

**Creating a Systematic Approach  
for the Reflective Practice of Service-Learning  
Academics through the Development of  
Communities of Reflective Practice**

Brian Gearóid Ó Donnchadha (BA, HDip in Ed, MEd)

**Academic Supervisor: Dr Kevin Davison  
School of Education  
College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies  
National University of Ireland, Galway**

*September 2011*

## **Examination Committee**

### **External Examiners**

Associate Professor Andrew Furco, Department of Organizational Leadership,  
Policy, and Development, University of Minnesota.

Dr Carmel Halton, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork.

### **Internal Examiner**

Professor Peter Cantillon, Discipline of General Practice, National University of  
Ireland, Galway.

### **Chairperson**

Dr Mary Fleming, School of Education, National University of Ireland, Galway.

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Figures.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Summary of Contents.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Preamble: A personal learning experience.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>1.1 Background to the Research.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1.2 Formulation of the Research Question.....</i>	<i>5</i>
1.2.1 How the question arose .....	5
1.2.2 Question deconstruction .....	7
<i>1.3 Why the Research Question is Important .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>1.4 How the Question Was Addressed.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>1.5 Thesis Structure .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>2.1 Introduction .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>2.2 The Historical Roots of Education Through Engagement.....</i>	<i>14</i>
2.2.1 Service-learning defined .....	19
2.2.2 Debating the term ‘service-learning’ .....	22
2.2.3 Multiple perspectives within service-learning .....	23
<i>2.3 Core Elements of Service-learning .....</i>	<i>26</i>
2.3.1 Standards for best practice in service- learning.....	26
2.3.2 The central role of reflection in service-learning .....	29
<i>2.4 Theoretical Context of Critical Reflection in Learning .....</i>	<i>31</i>
2.4.1 The development of thought about reflection .....	31
2.4.2 Defining reflection and its role in learning .....	34
2.4.3 Ah-ha moments .....	37
2.4.4 Mezirow’s influence on reflection .....	38
2.4.5 Unpacking reflection as a part of service-learning.....	41

## Table of Contents

2.4.6	Grounds for the use of reflection in service-learning .....	43
2.4.7	The process of reflection .....	45
2.5	<i>Theoretical Framework of Reflective Practice in Teaching</i> .....	46
2.5.1	Action as a feature of reflective practice .....	46
2.5.2	The role of critical theory in reflective practice .....	48
2.5.3	Examining assumptions about reflective practice .....	50
2.6	<i>Reflective Practice in the Pedagogy of Service-Learning</i> .....	52
2.6.1	Reflection and professional training .....	52
2.6.2	Literature on the reflective practice of engaged academics .....	54
2.7	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	58
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology</b> .....		<b>60</b>
3.1	<i>Basic Interpretive Qualitative Research</i> .....	61
3.1.1	Using Practitioner Research Methodology .....	64
3.2	<i>Philosophical Paradigms of Reflection and Research</i> .....	66
3.2.1	Epistemology .....	67
3.2.2	Positivism, objectivity and qualitative research on service-learning .....	68
3.2.3	The problem of academic objective detachment .....	70
3.2.4	The value-laden nature of research within engaged practice .....	71
3.3	<i>Constructivism</i> .....	72
3.4	<i>Critical Theory</i> .....	74
3.4.1	Advocating for change through the research .....	76
3.5	<i>Research Methodology</i> .....	78
3.5.1	Establishing learning goals .....	79
3.5.2	Addressing a need in the academic community .....	80
3.5.3	Reciprocity and reciprocal transfer of knowledge .....	81
3.5.4	Addressing the problems of interpretive inquiry on service-learning .....	82
3.5.5	Bracketing my philosophy of education .....	88
3.5.6	Monitoring subjectivity and preconceptions .....	90
3.6	<i>Criteria for Rigour in this Research</i> .....	92
3.6.1	Criteria for rigorous interpretive inquiry .....	92
3.6.2	Criteria for rigorous research on service-learning .....	93
3.6.3	Criteria for rigorous practitioner research .....	94

## Table of Contents

3.6.4 Consulting stakeholders to ensure validity.....	96
3.7 <i>Outline of the Research Method</i> .....	97
3.7.1 Sampling .....	98
3.7.2 Sampling strategy: focusing on the population being studied.....	100
3.7.3 Purposeful sampling: talking to the right people.....	101
3.7.4 Scope of the sampling .....	102
3.7.5 Participant demographics .....	104
3.8 <i>Data Collection Instrument: the Interview Procedure</i> .....	105
3.8.1 Interview questions .....	106
3.9 <i>Ethical Data Collection</i> .....	113
3.10 <i>Data Coding and Analysis Process</i> .....	115
3.10.1 Data coding with CAQDAS.....	119
3.10.2 Importing data into NVivo .....	120
3.10.3 Coding phase 1: broad coding.....	121
3.10.4 Coding according to criteria.....	123
3.10.5 Coding phase 2: grouping by category.....	123
3.10.6 Coding phase 3: cross-coding.....	125
3.10.7 Coding phase 4: distilling.....	125
Coding phase 5: Coding-on.....	127
3.11 <i>Data Analysis Process</i> .....	129
3.11.1 Critical listening .....	132
3.11.2 Critical talking.....	133
3.11.3 Critical reading.....	134
3.11.4 Reflective writing.....	136
3.12 <i>Analysis of the 6 topics of reflective practice</i> .....	136
3.12.1 Isolating the 3 key findings .....	138
3.12.2 Answering the questions .....	140
3.12.3 Validation.....	141
3.13 <i>Conclusion</i> .....	143
<b>Chapter 4: Findings</b> .....	<b>145</b>
4.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	145
4.2 <i>What, How and Why</i> .....	146

## Table of Contents

4.2.1 What do engaged practitioners reflect upon? .....	146
4.2.2 How is reflection conducted? .....	147
4.2.3 Why do engaged practitioners reflect on their practice? .....	148
<i>4.3 Methods used in Reflective Practice</i> .....	<i>150</i>
4.3.1 Contemplation .....	151
4.3.2 Thinking about ‘stuff’ .....	154
4.3.3 Verbal reflection with students .....	158
4.3.4 Verbal reflection with peers .....	160
4.3.5 Written reflection: solo .....	163
4.3.6 Collaborative writing with peers (not for publication) .....	169
4.3.7 Scholarship of teaching and learning with peers (for publication) .....	171
4.3.8 Multiple methods of reflecting on practice .....	174
4.3.9 Typology of reflective practice .....	179
<i>4.4 Elements of Good Reflection in Service-Learning</i> .....	<i>184</i>
4.4.1 Learning how to reflect .....	187
4.4.2 Questions about how to reflect .....	188
<i>4.5 Depth of Reflective Thought and Connectedness of Concepts</i> .....	<i>191</i>
<i>4.6 Time and Regularity of Reflection</i> .....	<i>195</i>
4.6.1 Time and student reflection .....	195
4.6.2 Time and teacher reflection .....	198
<i>4.7 Structured Reflection</i> .....	<i>200</i>
4.7.1 The problem of over-structuring reflection .....	204
<i>4.8 Communication Skills and Language</i> .....	<i>209</i>
<i>4.9 Safe Space for Reflection</i> .....	<i>213</i>
4.9.1 A suitable environment .....	213
4.9.2 Headspace .....	216
4.9.3 Safe space for teaching staff .....	219
4.9.4 The challenge of space .....	222
<i>4.10 Questions Academics Have About Reflection</i> .....	<i>224</i>
<i>4.11 Conclusion</i> .....	<i>229</i>
<b>Chapter 5: Analysis &amp; Model</b> .....	<b>232</b>
5.1 Challenging Expectations .....	232

## Table of Contents

<i>5.2 Implications of Reflection Criteria on Academic Reflection</i> .....	233
5.2.1 Different learning context for student and academic .....	234
5.2.2 Problem outline and potential remedy.....	237
<i>5.3 Theoretical Foundation for Community of Reflective Practice</i> .....	239
5.3.1 The case for peer reflection as a theoretical structure .....	240
5.3.2 The case for a structured model .....	244
5.3.3 Community of Practice – a suitably flexible theoretical structure .....	245
5.3.4 The case for safe space: Palmer’s Circles of Trust as a theoretical structure .....	247
5.3.5 Frames of reflection .....	251
5.3.6 Academic development .....	252
5.3.7 Civic development.....	253
5.3.8 Personal development .....	255
5.3.9 Academics use of reflection frames .....	256
<i>5.4 Addressing the Practical Needs of Academics</i> .....	262
5.4.1 A knowledge of how to reflect.....	262
5.4.2 Depth of reflection .....	268
5.4.3 Time and regularity of reflection.....	271
5.4.4 Suitable structure.....	280
5.4.5 Communication skills.....	286
5.4.6 Safe space.....	289
<i>5.5 Addressing the Philosophical Needs of Academics</i> .....	293
5.5.1 Discourse: the negotiation between dominant and alternative perspectives	294
5.5.2 Space: where the reflective practice happens .....	304
5.5.3 Criticality: developing a reflective mindset .....	307
<i>5.6 Communities of Reflective Practice in Action</i> .....	310
5.6.1 Examples of successful Communities of Reflective Practice .....	310
5.6.2 An example of a failed Community of Reflective Practice.....	317
<i>5.7 Conclusion</i> .....	318
<b>Chapter 6: The Promotion of Reflective Service-Learning in Ireland.....</b>	<b>320</b>
<i>6.1 The Dichotomy of Engagement in Higher Education</i> .....	320
6.1.1 The touchstone for best practice in civic engagement.....	323
6.1.2 Challenges facing Irish higher education .....	325

## Table of Contents

6.1.3 Calls for civic engagement in Irish higher education.....	327
6.1.4 The Need for insight.....	329
6.1.5 Achieving the aspiration of civic engagement in Irish higher education ....	335
6.2 <i>The Application of CoRP in Ireland</i> .....	336
6.2.1 The context and challenges of civic engagement in Irish higher education	337
6.2.2 The need for a knowledge of how to reflect.....	338
6.2.3 The need for extra time resources .....	338
6.2.4 The Need for institutional recognition of engaged practice .....	342
6.2.5 The need for a forum for relationship building .....	346
6.2.6 The need for agreed terminology .....	348
6.2.7 The common needs of engaged academics .....	350
<b>Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>352</b>
7.1 <i>Recommendations: Now What?</i> .....	354
7.2 <i>Reflective Practice: A Way of Being</i> .....	356
7.3 <i>Summary</i> .....	357
7.4 <i>Addendum</i> .....	359
<b>Appendix 1: Correspondence with Interviewees.....</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Example of Interview Questions.....</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Letter of Consent to Participate in the Research .....</b>	<b>369</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Transcriber Confidentiality Clause.....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding .....</b>	<b>373</b>
<b>Appendix 6: Coding Phase 4 – Distilling.....</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Reflective Practice: Coding-on .....</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>383</b>

## Table of Figures

Fig. 1	Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.	33
Fig. 2	Breakdown of interviewees by occupation.	104
Fig. 3	Names of topic folders created during first stage of coding.	122
Fig. 4	The methods that the interviewees used to reflect on their practice.	150
Fig. 5	Typology of reflective practice.	180
Fig. 6	Characteristics of high quality reflection.	185
Fig. 7	Ratio of references to topics about questions.	230
Fig. 8	Community of Reflective Practice.	240

## Summary of Contents

This Ph.D. thesis in education is a qualitative examination of the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning, which can be described as an experiential pedagogy whereby students learn through providing a needed service in the community. Over a period of two years, I interviewed 43 American practitioners about how they reflected on their practice of teaching in and researching about engagement with the community. This study found that practitioners used a wide variety of reflection techniques including contemplative, verbal and written techniques, conducted alone and in groups. Whilst academic collaboration such as research, publishing and conference presentations provided a method of reflecting on the academic elements of their practice; there was generally an absence of a forum in which academics could also reflect on their civic and personal development.

Arising from an analysis of the data and based on the practical and philosophical needs of practitioners, I posit that the use of a systematic approach to reflection can contribute to strengthening the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. I propose a Community of Reflective Practice: a structured model that facilitates academics to critically reflect with their peers (in a safe and nurturing environment) on their academic, civic and personal development. As a contribution to the theory of reflective practice I offer a typology of reflection that distinguishes types of reflection from techniques of reflection. Finally I discuss the context of civic engagement in Irish and US higher education and make recommendations for the implementation of a Community of Reflective Practice in the Irish context.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my research participants who generously shared with me their time, expertise and experience during the inquiry. Through the telling of their stories, they played a critical role and without them, this study would not have been possible.

During the research project there were many mentors who shared their knowledge, insight and passion for the field of community engagement. These wise scholars informed and challenged me, opened up new perspectives to me and through their example, taught me to make reflection ‘a way of being’ rather than ‘a way of doing’.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr Kevin Davison for his tireless work in supporting this project from the ‘*what*’ through the ‘*so what*’ to the ‘*now what*’ stages. Without his unfailing patience and unwavering guidance or his continued encouragement and practical assistance this research would not have reached fruition.

I am deeply indebted to Dr Attracta Brennan for her invaluable and thoughtful feedback as each chapter unfolded. She gave generously of her time to apply her experience of the research process, her ability to challenge with both insight and wit, and her heartfelt passion for teaching and learning, to inspire me and energise me during the write-up of the study.

Dr Elisabeth Hollander kindly offered the assistance of the Campus Compact network with logistical support and Dr Elaine Ikeda and her staff at the California Campus Compact very generously facilitated my field work in San Francisco. I am indebted to the International Association for Research in Service-Learning and Community Engagement for facilitating feedback from peers.

I wish to thank the Community Knowledge Initiative and Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, both at the National University of Ireland, for joint funding of the field work. I want to thank the wonderful people at the Fulbright Commission of Ireland, and their colleagues in the US, who through the

## Acknowledgements

awarding of a Visiting Researcher Scholarship, not only co-sponsored the field work but opened up a country to me. The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences must be acknowledged for its Postgraduate Scholarship funding and impact. I am also grateful to the staff of numerous offices and departments at the National University of Ireland, Galway for all their assistance.

I am ever thankful to Steve Donohue for all his support, to Dr Feargal Ó Béarra for his encouragement and the use of his writing pad. I am very grateful to Conall Ó Murchadha for his help with proofreading and layout. Thanks to Ben Meehan for his assistance with NVivo and to family and friends for all their support.

To all the engaged practitioners who encouraged me with their good will, and positivity; who contributed to the study by sharing their stories and resources; and who gave freely of their time and expertise, I am truly grateful to you.

Finally, I am grateful to my parents, Jerry and Róisín for teaching me the value of education; this work is dedicated to their memory.

*Brian Ó Donnchadha*

*Galway, February 2012*

*Your work is to discover your work  
and then with all your heart to give yourself to it.*

Buddha

## **Preamble: A personal learning experience**

This part of San Francisco was nicknamed the Tenderloin decades ago because the police, who were paid poorly by the city, allegedly took bribes from local businesses and hence the officers were able to afford the most expensive cuts of meat. Though it has not always been the poorest area of the city, it has been underprivileged for nearly a century and the poverty is contained in a “manageable” 20 blocks but it is surrounded by some of the most expensive real estate in the country. The problems of mental health, homelessness, poverty and addiction are played out in the public sphere two blocks from the sumptuous City Hall. When a television reporter door-stepped the mayor with filmed evidence of drug activity, public urination and the homeless sleeping on park benches two blocks from his office, the mayor had the benches removed over-night. We opened our dining room here in 1950 because this is where help was needed, and even though there is poverty here, it also has a strong feeling of community, and you have the opportunity to contribute to that community.

That was how the service-learning coordinator at the Bay Area Food Programme welcomed a group of students who had come to work for the day in the public dining room. The students, who were all in their late teens, were from a nearby high school. They were given a detailed orientation in the morning, and following their service were led through a reflection session. I had also gone along to serve in the dining room that day and I was surprised to see a familiar face in the queue for a meal.

He was well-dressed, in his early sixties, with shoulder-length, thinning blond hair and a haggard face. He had an ornate walking stick in his hand and when he smiled, he revealed his missing teeth. I had seen him earlier in the week at the end-of-term presentation on the oral histories of people experiencing poverty. This presentation was given by a group of students at a local university, as part of a sociology class in the B.Sc. in American Studies. The information

was subsequently published on a website to raise awareness about issues resulting from poverty. At the presentation, he identified himself as transgender and made a speech that began with the words, ‘Hi, my name is Jacinta<sup>1</sup>, and I’m messed up. After I returned from Vietnam, my boyfriend was killed in a car accident – following that, I lost everything to alcohol. I’ve been receiving handouts since then, so I wanted to give back to these students by telling them my story’.

Back in the dining hall, I introduced myself and said that I had heard the presentation a few days earlier. We would have chatted for much longer, had I not to return to my meal-serving post, ‘go right ahead, because once you get this old queen talking there’s no shutting me up’ was the reply. In a city 6,000 miles from home I hadn’t expected to recognise any face in a queue for one of the 2,000 meals we would serve that lunchtime.

Then Alice arrived. She had also shared her story in a speech at the same presentation.

This is an MRI photograph of my brain, and this is a picture of a normal brain. See the difference? The severe head trauma I received as a child was never treated, and wasn’t even diagnosed till ten years ago. Although I look normal on the outside, I’ve got severe learning disabilities: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder. I never knew why I was the way I was, until they did this MRI scan. Because of the disability, I’ve never been able to hold down a job and so I have no health insurance. I get my meals at the Food Programme every day. So the next time you tell a homeless person to “get a job” they have probably spent the last twenty years trying to do so, just like me.

I wanted to say hello to Alice too but I was on the food serving line, spooning chicken onto a never-ending line of trays. Each spoonful represented another ‘guest’, as they are referred to at the Food Programme, and I had already dished out what seemed like a mountain of food. That makes two people I know here, I

---

<sup>1</sup>The names of the guests, students and locations have been changed to ensure anonymity.

thought. In the past, I never imagined that I would recognise anyone in a *soup kitchen*, as I would have referred to it before.

All the servers were invited to eat lunch in the dining room with the guests. I ate with Dennis, a former saxophone player from Vermont, who told me that nobody here in San Francisco ever understood his wry, East Coast sense of humour. Later, as I was collecting empty trays, I saw yet another familiar face. It was the man I used to pass on my way into the supermarket near my house. I had often observed him as he walked his wheelchair down the street and then sat in it outside the supermarket door with his cardboard *Help* sign. Once, I paid for an extra sandwich in the café across the street and asked the waitress to give it to him the next time she saw him outside. As I was watching him in the dining room, talking to himself, I knew that if I spoke to him here, as I had with Jacinta and Dennis, I would never be able to ignore him on the street again. I turned away and went back to my work. Even though I knew the most hurtful thing you can do is to ignore someone begging on the street, I was ignoring someone now, in the very place I was supposed to be helping.

Encountering this man here brought the issue of homelessness and my attitude to homeless people, very close to MY home. I went back to speak to him but he had already left. One of the reasons I was at the Bay Area Food Programme in the first place was to understand the theory of service-learning. I wanted to see it from the perspective of a student doing service and feel what it is like to be pushed out of my comfort zone. Seeing the man with the wheelchair was the moment I *got it*, the moment the theory became *real*, and this was transformational learning. Through reflecting on the service experience I came to understand in a meaningful way the theory in practice and change my behaviour as a result.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The account of this pivotal learning experience first appeared in Ó Donnchadha, B. (2007) Service-learning, so what?, in: L. McIlrath, et al. (Eds) *Mapping Civic Engagement within Higher Education in Ireland*. (Galway, AISHE & Campus Engage), 192-201.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Research

For my Masters in Education research, I conducted a case study on a practical training module of a broadcast communications programme which I administered. One of the findings of that research was that students did not have the opportunity to reflect critically on their experiential learning. Their completed work was evaluated by tutors; however, this was not done reflectively but rather in a didactic manner. Students did not come to the stage where they could critically analyse both their strengths and weaknesses. An example of the students' experience could be the problem of running short of footage for a video piece during the editing process. On reflection it would become clear that the planning was insufficient, that a list of necessary shots was either not drawn up or not adhered to, that perhaps an interviewee was asked broad questions to which he gave answers that were too long, which meant that there was not enough tape left for other necessary shots. While an evaluation may be given by a tutor on completion of the task, the students were not active in the discovery process. While the project may have been *hands-on*, it was not necessarily *heads on*.

The research on experiential learning led me to see the importance of the reflection stage of Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle. This involves critically analysing an experience so as to understand the concepts that have been demonstrated. That is followed by abstract generalisation and the construction of theory based on the reflection process.

Another finding of my Master's study was that the work the students were completing had no value beyond the learning experience. As future members of public service broadcasting, the one month's hard work would neither be broadcast publicly nor be of service to anyone else but the students. Again, though the project may have been *hands on* it was not *hearts on* insofar as

neither the inter-personal development nor the civic aspect to the work was not examined.

