

# Community-based Teaching and Learning: Changing Roles for Faculty, Students, and Community

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*Abstract* Much of the reform in higher education is focused on the teaching and learning process with the goal of improving student outcomes. Specifically, the transformation is moving the higher education paradigm from a teaching focus to a learning focus. With this paradigm shift emerge new pedagogical approaches and changing roles for faculty and students. This article describes some possibilities for those roles by looking closely at three university classrooms in which service learning pedagogy was implemented. Service learning is an approach aimed at both curricular relevance and students' learning outcomes by connecting academic content with community service. Service learning has the potential to go beyond the transmission of knowledge to transformation and extension of it as well (Boyer 1990). Service learning conceptualizes the community setting as a site for possible generation of knowledge by tapping "the kinds of knowing already embedded in competent practice" (Schon 1995). Thus, within service learning experiences, community members often become co-teachers with university faculty. As a result of their community learning experiences, students begin to take on instructional roles. To provide an in-depth look at service learning classes, observers collected data about three university classes using narrative recordings, interaction tallies, use of time records, and continuums of teaching and learning. Data is reported in the form of faculty profiles and vignettes of classrooms. The profiles and vignettes capture examples of both traditional and changing roles of faculty, students, and community members. They demonstrate the potential for an exchange of roles among faculty, students and community representatives, as well as an expansion of the learning process.

## COMMUNITY-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING: CHANGING ROLES FOR FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY

Much of the reform in higher education has focused on the teaching and learning process with the goal of improving student outcomes. Specifically, the transformation is moving the higher education paradigm from a teaching focus to a learning focus (Barr & Tagg 1995). There is a recognition that the "instruction paradigm rests on conceptions of teaching that are increasingly recognized as ineffective - the primary learning environment with a fairly passive-lecture-discussion format where faculty talk and most students listen" (1995:13-14). New pedagogical approaches and changing roles for faculty and students are emerging as the paradigm shifts from teaching to learning. This article describes some possibilities for those roles by looking closely at three university classrooms in which a community-based teaching and learning approach was implemented.

### Community-Based Teaching and Learning: A Context and a Process

Community-based teaching and learning is not a new

pedagogical approach but it is currently embraced and supported on many campuses to promote curricular relevance and to improve student learning outcomes. The approach is also called service learning. Community-based teaching and learning connects academic content with community service, and views the community itself and its representatives as co-teachers who have valuable lessons to teach students. Community-based teaching and learning has the potential to go beyond the transmission of knowledge to transformation and extension of it (Boyer 1990). Community-based teaching and learning conceptualizes the community setting as a site for possible generation of knowledge by tapping "the kinds of knowing already embedded in competent practice" (Schon 1995). Thus, community members often share instructional roles with university faculty. In community-based teaching and learning classes, students assume new roles - they become resources, they initiate discussions, they pose problems, they raise issues and questions. As they gain new insights through their community learning experiences, they also begin to share the instructional role. Through reflections about their community experiences, students "make meaning" from those experiences and their course content.

In the process of making meaning, they become active and autonomous learners to the extent that they teach themselves and each other. Autonomous learning is a goal of the higher education reform effort; it epitomizes the paradigm shift from teaching to learning.

#### Studying Community-Based Teaching and Learning

To provide an in-depth look at community-based teaching and learning, comprehensive case studies of courses were developed at an urban university by a team of faculty and administrators (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon & Kerrigan 1996). Their intent was to explore assessment approaches for measuring and describing the impact of community-based teaching and learning on faculty, students, and community. One component of the case study's comprehensive methodol-

ogy was the use of classroom observations. Graduate assistants trained in observational approaches collected both quantitative and qualitative data about three university courses. They observed and developed narrative descriptions of five of the ten class sessions of each course, tallied the classroom interactions between faculty and students, recorded how time was used in classes, and rated class sessions on continua of teaching and learning (Howard 1993). Figures 1 and 2 display the continua and selected definitions of terms used. The continua represent the philosophy of the class, the kind of learning community established in the class, the roles of faculty and students, class values, and teaching approaches. Data from the above sources are blended into a profile for each course.

