fields. The mission of the association is to promote interest in the study and teaching of the Social and Behavioral Sciences. It includes but not limited to some of the following disciplines: anthropology, criminal justice, economics, education, geography, history, political science, sociology. In addition, the behavioral sciences and all subjects whose contents and aims are predominantly for development of human potential would be related to the mission of the Association. ECCSSA aims to promote the study of problems, the practice and teaching of the social and behavioral sciences to the best advantage of students in the classroom. A primary goal of ECCSSA's mission is to encourage research, experimentation and investigation in the field of the social and behavioral sciences. We hope to achieve this mission by cooperating with similar organizations in ventures which will achieve these purposes. A principal focus is public discussion and programs; producing desirable publications, articles, reports and surveys; and, to integrate efforts and activities of its members and cooperative activities with others interested in the advancement of education in the social and behavioral sciences.

Statement of Editorial Policy

The ECCSSA Journal is the authorized publication of the East Coast Colleges Social Science Association. Published annually, *The Journal* is primarily a service to ECCSSA. Manuscripts will be accepted from all scholars who submit articles of professional or pedagogical interest. Acceptance of a manuscript for publication will be contingent upon membership in the organization or participation in its annual conference roundtable or related research symposia.

Manuscripts submitted for consideration should adhere to the following: (1) policies and guidelines of the ECCSSA Journal; (2) submission, electronically in a word document; and (3) use of APA style and format as outlined by the American Psychological Association and its Publication Manual.

The Journal office is located on the campus of Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun Campus, 21200 Campus Drive, Sterling, Virginia 20164. Please address all inquiries to the attention of Dr. Rosalyn M. King, Editor, ECCSSA or send to *roking@ nvcc.edu* and *eccssastaff@gmail.com*. Any and all communication, including submitted manuscripts and changes of address, should be sent to this office.

Disclaimer

East Coast Colleges Social Science Association (ECCSSA) cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this journal; the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher and Editors.

ECCSSA is an association of professional social and behavioral scientists, scientists, and related professionals devoted to advancing research, practice, knowledge, and understanding, in the social and behavioral sciences for the progression of humankind.

The Association covers the east coast of the United States of America which includes: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Canada.
Gulf Coast States include Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

Visit our website at: www.eccssa.org

East Coast Colleges Social Science Association

Northern Virginia Community College
ATTENTION: Dr. Rosalyn King
Loudoun Campus
21200 Campus Drive
Sterling, VA 20164