Based on positive feedback from past students regarding their learning process, I was aware of the value of experiential learning. Added to that, I saw that service-learning could provide added value to the academic enhancement and the personal development of the students. Furthermore, as Irish speakers, my students were members of a minority language community, and I saw the value that service-learning had for their civic development by demonstrating their potential as agents of change within that community. I understood that service-learning had great possibilities, not only in my own programme, but for Irish higher education in general. Since it seemed that reflection was a key factor in experiential learning, and that service-learning is an experiential pedagogy, I set out to learn more about the pivotal role of reflection in service-learning. The *Michigan Journal for Community Service Learning* is a peer reviewed journal that is published bi-annually. It is considered to be the leading publication for the dissemination of research on service-learning. Of the eighteen volumes published to date (since its launch in 1994), a total of eight articles appear with 'reflection' in the title. It was clear that I would need to do further research to answer the questions I had about reflection and service-learning.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Research Question**

### **1.2.1 How the question arose**

I set about learning about service-learning in general by examining the literature from the US, where the pedagogy had originated and where it was well established. Tierney (1994, p. 110) emphasises the necessity of understanding and developing links with the research participants by saying: '...if our research is to be praxis orientated, if our purpose is somehow to change the world, then of necessity we must get involved with those whom we study'. I was awarded a Fulbright Visiting Researcher Scholarship to visit the US to research the use of service-learning. To get an insight into the context, it was necessary to immerse myself in the community of service-learning practitioners and one of the methods

I used to do this was to attend academic conferences and seminars. While in the US, I attended seven academic conferences and nine training workshops, including a staff development programme that ran over a semester. To observe the provision of direct service, I took part in community service projects which included: serving at a food programme for the homeless, working at a food bank, and painting classrooms in a school damaged by Hurricane Katrina. To keep track of those I interacted with, I compiled a database of scores of practitioners whom I had met through various networking opportunities.

While reading a cross section of the literature on the best practice of service-learning implementation I saw that the area of reflection was not researched as much as other topics, such as, for example, the effects of service-learning on students or the establishment and maintenance of community university partnerships. I visited twelve American universities between August 2006 and October 2007 to talk to teaching staff, students and community partners. I gained an insight into how service-learning was administered, but the area of reflection always seemed to be a topic that practitioners were unsure about and this stimulated my interest.

During my conversations with those American academics who used service-learning, it appeared that reflection was viewed in a different light depending on how it was defined and who was using it. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) highlight that there are many different understandings of what reflective practice is, and that there is a lack of consensus regarding its meaning. They contend that theory remains elusive; is open to multiple conflicting interpretations, and is applied in many ways depending on the context. Within individual programmes the structures for students to reflect on their practice of learning varied from the minimal to the comprehensive; however, all of the service-learning academics I spoke to, required their students to reflect on their learning to some extent.

If reflection is such an integral part of service-learning that academics make it mandatory for their students to reflect on their service-experience, the question arose as to *what role reflection plays in the practice of the academics who use service-learning?*

Brookfield (1995) describes the benefits to teaching of encouraging reflective conversation in a forum for teachers. Yet given the evidence of the benefit of reflective practice to teaching (Brookfield, 1995, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998) it seemed curious that there was little if any reference in the service-learning literature to academics reflecting on their practice of using service-learning.

There is a considerable body of literature to support the claim that reflection is an integral element of experiential learning (Clayton & Ash, 2005, Conrad & Hedin, 1982, Kolb, 1984). This being the case, I wanted to understand the role that reflection played in the practice of those who use service-learning as a pedagogy. I sought this understanding, not only to improve my own practice but also to contribute to that of others in the field.

### **1.2.2 Question deconstruction**

The main question of inquiry for this research study is: How do service-learning academics reflect on their engaged practice? Embedded in this research question are various sub-questions guided the study such as: what are the principle features of the methods used by academics, is there a preferred structure and how can the reflective process be improved?

In my conversations with engaged academics at conferences and seminars, I discussed my interest in reflection and service-learning. The focus would usually be on reflection techniques used as a teaching tool in class with students, but when I asked how they (the academics) used reflection in their own learning, the answers I received did not satisfy my curiosity, and thus I set out to answer the following question: *How do service-learning academics critically reflect on their engaged practice?* So as to clarify all the aspects of the question let me deconstruct it to be explicit about what I was asking.

- How: refers to an inquiry into the manner or to what degree something happens.
- Service-learning: refers to an experiential pedagogy, an alternative to conventional teaching and learning strategies, whereby students provide a needed service in the community as part of their curriculum.

- Academic: refers to teachers, researchers and service-learning coordinators.
- Critically reflect: refers to the nature of reflection and the role critical theory plays in it, what makes reflection critical, the elements of examining assumptions and the focus on causing change.
- Practice: refers to the decisions taken by the academic that affect the process and outcome of their professional work in facilitating learning.

### **1.3 Why the Research Question is Important**

When discussing my research interests with service-learning academics, I was universally met with interest and encouragement, and often with the comment, ‘I wish I knew more about reflection’. Though some academics debated the level of importance that reflection plays in their learning process and that of their students, all agreed on its importance in service-learning. Since it is acknowledged in the literature that reflection is integral to experiential learning, and because it appeared that so many academics were confused by it, I felt that the topic of reflection deserved examination. Considering the importance of reflection in the current literature on teaching and the practice of service-learning academics, I wanted to create a more systematic understanding of reflection so that it could be employed more effectively to strengthen teaching and learning.

Inspired by conversations with service-learning academics, I undertook a short service-learning experience at an organisation which provided meals for the homeless in San Francisco (detailed in the Preamble). As a result, I had an ‘ah-ha moment’ which caused me to question many of my own beliefs and preconceptions about community engagement. I reflected on the incident alone and with ‘critical friends’ in order to make meaning of my experience. The result of analysing a very personal and uncomfortable incident gave a tangible insight into the power of reflection, and was an epiphany that influenced the direction of my work.

A part of what I aim to do is to examine how reflection can become less random, and more systematic. Some people achieve the ‘ah-ha’ moments through

reflection, and others do not, even when reflection is a mandatory part of service-learning classes. Developing a model for practitioner reflection may help to move toward a deeper, more mindful learning process.

#### **1.4 How the Question Was Addressed**

Giles and Eyler (1998) suggest that the process of using service-learning is best researched through observation, which will give an insight into the experience of the participants who learn through engagement with the community. To have the opportunity to observe service-learning in action, I immersed myself in the field in different contexts and locations. I sought to interpret my observations in a rigorous manner. ‘Interpretive research requires as serious a consideration of systematic, thorough, conscious method as does empiricist inquiry’ (Lincoln, 1995, p. 276). As well as using a research paradigm and analysis which would complement the philosophical principles of service-learning (Shumer, 2000a) I also followed a process that adheres to criteria for quality in interpretive research (Lincoln, 1995).

The process of my qualitative research reflects Creswell’s (2007) suggestions: a) to logically study the topic within its context; b) to work with particulars before generalisations and c) to continually revise questions based on experience in the field. I followed Creswell’s suggestions in the following manner:

- a) Prior to, during and after my field-work, I systematically reviewed literature which was relevant to my research question (see Chapter 2). I narrowed the focus of the inquiry from reflection in service-learning, to the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning.
- b) After speaking to different stakeholders in campus community partnerships in the US, (teaching staff, students, college administrators, community partners and their clients), I narrowed the scope of my inquiry to focus on academics because, to try to research the reflective practice of all stakeholders would have been too broad. I worked with individual academics and listened to their stories

before searching for the wider applicability of what I had learned regarding reflective practice.

- c) The questions that I posed were refined and honed, based on what had already been studied, what I discovered, and what would be practical and applicable to the field in the future. Furthermore, both the process of the research and the research question itself developed through the interaction with those being examined. I strove to become informed by tapping into the expertise of academics, who had in some cases, up to thirty years experience. I sought to be critical through debate and conversation with people who had perspectives different to my own.

### 1.5 Thesis Structure

Chapter 2: In the literature review I examine the context of service-learning in which the study is set. I outline the core elements of the pedagogy and the central role that reflection plays in it. I discuss the theoretical framework of reflective practice in teaching and how this relates to the reflective practice of engaged academics.

Chapter 3: In the methodology chapter I outline the research paradigm I used, the data gathering instruments and how the raw data was coded.

Chapter 4: In the findings and discussion chapter I report what was discovered and why it was important. This outlines the practical and philosophical needs of engaged academics.

Chapter 5: In the analysis chapter I give details of the implications of what was discovered and how the knowledge can be used by practitioners. Drawing on the literature and my analysis of the data I propose a model to enhance the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning.

Chapter 6: The advancement of service-learning in Ireland is outlined in this chapter and how the study relates to the context of Irish higher education.

Chapter 7: The conclusions and recommendations chapter makes suggestions regarding how the discourse of civic engagement can be given the space to grow.

For students to understand how to use reflection as a learning tool, they must be given instruction on this skill by their teachers; for this to happen - considering that there is an affective aspect to the learning tool - academics must have an understanding themselves of reflection through their personal experience. There are a number of factors which influence this which will be uncovered by this research project. It is hoped that this study will contribute to academics' understanding of reflective practice, and as a result influence their practice, thus giving this study a transformative agenda (Lather, 1986a).

*Experience is not what happens to a man;  
it is what a man does with what happened to him.*

Aldous Huxley

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The concept of reflective practice will be examined in relation to how the educator teaches and how the educator learns. The current understanding of reflective practice within higher education will be discussed as a background to the findings on how academics who use in service-learning reflect on their engaged practice. Their use of a critical pedagogy within higher education has implications for how the academy functions. Furthermore, understanding how academics reflect on their practice can influence the role of the academy in society.

In this chapter, I will examine the current literature relevant to the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. I will describe the broad field of service-learning, then narrow the focus to reflection in service-learning, and then examine the theory of reflection in more detail. I will then put that theory in the broad context of how reflection is used in education generally, followed by an examination of reflection in teaching through service-learning. This will lead to an examination of the context in which reflective teaching in service-learning would fit into higher education.

An examination of reflective practice should not be viewed only from the perspective of the student learner but also from that of the educator using it as a teaching tool within service-learning. However, reflection is more than a teaching tool because it has as its basis, the philosophy of questioning. When a philosophy is used in this way it has an impact on how one teaches because it is more than a technique and instead is a critical way of thinking.

## **2.2 The Historical Roots of Education Through Engagement**

### **The Development of a Theory of Service-learning**

In their comprehensive history of the origins of service-learning, Zieren and Stoddard (2004) give a clear insight into context from which a new pedagogy grew. They document that in contrast to Europe, the State played an extremely limited role in American universities prior to the 1860s. Though this meant that there was very little State support, it left the universities free to adapt their curricula and experiment with pedagogies. It was not until the mid 1860s with a raft of legislation on social policy that the State reaffirmed the Jeffersonian ideals of fostering citizenship in a democracy and the need for practical education to benefit everyone. It was the first attempt to combine the liberal arts with vocational education, was funded by the State and was open to both men and women. With the passing of the Morrill Land Grant Bill in 1862, the proceeds of the sale of public land were channelled into public higher education and the founding of the Land Grant Universities and Colleges Service. These institutions were established to fulfil what was seen as the democratic mission of the United States, and they were ‘designed to spread education, advance democracy and improve the technological, agricultural, industrial and military sciences’ (Harkavy, 2006, p. 10).

Rocheleau (2004) lists the theorists and philosophers who influenced the belief that community service should have a role in American higher education. The thinking about US higher education developed from the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Lock, Kant, Mill, Rousseau and Jefferson. An amalgam of these theories led to the belief that ‘for their well-being, states should provide an education of economic and political leadership and social and ethical concern’ (Rocheleau, 2004, p. 4) so that university graduates would be prepared ‘to contribute to the alleviation of human suffering, the insurance of human rights, and the development of a productive society’ (ibid).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, German technical education began to serve as an international model in both secondary and tertiary levels. This model included practical internships related to the students study and was

adopted by the land grant universities. At this time new concepts began to emerge regarding the responsibilities higher education should have and what role it should play as a part of a democratic society (Speck & Hoppe, 2004). The spirit of the Morrill Act was perhaps best illustrated at the University of Wisconsin, which at the turn of the twentieth century designed programs around the educational needs of adult citizens across the state (Harkavy, 2006). The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided funding for extension programmes in the Land Grant universities beyond the campus (Eddy, 1957) to connect higher education with the ordinary American citizen.

The community college movement was founded with the aim of meeting community needs and linking education with preparation for practical work in the community (Barnett, 1996). They greatly increased in popularity with the flood of immigrants coming to the United States between 1900 and 1920. They continue to provide two-year diploma courses in a wide range of vocational disciplines that can be transferred as the first half of four-year degree programmes in university.

According to Rocheleau (2004), the idea that community service could be a manner in which to learn and not merely a result of the education system, has its roots in John Dewey's pragmatist thinking about the nature of knowledge and society and his belief that the purpose of reasoning is to solve the problems faced by man. For Dewey (1913) learning facts and theory in the actual contexts where they occur gives them authenticity. Furthermore, experimenting with theories in problem-solving situations helps one deal with an ever changing world (Dewey, 1938, Giles & Eyler, 1994b). Dewey insisted that higher education must meet public needs and adapt to the changes in modern life of the citizen as well as the political and industrial life of the country (Zieren & Stoddard, 2004).

In 1896 Dewey established what he called the Laboratory School, in which students experimented with problem-solving and educators experimented with new curricula (Hines, 1972). Dewey's vision for progressive experiential education met with considerable opposition from traditionalist educators (Hutchins, 1953) who wanted to promote an education system that was positivist

and technical. There was a misconception that progressive experiential education was unstructured and not rigorous. However, Dewey did not accept the post-modern stance of unstructured de-schooling of students (Rocheleau, 2004) and posited that ‘the belief that all genuine education comes through experience does not mean that all experiences are equally educative’ (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). There was also the belief among Dewey’s detractors that the kind of education he promoted was liberal and politically left-leaning. According to Rocheleau (2004), service-learning that follows Deweyan thinking avoids committing to any particular moral or political principle, or economic arrangement, and does not profess undisputable ethical principles. However, it is value-laden, and uses education for the promotion of the common good; therefore, it is democratic and socially engaged in its perspective.

Kenny and Gallagher (2001) refer to the influences that were at play in US society in their detailed account of the circumstances that led to the development of service-learning as a recognised pedagogy. With the advent of the Cold War, the fears fuelled by competition with the Soviet Union encouraged US universities to focus more on research, scientific development of defence related technology and the education of the middle classes for the labour market.

The 1960s was a time of upheaval which saw a shift in social order in both Europe and the US. There was a desire among many young people to bring about social change, with evidence of this in the student riots in Paris, the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the anti-war movement and student demonstrations in Berkeley. Butin (2005b, p. 91) posits that ‘service-learning arose within the crucible of the civil rights era and that history informs almost all modern-day enactments of it.’ A feeling of the collective power of young people fuelled debates about the difference between the kind of education students wanted and what the academic establishment to provide.

New education theories were debated, and in the early 1970s theorists saw education as a vehicle for social change. The work of epistemological theorists such as Quine (1953) and Habermas (1972) play a part in unseating positivism as the predominant epistemology from the 1970s onwards. These

theorists drew heavily on Dewey's thinking regarding holistic education and the experiential aspect of it found a new audience through the work of Kolb (1984). Service-learning is also influenced by the theory of critical pedagogy as advocated by Friere (1970) and Giroux (1988) who see the function of education as examining the role that power plays in society. One of the traits of this is the shift in the power dynamics insofar as the instructor becomes a fellow learner with the students and all co-create knowledge. In service-learning this is carried further with learning being brought beyond the walls of the classroom and the university to the community, with the community partners seen as reciprocal collaborators in the learning process. When students reflect on social issues, they are encouraged to think deeper than 'there is poverty, feed the hungry', to ask 'why is there poverty, and what can be done to address the cause of this social problem?'

Influenced by these new ideas, a growing number of educators began to include service as a part of their teaching and learning strategy. This engagement with community has been fuelled by the growing belief that the academy is disconnected from society (Macfarlane, 2005). The 1980s saw a reduction in social capital and growth in consumerism and individualism. Putnam (2000) states that, life is easier in a community that has a substantial stock of social capital. He suggests that the networks of civic engagement foster trust and reciprocity in the community (Putnam, 1995b, 2000). They facilitate the solution of problems faced by members of the network, reduce incentives for opportunism and encourage a sense of self and identity within the community. Discussing the thirty years from the 1970s, Putnam (2000) reports that evidence of civic disengagement is illustrated in the fall in interest in local and national politics, lower voting turnout, reduced membership of local organisations and societies (including churches and trade unions) and a fall in volunteerism. This is counteracted however, by a growth in personal support groups, in mass organisations (like the American Association for Retired Persons) and in non-profit organisations (such as Oxfam) with participation limited to monetary donation. He calls for an examination of 'how to reverse these adverse trends in

social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust' (Putnam, 1995a, p. 65)

The reaction to the disengagement of the 1980s was calls from the likes of Boyer and Boyte for higher education to return to its historical commitment to community development. This was added to by the view that the research universities were not creating knowledge to meet the civic and social needs of a changing America. Though there was a perception that college students were materialistic and self-absorbed, many students were involved in community service on their campuses. 1985 saw the establishment of Campus Compact, to help a member universities and colleges create structures to support civic engagement. Now numbering 1100, these campuses aimed to put their knowledge and resources to work to help build strong communities and educate the next generation of responsible citizens.

A non-profit and independent federal agency called the Commission on National and Community Service was founded in 1990 to develop service initiatives on the assumption that many of the country's community problems were caused by a social disconnection. The agency provided funding to support students engaged in community service. The Wingspread Conference on the Civic responsibility of Research Universities attended in 1998 by stakeholders in higher education established the viability of the concept of outreach scholarship for community development. At the President's Summit for Americas Future President Clinton signed a declaration stating that it was a national duty of every American to take responsibility for one another. The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities (1999) added to the movement towards civic engagement by putting pressure on state and land-grant universities to meet local, regional and national needs. To provide an academically rigorous framework to universities and colleges, the American Association for Higher Education produced an 18 volume series of text-books on the introduction of service-learning across the disciplines. There are now thousands of programmes using service-learning throughout the US (Gelmon *et al.*, 2001). Service-learning as a pedagogy was once on the fringes of the education system is now becoming

increasingly institutionalised and accepted as ‘normal’ a fact in itself, that is troublesome for some such as Dan Butin, as will be seen later.

The democratic mission served as the central mission for the development of the American research university, including both land-grant institutions and urban universities (Harkavy, 2006). The conceptual origins of service-learning can be found in the historic commitment of American higher education to public purpose, in the political philosophies of John Dewey, and in American traditions of volunteerism and social activism (Jacoby, 1996, Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997). Given the social perspective advocated by Dewey and the critical perspective advocated by Friere, the theoretical foundation of service-learning is inherently political in nature.

### **2.2.1 Service-learning defined**

*Service-learning* has been described as follows:

...a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5).

[Service-learning is] ...a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996a, p. 222).

Service-learning involves the university teaching staff, students and a community organisation co-operating in a reciprocal partnership to address a need in the community while facilitating the academic, civic and personal development of the student. It provides the opportunity to apply classroom theory to ‘real-life’ situations in the community (Ender *et al.*, 2000). The partnership needs to be reciprocal with the varied priorities of each partner given equal importance. The

goals must be inclusive and function as a mutually beneficial joint venture. Service-learning differs from other forms of experiential learning such as internships or field education because the service addresses a civic need and the focus of the service is equitably beneficial for the recipient and the provider (Furco, 1996). The client benefits through receipt of the service and the provider learns while conducting the service. Through a service-learning project, the university contributes to community development by providing resources as well as a structure in which students can participate in the community while they are learning. Through engaging in partnerships with a university, community organisations have access to the campus academic community ‘on tap’ (Boyte & Hollander, 1999) so as to utilise expertise that can address concerns of the community. Likewise, the expertise of the community partner is shared with the student.

Ideally, the university provides resources to the community in the form of students’ direct service, a pool of expertise and/or the results of participatory action research that students conduct in collaboration with a community organisation. In return, the university is able to facilitate an effective learning experience for its students. The community partner benefits from the student’s work and also gains access to university physical resources such as the library, whilst the community partner contributes to the student’s development by being a co-educator with the university. Meanwhile, the student has the opportunity to put classroom theory into practice while providing a service needed in the community. The benefits are reciprocal because each participant contributes and receives something of value.

### ***What service-learning is not***

Because service-learning means different things to different people (Furco, 2003), it can be helpful to outline what service-learning is not (Welch, 2006).

- Service-learning is not charity or ‘good works’ (Sobus, 1995). Whilst it is an add-on to an existing curriculum, it must be a central part of the curriculum design.