Figure 1. Continuum of Teaching/Learning Qualities

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Theory  | Theory and Experience                           |
| Others' Knowledge                             | Personal Knowledge                              |
| Student as Spectator                          | Student as Participant                          |
| Faculty in Control                            | Shared Control                                  |
| Student as Learner                            | Student as Learner and Teacher                  |
| Faculty as Teacher                            | Faculty as Teacher and Learner                  |
| Individual Learning                           | Collective Learning                             |
| Clear Distinction between Teacher and Learner | Distinction Blurred between Teacher and Learner |
| Answers                                       | Questions and Answers                           |
| Certainty of Outcomes                         | Uncertainty of Outcomes                         |
| Common Learning Outcomes                      | Individualized Learning Outcomes                |
| Ignorance Avoided                             | Ignorance a Resource                            |
| Focus on Student Needs                        | Focus on Student and Community Needs            |

\* Adapted from J. Howard. (1993). Community service learning in the curriculum. In J. Howard (Ed.), *Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service learning*. Ann Arbor, MI: OCSL Press.

Figure 2. Continuum of Teaching /Learning Contexts

|                                 |               |                  |
|---------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Commitment to Others:           | Low           | High             |
| Student's Role:                 | Passive       | Active           |
| Faculty Role:                   | Directive (1) | Facilitative (2) |
| Learning Orientation:           | Individual    | Corporative      |
| Pedagogy:<br>Constructivist (4) | Banking (3)   |                  |

Definitions:

- (1) Directive Role-is one of managing, ordering, instructing, taking charge with authority and control.
- (2) Facilitative Role-is one of supporting, making resources available, aiding and assisting.
- (3) Banking Pedagogy-refers to a teaching process in which a faculty instructor deposits information in students who are expected to respond to occasional withdrawals (exams).
- (4) Constructivist Pedagogy-refers to a process of experiences where students construct their own learning with a faculty facilitator.

\* Adapted from J. Howard. (1993). Community service learning in the curriculum. In J. Howard (Ed.), *Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service learning*. Ann Arbor, MI: OCSL Press.

Format for Course Profiles

In order to demonstrate the changing roles of faculty, students, and community partners, a profile of each class is presented. The profile begins with an initial description of each faculty instructor and course. The classroom environment is described through interaction and use-of-time data. The profile descriptions also include transitions in the class climate, and changes in the roles of faculty, students, and community. Vignettes of a few of the class sessions provide a look at new roles. The profiles and vignettes capture examples of both traditional and changing roles of faculty, students, and community members. They demonstrate the potential for an exchange and sharing of roles between faculty, students and community and for an expansion of the learning process beyond the campus classroom.

**COURSE PROFILES**

Faculty A's Course

Faculty A is a full professor in the School of Education with a history of 11 years at the university. She is actively involved in the community both within and outside the university. She has taught the course, Introduction to Education, for eight years. The course is taken by both graduate and undergraduate students, and not only by education majors. Classes are scheduled once a week for two and a half hours. The course explores the nature of education in America with consideration of the relationships among cul-

ture, society, and education. It is accompanied by a one credit course requiring students to spend 3 hours per week in the community. The community work is a requirement and consists of tutoring students in the Migrant Education program of the local public school. Each university student is paired with an elementary or secondary student.

The course syllabus demonstrates integration of the community experience with the course in assignments, readings, and exam items. For example, in a description of the final paper/project, students are encouraged to "use the school experience as the basis of their project or paper." One of the options for the final project is to "observe a particular community group and analyze the transmission of culture in that group and its larger community setting." The course readings are focused on topics that will likely surface in the community placements, such as education in a multicultural society, discrimination in schools, and student social class and teacher expectations.

Transitions in Faculty A's class sessions. Class sessions of this course progressed from a formal structure in the first class to an informal structure in the last class. In the early classes, Faculty A maintained control of the content, questions, use of time and direction of the discussion. Lecture dominated the class schedule during the first class, but by mid-way through the course, lectures accounted for only 10-15 minutes of each class time. Faculty/student interactions were minimal in the first class session and primarily initiated by the faculty with a ratio of 16 faculty initiations to 1

student initiation (16fac:1st). The third class session was dominated by interactions and initiations were shared more equally by faculty and students in a ratio of 31fac:43st. The last session was completely interactive and students initiated most of the interactions. The ratio for that class session was 13fac:57st.