- Though service-learning programmes may be taken as an elective, the service within the programme is not optional. The service is a compulsory part of the course like exams, laboratory work or readings.
- Service-learning is not just limited to the Social Sciences. It is applicable across the disciplines.
- Service-learning is sometimes confused with ‘community-service’. Service-learning is not a punishment dealt out by the courts.
- Service-learning is not solely for university students. It can be used in primary and secondary schools and by teachers as well as students.
- Service-learning is not a case of clocking up a certain number of service hours by doing menial tasks in order to meet a quota; this would equate to sitting in a library and doodling.

A short-term service project that has no instructional objectives is not service-learning. Spending a day cleaning up a park is merely free labour unless there are learning goals, for example: analyzing the litter; identifying its source; discussing the environmentally appropriate manner of disposing of the litter; drawing up suggestions for addressing the litter problem in the park and putting the problem in the park in the context of the local and national policy on litter. The students’ learning is the return for what would otherwise be a menial task.

- A practicum focused purely on skills acquisition is not service-learning if there is no benefit for the community. As each service-learning programme type is defined on a continuum by the intended beneficiary of the service activity and its degree of emphasis on service and/or learning (Furco, 1996), there is an ongoing debate as to whether or not a for-profit organisation such as a bank, can provide suitable placement as part of a service-learning course on the grounds that there is no direct benefit for the community. A well-organised placement in the for-profit corporation of a social entrepreneur may be closer to service-learning than a placement in which there is a mismatch between the student and a non-profit organisation.

Service-learning is a complex pedagogy and it is important to make the distinction between service-learning and other forms of experiential learning. If it is mistaken for a glorified form of volunteering, and not implemented according to best practice the long term viability of campus community partnerships can be damaged.

### 2.2.2 Debating the term ‘service-learning’

The term service-learning was coined in 1967 by Bill Ramsay and Robert Sigmon at the Southern Regional Education Board in reference to the internship programmes in social and economic development sponsored by the Oak Ridge Associated Universities, in Tennessee (Giles & Eyer, 1994b, Taylor, 2007). Goodwin Liu, one of the pioneers in the field of service-learning highlights that the idea is not necessarily a recent one.

To characterise service-learning as a new development in education is inaccurate at best and presumptuous at worst. The concept (if not the label) has an impressive pedigree that includes the university-based extension programs of the 1860s land grant movement, John Dewey’s philosophical pragmatism during the early decades of this century, and the campus and community-based organizing initiatives in the 1960s civil rights movement

(Liu p. xiii, in Stanton *et al.*, 1999).

Service-learning variously refers to a philosophy, a pedagogy and an educational programme (Taylor, 2007). In the years since it was first coined, there has been much debate as to a definitive name. This has gone as far as the significance of the hyphen in the term (Sigmon, 1996). By 1990 there were already 147 different terms for activities that could be classified as service-learning (Kendall, 1990) such as community service-learning, community engaged learning and community service. Taylor (2007, p. 5) provides a very detailed analysis of the etymology of the word ‘service’ and explains that because the word is associated with a number of ‘helping activities’, it can ‘yield cognitive metaphors whereby service is slavery, service is evangelism, service is soldiering or service is charity.’ Debates regarding the name have largely been resolved and the term ‘service-learning’ has been institutionalised in the US, most notably in 1990 when codified in the National and Community Service Act<sup>3</sup> (Taylor, 2007).

---

<sup>3</sup> This legislation was passed to encourage volunteering by creating and funding an independent federal agency called the Commission on National and Community Service.

Because of the negative connections the word ‘service’ had to charity, there were inherent reservations about the term. For example, early pioneers of the pedagogy Stanton, Giles and Cruz (1999) expressed their misgivings about the implied inequity between the served and those who serve. All three, who were rooted in the social change end of Morton’s continuum<sup>4</sup>, highlighted that there must be reciprocity in the service-learning relationship for it not to be regarded as charity.

In the debate regarding the correct model of service-learning – that of charity or social change – Morton (1995) suggests that rather than moving from one end of the continuum to the other, it is preferable to choose the model which best suits the context and then explore it deeper. In Ireland, there is a preference for the term community-based learning. While the problems associated with the word ‘service’ are avoided, there is still the risk of misinterpretation. The term implies that the learning takes place only in the community and overlooks the fact that the pedagogy refers to the whole curriculum, including the campus-based activities. For the purposes of this work, much of which is rooted in the American system, I will use the term ‘service-learning’. Likewise, although there are schools of thought that contend that service-learning is at the same time a philosophy, a pedagogy and a programme of education, my reference to it will be in the context of a teaching and learning strategy.

### **2.2.3 Multiple perspectives within service-learning**

Bringle *et al.* (2009, p. 1) attest that engaging with the community involves complex and dynamic relationships ‘that hold the potential to catalyze significant growth for the participants as well as substantial new work and new knowledge production.’ Meanwhile, Furco (1996) states that no experiential educational approach is static on the continuum between service and learning, with the emphasis on moving from service towards learning or vice versa throughout the duration of the programme. He continues by positing that the intended foci and

---

<sup>4</sup> Morton, K. (1995) ‘The irony of service: charity, project and social change in service-learning’, explored the continuum of service-learning that went from charity to social change.

beneficiaries must be agreed in advance so that the programme's position on the continuum can be tracked.

Since its inception, the pedagogy of service-learning has developed in different forms and with various emphases. Even within one programme, service-learning is viewed subjectively by the participants from diverse perspectives; that of the academic, student, community partner, and/or university administrator. Indeed, even within the group of students who are participating in a course using service-learning, there will be different motivations and learning goals, thereby making service-learning a pedagogy which is difficult to define and analyse (Furco, 2003).

Therefore, taking the perspectives of all of the stakeholders into consideration I define *service-learning* for higher education as follows:

*University staff, students and community organisations co-operating in a long-term reciprocal educational partnership to address issues identified by the community while facilitating the academic learning, and the civic and personal development of the stakeholders through critical reflection, while furthering the institutional aims of both the university and community organisation.*

This description incorporates many of the principles of service-learning good practice (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989) while including specific learning goals identified by Clayton and Ash (2004). Whilst it refers to the three principle stakeholders: teaching staff; students; and staff at the community organisation, others can also be involved, such as the administrative staff in the university service-learning coordination office and the clients of the community partner.

Though the student may be involved for only one or two semesters, the partnership between the university and the community organisation can be a long-term commitment. This can strengthen the relationship and allow for long-term strategic planning. Given that a partnership, by definition, benefits all of those involved, it is important to highlight the reciprocity that must exist in a service-learning collaboration/partnership. Service-learning as described here, is

not based on altruism, but instead should be a 'win-win-win' situation by striving towards the benefit to all partners collectively and individually.

A partnership can only be fostered with equity if the development goals of the community are compatible with the learning goals of the student and the mission of the university. Regardless of the discipline, it is universally accepted that the aim is for students to critically reflect on their experience and develop their academic skills, civic awareness and personal growth (Ash & Clayton, 2004, Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, Eyler, 2001, Eyler, 2002, Eyler *et al.*, 1996, Hatcher & Bringle, 1997, Hatcher *et al.*, 2004, Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, Jacoby, 2003, Kendall, 1990, Sigmon, 1979, Silcox, 1993, Toole & Toole, 1995, Welch, 1999). By facilitating the learning of the student and the development of the community partner and its clients, both the university and the community organisation will be fulfilling their institutional missions.

As a pedagogy, service-learning is challenging for all partners, who require training, support and recognition. However, the benefits make the investment profitable, as it is a teaching and learning strategy that has the potential to achieve a broad range of positive outcomes (Astin *et al.*, 2000, Jacoby, 1996).

These multiple perspectives on service-learning have been woven together into what Boland (2006) terms a *pedagogy for civic engagement*, with individual institutions adapting it to suit their preferred style of education. Indeed, universities are uniquely placed to foster civic engagement for a number of reasons: (1) they represent large organisations with resources (both tangible and intellectual) that can be of a developmental benefit to the local community as well as society in general; (2) exposing students to issues of social justice in a manner that they can analyse and reflect upon from different perspectives, can contribute to national social capital (D'Agostino, 2006) and (3) evidence suggests that service participation appears to have its strongest effect on the student's decision to pursue a career in a service field (Astin *et al.*, 2000, Boland, 2008).

Regardless of the debate about the name of the pedagogy, and the many perspectives taken with its implementation, there are a number of key features

which are common to every shade of service-learning. It is important to highlight these features so as to differentiate service-learning from any other form of experiential learning.

## **2.3 Core Elements of Service-learning**

### **2.3.1 Standards for best practice in service- learning**

As the interest in service-learning grew during the 1980s, so too did the misconception in some quarters that it was ‘soft learning’ so that the demand grew among practitioners for standards of best practice to ensure academic rigour in the implementation of service-learning (Rocheleau, 2004). Through extensive consultation<sup>5</sup> with over 70 US educational organisations interested in service-learning, such as universities, community colleges, community organisations and education funders, Honnet and Poulsen (1989) drew up a set of principles of good practice for combining service and learning (listed below). These principles remain the touchstone for the construction, maintenance and review of service-learning programmes in the US and internationally.

Honnet and Poulsen (1989) contend that an effective service-learning programme:

1. Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.
2. Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.
3. Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.
4. Allows for those with needs to define those needs.
5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.
6. Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.

---

<sup>5</sup> The consultation process was conducted by the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (NSIEE, now known as National Society for Experiential Education, NSEE).

7. An effective program expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.
8. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.
9. Ensures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved.
10. Is committed to programme participation by and with diverse populations.

(Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, pp. 1-2)

The central themes running through these principles cover: equity; the needs of the community; academic rigour; reciprocity and reflection. Whilst they are applicable – regardless of the agenda of the institution, the location of the community, the social partner or the field of study – and include direct and indirect service; in recent years, there has been a move away from focussing on the deficits in a community and towards developing community assets (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993). Although the ‘common good’ is still central, the broadness of the term means that it can be defined and interpreted differently by the institution.

In the years that followed the publication of Honnet and Poulsen’s ten principles, confusion arose regarding the distinction between academic service-learning and other forms of community-based student experiences. Consequently, there needed to be clear criteria as to what academic service-learning was and what it was not. Though Honnet and Poulsen’s principles were (and still are) useful guidelines, service-learning underwent a refinement as it became more legitimate as an approach in higher education and there was an additional need for bench-marking criteria for course design. This need was addressed by Howard (2001), who added the following principles as a guide to good service-learning practice:

1. Academic credit is for the learning that happens not for the service that is carried out.
2. Do not compromise academic rigour.
3. Establish learning outcomes.

4. Establish criteria for the selection<sup>6</sup> of service placements.
5. Provide educationally-sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course learning objectives (such as critical reflection).
6. Prepare students for learning from the community.
7. Minimize the distinction between the students' community learning role and classroom learning role.
8. Rethink the faculty instructional role.
9. Be prepared for variation in, and some loss of control with, student learning outcomes.
10. Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course.

(Howard, 2001, pp. 16-19)

Howard's updated principles are similar to those of Honnet and Paulsen, but Howard's place greater emphasis on the need for academic rigour, the use of reflection, the balance between the academic and civic aspects of the pedagogy and the role of academics and the community partners in service-learning. Quality reviews of service-learning programmes are currently assessed by these principles in the US. There is little if any discordance in the literature regarding the core elements of service-learning. There is however some divergence in the interpretation and implementation of service-learning. Depending on the ethos of the institution, greater or less influence is placed on different aspects of what service-learning can do. Faith-based institutions may be rooted on the charity end of Morton's continuum of service with secular community colleges based in deprived areas may be focused on the social justice end. Though there may be debates regarding focus within the pedagogy, there is little disagreement among those who use it regarding its value. Opposition to service-learning is hard to find and is limited to the fringes such as the Creationist movement (that requires school books to have a warning if they contain suggestions that the world was not created 6,000 years ago) and radicals such as Stanley Fish (2003, 2004a), who called on US higher education to focus on questions of truth rather than social justice or democracy. Butin (2005b) uses the critical stance taken by Fish

---

<sup>6</sup> Examples of these criteria are: that service placements are linked to course material; service activities are connected to course learning outcomes; correlate the duration of the service placement with the time needed to achieve the course learning goals; assign students to projects that meet needs in the community as defined by the community partner.

to propose a new perspective of service-learning as a postmodern pedagogy. Butin argues that there is no ‘universal “best practice” for service-learning because this requires a value judgement that is influenced by local context and by the cultural, political and social context. He continues that service-learning pushes the normative assumptions of what is considered to be good teaching and learning, and it frustrates attempts to tidy learning into an easily manageable curriculum. He says that service-learning a post-modern pedagogy because of how it challenges metanarratives and highlights ‘the complexities and ambiguities of how we come to make sense of ourselves and the world around us’ (Butin, 2005b, p. 98). He echoes the critical stance that Fish takes and challenges service-learning advocates not only to question how service-learning is implemented, but to be prepared to question if service-learning is the best way to “do” higher education. Returning to Fish and the debate about what should be studied in higher education, and what counts as ‘truth’ Butin (2005b, p. 102) suggests that advocates of the pedagogy may have been ‘playing the wrong political game’. He proposes that rather than accept and function within the current rules of the education system, they should instead change the rules in order to promote and sustain service-learning in higher education and consider why we are using service-learning in the first place.

### **2.3.2 The central role of reflection in service-learning**

Many American universities (such as University of Utah and the University of San Francisco) have a rigorous procedure for a new course to be designated a ‘service-learning’ course. Not only must the proposed syllabus be approved by a university curriculum committee, it must also be approved by the Service-Learning Centre, which provides strict criteria, similar to those of Howard’s. Whilst it is unusual for a pedagogy to have such clear and rigorous guidelines for design implementation and review, a service-learning programme must contain all of the following criteria:

- Rigour
- Learning outcomes
- Community issue

- Reciprocity
- Reflection

Given the nature of this research, I will be focussing solely on the criterion for reflection, which is central to service-learning, for as Felton *et al.* (2006) contend, experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning. Indeed, ‘experience becomes educative when critical reflective thought creates new meaning and leads to growth and the ability to take informed actions’ (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, p. 114). This is supported by (Ash & Clayton, 2004, Billig, 2007, Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, Cress *et al.*, 2005, Deeley, 2010, Dunlap, 1998, Eyler, 2001, Eyler, 2002, Eyler *et al.*, 1996, Felten *et al.*, 2006, Gibboney, 1996, Greene, 2006, Hatcher & Bringle, 1997, Henry, 2007, Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, Howard, 2001, Jacoby, 1996, Leming, 2001, Molee *et al.*, 2010, Reed & Koliba, 1995, Rhoads & Howard, 1998, Welch, 1999).

In summary, the consensus in literature is that service-learning is a critical pedagogy having education and community engagement at its core. Service-learning can develop a discourse of questioning the social status quo in order to contribute to ‘the refurbishment of our civic infrastructure and promoting a more civil society’ (Lisman, 1998, p. 8). In contrast to the hegemonic assumptions promoted by conventional higher education, critical pedagogy examines contrasting lived experiences and requires a critique of society and the power sources which maintain the status quo of inequality (King, 2004). For these lived experiences to cause the disequilibrium in the student required for learning to happen, there must be space for critical reflection (*ibid*). Shor (1992) also argues that this critical learning process can be fostered and a democratic discourse can be developed through the use of critical pedagogy. On a simplistic level, service-learning can be seen as an effective teaching and learning strategy. However, at its core, it is, in fact deeply political. In the following sections, I will discuss the theory of reflection and its critical role in the service-learning programme. This is relevant to the research question because it is important to set the context in which engaged academics use reflection as a teaching tool. After a discussion

about student reflection, I will continue by discussing the role that reflection plays as a learning tool.

## **2.4 Theoretical Context of Critical Reflection in Learning**

### **2.4.1 The development of thought about reflection**

John Dewey was one of the first to extrapolate theory on how to draw meaning from experience and apply it to educational theory. For Dewey, reflective thinking was: ‘active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends... it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality’ (Dewey, 1933, p. 9). Rodgers (2002) outlines the four vital elements of reflection that Dewey proposed, as follows:

1. It is a process of making meaning of experiences.
2. It is a structured and systematic process.
3. It is enhanced when conducted with others.
4. It requires a desire for personal and intellectual growth.

Dewey (1938) stressed the importance of understanding the nature of human experience i.e. what is learned in a particular context cannot be split or compartmentalised from the rest of one’s life. He contended that ‘...a world, whose parts and aspects do not hang together, is at once a sign and a cause of a divided personality’ (Dewey, 1938, p. 44). To achieve full integration of the different aspects of one’s life, amalgamation of one’s experiences is necessary. From an educational perspective, the value of the experiences is measured by the amount of integration that takes place, and it is this process of connecting experiences that is of particular interest to educators. The influence that Dewey has had on service-learning should not be overlooked; the importance he holds in American education has certainly contributed to the level of legitimacy that the pedagogy has achieved in the US.

Later Lewin (1951) developed a model of learning that he called a ‘cycle of action’. This describes the process of knowledge being generated by moving from a concrete experience, reflecting on that experience, drawing meaning or theorising about the experience, and experimenting with the new idea. Piaget (1969) emphasised the

influence of the environment on the learner and vice versa and that learning arose from conflict between the two. He maintained that learners *assimilate* information by changing it to fit with previous knowledge already stored in the mind; for example, squeezing footballs into a wooden box, the footballs being information and the box being the mind. Alternatively, information is *accommodated*, according to Piaget, when the mind changes in light of new evidence; for example, storing the footballs in a net bag rather than a wooden box.

Honey and Mumford (1992) built a typology of learning styles based on the stages of Lewin's cyclical model, which names the Activist, who learned best through concrete experience; the Reflector, who prefers to learn through reflective observation; the Theorist, who predominantly uses abstract conceptualisation; and the Pragmatist, who prefers active experimentation.

David Kolb formulated his Theory of Experiential Learning based on the work of Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, and Honey and Mumford. Kolb (1984, 1999a) believed that learning should not be seen in terms of outcomes, but rather as a continuous process of interaction between the learner and the environment. Learning is influenced by how learners adapt to that environment and how they adapt the surroundings to themselves. Kolb and Kolb (2005) understood learning to be a continuous process of integrating the different and opposing aspects of one's experiences such as thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving. There is a perspective that would take this further and see reflective practice as a process of a sitting of the knowledge in its socio-political context, drawing inferences beyond the confines of the experience itself.

Picture a person attempting to unlock a door to a corridor with a bunch of keys that appear to be identical. The person tries one key; if it does not work, the person tries another and continues through the bunch until the correct key is found. Simple trial and error will suffice to open that door on one occasion but having found the correct key once does not ensure first time success in the future. If the person stops and *reflects* which key is correct, then formulates a plan for the future (such as labelling the key) and having done that, locks the door behind him (proving the key to be the correct one) he will have learned which key fits that door. Once in the corridor the person is then faced with another door and the process continues. In essence, learning from experience means adding to one's store of knowledge based on interactions with one's environment (Kolb, 1984).

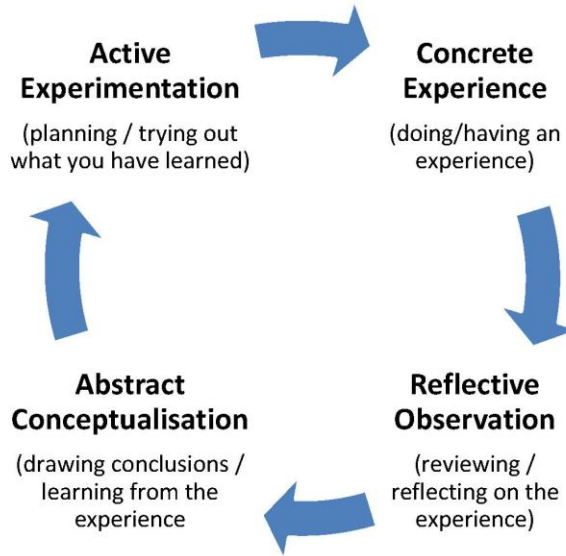


Fig. 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

As can be seen in figure Fig. 1 Kolb's theory of experiential learning moves from concrete experience through reflection, to concept forming, to experimentation and on to experience again. Reflection plays a pivotal role in learning from experience (Maudsley & Strivens, 2000) and requires time for new information to be either absorbed into existing schema or adapted to fit said schema (Eraut, 1992). Understandably, an experience that has not been analysed critically will lead to a flawed theoretical conceptualisation which in turn will have poor results in the succeeding experimenting stage of Kolb's cycle. The surface knowledge of *which* is the correct key may well be important however, asking *why* questions goes deeper.

In her discussion of tacit knowledge, Kinsella (2009) cites the work of Polanyi, Schön and Argyris, and later work by Schön on his own. Kinsella suggests an increased importance of tacit knowledge and the efforts to make it more explicit, and this is echoed elsewhere by Loughran (2002) and Ghaye and Ghaye (1998). Kinsella (2009) believes that professionals develop a knowledge of how to do something based on experience, though they may not be able to

explain how they know such things, they just do. She calls for this knowledge to be acknowledged and indeed challenged. This is similar to asking the question, why do we do what we do the way we do it? As will be seen, this challenging question will arise repeatedly throughout this research.

Given that it is human nature to strive to understand the meaning of our experience (Mezirow, 1997), getting to a deeper level of understanding involves asking probing questions to move from the description of an experience to understanding the significance of this experience in terms of how it influences one's learning and behaviour. Critical reflection moves the process from the human 'thinking about stuff' to a more rigorous academic process in which deeper understanding is sought. This contrasts with traditional teaching methods or 'The Banking Method' as Friere (1970) describes it, in which the students are empty bank accounts awaiting lodgements of knowledge by the teacher. Friere maintains that 'knowledge evolves only through ...restless, impatient, continuing, [and] hopeful enquiry' (1970, p. 72). His language portrays an energetic, active learning, fuelled by curiosity and striving for understanding. He describes reflection as ongoing and motivated by curiosity and a process of knowledge creation. Curiosity however, must be encouraged and guided so as to draw the meaning from experience, adding criticality to the reflection moves from a casual wondering why, to an active exploration for deeper meaning.

#### **2.4.2 Defining reflection and its role in learning**

Because of the differing theoretical orientations of its origins (Mackintosh, 1998), the absence of an agreed definition regarding the meaning and use of the term 'reflection' has caused the terms reflection and critical reflection to be used interchangeably. The concept of critical reflection in education evolved from Dewey's (1933) ideas on reflective thinking and has branched into the following: reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983); reflective learning (Boyd & Fales, 1983); critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1990a); metacognitive reflection (Fogarty, 1994); effective reflective practice (Loughran, 2002); critical reflective practice (Issitt, 2003); critical reflection (Fisher, 2003) and various other combinations of

the words reflection and critical. While the concept is continuously debated, there is little agreement as to what reflection means in practice (Hubbal, Collins, & Pratt, 2005) to the extent that ‘the practice of reflection is not necessarily the same as reflective practice’ (Issitt, 2003, p. 179). An important qualifier is the addition of the word critical, as this draws on critical theory and implies that there is a deeper questioning of assumptions than a passive ‘*thinking about stuff*’.

However, in identifying what reflection in service-learning means, I will refer to the definitions of Eyler *et al.* (1996) and King (2002). They define critical reflection as:

A process specifically structured to help examine the frameworks we use to interpret experience: critical reflection pushes us to step outside of the old and familiar and to reframe our questions and our conclusions in innovative and more effective terms (Eyler *et al.*, 1996, p. 13).

[A] deliberate process during which the candidate takes time, within the course of their work, to focus on their performance and think carefully about the thinking that led to particular actions, what happened and what they are learning from the experience, in order to inform what they might do in the future (King, 2002, p. 2).

The first definition hints at the difficulty of reflection, which requires stepping outside the known. Fear of the unknown added to fear of change can lead to a resistance to the process of reflection. Whilst King’s definition is drawn from the UK’s Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority<sup>7</sup>, and refers to changing one’s future behaviour, it does so in a manner that implies that the change is intrinsic rather than foisted upon the learner by external circumstances. Carefully thinking about past actions to inform future actions removes some of the threat of having to ‘reframe the old and familiar’.

In the search for an illustration for the essence of reflection, rather than academic works and debates, I believe that this extract from T.S Eliot’s *The Dry Salvages* in ‘Four Quartets’ (1943) is illuminating:

---

<sup>7</sup> The QCDA is the statutory body in the UK with responsibility for supporting schools and colleges in the assessment and examination of the national curriculum.

The moments of happiness – not the sense of well-being,  
Fruition, fulfilment, security or affection,  
Or even a very good dinner, but the sudden illumination –  
We had the experience but missed the meaning,  
And approach to the meaning restores the experience  
In a different form, beyond any meaning  
We can assign to happiness. I have said before  
That the past experience revived in the meaning  
Is not the experience of one life only  
But of many generations –

Eliot implies that because we become so wrapped up in the other distractions of life, it is possible to miss the meaning of what we experience. Simply having an *ah-ha* experience does not mean one understands it, but rather, it is through the search for its meaning that the experience can be reshaped and take on a greater significance. In the light of new understanding, the experience can be understood or shared and enjoyed by more than just the individual. Therefore, not only can one share personal learning, but one can also arrive at universal truths, which can contribute to the common good.

As restrictive definitions can create false confines and narrow the perspective, I describe critical reflection – in its broadest sense – as *drawing meaning from experience*, a meaning that can be generalised and applied beyond the confines of the original ‘sudden illumination’. This description is applicable to any context which uses critical reflection i.e. with students, with staff, alone or in groups, using written, verbal or creative methods; the essence of reflection is the drawing of meaning from experience. In the opening stanza from Eliot’s (1934) ‘The Rock’ he asks ‘where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge, where is the knowledge we have lost in information?’ This points to the chasm between knowledge and understanding; critical reflection is the bridge between both sides of that divide.

### 2.4.3 Ah-ha moments

Boud (2006, p. 2) cites some of the respected literature on reflection when he claims that the questioning of experience is ‘the exploration of “a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt” (Dewey, 1933), or “surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique” (Schön, 1983) or “inner discomforts” (Brookfield, 1987) or “disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow, 1990)’. These all emphasise that the spark of curiosity regarding an experience stems from an emotion of unease with that experience. Dewey refers to the situation of ‘uncertainty and conflict’ necessary for learning to occur. Both Green (2001) and Tatum (1992) give an example of emotional discomfort such as that encountered when confronting racial prejudice during a learning programme (a social issue which often arises in service-learning). Teaching and learning strategies that stem from the positivist traditional view have had little room for emotion such as the personal discomfort of uncertainty and conflict. As such, uncertainty is often resisted by both academics and their students who prefer to take comfort in the certainty of facts. In opposition to the positivist traditional perspective, Mezirow (1997) claims that discourse can be encouraged and assumptions questioned through disorientating dilemmas such as those arising out of experiential learning.

The ‘ah-ha moment’ describes the sudden illumination when something makes sense or takes on a new meaning and often happens when one is forced out of one’s comfort zone. It is known by some service-learning practitioners as ‘squirm and learn’. Challenging one’s *frames of reference* so that assumptions are questioned is an uncomfortable experience. However, exposing students to experiences that challenge their assumptions can ignite aha moments. Though the full implication of the new meaning may not be immediately obvious, there is an acknowledgement that ‘something has changed or needs to change’ based on the new knowledge. The form of the change and its impact on the future, take shape during the reflection process.

Couto (1982) discusses the effects of putting students in uncomfortable situations and pushing the boundaries of their comfort zone. He calls this ‘structured disequilibrium’ because it unsettles the student, however, he

maintains that there *must* be a structure so that students can reflect and learn from their experience. The disorientating dilemma may influence the student's habitual behaviour or ways of knowing so that they are better able to understand the new experience. However, as will be seen later, it is significant that a structure is necessary within which to examine the experience.

Service-learning has at its root, the use of challenging experiences to question assumptions. Without this questioning, the pedagogy would be no different to the didactic banking method of education. Though one may have an *ah-ha moment* of realisation, the experience needs to be given time and due consideration (i.e. reflection) in order to gain the full benefit from it. The process of drawing meaning from an experience is a complicated one and needs to be facilitated correctly. Because service-learning is a form of experiential learning and that drawing meaning from an experience is what fuels the learning, critical reflection on the service experience is a core element of service-learning in order to ensure that one does not *have the experience but miss the meaning*.

#### **2.4.4 Mezirow's influence on reflection**

As already outlined, reflection in education grew from the work of Dewey, Schön and Mezirow; however, it is predominantly in Mezirow's theory of transformative learning that the critical nature of reflection is emphasised (Imel, 1998). In contrast to 'thinking about stuff', reflection must involve critically thinking about assumptions with the view to causing change, which then can have an impact on the environment in which the learner lives. This is significant in the context of service-learning, because of the role that transformation plays in the pedagogy, thereby affecting the learner and society.

Mezirow (1994, 1997) stresses the importance of examining one's assumptions and highlights that adults have assumptions which frame their world view. These include personal beliefs and emotional reactions, as well as a general frame of reference through which the world is interpreted. Mezirow (1998) claims that we must be critically reflective *in order* to fully comprehend the meaning of experiences that include: values; feelings and ethical issues. The

transformation of these structures or perspectives is the process of becoming aware of how assumptions impact on the way we see ourselves, our interactions with others, and how we react to new understanding (Mezirow, 1981).

Reflection does not necessarily imply making an assessment of what is being reflected upon, a distinction that differentiates it from critical reflection. Critical reflection may be either implicit, as when we mindlessly choose between good and evil because of our assimilated values, or explicit, as when we bring the process of choice into awareness to examine and assess the reasons for making a choice (Mezirow, 1998, p. 185).

Whilst thinking about assumptions may not lead to change; having one's meaning structures challenged through critical reflection is an uncomfortable experience. In Mezirow's (1998) opinion, changing one's meaning structures involves experiencing 'disorientating dilemmas' either through sudden insight into the assumptions that have limited understanding or a number of gradual transitions which transform one's perspectives. He suggests that there are three levels of reflection: 1) awareness of assumptions, 2) assessing that which has been reflected upon and 3) theorising with the potential to change behaviour. He also posits that 'self-reflection can lead to a significant personal transformation' (1997, p. 7) of habits of mind and awareness of how we view the world. The element of change is therefore particularly important in the context of service-learning, which facilitates change in the learner and society.

Though Mezirow later modified his theory of Transformational Learning and reduced the emphasis on disorientating dilemmas, his levels of reflection bear a strong resemblance to Borton's (1970) more straightforward model of 'What, So What, Now What?'. In Borton's model, the transformation is that of one's beliefs, which may (or may not) lead to a transformation in behaviour. Meanwhile, Ash and Clayton (2004, pp. 142-143) contend that the learning that is gained through reflection should be actively used so that it 'leads to better understanding and more informed action...to improve myself, the quality of my learning, or the quality of my future experiences.' Transformation has occurred when reflection leads to action, and this is central to service-learning. Asking the

question, ‘what will I do differently based on what I have learned’ (Ash & Clayton, 2004) moves the learner from the abstract to the concrete.

Catalytic validity (Brown & Tandom, 1978, Lather, 1986a, Reason & Rowan, 1981) refers to the degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1973) terms *conscientization* of knowing reality in order to better transform it. The same principle applies to the transformative nature of critical reflection. Having reflected on a topic and decided that a change in one’s assumptions was appropriate, not following through on this decision (to the *now what*) falls short of the transformation that Mezirow claims is necessary for reflection to be critical.

There is a divide between subjective and objective reflection and education. There is no question that scientists must use objective reflective analysis to generate knowledge. But when social scientists suggest that learning involves being self-critical, there is resistance by some within the academy to the subjectivity of reflection as a legitimate strategy of inquiry. Objectivity holds a tight grip of higher education and venturing into the ‘messy lowlands’ of subjectivity is seen as a dangerous path. Indeed, as summed up by Schön (1996, p. 17):

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing ‘messes’ incapable of technical solution in the swamp. The difficulty is that the problems of the high ground are often relatively unimportant to clients or larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of greatest human concern.

Western educational theory and practice is still caught up in the subjectivity/objectivity divide but the use of reflection in service-learning tries to reconcile the divide between subjectivity and objectivity. The role of reflection in education was valued by Dewey, and indeed the criticality of Socratic questioning goes back to the beginning of education as we know it, so why has

this form of learning not only gone out of favour, but been devalued to either ‘soft’ or ‘dangerous and threatening’?

In his explanation of his ‘Theory of Transformational Learning’, Mezirow (2006) discusses deep critical reflection of one’s own assumptions and those made by society. However, though the personal nature of deep (self) reflection may be seen as having a legitimate role in personal therapy, it is not something that is widely accepted as a part of formal education. Therefore, adopting reflection (which includes the subjective) as a formal part of higher education can be regarded as a challenge to our understanding of teaching and learning. Perhaps the search in the swampy lowlands for definitive answers is seen as a futile pursuit. One could ask what role criticality and thinking are given in higher education, given that university core curricula do not usually contain classes on ‘How to think critically and learn actively’. It is assumed that, by virtue of having gained admission to university, students have already mastered the skill of learning and need no further instruction on the topic. The skill of reflection is one that can be learned through proper facilitation and a suitable environment which encourages critique, and service-learning is a context within which that can happen.

#### **2.4.5 Unpacking reflection as a part of service-learning**

As discussed earlier, Dewey is a significant figure in the development of critical reflection in education. According to Hatcher (1997, p. 24) there are three principles central to Dewey’s educational philosophy: (1) ‘education must lead to personal growth; (2) education must contribute to humane conditions; and (3) education must engage citizens in association with one another.’ Dewey’s holistic philosophy on education has influenced the development of service-learning, because of its critical nature and community agenda. There is evidence of this in Stanton’s (1999) explanation that one of the central tenets of service-learning is the development of subject knowledge through the critical reflection on service experiences in order to foster the development of the student, the community and democracy in general. Felton *et al.* (2006, p. 38) remind us that

Dewey's influence on service-learning 'is evident in many of the definitions of reflection in the service-learning literature', for example:

- Reflection is the intentional consideration of an experience in light of particular learning objectives (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, Hatcher, 1997).
- Reflection 'is the process that helps students connect what they observe and experience in the community with their academic study' (Eyler, 2001, p. 35).
- Reflection is 'the ability to step back and ponder one's own experience, to abstract from it some meaning or knowledge relevant to other experiences' (Hutchings & Wutzdorff, 1988, p. 15).
- 'It is through careful reflection that service-learning, indeed any form of experiential education generates meaningful learning' (Ash *et al.*, 2005, p. 50).

The most succinct comment on the role of reflection in service-learning is that of Eyler (2001, p. 35) when she says 'reflection is the hyphen in service-learning<sup>8</sup>'. Meanwhile, the literature consistently agrees that effective service-learning programmes provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, Clayton & Ash, 2004, Eyler, 2002, Honnet & Poulsen, 1989).

Reflection activities which engage the learner in an examination of the relationship between the service and the discipline being studied, provide great potential for academic, personal and civic development (Giles & Eyler, 1994b). Whilst theoretical issues can be studied and analysed in an abstract manner, when students are exposed to more than simply academic learning, they are required to broaden their spectrum of understanding to include personal and civic development. It is important to note these three areas of focus within service-learning (i.e. academic, personal and civic development) because they run throughout service-learning in general and reflection in particular.

If students use reflection to 'prepare for, to succeed in, and to learn from the service experience', it will help them to see the broader context in which the service occurs (Toole & Toole, 1995, p. 2). For example, rather than focussing on the story of one man who begs on the street, a bigger picture shows the issues

---

<sup>8</sup> Though the pedagogy is sometimes referred to as service learning, based on Eyler's (2001) definition, service-learning is spelled with a hyphen in this research.

of homelessness, poverty and inequality as social problems. Silcock (1994) views reflection as a means for linking social and knowledge contexts, and for translating one sort of experience (academic/objective) into another (practical/subjective). For him, reflection is a way of connecting the ‘unknowing to the knowing’: once you are aware of a social problem you cannot return to being unaware of it. It may be possible to ignore the issue, but not to be ignorant of it.

#### **2.4.6 Grounds for the use of reflection in service-learning**

Cowan (1998) acknowledges that using reflective learning requires more time and resources than the lecture format commonly used in universities, but he maintains that the outcome of reflective learning is likely to be more successful. Eyler *et al.* (1996, p. 15) believe that ‘reflection leads to a better understanding of social problems *and* to the quest for better solutions.’ Whitney and Clayton (2011) see reflection as a way to generate deeper learning within service-learning programmes and according to Eyler and Giles (1999) reflection can lead to improving the transfer of knowledge from one context to another. When a student sees that theory learned in class can be applied in the field or in other classes (Silcock, 1994), it takes on a greater relevance for the student. Abstract theories of the impact of economics on class structures become tangible to the student who is tutoring a child of a low-income household who endures discrimination because of their post code. For example, the question of the low representation of Finglas residents in the Trinity College student body may arise. Reflecting on the causes of the imbalance can cover issues such as social housing, educational policy and the effects of the welfare state. This can then be transferred to the context of the university student who may be from a privileged middle-class background. The concept of the ‘*haves and the have-nots*’ becomes concrete when you can see yourself being placed in one category and confronted with the other.

Though reflection is an integral element of service-learning, it is a matter of choice for the academic as to which model of reflection is implemented on any

given service-learning programme. There are a number of models of reflection designed specifically for use in service-learning programmes for example: the D.E.A.L Reflection Rubric (Ash & Clayton, 2004) and the ABCs of Reflection (Welch, 1999).

Ash and Clayton (2004) devised the D.E.A.L. reflection rubric for use in service-learning with the letters standing for: Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning. The rubric develops Borton's (1970) 'what, so what, now what?' model to include the principles of critical thinking and encourages the learner to move from lower to higher order thinking as described in Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives. The rubric involves objectively describing the facts of a learning experience and then examining those facts by reflecting on them using three perspectives; academic enhancement, personal growth, and civic engagement. The learning is articulated by answering the following questions: *What did I learn? Why is it significant? What will I do differently based on what I have learned?* The rubric can be used by individuals or groups, and it is a good start for one's personal reflective practice.

Based on the work of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff (1994) and Bradley (1997), Welch (1999) developed a model he calls The ABC's of Reflection. The guided reflection rubric is a teaching and learning tool for service-learning; using the model one can examine an experience in the following manner:

- (A) affect: how do I feel about the experience? Why do I feel that way?
- (B) behaviour: how did I behave before, during, and after the experience?
- (C) cognition: what did I learn or how can I connect the experience to my intellectual and academic development.

Each of these frames of reflection can then be viewed from one of three contexts.

1. Self: 'I learned... and it impacts on me by...'
2. Other: 'It must be difficult to have to live on the street.'
3. Global: 'what are the factors that allow homelessness to happen, and what can be done about them.'

The DEAL and ABC's reflection rubrics were researched and developed specifically for reflection in service-learning, and though they are both similar to Borton's (1970) 'what, so what, no what?' they are considerably more complex.

If a service-learning experience is not teased out with reflection, there is the risk of solidifying prejudice because there can be a strong tendency to reject ideas that do not fit our preconceptions (Mezirow, 1997). Dewey calls this a 'mis-educative' experience because it distorts or arrests growth (Giles & Eyler, 1994b). There is also a danger that short, once-off service-learning programmes will not foster the development of a relationship between the student and the client, and indeed can cause more harm than good (Illich, 1990). Another pitfall is that the student may see their service as charity, rather than a learning experience where everyone gains. The use of reflection can overcome these pitfalls and draw the full learning potential from the teachable moment.

#### **2.4.7 The process of reflection**

Reflection may be conducted in many ways: graphically, verbally, creatively, individually and in groups. Reflection typically follows the approach of 'What? So what? Now what?' i.e. an objective description of an event, followed by an analysis of the significance of the event and its implication for future situations or behaviour. A vital part of service-learning is reflecting on the situations encountered, with fellow students and teaching staff in order to analyse theory in respect of practical situations, to examine alternative points of view, and/or to make informed choices for future situations (Rama, Ravenscroft, Wolcott, & Zlotkowski, 1999). Biggs (1999) describes the process of reflection as an example of abstract higher order learning. Biggs contends that it is vital for the learner to have a full understanding of critical reflection in order to draw the most benefit from a service experience. Toole and Toole (1995) take what is almost a Buddhist perspective when they suggest that *thoughtfulness* should permeate the whole service experience. As well as being an effective learning tool, reflection is also a mechanism by which students can show what they have learned and how they have done so. The assessment of content and process can

be combined in, for example, a reflective essay by which a student can display an understanding of theory and how it was practically applied during the service experience.

Even though much has been written on the relevance of critical reflection to students, there is not nearly as much written on the role of the academic in service-learning beyond devising the reflection methods and facilitating them for the students. The bulk of literature mainly focuses on: a) why reflection is vital and b) methods of using reflection as a teaching tool, with the focus on the learning conducted by students. With the general acceptance (among engaged scholars and practitioners) that one cannot run a service-learning programme without reflection, it would be natural to assume that reflection plays an equally important part in the practice of those academics who use service-learning in their teaching practice.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework of Reflective Practice in Teaching**

### **2.5.1 Action as a feature of reflective practice**

Although Dewey did not outline what educational institutions should look like, he did advocate holistic education through the integration of the mind, body, spirit, experience and knowledge (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). This, Dewey believed, should not be limited to the student but be applicable also to the teacher. Following on from the work of Dewey, Habermas was concerned with the nature of knowledge. Reflection for him was one of the processes that underpinned the generation of knowledge (Habermas 1971, in Moon, 1999b). For Habermas, the development of knowledge relied on the interpretation of thought through critical modes and the integration of ideas to make meaning of human behaviour. This concept of making meaning through reflection has been cited by many as being central to using reflection in one's practice (Ash *et al.*, 2005, Eyler *et al.*, 1996, Le Cornu, 2009). Habermas believed that the acquisition of knowledge about human behaviour was aimed at producing a transformation in oneself or in society (Moon, 1999b). He suggested that there must be critical

or evaluative processes to guide the interpretative process of social science in its quest to understand human nature. One part of this quest was the interpretation of experience with the aim of empowerment and political emancipation (Morrison 1995).