On the continua, Faculty A showed significant movement in almost every category. She moved from a theoretical emphasis, faculty control, answer-oriented discussion, and a student-needs focused approach to a blend of experiential/theoretical emphasis, shared control with students, flexible outcomes, and blended student/community needs approach. Faculty A began the course with a collective learning approach, a learning community orientation; she maintained the approach and strengthened that orientation as the course proceeded. She also began the course with a high commitment to others and an active role for students, both of which increased as the course proceeded. Faculty A moved from a directive role to a facilitative role (see Figure 1) during the academic quarter, and her pedagogy became more constructivist (see Figure 2) each week of the course. Her facilitative role and constructivist approach explain the changing role of students as the course progressed.

Changing roles in Faculty A's classes. A vignette from one of Faculty A's classes at a point mid-way through the course illustrates the changing roles of students:

A student presenter has just reorganized the physical classroom environment. He directs his student peers to "synthesize the article and to write a thesis statement of what was going on in the article." After students write, he moves the students into four distinctly different groups. Once the groups are formed, he conducts a discussion and deliberately calls on only a few of the students. He also gives negative feedback to one group of students, and accolades to another group in a very encouraging way. His activity focuses the students awareness on the potential for teacher behavior to create a self-fulfilling prophecy for students, and his classmates discuss the experience with intensity. "Those of us who were ignored or discouraged quickly became quiet in this class, but those who were praised or encouraged were definitely participating fully." During a debriefing, one student states, "This was an effective way to help me internalize what the author was saying in the 40 pages we read." The interactions go on for an hour, with only one comment from Faculty A.

The students in Faculty A's classes have become teachers for each other and for themselves. They were observed in both directive and facilitative approaches to their instruc-

tional role. Their participation as learners increased at the same time. In the course narratives, students were heard using their community experiences to explain or interpret course concepts. Faculty A became a more equal member of the learning community and clearly assumed a listening/observing role. In this course the community representative did not take an active role in the instruction, only in the placement and coordination of community sites.

#### Faculty B's Course

Faculty B is an associate professor who has been a member of several university faculties and has been in the Art Department for two years. She is personally and professionally involved in community work. Her course, Graphic Design, concentrated on the design process. Twenty-seven undergraduate students were enrolled in the course. The syllabus described the course intent as the "linking of graphic design practice to communication of the artistic message of a client to a specific audience." The required community service component of the course involved students producing graphic work (letterheads, business cards, logos, presentation folders, brochures, banners, and t-shirts) for non-profit organizations. The requests for graphic assistance originated from two community agencies.

Transitions in Faculty B's class sessions. Students in Graphic Design (27 undergraduates) sat at drafting tables arranged in rows. The classroom atmosphere was open, social, cooperative and relaxed from the initial class session. Faculty B interacted casually with the students. It appeared that many of the students knew each other well and most were already known to the instructor (they had been in classes together previously). Faculty and student initiated interactions were about equal in number during the twice weekly class sessions except when community partners were involved in the class. When community partners joined the class, they initiated interactions as much as students did, and Faculty B initiated few interactions.

Class time was spent on lectures, discussions, individual work and on question/answer sessions. The course included frequent class sessions with community partners in which students both asked and answered questions. Community partners also made presentations about their organizations, about the populations they served, and about their communication with the community as a whole. These were fairly interactive and casual presentations much like those of the faculty member. Community partners responded to student questions, and provided feedback on students' graphic products.

Faculty B began her course with a blend of theory and experience, common learning outcomes, and a focus on both student and community needs with primarily a facilitative approach. On the continua those aspects of her pedagogy and the course became dominant as the quarter progressed.

The student role began as a passive one and became more active.

Changing roles in Faculty B's classes. Faculty B made it clear in her course syllabus and in her class lectures that the community involvement by students was undertaken for very practical, client-oriented reasons. There was no association of any "volunteerism" in the community work. Rather, it was presented as a professional relationship that addressed a need for the non-profit client. Although the community-service project was introduced as a practical, business-based assignment, the students' roles began to change as they became involved with the community. They moved from being slightly passive in the beginning of the course to being more active participants as the term progressed. The student activity took forms similar to those in Faculty A's class, that is, they posed questions, initiated discussions, and raised issues.