Barnett (1997) carries Habermas' ideas further and contends that an examination of the nature of knowledge is not enough to prepare learners to live in modern society. He posits that higher education should use the tool of reflection to include the *critique* of self (the learner), of the learning institution and of society, as well as examining the nature of knowledge. Furthermore, critical reflection should go beyond mere discussion and in fact generate action, to the extent that, according to Barnett, critique and action are what defines the critical being. In his view, part of the obligation of higher education is to provide the space for learners to develop understanding, self-reflection and action (Moon 1999b). Freire (1970) attests that reflection is essential to action, and without action there is no transformation. Reflective practice, therefore, requires reflection to be linked to action (Issitt, 2003) thus following Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Fig.1 section 2.4.1) in which experience is informed by reflection which in turn leads to further understanding.

At this stage, we can see that reflective practice is not merely a learning tool conducted after an experience in order to get a more holistic perspective. It is more than an activity. It is a mind-set and a built-in part of one's practice. As Bolton (2010, p. 3) puts it 'reflection is a state of mind, an on-going constituent of practice, not a technique, or a curriculum element.' The more critical the reflection, the deeper the questioning and the more political it becomes. The form of the action, which must necessarily result from reflective practice, depends on the practitioner but it can have a personal, social and/or political impact. Being a reflective practitioner without deep questioning is like being a cyclist without a bike.

### 2.5.2 The role of critical theory in reflective practice

Critical theory analyses the process through which dominant social and economic groups impose values and beliefs that legitimize their own power and position of control. This is relevant in that it informs critical pedagogy, which is the application of critical theory to teaching and learning strategies. As a part of the teaching and learning strategy, critical pedagogy uses the examination of power within the context of an educational institution to focus on the power inequities in society.

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological content supposedly linked to the science, or to ensure that his [sic] own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousness – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth (Foucault, 1980, p. 133).

Achieving a power shift, either on campus or between the stakeholders in campus community partnerships is not necessarily the objective of community engagement. The aim of questioning power brokers is not merely criticism for the sake of toppling one truth regime to instate another. Rather, it strives towards creating the space in which criticality can be fostered, and assumptions about 'the way it is' are allowed to be questioned. Brookfield (1995) contends that in the context of teaching, reflection is not by definition critical. It is quite possible to reflect on one's teaching by focussing solely on the 'nuts and bolts' of classroom processes such as handouts, PowerPoint slides or assessment deadlines (Brookfield, 1995). What makes reflection *critical* is maintaining a consistent focus on detecting and examining two kinds of assumption: (1) how power affects educational interaction and (2) hegemonic assumptions<sup>9</sup> (Brookfield, 1995). Critically reflective teachers scrutinize their role as powerbrokers in the relationship with their students and within the educational institution. They also reflect on the assumptions that they make regarding their

---

<sup>9</sup> For example, the stance that the meaning of education is the transfer of knowledge from the expert knower to those who do not know.

students, their own knowledge and their role in society. By implication therefore, being critically reflective in one's practice of teaching, means questioning power and received knowledge. This can often sit uneasily in the context of higher education unless there is an ethos in the institution that encourages questioning of this kind.

Brookfield (1995, p. 209) highlights that according to critical pedagogy, 'the point of education is not just to understand the world, but to change it, often through collective endeavour. Critical pedagogy becomes a means by which students are helped to break out of oppressive ways of thinking and acting that seem habitual but that have been imposed by the dominant culture.' Service-learning can be considered a critical pedagogy, as it is a teaching and learning strategy which, on a macro level involves questioning and changing the structures of society which can lead to injustice thereby resulting in social problems. There is an inherent tension then between service-learning as a critical pedagogy and higher education, which as a long established and influential social institution is in a position to exercise power. The tension between higher education and an engaged critical pedagogy is confounded further because service-learning is 'housed' within higher education. The critique of society and social problems is also a challenge to the traditional approach to teaching and learning in higher education.

On a micro level, service-learning contributes to the change in the learners' academic knowledge, civic awareness and personal development. Whilst understanding and learning is developed through the questioning process of critical reflection (Smyth, 1992), the questioning is evaluative through the asking of 'what' questions. It is also analytical by asking 'why' question. 'The most important aspect of changing and transforming the world doesn't begin outside, but instead from deep within you' (Shockley, Bond, & Rollins, 2008, p. 198). Reflective practice involves an examination of oneself, with the scope widening in concentric circles to include those around us, our workplace, local community and society as a whole. Mezirow (1990b) posits that there is an onus on educators to encourage their students to social action by engaging in reflection on social issues, political perspectives and common preconceptions. Asking

questions that examine the source of problems rather than addressing the symptoms, is a part of what makes engaged pedagogy transformative and critical. The implication for teachers using critical pedagogy is that challenging the dominant ideology risks opposing departmental or institutional policy.

An earlier illustration of experiential learning discussed the process of discovering the correct key for a locked door. Critical pedagogy when applied to this example would ask questions such as: why was the door locked, who holds the keys, why the need for locks, what role do you have in this dynamic? In the service-learning context this criticality is important, as it moves the student to ask questions about why there are specific needs in the community and in society in general, and it is through the examination of the root causes of social injustice that the student gets broader and more critical insight.

When interviewed, Mike Goldstein, one of the pioneers of service-learning said, ‘I suspect many of us in our early years had a guiding theory: that the door that says “do not enter” was a challenge. We saw closed doors as waiting to be opened’ (Stanton *et al.*, 1999, p. 181). One can only speculate as to whether he was referring to entering the ‘swampy lowlands’ of engaging with the community, or the attempt to open the doors into the Ivory Tower and have engaged pedagogy accepted as legitimate pedagogy by the institutions of higher education.

### **2.5.3 Examining assumptions about reflective practice**

The first facet of reflective practice for teachers is the examination of power and change in education, whilst the second facet concerns the questioning of assumptions (Adler, 1991, Brookfield, 2008, Shockley *et al.*, 2008). Assumptions give us the moorings that help us make sense of the world around us. Oftentimes, we build up prejudices and preconceptions that we take for granted to the extent that their existence may not be obvious. Even if these ideas were correctly informed when first conceived, since change happens continually, we may not have ‘updated’ what we believe.

Not all learners are open to engage in critical reflection. Since one of the features of reflective practice is the questioning of assumptions, which can lead to change; there are risks involved with challenging our *frames of reference* or the broad set of concepts and beliefs that we hold (Brookfield, 1995, Moon, 1999b). Mezirow (1990a, 1997) calls these frames of reference ‘meaning structures’ and posits that we resist learning which does not fit in with these assumptions. Even though we have a need to understand the meaning of our experience, we strive towards viewpoints which are functional and do not leave unanswered questions. The transformation of meaning structures which happens through critical reflection can be viewed with a certain amount of trepidation by some teaching staff.

Reflective practice implies being aware of one’s beliefs, attitudes and emotions (Dewey, 1933) and being prepared to examine how they influence one’s behaviour. It involves the awareness of how we frame (or reframe) what we see and the questioning of assumptions that guide the way that we work (Loughran, 2002, Mezirow, 2006). Reflective practice helps to deconstruct positions of role, belief, culture, and to observe them more deeply from multiple perspectives. Having a variety of viewpoints and depth of understanding gives the conceptual flexibility to see beyond the information given and beyond one’s own presuppositions (Hart, 2008, Loughran, 2002, Ó Donnchadha, 2007).

Reflection on past experiences contributes to developing professional practices in the future (Silcock, 1994). Transforming experiences into action in the context of education, relates to the decisions that teachers make and the ability to justify them rigorously. Issitt (2003, p. 185) claims that ‘reflective practice, when approached systematically and with criticality, has the potential to enable practitioners ...to understand and act in relation to the personal, professional and political challenges they face.’ These challenges include: the regular requirement for rapid reaction and proof of expertise in the teaching environment which involve reviewing, interpreting and reconstructing ideas (Moon 1999b).

As far back as the early 1970s, American teachers were being called upon to reflect on what they were doing and why they were doing it (Silberman, 1971). In an analysis of literature on enhancing reflective teaching practice, Hubbal *et al.* (2005) outline the benefits of reflecting on one's teaching practice to be: personal growth; an increased understanding of pedagogy; and improved scholarship of teaching and learning. However, the questioning of social issues or the emphasis on causing change does not seem to be a feature.

## **2.6 Reflective Practice in the Pedagogy of Service-Learning**

### **2.6.1 Reflection and professional training**

There is a sizable body of literature on reflective practice in the professions much of which is influenced by Schön (Black & Plowright, 2010, Boud *et al.*, 2006, Moon, 1999b) with the general view that reflective practice means the application of critical reflection to how one practices one's profession. This is evident in the research on the role of reflective practice in nursing training (Burrows, 1995, Hyde, 2009, Issitt, 2003, Mackintosh, 1998, Newell, 1992) and social work training (Bellefeuille, 2006, Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Dempsey *et al.*, 2008, Gursansky *et al.*, 2010, Halton *et al.*, 2007, Murphy *et al.*, 2010, Murphy *et al.*, 2008). There is reference to the role of reflective questioning in medical education (Glynn *et al.*, 2006, Lachman & Pawlina, 2006, Mamede & Schmidt, 2004, Mann *et al.*, 2009).

There is a growing body of work on reflective practice in education, teacher training and professional development (Adler, 1991, Brookfield, 1995, Carter, 1993, Clift *et al.*, 1990, Day, 1993, Day & Leitch, 2001, Dickson, 2011, Farrell, 2004, Fendler, 2003, Flanagan, 2007, Fogarty, 1994, Generett & Hicks, 2004, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, Grimmett *et al.*, 1990, Hall-McEntee *et al.*, 2003, Hall, 1997, Harford & MacRuairc, 2008, Hubbal *et al.*, 2005, Husu *et al.*, 2008, Kuit *et al.*, 2001, Larrivee, 2000, Loughran, 2002, Lyons, 1998, Lyons, 2010, McLaughlin, 1999, Norlander-Case *et al.*, 1999, Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, Ottesen, 2007, Palmer, 2007, Ross, 1990, Russell, 2005, Silcock, 1994, Smyth,

1989, Valli, 1992, Wildman *et al.*, 1990, York-Barr *et al.*, 2006, Yost *et al.*, 2000). However, much of this literature deals with teaching in secondary schools, or the training of secondary school teachers. Though it deals with reflective practice, it is not focused on higher education academics and not related to service-learning. There are however, two examples which make a useful contribution to this study even though they do not deal with the reflective practice of service-learning academics.

An Irish example of the use of reflection in social work training is the group of scholars based in University College Cork which adopted a reflective framework for teaching on the two year Masters in Social Work Programme (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Dempsey *et al.*, 2008, Halton *et al.*, 2007, Murphy *et al.*, 2010, Murphy *et al.*, 2008). They conducted research on the long term outcomes of using reflective learning and the results are applicable to the context of this research. Their framework included a ‘skills laboratory’ and the compilation of a learning portfolio. The skills laboratory consisted of groups of 15 students meeting in reflective groups for four hours weekly in the first term of the first year, and for two hours weekly in the second term of the second year. These reflection groups were broken down into smaller groups to conduct role-play and video reflective exercises. There were further reflection sessions facilitated by an external member of staff throughout the year. Verbal reflection used ‘critical friend’ support and critical incidents analysis. The reflection groups collaborated in the creation of learning portfolios, and this written reflection included autobiographical writing, learning journals, work placements reports, and any other relevant written artefacts that the students felt was important in documenting learning (Murphy *et al.*, 2010). The key aspects of the work of Halton *et al.* are that they developed the skill of reflection within a group and used those skills in a structured manner to reflect on a regular basis. The influence of the work of Halton *et al.* on this research will be discussed in the implications of the findings in section 5.6.1.

One relevant example of the use of reflection in teacher training programmes is that of Allard *et al.* (2007) who describe a collaborative research project in Canada which involved representatives from a body for accrediting

teacher education programs, a professional development cooperative and a District School Board. The research questions were:

- What professional learning processes can be used to facilitate reflective practice?
- How can narrative, teacher inquiry and reflection illuminate standards of practice?
- What is the significance of teacher inquiry for student learning?

The collaborative group began without a defined format but a structure emerged organically from the needs of the members. A facilitator modelled the narrative method of reflection by telling stories about tensions in her practice. Participants were then encouraged to write about ‘pivotal experience from their professional practice’. Significantly, they group developed a safe, supportive environment that sustained the risk-taking required to address assumptions about teaching and learning. Allard *et al.* (2007, p. 309) point out that ‘the creation of a learning community ...provided a forum to take risks, [and] challenge personal beliefs and practices’. The group reported that through reflection, they gained a deeper understanding of the connection between personal and professional practice, and the power that narrative had in the reflection process. They also reported that they had benefited from making reflection a ‘habit of mind’. The key aspects of the work of Allard *et al.* (2007) were that they had a structured approach to reflecting on their teaching in a safe environment and the importance of these elements and how they apply to my findings will be discussed at greater length in section 5.7.

### **2.6.2 Literature on the reflective practice of engaged academics**

There has been considerable research carried out on the effects and implementation of service-learning. However, there has been less research conducted on critical reflection within the pedagogy. Though there have been publications on the practicalities of using critical reflection in service-learning (Ash & Clayton, 2004, Eyler, 2001, Eyler *et al.*, 1996, Gibson *et al.*, 2011, Molee *et al.*, 2010, Reed & Koliba, 1995, Welch, 1999, Whitney & Clayton,

2011) and there is consensus that reflection is a necessary element of service-learning, this body of literature is mostly focused on facilitating reflection with students. There is some literature on teacher training through service-learning (Donahue & Hale, 2007, McBrien, 2008, Welch & James, 2007) however; this deals with student teachers, not experienced academics. There is very little reference to the effects of using service-learning on engaged academics (Kerrigan *et al.*, 2003, Leh, 2005, McCarthy, 2007, Pribbenow, 2005).

As can be seen above, there is a large body of research on the topics of service-learning implementation; critical reflection in service-learning; reflective practice in teacher education; teacher training through service-learning. This literature is connected in one or two aspects, to the current research question, but it does not combine 'reflective practice' with 'academics' with 'service-learning'. Four of the most relevant pieces of research which include the three elements of the reflective practice of service-learning academics are discussed here.

The findings in Pribbenow (2005) suggest that the majority of the 35 participants in his case study located in a Midwestern US university, were positive about using service-learning, stating that it encouraged participants to have a deeper engagement with teaching and learning, provided a closer connection with students and peers, and a better understanding of student learning processes. Though the research was not focused specifically on reflective practice, Pribbenow (2005, p. 35) highlights the need for 'a broader and more comprehensive approach to service-learning faculty development, an approach that encourages faculty reflection and growth within the context of a community or communities of teachers and learners.' It shows that even though academics found that organised reflection sessions on their practice of using service-learning in a supportive environment improved their understanding of the pedagogy and challenged them to rethink their understanding of how knowledge is created, the 'opportunities to talk about good teaching occurred but in varying degrees of depth and meaningfulness' (ibid). This article stresses that though peer reflection on engaged practice is a positive exercise, it is not a structured and frequent aspect of the practice of engaged practitioners.

Taggart and Hessler (2006) posit that reflective practice contributes to sustaining effective service-learning programs and practices. In their ongoing longitudinal research on reflective practice, they have adapted Brookfield's (1995) Critical Incident Questionnaire to examine the academic and civic development of service-learning academics and students. As well as monitoring the development of particular programmes and partnerships in two Midwestern US universities, the reflection process raises questions about participants' identity and goals as engaged academics, such as: 'Does my vision of my role match my institution's? If it does not match, is it more important to try to alter my institutional role description or to alter my approach?' (Taggart & Hessler, 2006, p. 169). Clearly this is not simply programme evaluation but is, in fact, questioning the core of the institution and its role in society.

Fear *et al.* (2002) discuss what they see as the standard instruction paradigm of higher education in the US which is similar to Trowler's (2001) managerialism ideology in the UK. They offer an alternative which they call the Learning Paradigm, which seeks to achieve specific student learning outcomes through flexible learning arrangements, with staff and students actively collaborating as knowledge creators (Fear *et al.*, 2002). Their paradigm develops a dialogue around transformative learning and creates a model of engaged learning. Agreeing that it is necessary to examine 'the values, beliefs and approaches that guide their work' they use dialogue in a faculty learning community and 'discover compelling points of convergence associated with their engagement experiences' (Fear *et al.*, 2003, p. 55). Arising out of a deep yearning 'for a time and place just to talk with one another about what really matters' (Fear & Doberneck, 2004, p. 12), and believing that the work of engagement cannot flourish without an underlying philosophy and discourse, they developed a rigorous foundation for a model of their engaged work which was radically different to the norms in their institution. What was central to their space for collegial engagement was that the work was cross-disciplinary; it was engaged with the community; and it used democratic dialogue and active listening in an atmosphere of trust. Through peer-reflection, they arrived at a clear understanding of why they are engaged and identified themselves as a

Colloquy on Teaching and Learning at Michigan State University. This was a social organisation within the academy and drew on ideas of Owen (2000) and Hock (1999) to create a network that adopted an approach to leadership ‘characterized as non-hierarchical, self-organized, and participatory forms of collegial engagement’ (Fear & Doberneck, 2004, p. 15).

The Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort at the University of Utah was an example of a reflective learning community. Welch (in Diener & Liese, 2009) describes the development of the Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort, which comprised nine faculty members representing eight different disciplines. It evolved through a two day retreat on service-learning and civic engagement and developed into a ‘Learning Community of Civically Engaged Scholars’ during which the nine colleagues agreed to make time for conversations and for reflection. Following the retreat, they met informally once a month to continue the conversations of discovery that began at the retreat. The group members agreed to take turns hosting the gatherings at their homes with the sharing of food being an important component of the communal experience. Though there was technical and financial support to promote the implementation of service-learning and civic engagement, the members felt that they needed more than training workshops on service-learning implementation. They admitted to feeling undervalued and misunderstood by their colleagues and administrators within their respective departments. ‘They needed a gathering of like-minded scholars in a safe haven and a chance for exchange’ (Diener & Liese, 2009, p. xiii). They wanted a shared personal community to continue their journey of discovery, something that staff training workshops could not provide. By sharing their stories, they began a process of professional and personal affirmation and discovery. This resulted in the development of a structure loosely based on the work of Schön (1983), which revolved around the following reflective questions:

- What does *civically engaged scholarship* mean or look like to me?
- Why do I do this type of work?
- What would it mean if *we* didn’t do this type of work?
- Why are you a part of this community of scholars?

Each member considered these questions and submitted written answers to the gatherings for discussion. The conversations focussed on the work of using service-learning, and developed into personal and professional narratives describing how the members translated their personal philosophies into actual classes and community projects. These were published in 2009 by Information Age Publishing as an academic book with the title *Finding Meaning in Civically Engaged Scholarship: Personal Journeys, Professional Experiences*.

One member commented on his participation in the group: ‘I am drawn to the people who do this work. They bring out the best in me. Interacting with and learning from each other helps me become a better person as well as a better academician’ (Diener & Liese, 2009, p. xiv). Another member described her participation in the Cohort ‘as critical in helping her derive and affirm purpose and meaning in her scholarship’ (Diener & Liese, 2009, p. 213). The members were united in the aim of making significant contributions to students, to their disciplines, to the civic mission of the institution, and to their own sense of self. One result of participation in the Cohort was ‘to move many of its members from narrow academic silos to a multidisciplinary stage where “pedagogy of engagement” plays out’ (Diener & Liese, 2009, p. 209).

The articles discussed above show that service-learning academics value reflection on their engaged practice; they reflect with deep levels of questioning and wish to have better opportunities to do so as a part of their regular practice. They highlight that peer reflection was a positive addition to their understanding of the use of service-learning but was conducted for the most part without a set structure for reflective practice.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

The use of community engagement in higher education has its roots in the American land grant universities of the 1860s. Service-learning as a pedagogy began to take shape in the late 1960s and developed in different formats, it is now used in over 1,100 American universities as well as many higher education

institutions around the world. Reflection is seen as one of the core elements in the pedagogy and is integral to the learning process of drawing meaning from the experience. Though there is a raft of research on various aspects of reflection in service-learning, it seems that there is a gap in the literature which focuses on the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. Though there is consensus that reflecting on the use of service-learning is beneficial for those using the pedagogy, it appears that it is conducted, for the most part, in an *ad hoc* manner. The academic experience of service-learning matters because it influences the student learning environment and the direction the learning takes. For this reason, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. The following chapters will investigate this in greater depth and it is hoped, shed more light on the topic.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Given that my research focuses on reflection in service-learning which involves direct and active participation in select communities, my research methodology had to be one that was able to get closer to those who are on the front line of reflection, specifically the veterans of service-learning pedagogy. Further to this, my connection to this community as a practitioner creates some ethical issues which I will address below. This chapter will describe the research instruments I employed, the methodological and philosophical theory that shaped my research, and lastly will offer a preliminary outline of how I analysed the data.

This research sets out to examine how service-learning academics critically reflect on their engaged practice. Examining such a subjective topic as reflection as an insider raised some ethical issues which I tackled by following practices for rigorous research. I adhered to Lincoln's (1995) criteria for interpretive inquiry; followed Shumer's (2000a) recommendations on the research of service-learning and employed Anderson and Herr's (1999) standards of rigour in practitioner research. The research process was guided by constructivist theory, with the view of creating an accurate picture of the practice of those who had many years experience in the area. The project was conducted in a reflective manner in order to mirror the principles of practice which was being examined.

Shumer (2000, p79) posits that 'because service-learning is about context, about values and about change; it seems quite logical that research paradigms that capture these dimensions of human interaction would be most suitable for the study of service-learning.' Richardson (1994, p. 7) describes practitioner research as inquiry which 'is conducted by practitioners to help them understand their contexts, practices, and, in the case of teachers, their students.' Anderson and Herr (1999) posit that practitioner research aims to transform the education setting it studies through reflection on action.

Data<sup>10</sup> from a representative sample of 43 stakeholders including teachers, service-learning administrators and researchers was gathered by the use of semi-structured interviews which were then analysed with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software. The scope is limited to those who use pedagogies which engage with the community.

This research is inductive insofar as it will explore a question in a rigorous manner and will suggest a theoretical model of practice based on the empirical collection and analysis of relevant data. It is reflective in nature because it seeks to make meaning of experience in order to transform practice. It follows guidelines set out for reflective inquiry and mirrors the principles of service-learning.

### **3.1 Basic Interpretive Qualitative Research.**

‘Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). A central feature of qualitative research is that the research constructs reality through interaction and study of the world with the aim of ‘understanding the meaning a phenomenon has for those involved’ (Merriam, 2002, p. 37). It seeks to interpret these experiences, and construct of a view of the world based on how people interpret their own experiences and the meanings they give to those experiences (Merriam, 2002). Analysis involves identifying patterns that recur throughout the data and ‘the overall interpretation will be the researchers understanding... of the participants understanding of the phenomenon of interest’ (Merriam, 2002, p. 38). The purpose of interpretive qualitative research is to understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences.

The context being studied influences the research question which in turn influences the choice of research practices (Nelson *et al.*, 1992). I chose the interpretative approach because my research question sought to understand how a

---

<sup>10</sup> The word ‘data’ will be used in the plural form with singular construction throughout this work.

certain group of people make meaning within the context of service-learning. The context had not been examined explicitly before and therefore raised the question – how do service-learning academics reflect on their engaged practice. This question called for an approach that could encompass the breadth of the topic, address the inner-personal and inter-personal nature of reflection, as well as facilitate the construction of meaning that reflection involves.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 10) state that ‘qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning.’ I believe that the approach I have chosen is fitting, not only because it is the most common approach used in education (Merriam, 2002), but because, as a researcher, I see myself akin to the Nelson *et al.* (1992, p. 4) definition of qualitative research itself in being ‘committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience.’ Denzin and Lincoln (2005) comment that this perspective of qualitative research brings with it tensions and contradictions of methods and the manner of interpretation. It is therefore, not surprising that the study would have affinities to other specific qualitative research paradigms. There are valuable perspectives offered to the researcher by paradigms such as grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology. These go in a direction different to that which I had chosen. I sought to make meaning of meaning making, however according to (Merriam, 2002) grounded theory seeks not only to understand but develop a theory based on that understanding; phenomenology seeks to understand the underlying essence of the phenomenon; and ethnography seeks to understand not only the people their interactions and their experiences but the interplay between those and the surrounding culture of the society.

I needed an approach which was flexible enough to be able to address the topic of reflective practice in service-learning which is difficult to ring-fence, has a variety of interpretations, and is unpredictable in nature. I used some features akin to phenomenology such as bracketing, highlighting of my perceived assumptions and prejudices in advance; and horizontalization, giving all data

equal weight in the initial analysis before clustering it into themes (Merriam, 2002). However the requirement for phenomenological reduction (constantly returning to the essence of the experience) was a limitation because I was not seeking to distil reflection to such a concentrated state. A further limitation was the requirement of imaginative variation – to examine reflection from divergent perspectives – but it was difficult to find views among interviewees or in the literature that contradicted the value of reflective practice.

Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is more than a data analysis strategy but a whole research approach, covering the reviewing of literature, the sampling technique the data analysis and theory building (Merriam, 2002) but I did not use this approach from the start of the project. Grounded theory has the aim of developing an abstract theory; however, I did not set out with the aim of developing theory about reflection because I did not know that a model was needed. Based on my research question, my aim was to get a deeper understanding of a learning process. I did arrive at practical insight, and this did emerge from the data however, this would not qualify the research as having adopted a grounded theory approach. Though some of my data analysis techniques were similar to those used in grounded theory; such as comparing responses from different interviewees regarding particular topics, and isolating different themes but these are techniques used in other approaches to interpretative research. Thematic analysis and data comparison is not necessarily the same as grounded theory. Furthermore, I did not use micro-analysis coding because it would have been too time consuming given that I interviewed 43 academics.

More importantly, such a minute level of analysis was not needed because themes emerged through the general topics being raised by practitioners. I did not need a forensic search for discursive or unconscious meaning. The analysis strategy that I chose was in line with the interpretive approach and did not require line by line interpretive interpretation.

Ethnography is a manner of studying human society with the aim of interpreting the culture of a group (Merriam, 2002). My study drew some elements from

ethnography in that I am examining the knowledge people have in a value-laden context and how that structures their world view (Merriam, 2002). I became intimately familiar with the context through first-hand participation; however, because I preferred diversity in the sample, it meant that the interviewees could not be viewed as a homogenous group. While I strove to interpret the meanings participants made of aspects of their lives, I did not aim to make it a cultural interpretation of the phenomenon. The limitation of ethnography for my work exists in the requirement described by (Merriam, 2002, p. 237): ‘It is not enough, then, to describe the cultural practices of a group; the researcher also depicts his or her understanding of the cultural meaning of the phenomenon.’

### **3.1.1 Using Practitioner Research Methodology**

My study bears elements of practitioner research as described by Anderson and Herr (2007). Firstly, it is not produced exclusively for a scientific community but has as its focus the broader community of education practitioners, particularly those who use service-learning. In terms of the research topic, I am an insider and aim to serve the service-learning community. I recognise the need for practitioners to play a role in shaping knowledge about this community of practice, and my closeness to the community is not a dangerous bias, but rather an asset.

Secondly, the research aims to contribute to transformation in the educational context in which it is set and comes from my belief in the need for an alternative and more effective way of teaching in higher education.

Thirdly, reflection is one of the driving forces of the research. I sought to examine a particular element of the practice of academics, and discover why they do what they do the way they do it. There were problematic areas that academics highlighted and I questioned how these could be overcome. Some of these problems had been addressed separately in different contexts, so I drew together different strands for the first time, to meet the requirements of the issues which arose from my data. Through analysis of the action of academics I established the

significance of the issues, and I produced a possible route of action with which to address these issues. Therefore, the process followed the ‘what, so what, now what?’ model of reflection.

Though I will make recommendations based on the data, these suggestions are not necessarily generalisable to any given context either within service-learning or mainstream education. As well as being culturally contextual, service-learning is socially contextual, involving human behaviour and its change and development. Therefore, it is incumbent on academics to use their insight and creative thinking to apply the recommendations of this research to what is relevant to them in their own teaching context.

The standpoint of objective outsider has been rejected by communities that do not want to be treated as laboratories. Partnership with community is central to service-learning; one cannot be an insider and use an objective paradigm to examine elements of engaged practice such as partnerships. Rowan (1981, p. 168) highlights that according to Esterson (1972) ‘the researcher constitutes himself as part of the field of study’. Conducting conversations with peers can ‘suggest new possibilities for our practice and new ways to analyze and respond to problems’ (Brookfield, 1995, p. 141). Providing multiple perspectives can lead to deeper understanding and reciprocal learning. In describing the relationship between researcher and what is being researched, Creswell (2007, p. 17) outlines that ‘the researcher attempts to reduce the distance between himself and that which is being researched’ by collaborating and spending time in the field with participants to become an insider. It is thus the researcher’s task ‘to enter that dialogue, and eavesdrop as it were; to listen in and capture the essence of what is perceived by the subject’ (van der Mescht, 1999, p. 3). To be able to look from the inside out I immersed myself in the service-learning community for almost two years. I worked on service projects, interviewed academics and their students, talked to community partners and their clients, participated in training seminars and attended and presented at many academic conferences. Added to the in-depth review of the literature on the subject, I also reflected on my own experiences and drew my conclusions based on the data available to me. I believe that within the given timeframe, I was as well placed as possible to conduct the

study and that my experience in the field added to the trustworthiness of the research.

Neither an insider nor an outsider can single-handedly control the development of a group. Dictates imposed from outside are unlikely to be accepted in any community without agreement by its members. Consensus is more likely to be generated if the ideas come from an insider who understands the community and if those ideas have been constructed in collaboration with the community members. In their discussion about collaboration between members of a learning community, Mitchell and Sackney (2011) say that educators are more likely to construct new knowledge when it is seen to be connected to real issues which are of importance to the community. ‘What this implies is that discourse and dialogue within a community of practice promote concept development and professional learning as much as (perhaps more than) direct instruction’ (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 62). My solid foundation in the published research, my immersion in the broad community of practice of engaged academics, and the dialogue and debate about the topics of common interest have contributed to the construction of my ideas, and have strengthened my research.

### **3.2 Philosophical Paradigms of Reflection and Research**

According to Guba (1994, p. 107) ‘a paradigm may be viewed as a set of *basic beliefs* (or metaphysics) that deal with ultimates or first principles. It represents a *worldview* that defines, for the holder, the nature of the “world,” the individuals place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts’ [emphasis in original].

One should not conduct inquiry without being clear about the paradigm which informs and guides one’s approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Identifying one’s philosophical standpoint is in itself a reflective exercise and perhaps not something that one would give ongoing consideration to without the requirement

to fulfil a criterion of academic writing. One of the important questions in reflective practice is ‘why do I do what I do, the way I do it?’

My actions are guided by my belief structure; therefore, I must ask the question ‘what *are* the beliefs that guide my action?’ I may have a general concept dating back some time, in fact a *pre-conception*, which I take for granted. One of the aims of reflection is to challenge preconceptions and ‘to examine the frameworks we use to interpret experience’ (Eyler *et al.*, 1996, p. 13).

### 3.2.1 Epistemology

‘All knowledge is knowledge from where a person stands. Standpoint epistemologists reject the implicit and hidden white male standpoint of mainstream choice [and]... the idea that there is one true standpoint, highlighting the inherently subjective and political nature of all knowledge’ (Ezzy, 2002, pp. 20-23). In discussing feminist standpoint methodology Harding (1987) argues that rather than the female standpoint giving a ‘true’ account of women in society, instead it is just ‘less false’. My historical and cultural background has shaped how I interpret the experiences the participants recounted to me, and I am unable to be objective, even if I wanted to be. In my interpretivist<sup>11</sup> perspective as a researcher or my interpretation of the data, I do not claim to have found *the* truth, but instead posit an interpretation of my experience informed by the rigorous guidelines which I believe to be suitable for this research process. Although other participants in campus community partnerships were consulted for background information and alternative perspectives, the voices heard in this research are those of teachers and researchers who use service-learning. In their responses to my questions, many proved themselves to be what Lincoln (1991) refers to as ‘passionate participants’. The more I became informed about the field the more I too became passionate about it, and its potential to bring about change. However, as my opinion developed, I saw that a change in attitudes and

---

<sup>11</sup> By holding the view that reality is context specific and constructed by social actors, interpretivism is the seeking to understand lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994).

beliefs was of little use without ‘the fostering, stimulation and enabling of social action (Lincoln, 1995, p. 277). I believed that by contributing to the discourse on engaged practice, I was contributing to the aims of that philosophy which include fostering action and social change.

### **3.2.2 Positivism, objectivity and qualitative research on service-learning**

Service-learning is not only a method of teaching and learning but also a philosophy (Giles *et al.*, 1991, Kendall, 1990, Shumer, 2000a, Stanton, 1990b, Stanton *et al.*, 1999). As a philosophy, it represents how people see their role in society and is as a result value-laden; therefore, the study of service-learning ‘is incongruous with the precision required and value-free goal of positivism’ (Shumer, 2000, pp. 78-79).

Shumer continues by stating that because much of the research in service-learning to date involves ‘self- or group-reflective practice, explaining the world from the perspective of those living it... [the] use of self-reported data is... considered to be a major violation of the philosophical/methodological protocol subscribed to by positivists’ (Shumer, 2000a, p. 77). Since positivism is at odds with the value-laden nature of service-learning, this research adopts a qualitative strategy and is a narrative description and interpretation of a social phenomenon.

Lather (1986a, pp. 63-64) discusses types of research that have ‘transformative agendas’ arguing that ‘scientific “neutrality” and “objectivity” serve to mystify the inherently ideological nature of research in the human sciences and to legitimate privilege based on class, race, and gender.’ Given the transformative agenda that this study has, I could not adopt an objective stance.

As people cannot be understood from a distance (Ezzy, 2002), the researcher must be an insider in the field of study and seek mutual understanding through dialogue (Rowan, 1981, Tierney, 1993, Tierney, 1994). Having immersed myself in the field of study, it would be naïve to try to adopt an objective standpoint as a researcher. Knowledge cannot be definitive, according to Eisner (1992), because all we have to base it on is our individual frameworks of perception of a world, that itself can only partially be understood. He states that traditional research

sought to be objective but this is an impossible and undesirable goal; research cannot reach true knowledge, just belief based on good reason.

Being an insider in a community of practice, it is not appropriate to conduct research within the realm of service-learning and attempt to adopt an objective stance. Lincoln (1995, p. 281) in a discussion of the ideas of Parker Palmer (1987) suggests that seeking objectivity is contrary to qualitative research and it is 'only by abandoning the senseless commitment to what we now think of as objectivity can we re-attain the state of being a learning community.' Palmer (1987, pp. 20-25) posits that the mode of knowing that dominates higher education is what he calls 'objectivism' which is objective, analytic and experimental and is contrary to his concept of community. He suggests that 'knowing and learning are communal acts. They require a continual cycle of discussion, disagreement and consensus over what has been and what it all means.' Though not openly stated by Palmer, this 'cycle of discussion' bears a striking resemblance to reflective practice. I believe that my efforts to conduct this research in a reflective manner avoid the problems of objectivity and reduce the risks of getting 'taken in' by subjectivity.

The results of the research arise from the context of what is known at the time of writing and are not claimed to be undisputable *fact*. The results however, will be truthful to the context under examination and valid because of the rigour of the research process adopted. Though *truthful* I will not make the positivist claim to have uncovered *truth*, but instead strive towards understanding the meaning of what I have studied, in line with the suggestion of the documentary film-maker Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992, p. 182) to 'always point to the process of constructing not truth, but meaning, and to [one]self as an active element in that process.' Eisner (1992, p. 14), agrees that 'insofar as our understanding of the world is of our own making, what we consider true is also the product of our own making.' Therefore, in his opinion, truth is subjective and shifts depending on new frameworks that appear. Our frameworks are influenced by our limited experience and contextual acculturation, and therefore, cannot be relied upon to render definitive, objective truth.

### **3.2.3 The problem of academic objective detachment**

Harry Boyte, is highly regarded as an academic, advocate and philosopher, and his views on campus community engagement would identify him as a critical constructivist. Boyte (2000, p. 10) condemns what he calls ‘the insidious socialization’ which influences young academics in their postgraduate research and that pervades in higher education in general. This culture encourages a stance of detachment from one’s fellow citizens. Academics embody such aloofness in different ways according to Boyte, because the image of the detached and objective scholar leads to the expert stance of ‘fixing problems’, ‘discovering truths’ and ‘dispensing knowledge’ (Boyte, 2000, p. 10). Because positivism grants the detached academic the power to judge truth, in Boyte’s view, ‘the philosophy of detachment feeds a crisis in democracy’, with the positivist mind-set being – in his opinion – ‘a silent civic disease’ (Boyte, 2000, p. 11). Boyte continues by pointing to the culture of the academy which disengages academics from public life, claiming that this dis-empowers them politically and intellectually and is sustained by the philosophy of positivism. This contributes to the deficit model (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1993) that subscribes to the concept of viewing as ‘needy clients’ groups of people that may be powerless or poor. Macfarlane (2005, p. 309) posits that there is evidence to suggest ‘that the collegiality of faculty life has been replaced by a less communal and more isolated existence.’ He believes that the academy has a responsibility to engage with the community but because of its preoccupation with focusing on the civic awareness of students has overlooked ‘academic citizenship’ which is the glue that keeps the academic community connected with the world outside the university walls.

Parker Palmer (1987, 1998) questions the validity of objectivity which disconnects the head from the heart, and the teacher from the subject. Education cannot be transformed ‘if we fail to cherish – and challenge – the human heart that is the source of good teaching’ (Palmer, 1998, p. 3). The disengaged aloof stance that positivism encourages is incongruous to the engaged nature of service-learning. Boyte (2000) agrees with Palmer in the view that knowledge is

communally generated and public in nature. In service-learning, this is reflected in the concept of knowledge co-creation in community-campus partnerships; therefore, to adopt a research philosophy for this study which is incongruous to that would not gain the trust of participants.

Boyte (2000, p. unavailable) claims that ‘science asks “how” questions, but it neglects questions of meaning, purpose, and value.’ This research asks ‘how do academics reflect on their engaged practice?’, however, it also seeks to understand the ‘why’ behind the how question. Through reflection, one asks questions of meaning, purpose and value, and it is important that the research would mirror this.

Palmer (1998, p. 10) attests that ‘good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.’ He maintains that educators seldom reflect on their identity as teachers and ask ‘who is the self that teaches?’ I sought to examine reflective practice at a level deeper than the ‘how to’ by discussing the philosophical perspectives that academics use to examine their practice.

Hicks *et al.* (2005, p. 61) argue that ‘teachers need to explore their own journeys of cultural indoctrination and assimilation, the hegemonic structures that surround and influence their thinking and practice, and finally, take some form of thoughtful, community-minded action that changes the experience of teaching and learning for both instructor and student.’ In light of this, a study limited to ‘how to reflect’ would not contribute enough to the academic community which I seek to serve.

### **3.2.4 The value-laden nature of research within engaged practice**

The manner in which a research topic is chosen, framed and investigated reflects the inquirer’s values (Lincoln, 1995, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Shumer (2000) believes that since service-learning research is ‘a value-laden, dynamic, change-orientated, and often idiosyncratic phenomenon, paradigms that address issues of context, values, change and personal understanding seem not only appropriate, but in fact, necessary.’ Cronbach (1980, p. 105) claims that ‘to call for value-free

standards of validity is a contradiction in terms, a nostalgic longing for a world that never was.’ Lather (1986a, p. 64) posits that ‘research which is openly valued-based is neither more nor less ideological than mainstream positivist research’ but ‘represents an epistemological break from the positivist insistence upon objectivity’ (Hesse, 1980, p. 196).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), inquiry is either value-free or it is not, therefore, because this research is not value-free, I cannot subscribe to a positivist paradigm. Even if it were possible, it would be undesirable to conduct this research without acknowledging that values shape the inquiry outcomes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My own values and how they developed will be outlined below, and it is important for me to preface the work by saying that through this research, I strive to foster dialogue and facilitate change among academics who use service-learning. By my having such an agenda, the research cannot be value free. Because service-learning is about ‘context, values and change’ (Shumer, 2000a, p. 79) I chose a paradigm that accepted the value-laden nature of the topic. I was completely open to participants about my intentions for the research, and the criteria for rigorous methodology described through this chapter, provided safeguards and guidelines for me to follow.

### **3.3 Constructivism**

This study is located within the general area of service-learning research, with the specific focus on reflective practice. It is therefore logical that I should be reflective in the practice of conducting the research. This stance thus influences the process of the inquiry and the philosophical standpoint I adopt. By reflecting on my beliefs about education, examining my preconceptions, and justifying my philosophical position I would subscribe to elements of both Constructivism and Critical Theory.