Members from the community organizations were not "behind the scenes" participants in this course; they were often present and played a major role. Community partners introduced their agencies and explained their needs for graphics. In doing so they also explained the work of their agencies and the clients they served. The specific needs of the agencies often necessitated that student designs be culturally and linguistically sensitive. Though understanding diversity was not a stated goal of the course, it became an outcome as a result of collaboration with the community partners and the changing role of students. Students discussed and became better informed about diversity and how it applied directly to their graphic design work. Students also learned about their community as they worked with the community partners, and developed skills of team work as they struggled with a collaborative design process. In much of this learning, students taught themselves and each other informally as needs arose. Thus students took on an instructional role.

Sessions with the community partners gave students feedback on their design projects and observers noted that these sessions were characterized by lively and thoughtful discussions. Comments, questions, and criticisms all flowed freely between students, the community partner, and the professor. These class sessions were examples of a rich synthesis of community needs, course content, and student investment.

Community partner involvement in this course broadened the curriculum to concepts of diversity, inclusion, and cross-cultural issues. Students worked to integrate their understandings of the concepts into their design products. By mid-way through Faculty B's course, students, community, and faculty were all in instructional roles.

#### Faculty C's Course

Faculty C has been an Assistant Professor in the English

Department for three years. His teaching background is in professional writing with a focus on technical writing and editing, composition, and business communication. He provides service to the community through training and seminars on technical writing. His Technical Editing course is the first community-based teaching and learning course taught by Faculty C, but he anticipated the experience with enthusiasm saying, "This is the way I've always wanted to teach."

Introduction to Technical Editing was taken by 21 students, both graduate and undergraduate. The course was designed to provide practice in technical editing by exposing students to numerous documents, including "living documents" provided by local community organizations. Those documents included brochures, instructional materials, informational pamphlets, and even a menu. The syllabus describes the "community-based component" with its team approach to editing documents. Students were to form teams, select a community organization or business, and make arrangements for their project. Projects ranged from editing brochures, to designing menus, to writing grant proposals. The course schedule described presentations by 10 community representatives. Classes were held twice weekly for an hour and 50 minutes in a small, rectangular room set up in a traditional arrangement with a podium and individual desks and chairs.

Transitions in Faculty C's class sessions. For most of the class sessions, the use of time remained consistent. Approximately one-third of the class was devoted to presentations by community members and students, with 20% of the time in lecture format, and 50% of the time in discussion and question/answer exchanges. Interactions between faculty and students remained consistent at a ratio of 2 faculty initiated interactions for every 1 student initiated interaction for most classes. The initial classes were more formalized with lecture on course content and requirements, and characterized by primarily faculty-initiated interactions.

On the continua, Faculty C clearly moved from a theoretical to an experience-based orientation. The role of faculty shifted from one of control to shared control with students, that is students posed topics and questions, or raised issues. The class became more informal and students moved from being only learners to small group configurations in which they became teachers for each other. By the end of the class, the distinction between teacher and learner became blurred as students gained expertise in the community. While there is evidence of transition during the sequence of class sessions, the movement is never totally to an orientation that is opposite where Faculty C began. On the continua, students also embraced more active roles, and Faculty C moved from a directive to a facilitative approach.

Changing roles in Faculty C's classes. The involvement

of community members in this course began with the partners in the role of traditional presenters - lecture style with a podium and an audience. This description characterized the instructional approach of Faculty C. There was limited involvement of students other than their presentations. When making presentations, students also adopted an instructional approach identical to that of the faculty and community partner. However, as student teams formed and began their community projects, class sessions were dominated by an ongoing dialogue between students. Student groups posed and solved problems, and made decisions in a collaborative way. Faculty C facilitated minimally, remained in the background as the students took charge of their own learning. During the group work, most interactions were initiated by students. From a course overview in terms of instructional time, it would appear that faculty, students, and community members equally shared the instructional role. Faculty and students became peers within the learning process, but the community members did not actively participate in that process. They took on a very temporary instructional role during their time in class.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHANGING ROLES FOR FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY

The changing roles of all three constituencies emerged in the three courses but in different forms and with different teaching approaches. With respect to students' roles, the following observations summarize the changes:

- In Faculty A's course, students took on a formal instructional role and facilitated the class sessions. Students were scheduled to do so and they used a variety of instructional approaches.
- In Faculty B's course, students taught themselves and each other in an informal instructional role and used indirect approaches to their learning - discussions, questioning, and integration with the community project.
- In Faculty C's course, students taught the class in a formal instructional role by giving presentations in a lecture mode, and taught themselves and each other in an informal instructional role by discussing, posing questions, and solving problems collaboratively.

With respect to the roles of community partners, the following observations summarize the changes or lack thereof:

- In Faculty A's course, the community partner did not take any kind of active role in the university

classroom during the entire course.

- In Faculty B's course, the community partner took on an ongoing formal instructional role, and led class discussions, responded to questions, and made presentations of content. The partner used the same casual facilitative style of teaching as Faculty B.
- In Faculty C's course, the community partner took on a temporary formal instructional role and made presentations in the same lecture followed by question/answer format as Faculty C.

With respect to changes in the faculty roles, all three faculty shared their instructional roles with students and with community partners. For Faculty A and C, it was a planned change when students took on the instructional role. For Faculty B, it was unplanned but perhaps anticipated.

One conclusion that can be reached when the three courses are considered is that the instructional roles can be shared with students and community partners regardless of the teaching style. It is intriguing however to note that the faculty member's style was adopted by both students and community partners.

The second conclusion is connected to a recommendation from Howard (1993) in his guidelines for practice in service learning, that is, to re-think the faculty instructional role. He describes the learning role of students in the community and the idea that they are acquiring course-relevant information and knowledge from their community experiences. Howard urges faculty to re-think their role and consider moving from information dissemination toward learning facilitation and guidance. The observations of Faculty A, B, and C's courses confirm the movement toward less directed instructional approaches in community-based learning courses. The observations extend the re-thinking further, that is, faculty are urged to consider sharing the instructional role with students and community members.

Most of us who teach in university settings would agree that we want our students to be lifelong learners. A commitment to that goal would include attention to the preparation of students for autonomous learning. By introducing students to the teaching capacity of the community and by sharing the instructional role with students in our courses, we begin to influence their capacity to be lifelong learners.

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## 要 約

# 地域に基づく教育と学習

## 教員，学生，コミュニティの役割の変化

高等教育における改革の多くは，学生の成績の向上を目指して教授 (teaching) と学習 (learning) 過程に集中されている。とくに，高等教育のパラダイムの焦点が教授から学習に変る方向に動いている。このパラダイムシフトは新しい教育学的方法と，教員と学生の役割の変化として現れている。この論文では，サービス学習教育法 (service learning pedagogy) を実行した3つの大学の授業をくわしく見ることによって，どのような役割が可能であるかを述べる。サービス学習とは，学術的な内容をコミュニティーサービス (community service: 地域社会の支援体制) と連結させることによってカリキュラムを適切なものにするとともに，学生の学習成果を高めることを目的とした方法である。サービス学習は，知識の伝達を越えて知識の転換とその発展におよぶ可能性を持っている (Boyer 1990)。サービス学習は，「有用な経験に含まれているある種の知識」を刺激することによって，知識を生み出し得る場所としてのコミュニティー環境を概念化したものである (Schon 1995)。したがって，サービス学習の経験の中では，コミュニティーメンバーがしばしば大学教官と一緒に教師になり，コミュニティー学習の経験の結果として，学生達自身が教育の役割を引き受け始めるのである。サービス学習授業を詳細に見るために，観察者は，音声記録，対話記録，経時記録，教育と学習の連続記録を使って，3つの大学の授業データを集めた。データは教員の個人紹介と授業風景の形で報告されている。個人紹介と授業風景は，教員，学生とコミュニティーメンバーの伝統的な役割や，変化していく役割の例をとらえている。これらは，教員と学生とコミュニティーの代表者の役割交代の可能性，および学習コミュニティーの拡大の可能性を示している。

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