Reflection is an examination of experience with the view to generating new understanding, and that falls under *Social Constructivism*. According to the work of Ghaye and Ghaye (1998), Fosnet (1996), and Burr (1995), the central tenets of

Social Constructivism in relation to the study of education, can be seen as follows:

- A critical stance towards received knowledge: assumptions must be subjected to examination using, for example, reflective conversations, which will lead to further learning.
- An understanding of the historical and cultural context of where and when one lives in the world: one should not assume that one way of knowing can be ranked higher than another.
- A belief that the creation of knowledge is propagated through social interaction and that reflection on practice is a driving force for learning. One does not arrive at an understanding in complete isolation but rather one compiles understand through interaction and communication with others.
- A belief that understanding and social interaction are interlinked; how a social group sees the world influences how it behaves.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) posit that social order is an ongoing human activity. Society is changed and knowledge is generated and reconstructed through social interaction between people. Because I agree that society is continually changed and meaning constructed by its social actors, I subscribe to Social Constructivism. I believe that we each construct our view of the world based on our interpretation of it; however, our constructions are bound to be imperfect because perception and observation are fallible.

Because I am seeking to understand aspects of the world in which I live and work (Creswell, 2007), I question the beliefs I hold and *reconstruct* my view of the world based on the new knowledge and experiences. Lincoln (1995, p. 276) reminds us that ‘seeking out multiple constructions of the world by multiple stakeholders has to be marked by serious, sustained searches for, and prolonged engagement with, those stakeholders and their constructions.’ The more I am immersed in the field and interact with service-learning academics, the more my understanding is constructed with the building blocks of insight. Through dissemination of the research findings, I am committed to creating dialogue

within interpretive communities based on critical thinking and practical consideration (Lincoln, 1995, Schwandt, 1994, 1995).

Carter (1993) cautions us however, that practitioners' accounts of their reality are themselves constructions of reality and not reality itself. She contends that making generalizations based on stories of experience is problematic; firstly, because stories resist singular interpretation and secondly, because the relationship between story and reality is troublesome.

Narrative resists singular interpretation and therefore, the qualitative interpretation of data is complex. Though I reflect on the narratives of the interviewees and compare their stories to the literature, that literature is disseminated within a discourse where reflective practice is not recognised as a legitimate pursuit of academics by the dominant higher education paradigm. This is in contrast to the reflective mindset of some of the engaged academics I interviewed who continually view their practice through reflective lenses.

Nonetheless, I strive to consider the data in light of the evidence from the literature, and through a rigorous research process, construct a meaning that can contribute to the practice of those working in an Irish context similar to that which I have examined in the US.

### **3.4 Critical Theory**

Shumer (2000a, p. 77) states that within:

‘...critical science, reality is determined by examining historical and power relationships to better understand current social conditions. The purpose of the method is to expose inequities in the social system, to raise consciousness levels and to create change for social improvement and social justice.’

He continues by stating that critical science would be an appropriate and valuable paradigm for researching service-learning because, by its very essence, it is about using knowledge and education to promote social justice.

By subscribing to critical theory, one must examine a context by questioning received wisdom, by asking why one should accept the status quo. Asking ‘why do I do what I do, the way I do it?’ questions the status quo of one’s practice in the context of power relations, both in terms of the practitioner possessing power and/or not possessing power. The issue of power balance arises within the service-learning partnership, with the institution on top, followed by the practitioner, then the student and finally the community partners and their clients.

Tierney (1994) posits that there is no way for a researcher to arrive at the ‘true interpretation’ of a phenomenon. Instead the aim of research, in his opinion, is to provide a space for those whose voices have been not been heard or have been silenced. Therefore, it is important for me to use a paradigm that takes into account the role that power plays in the research process. As a researcher, I have the choice (and some would say obligation) of becoming an agent for change through harnessing the experiences of the research participants. I must continually monitor my actions, through the research process, with the question of who will benefit by being empowered with the knowledge generated. I strive to create a mechanism in which engaged academics may find their voice and generate new knowledge in a manner that may be regarded as a legitimate academic pursuit within the current discourse of higher education.

This work seeks not only to inform, but in its critique of the relations of power in education aims to offer new perspectives, approaches, and tools for educators to rethink their practice. I hope to contribute to the debate regarding how reflective practice is viewed within the dominant ideology of higher education. Critical theory can help to break out of habitual ways of understanding the world through the power structures that currently shape our reality. In doing this, it offers academics an alternate perspective with which they can cause change. Questioning assumptions is an integral part of reflective practice; this means maintaining criticality, not only of one’s own practice of

teaching but also of the discourse in which that teaching happens. If academics focus only on the *nuts and bolts* of teaching, they will always be confined to operating within the parameters that currently surround engagement. However, criticality of the boundaries of engaged practice is necessary so that reflective practice not only improves but manages to expand and gain recognition as a legitimate activity.

### **3.4.1 Advocating for change through the research**

According to Savage (1988), combining critical reflection, research and action leads to quality research. Tierney (1994, pp. 98-99) posits that ‘research is meant to be transformative; we do not merely analyze or study an object to gain greater understanding, but instead struggle to investigate how individuals and groups might be better able to change their situations.’ Service-learning can be transformative learning, and as such, is aligned with the ontological view of critical theory in which transformations occur when ‘light is shed on ignorance’ through the insight of experience and ‘dialectal interaction’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113).

I believe that the relationship between the investigator and what is being examined is ‘transactional and subjective’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Beliefs that I held were altered by those to whom I spoke, and likewise, interviewees were challenged in their beliefs by the questions I asked. Many reported that the interview itself was ‘a reflective exercise’ causing them to reconsider matters on which they had made value judgements. As both interviewer and interviewee reflected on the same conversation, each created a new understanding as the research progressed. The quality of research is judged by its ability to connect itself with real action that will have social consequences (Lincoln, 1995, Savage, 1988). A desired result of the research process is the self-understanding that the interviewees gain through their participation.

Within the paradigm of critical theory, I would see myself as a *Pragmatist*, with the results of the research being suggestions on potential ways to address real problems rather than hypotheses about abstract questions. I would take my

pragmatic stance a step further, and be an *Advocate* for research contributing to change and reform. I see little point in conducting this study merely as an academic exercise without it having an impact on the academic community of engaged academics. I am committed to the goals of service-learning and to change, and this is an inseparable part of me as a researcher and educator. My goal is, through systematic and rigorous research, to make a proposal that is trustworthy, which can then be adopted by engaged academics to bring about change. Because this is the case, I find critical theory to be an important tool to apply to my analysis because it offers the tools by which to begin to examine and deconstruct the accepted ways of teaching and learning in higher education and to think about them differently.

Some of the aims of service-learning are to bring about change in the students' worldview, change in the role of the education institution in the community and foster community development. Though many of my interviewees were tenured lecturers, some felt powerless to change the pedagogical practice outside their immediate environment. Though service-learning is becoming more popular throughout the world, it is still on the periphery of mainstream higher education. Through maintaining criticality and questioning the status quo, engaged academics can challenge the dominant discourse that sees community engagement as *soft* and learning through reflecting on that work as less rigorous than a positivistic approach.

Achieving change is inseparable from service-learning, and as a service-learning advocate I am committed to the goals of achieving change within the immediate community of higher education, which, I hope, will have an onward effect on the community beyond the campus walls. Because this is the case, critical theory is an important tool to apply to my analysis because as a theory it offers the mechanism to begin to deconstruct how we do what we do the way we do it, and to allow us to think about it differently.

Brookfield (1995, p. 49) discusses how one's teaching is influenced by one's own learning: 'we may espouse philosophies of teaching that we have learned from formal study, but the most significant and most deeply embedded

influences that operate on us are the images, models, and conceptions of teaching derived from our own experiences as learners.’ Based on my personal experience of an unimaginative education system – founded on the banking method and the deficit model of learning, which overlooked critical thinking and mistakenly assumed that students already understood how to learn – I wish to be an activist for reform of the method of teaching and learning in Irish higher education. Through collaborating with service-learning advocates, and participating in their work, I have seen the positive impact that service-learning can have on the lives of the partners and I seek to contribute to the discipline through this study. Indeed, far from this being a personal agenda, the ‘fostering, stimulation and enabling of social action’ is one of Lincoln’s criteria for interpretive inquiry (Lincoln, 1995, p. 277). Though I am overt in my stance of advocating for change, I seek to do so by providing guidelines for action rather than imposing a rigid structure. I believe that criticality is necessary to continually monitor why we do what we do, the way we do it. Examining one’s practice in the context in which one works can generate site-specific knowledge and provide a deeper insight into the interaction of the social actors within that space. In order to impact on that space and those within it, one must first maintain a continuous criticality of self.

### **3.5 Research Methodology**

By subscribing to critical theory, and given the fact that the research is about reflective practice in service-learning, it is logical from a practical and philosophical perspective, that I should use a reflective approach to the research.

Shumer (2000) recommends that the study of service-learning should mirror the principles of service-learning. The use of reflection is an integral element of service-learning (Ó Donnchadha, 2007). Giles and Eyler (1998) recommend matching the research method with the research question.

The overarching principle which guided this research was that of reflective practice. In the development of the research question, the sourcing of

interviewees, the collection and analysis of the data and the distillation of the recommendations, a reflective approach was used by:

- Questioning assumptions
- Drawing meaning from experience
- Consulting stakeholders for input

Ghaye (2011) suggest three main types of validation for reflecting on one's practice: 1) critical self-validation, 2) peer-group validation, and 3) public validation. Bearing this in mind:

- I monitored the process of my research by challenging new ideas and questioning if they would work in practice. The concept of peer reflection emerged as being an important element in the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. This was challenged by the question of how peer reflection would work in a dysfunctional department in which peers did not have the safe space in which to reflect together.
- At different stages of the research process, I consulted with participants – either through conversation or by sending them drafts of the thesis – to get feedback on how my ideas were developing. The responses were generally positive, but would usually come with questions. For example, I was asked about the difficulty of applying theory based on US experience of service-learning to the context of Irish higher education. I presented the preliminary findings of my research at numerous academic conferences in Ireland and the US to elicit critique. Applying a reflective process to my research was important, firstly because it ensured that I was not swayed by false assumptions about the topic; secondly, it continuously focused my attention on the needs of the academic community of which I was a member, and finally, it meant that I practiced the method of learning which was the topic of inquiry, thus giving insight into its complexities.

### **3.5.1 Establishing learning goals**

Shumer (2000) recommends that research on service-learning should mirror the elements of service-learning itself, one of which is having clear learning goals. Since there was very little previous literature available on the reflective practice of engaged academics, I chose a topic that was in need of investigation and that

was of importance to academics. I sought to achieve an outcome that could be applied to the day-to-day practice of service-learning academics in particular and of teachers in general. Many interviewees expressed their interest in reflection and articulated the view that even with their years of experience; it was one of the areas of service-learning that for them needed further research. Whereas in the initial stages of the research process, I was interested in the use of reflection by students, it became clear that there was a greater need for deeper understanding of the reflective practice of academics using service-learning.

### **3.5.2 Addressing a need in the academic community**

Boud (1999, pp. 130-131) states that ‘reflection involves questioning what we do in professional education, our role in it and how we can best promote the interests of learners.’ To address these questions, he believes, we must challenge our own practice, examine it and learn from it. I sought to address some of these questions by examining an aspect of teaching.

In the parlance of engaged pedagogies, ‘community’ usually refers to non-profit organisations involved in direct service provision; however, the case can also be made for addressing needs among the community of practice of service-learning academics. Whilst the need for further research into reflection has been widely acknowledged (Boud, 2006, Boyd *et al.*, 2006, Correia & Bleicher, 2008, Welch & James, 2007), a research inquiry on and through reflection should shed light on the understanding and practice of the pedagogy of service-learning and also on teaching and learning in general (Whitney & Clayton, 2011).

Lincoln (1995, p. 280) labels interpretive inquiry as *communitarian*, stating that ‘research takes place in, and is addressed to, a community’. She suggests that it should ‘serve the purposes of the community in which it was carried out rather than simply serving the community of knowledge producers and policymakers’ (*ibid.*). Research is a community project, not a restricted to disciplines within the academy (Lincoln, 1995, Savage, 1988).

Palmer (1987) posits that objectivist knowing is essentially ‘anti-communal’. I strive to empower service-learning academics – which I see as a

community of practice – by contributing to a continuous process of revision and development of knowledge and understanding (Elliott *et al.*, 1999, Lincoln, 1995) in the hopes that they will then be in a better position to foster change in service-learning implementation and to influence education policy. I included peers in my own reflection practice by discussing my research with them. Though my approach is not as communal as participatory action research, it was collaborative insofar as I sought critique from participants and peers who were experts in using service-learning. It was important to have a touchstone to the reality of engaged practice since I was researching fulltime and not teaching on a service-learning programme.

According to Brookfield (1995, p. 266) ‘critically reflective teachers know that what happens in their classroom changes the world’ by causing change on personal, social and political levels. The academy would be the immediate beneficiary of this work, as I hope that the study can make a positive impact on the quality of facilitating service-learning. Though the community of service-learning would be the primary target of this research, I hope that the research will have a subsequent effect on the community of students and likewise on community partner agencies.

### **3.5.3 Reciprocity and reciprocal transfer of knowledge**

Lincoln (1995, p. 283) describes reciprocity as ‘a characteristic of high-quality, rigorous qualitative interpretative inquiry...argued to be essential because of the person-centred nature of interpretive work.’ I reflected upon a reciprocity that included myself as one of the reciprocating members of the field of study (Rowan, 1981). In parallel with the principles of service-learning, I sought to make the research reciprocal in nature so that the learning of the respondents was as important as the learning of the researcher (Lincoln, 1995) by ensuring that those who contributed to the study would also benefit from it (Shumer, 2000). In this case, each participant was provided with an electronic copy of the findings in return for their time and effort. ‘One important mechanism for the transfer of knowledge from one setting to another is the provision of vicarious experience’

(Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114). It is my aim to share the knowledge that has been built up over thirty years in the US with the Irish academic community which is at the beginning of the journey towards including service-learning as a recognised pedagogy in higher education. Guba and Lincoln's (1994) view of constructivism sees the inquirer as an orchestrator and facilitator of the enquiry process. In a similar way, it is through facilitating the reflective examination of a particular professional practice in one setting (the US) that I will be able to orchestrate its transfer to another setting (Ireland).

Because critically reflective teaching happens when we identify and scrutinize the assumptions that are the foundation of how we work (Brookfield, 1995), the potential of this study is not limited to the field of service-learning. The transformative potential of practitioner research makes it appealing to critical pedagogues, staff developers and school reformers (Anderson & Herr, 1999). On a wider scale, it is hoped that the recommendations of the study will lead to change in the practice of teaching, both in the field of service-learning and in higher education policy. Research is meant to be transformative and academics are called upon to use their research to help participants understand and be able to bring change to their situation (Lather, 1991, Tierney, 1994). Because reflection is an integral element of service-learning, and reflective practice has the potential to bring about transformation, having a better understanding of the reflection process can lead to changing practice, and to improvement for the academics, their students and, as a result, the community partners.

#### **3.5.4 Addressing the problems of interpretive inquiry on service-learning**

Though Shumer (2000a) does successfully demonstrate that positivist research in service-learning is an anathema, this is relatively easy, given that positivism is like an apple weighing scales being used to weigh orange juice. Shumer accepts that self and group-reflective practice is considered a violation of positivist methodologists, however there are those within the service-learning research community such as Furco (2003), Steinberg *et al.* (2010) who would also question this shortfall in service-learning research methodology.

Shumer rightly calls for rigorous research in service-learning and draws on the work of Anderson and Herr (1999) as well as Lather (1986a). Though his arguments are well grounded in accepted literature, apart from catalytic validity, there is an absence of external validity in what he proposes. Catalytic validity is difficult to confirm unless there is follow-up research done to examine the impact of the research process or the findings. Indeed Shumer says that there is a need for ‘long term qualitative studies that document the effect over time of service-learning on individuals, institutions and communities (p80)’ however, given that my sample is limited to one section of stakeholders and that it is not within the scope of my research to conduct follow-up data collection with my interviewees, this is a limitation of Shumer’s framework in this research.

Shumer suggests that we need to be able to tell the story of service-learning as it plays out in the lives of the stakeholders. This laudable approach to giving a rounded view puts pressures on the researcher to take all views into account. This is a difficult task however, since there is a difference in contexts between the ways each stakeholder would experience service-learning. Given that the research question is limited to academics, I felt it prudent to focus on the viewpoint of only one of the stakeholders. Finally, though Shumer refers to examples of research methodology that – in his opinion – were either strong or weak, he does little to outline a specific methodology of his own beyond firstly, recommending the paradigms of interpretative and/or critical science. However, I would support his second recommendation, that research on service-learning should be congruent to the principles of service-learning even if those principles are not universally agreed upon.

Furco (2003) identifies a range of difficulties the researcher faces when conducting inquiry on service-learning and these include: the problem with the definition of service-learning; the difference in contexts where service-learning is used; the absence of well tested instruments and protocols to capture the outcomes of service-learning; and the difficulty with analyzing the impact of

service-learning on students and community. These issues affect this research to varying degrees and I took steps to address the limitations as follows.

It must be highlighted that this research is not an inquiry on service-learning per se, but rather on reflective practice within service-learning. However, to address the absence of an agreed definition of service-learning I drew on the work of well established service-learning researchers, with these two definitions having garnered general consensus within the service-learning academic community. I used these definitions as a foundation for my own description of service-learning. I also highlight what service-learning is *not* and added to account of the historical and philosophical background of service-learning. Furthermore, I have given clear indication as to the scope of the topic being covered in this research.

Furco's (2003) concerns regarding instruments for assessing the outcomes of service-learning are very legitimate however, they refer principally to the study of student learning outcomes and the effects of service-learning on students and/or the community. This inquiry does not deal with students, but instead focuses on academics' reflective practice and therefore, there are no pre-determined learning outcomes to examine. In fact, it will be highlighted later that the absence of learning-outcomes in the process of teaching with service-learning is a factor that influences the legitimacy given to academics reflecting on their engaged practice.

The absence of well tested instruments and protocols to capture the outcomes of service-learning applies to the outcomes of reflection. One of the results of this research is the identification of the difficulty with ranking the degree of reflection on engaged practice. However, though it is beyond the bounds of this research to investigate a scale of how much academics reflect, I will propose a typology of reflection that identifies how academics *do* reflect on their engaged practice. Given the current absence of a scale of reflective practice, it would therefore be difficult to introduce a quantitative aspect to the measuring of reflective practice, which Furco suggests would add breadth and depth and the opportunity for triangulation of service-learning research.

Steinberg *et al.* (2010) identify further problems with conducting research on service-learning relating to sample size, self selection bias, self reporting, lack of control groups, and a lack of generalisability. These issues were dealt with in the following manner.

Sample size: a study carried out by Mason (2010) on 560 doctoral research projects submitted in the UK and Ireland, which used qualitative interviews as the data gathering technique, found that the average sample number was 31. According to this figure my sample number of 43 was above average which rendered a considerable amount of data. As is clear from the findings, saturation level was reached and this indicated that the sample size was adequate for this inquiry.

Self-selection bias: given that the majority of interviewees chose to use service-learning, the group of interviewees is necessarily self-selecting. This problem is unavoidable given the research question. The reflective practice of academics who do *not* use service-learning in the contexts I examined has the potential for further research and would be useful as a comparison for this study. Because studies with comparable parameters do not exist, I relied on the literature on reflective practice within education as a counterpoint to my data.

Control group: I also interviewed an Irish academic who did not use service-learning but who (following the interview) identified himself as a reflective-practitioner. This was an effort to have an insight into reflective practice not influenced by service-learning. The idea of a sample group had its advantages however; it would have required a group greater than one and with a separate set of criteria that would add to the complexity of the data gathering process. This interviewee's data was excluded from the final results.

Self-reporting: though instruments using self reporting can be useful, there is the problem that the researcher is being told what s/he wants to hear; the report is influenced by biases and poor memory; and may not accurately correspond to behaviour. However, these issues are unavoidable given the topic in question. Much of the reflective process is internal and therefore, can only be reported by the practitioner. Though alterations in action following a reflection

session may be observed by colleagues, the accuracy of these interpretation is less reliable than self-reporting. The interviewees were very candid regarding their own areas of weakness in terms of reflection and made no effort to portray themselves in glowing terms. I had considered the idea of sharing transcripts with a group of interviewees and then gathering them together for a reflection session on their reflections, however, this posed issues of confidentiality, and logistics and was discounted as a method of triangulation.

Generalisability: Lather (1986a) questions the call for generalisability in interpretative research and instead recommends a raft of internal validity checks, which I have followed (see section 3.6.3). Though I followed Schofield (2002) suggestions of studying the typical and atypical and using multisite studies, I did not set out to achieve generalisable results that are predictive for all situations and given the topic of reflection being such a subjective activity, it would be unreasonable to try to do so. This research highlights needs that academics have and the model I have developed makes suggestion as to how those needs can be addressed. However, it is noted that the recommendations made in the model must be adapted to meet the conditions that exist in different contexts.

Although the research began as an examination of the use of reflection *by students* who were taking service-learning courses, based on exploratory conversations with stakeholders, it became apparent that there was not a clear understanding of the reflective practice of the academics who were themselves using service-learning. Therefore, through conversations with research participants, the research question was modified and refocused to address the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning.

Lincoln (1995) discusses ‘reflexivity or critical subjectivity’ as a criterion for interpretive research. Though she admits that there is no general agreement as to exactly what form this might take, her description contains some of the elements of critical reflection and of transformational-learning: ‘thus the words transformative and critical not only embody the action aspects of research, but also recognize the ability of meaningful research experiences to heighten self-awareness in the research process and create personal and social transformation’

(Lincoln, 1995, p. 283). I strove to create meaningful research experiences by immersing myself in the field; participating in service projects and training seminars; and by conducting dialogue with many of the top academics and researchers in service-learning whom I had the good fortune to meet during my stay in the US.

Smith (1993, p. 150) points out that ‘the task of the interpretivist is to elaborate what lies beyond epistemology and beyond the idea that there are special, abstract criteria for judging the quality of research’ because ‘interpretivist[s] see criteria not as abstract standards, but as open-ended, evolving lists of traits that characterize what we think research should do and be like’ (Smith, 1993, p. 153).

Though I would subscribe to the philosophical standpoint of interpretive inquiry, one must not accept it completely without question. Garrick (1999, p. 150) points out that there are many leading theorists who argue that the ‘preferred method of research for social science involves description, interpretation, self-reflection and critical analysis.’ He raises the issue that ‘the subject... cannot be assumed to be autonomous and self-directed’ and ‘cannot be assumed to reflect “rationally” upon everyday experience and to comprehend their “own” experiences objectively.’ Interviewees interpret their own experiences in the light of their environment which is ‘structured historically in the traditions, prejudices and institutional practices that come down to us’ (Taylor, 1993, p. 59). They then give this subjective account to the researcher. The researcher’s interpretation of these stories/data is philosophically re-interpretative as they ‘retell already interpreted experience.’ Furthermore, all of this discourse is influenced by ‘what kind of talk occurs and which talkers speak.’ Garrick (1999) does not discount interpretive methodology but rather urges a stronger critique of its philosophical foundations than has been seen in education literature. He offers little by way of solutions to the questions he raises, but cites leading interpretive theorists who argue that ‘no single method can completely filter out widespread social biases that are deeply inscribed in language and culture’ (Garrick, 1999, p. 155). He is in agreement with Palmer (2004) when he says that the knower cannot be separated from the known, and

concludes that ‘self-understanding (insofar as it is possible) lies at the heart of this new epistemology of qualitative education research’ (Garrick, 1999, p. 155). It is ironic that an article entitled ‘Doubting the Philosophical Assumptions of Interpretive Research’ should end by recommending self-understanding, which is at the core of reflective practice.

The challenges of the interpretive paradigm in researching reflection mean that we have to negotiate the multiple ways of making sense of what we see and this is true also for reflective practice itself. All interpretation requires some form of communication, verbal, written or artistic; each form has its limitations and advantages, and deciding which one you chose to tell the story is actually a part of the story itself (Eisner, 1992). Maintaining awareness of the difficulty of the process of interpretation and the limitations of the forms of interpretation is important; and seeking to overcome those challenges through deeper understanding is common to interpretative inquiry, to reflective practice, and particularly to reflective inquiry.

Any research design will have limitations that must be overcome. Given that there is so little research that exists on this topic, I believe I have made a contribution to the research community by identifying the limitations of research on reflective practice of academics, and this will be useful for future inquiry.

### **3.5.5 Bracketing my philosophy of education**

The researcher must examine their own experience to become aware of prejudices, preconceptions, assumptions, agendas, personal values, power inequity and conflicts of interest, because unless they are bracketed these factors can influence the research process (Ahern, 1999, Bringer *et al.*, 2004, Merriam, 2002). Lincoln (1995, p. 280) agrees that it is important to ‘come clean’ about one’s stance and position about what one believes to be true so that an experience can be discussed within ‘its own intrinsic system of meaning, not one imposed on it from without (Merriam, 2002, p. 94). It is important for me to be clear about my personal views on education and how they may influence the research question and my analysis of the data collected.

I believe that education is the key to freedom. Access to education is a fundamental human right and I strive for the holistic aims of education as outlined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). Based on the experience of my own learning and that of my students in the last fifteen years, I believe that having a personal connection to what is being learned improves motivation to learn. For my own part, I am able to connect more to a subject that has a practical application than to the abstract or purely theoretical. Perhaps, because of my preference of the practical rather over the theoretical, I have seen the advantages that experiential learning has over silent study. In both my personal learning and my teaching style, I prefer to outline theory first, and then use hands-on experience to experiment with it, followed by an examination of why something does or does not work.

I taught English as a foreign language to complete beginners aged from eight to ten. It was very rewarding to know that most of the English they spoke at the end of the year had been learned during my classes. It demonstrated my potential as an agent of change, which in later years, I saw as the potential to contribute to change in the quality of teaching and ultimately to promote social justice through service-learning.

I had the misfortune during my higher education to attend lectures given by lecturers, who may have been successful researchers but who did not possess the gift of teaching. Moreover, this was particularly poignant when they were ‘teacher educators’. I believe that this was a factor which encouraged me to study pedagogy and strive to contribute to the reform of teaching and learning in Irish higher education.

I must confess that I was not the most motivated or able student during my undergraduate studies, because, among other reasons, I did not understand my learning style. I later achieved better results through a kinaesthetic learning style; however, this learning style was not readily catered for in the large lecture hall format. I discovered the benefits of peer reflection, and the role it can play in the research process.

I see my experience as a teacher as an advantage rather than hindrance to this research; in fact I agree with Lincoln (1995, p. 280) that ‘detachment and author objectivity are barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it.’ I made efforts to look beyond the subjective scope of my role as teacher and that of my peers. I am aware that there is a power dynamic in all civic engagement and I kept in mind the participants in the research and the stakeholders in campus community engagement by regularly asking ‘how can I insure that this research will impact positively on the participants, on the institution and its students, and on the community partners and their clients?’ I kept the commitment to reciprocity, in as far as was possible, within the scope of the research by striving to contribute to academic staff development and as a result contribute to the improvement of campus community partnership.

Learning must flow and continue to be updated. My belief in the value of lifelong learning influences my understanding of the nature of knowledge, the need to build on knowing through careful consideration of experience.

### **3.5.6 Monitoring subjectivity and preconceptions**

I became familiar with the Irish higher education system over a period of 15 years by studying and working in the sector. I was met with a different learning context in the US, and what I had considered to be normal was regularly pointed out as being relevant in the Irish context but not in the US context. My assumptions were challenged on topics such as diversity, the belief that everyone understood issues of race and sought integration, the ability to speak English, numbers of students of a young age married with children, the influence of faith on university curricula, the difference in civic spirit, the difference in attitudes to what democracy meant and its connection to patriotism, the assumption that engaged academics would follow the same rubrics they gave their students. My beliefs were challenged in informal ways through introspection, and through conversations with practitioners, students and colleagues. I was challenged in more formal ways through reading literature and attending conferences.

On an internal level, personal processing of preconceptions was unavoidable on issues such as diversity, when for example I moved to Washington and it appeared to me that I was the only Caucasian living in an exclusively black neighbourhood. My understanding of educational context was widened, given that the variety of Irish higher education institutions could be seen only in the nuanced differences between an NUI university and an Institute of Technology. However, I saw the contrasts in culture stand out starkly when visiting a predominantly Mormon university in Utah and a State university in San Francisco. This not only affected the learning context in which students were taking service-learning courses, but the context in which academics were teaching and how that was influenced by the establishment.

Given that I was based at the California Campus Compact head office, I had the opportunity to meet many practitioners, researchers and academics. Without exception all were encouraging and many took the time to discuss the ideas I was developing, and give their opinions, all of which contributed to me developing a rounded view of the topic as well as keeping the development of my own ideas under scrutiny of experienced practitioners. There were many informal conversations with experts in the area which was not used as data but which helped give an insight into the topic I was studying.

I had numerous opportunities to examine my perspectives and keep my subjectivity in check on formal levels. Some of the research participants attended conferences that I presented at; they gave feedback in the question and answer session at the end of a presentation and others gave their critique in follow up conversations. At one of these conferences, there was a system in which a junior researcher would present preliminary findings of their research and a senior scholar would give a public critique. I had the opportunity to do this with one of my interviewees. Following that, we collaborated on a conference workshop which allowed us both to share and develop ideas. Four participants read chapter drafts and commented directly on the work. They gave constructive criticism regarding the development of ideas, and gave guiding suggestions such as relevant literature to read, considering the approach of addressing general needs

rather than evaluating reflection techniques, and ensuring that the work would be not be site specific that it could not be transferable to the Irish context.

### **3.6 Criteria for Rigour in this Research**

#### **3.6.1 Criteria for rigorous interpretive inquiry**

Lather (1986a) posits that research requires credibility checks to ensure the trustworthiness of data while Ezzy (2002) states that there is a need for a full explanation of what the researcher considers to be rigorous. Meanwhile, Lincoln (1985, p. 277) proposes that the researcher commit to the following four criteria for interpretive inquiry:

1. Fairness by considering a balance of stakeholders' views: this is necessary in this study because of the many different perspectives that there can be of a service-learning partnership (detailed in 2.2.3). To get a deep insight into the context of the topic and to get the perspective of the others involved in campus community partnerships, I consulted with other stakeholders including students, service-learning coordinators, community partners and their clients (see 3.7.2). This informed the investigation by highlighting the variety of factors which influenced the use of service-learning and showed how different partners viewed reflection. I considered a balance of academics views by formally interviewing 43 academics from different locations, disciplines, contexts and levels of experience. Because my definition of service-learning academic is wide (see 1.2.2) a variety of participants were chosen which included: lecturers, service-learning coordinators, staff development trainers, researchers as well as a former senior lecturer (then a college president) and a secondary school teacher with specific experience in reflective practice. This was appropriate because of the nature of service-learning, individuals may have more than one role, for example those who taught also conducted research, or coordinators also taught students and staff as well as deal with administration.
2. The learning of respondents is as important as the learning of the researcher: this was addressed by the intention of providing all the interviewees with a copy of the thesis when finished.

3. The fostering, stimulation and enabling of social action: this was achieved by examining the practice of interviewees and by my contributing to the dialogue about reflection in service-learning. By adding to the discussion about community engagement, I seek to develop the pedagogy of service-learning and its aim of contributing to social justice through education.
4. The open and democratic sharing of knowledge rather than the concentration of inquiry in the hands of privileged elite: as well as providing the participants with a copy of the thesis, I have disseminated the work to the wider academic community through publications and conference presentations.

### **3.6.2 Criteria for rigorous research on service-learning**

Shumer (2000a) posits that the research paradigms used to examine service-learning should complement the philosophical principles of service-learning. Honnet and Poulsen (1989) suggest ten principles of best practice, which can be summarised by describing service-learning as follows:

1. Rigorous: I clearly stated the standards I intended to follow during the research process. This included gaining a broad and deep understanding of the topic through a review of the published literature, fully sourcing and gathering complete data, and basing my recommendations on the systematic, critical analysis of said data.
2. Reflective: I adopted a reflective approach to the overall research process and to the analysis of the data, questioning why the practice of the participants is the way it is and seeking to make meaning of what I found.
3. Having clear learning goals: I chose a question that had not been given consideration in the published literature and I sought to achieve an outcome that could be applied to the day-to-day practice of service-learning academics.
4. Addressing a community need: the need for further research into reflection has been widely acknowledged (Boud, 2006, Boyd et al., 2006, Correia & Bleicher, 2008, Welch & James, 2007). Based on conversations in the pilot project and later confirmed in the interviews, it was clear that the interviewed academics wanted to gain a better understanding of reflective practice in service-learning.
5. Reciprocal: I sought to make the research as beneficial for the participants as for myself. To this end I have produced a model of reflection that academics can use to enhance their engaged practice.

### 3.6.3 Criteria for rigorous practitioner research

Influenced by the work of Lather (1986a, 1993), Anderson and Herr (1999) describe five criteria for rigorous practitioner research which are applicable in this interpretative study. I used these guidelines to ensure the following:

1. Democratic validity: refers to the extent to which the research is conducted in collaboration with the stakeholders of the topic being examined.
2. Dialogic validity: refers to the critically reflective dialogue with other practitioners.
3. Process validity: refers to the extent in which the question is addressed so that there is continuous learning either by the researcher or the system which is being investigated.
4. Outcome validity: refers to the extent to which the problem which led to the research question was addressed and/or resolved.
5. Catalytic validity: refers to the extent in which the research process causes participants to change their perspectives of the research topic putting them in a better position to change the reality they see.

To ensure that the research met these criteria of validity, I kept the following questions in mind:

1. *Do the data and the findings apply to a range of representative sources and stakeholders in the research topic?*

Yes. My immersion in the environment of American higher education (described earlier) gave me access to the stakeholders in the context I wanted to examine. According to Shumer (2000a, p. 79) ‘we need to be able to tell, in detail, the story of service-learning as it plays out in the lives of students, community sponsors, administrators, faculty and other notable contributors to the process.’ I achieved this by interviewing 43 academics and consulting with other relevant stakeholders.

2. *Were the data and the findings a result of two way dialogue?*

Yes. The interviews were in themselves reflective conversations. They were semi-structured insofar as there was a list of possible questions; but this list was

to prompt conversation which could follow lines of interest and areas of experience of the interviewee. Ezzy (2002, p. xiii) argues that one of the main challenges in qualitative data analysis is ensuring that ‘the voice of the other is heard and allowed to enter into dialogue with pre-existing understandings.’ In order to continue the dialogue, some of the participants were interviewed more than once, whilst others were consulted for critique of ideas at later stages of the research process.

3. *Was a rigorous process followed that contributed to the learning of the researcher and/or the system being examined?*

Yes. The research question was framed and addressed in a manner that permitted ongoing learning of the researcher and the community of engaged practice. The data underwent multiple levels of coding so as to isolate the accurate opinions of the participants. Finally, the recommendations suggest that any model of reflection must be adapted to fit its context and can be enhanced by the ongoing learning of the academics.

4. *Does the research address a real problem that needs solving?*

Yes. The research question was formulated through an in-depth review of the literature to highlight that there was a gap in knowledge about the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. The interview questions were honed through numerous informal conversations with service-learning academics. To ensure that the research would examine issues of relevance to the participants, they were directly asked ‘what questions do you have about reflective practice?’ Interviewees were aware that the research project sought to contribute to the field of service-learning in general and to the area of reflection in particular and some expressed a desire to participate for these specific reasons. The question of how academics reflect on their practice was answered and the implications of how they reflect were addressed in the formulation of a reflection model.

5. *Will the research address the problem and have a positive impact on the field of study?*

I viewed the research project’s catalytic validity (Anderson & Herr, 1999, Brown & Tandom, 1978, Reason & Rowan, 1981) as described by Lather (1986a, p. 67) as the ‘degree to which the research process re-orient, focuses, and energizes participants to know reality in order to better transform it.’ By examining the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning and

comparing it to the literature on reflective practice in higher education, I made recommendations as to how practice could be improved. It is hoped that, based on the findings and recommendations of this research, those who use service-learning will be able to adapt their practice to make it more reflective and therefore, more effective. At the time of writing, it is too early to assess the impact that the research has had. However, the change that has been observed is that some of the interviewees said that following the interview, they were going to give deeper consideration to why they do what they do, the way they do it.

At every stage of the research process I critically reflected upon what I was doing in the light of these criteria for validity.

#### **3.6.4 Consulting stakeholders to ensure validity**

Tierney (1994, p. 110) suggests seeking the advice and suggestions of the people interviewed in a piece of research:

...to understand whether our interpretations are similar to those who have been studied. I do not necessarily believe that the researcher and the researched must always agree on a particular interpretation, but I am troubled if we do not even bother to ask our interviewees what they think about our analysis.

Conferring with a subsample of respondents on the progress of the research and the emerging results is called *face validity* or member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, Lather, 1986b, Reason & Rowan, 1981). Lather (1986a, p. 67) believes this to be 'integral to the process of establishing data credibility.' In follow-up conversations with four of the participants about the progress of my research and the development of my thought process, I had to justify my new ideas with evidence from the field. Assumptions that I did not notice were pointed out and questioned. An example of this was the suggestion that peer reflection would be beneficial for engaged academics. This was challenged when the issue of departmental dysfunctionality was highlighted, with interpersonal problems impeding the development of a safe and trusting environment. I had to take this

perspective into account and make suggestions regarding how such a scenario could be overcome.

### **3.7 Outline of the Research Method**

Service-learning should be adapted to suit the ethos and the environment of the institution, to meet the learning outcomes of students of varying disciplines and to address the needs of diverse communities. For example, the homelessness issue of central San Francisco is in contrast to the linguistic and cultural issues of Hawaii, which in turn differed from the racial issues of New Orleans. In order to gain insight into the disparate perspectives of service-learning, I spoke informally to different stakeholders in campus community partnerships. These included: academics, researchers, administrators, students and community partners in twelve campuses across the US. I also took part in service projects in California, South Carolina and Louisiana; attended professional training in the Bay Area of California; and participated in numerous academic conferences in California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Oregon and Washington.

The research question was formulated based on personal curiosity and the experience of academics who expressed a desire for a deeper understanding of reflective practice within service-learning. The relevant characteristics of potential participants were identified and criteria were defined. I recruited participants from twelve universities in different parts of the United States that used service-learning. To collect the data necessary to answer the research question, I spent over 15 months in the US. While based in San Francisco, I travelled to different universities all over America to find academics who were well positioned to assist me in investigating the issue of reflection in service-learning. I interviewed 43 service-learning academics, discussing reflection, pedagogy, service-learning and civic engagement. Two of these academics I interviewed more than once because of their expertise in the area of reflection in service-learning.

Having collected a large amount of data, I focussed on the details that related specifically to reflective practice. The interviews were loaded into NVivo - a qualitative data analysis software package - for ease of content management.

### **3.7.1 Sampling**

Service-learning has been in use in Ireland since 2001. When this study began, I felt that the academic experience of service-learning in the country was insufficient to accurately answer the research question. In contrast to this, because service-learning has been used in the US for at least thirty years, I chose to source my research participants there, so as to have access to the wealth of experience which had been built up over that time.

Campus Compact is a member organisation that promotes civic engagement in US higher education. Formed in 1985 with three universities that used service-learning, at the time of writing it has over 1,100 member colleges with NUI, Galway being the first non-American member. During a visit to Ireland in January 2006 by the executive director of Campus Compact, I discussed with her my interest in service-learning as the topic of my Fulbright Research Scholarship. She suggested that I would have greater access to data sources through Campus Compact than by being hosted by a single university.

In April 2006, I spent one month in San Francisco to attend three academic conferences on service-learning and to prepare for the data gathering process during the following academic year. While there, I was generously provided with a research office by California Campus Compact at their head office, which gave me access to the library of the San Francisco State University. The combination of the Fulbright Scholarship and my affiliation with Campus Compact greatly assisted my access to the data and personnel whom I sought. Though the Campus Compact staff did not participate in any interviews or have any input into the data, they assisted my research considerably by kindly providing resources.

Throughout the following year, I was facilitated by Campus Compact with the contact details of service-learning academics in California and other parts of the US. While I met a small number of US service-learning practitioners at

academic conferences in Ireland, I met many more through their interaction with the Campus Compact head office in San Francisco and through the numerous conferences and seminars that I attended in the US.

Some participants were recommended to me because of their highly regarded teaching reputation. Others I solicited directly because they were cited in the literature as being authorities in specific areas such as critical reflection or staff development. On a number of occasions, a contact or an interviewee would suggest the name of someone who would be able to answer a particular question asked. Rubin (2008) refers to this as snow-ball sampling. I promptly followed up these contacts via e-mail or telephone. Examples of this contact are listed in Appendix 1 'Correspondence with Interviewees'.

In some cases, I visited colleges that had a high number of service-learning courses or were hosting a service-learning conference. In three cases, I chose a university because it had an institutional policy of engaging with the community, which meant that all students had to complete a service-learning course in order to graduate. I contacted the service-learning coordinator there, outlining the study and the kind of research participant I sought, and was then introduced to people who had expertise in the use of the pedagogy.

I took account of the suggestion by Ezzy (2002, p. 63) that 'data collection is guided either by preconceived theories and ideas about what is important, or by the cues that present themselves during the data collection process.' If an opportunity arose to gain a deeper insight I adapted my schedule: to speak to whomever I could with experience in service-learning; to sit in on their class or reflection session; to talk to students or to become involved in a service project as it was important to me to become immersed in the community of practice that I was studying.

One university sent out an e-mail to its entire staff inviting those interested to attend a focus group and four people attended. Another university organised up to five activities and meetings a day for the week that I spent there. This included sitting in on a class where students were reflecting on their service experience tutoring in a high school. In one university, I attended a series of staff

development seminars for academics interested in improving their skills of service-learning implementation. This consisted of six weekly workshops lasting two hours, during which time I interacted with the faculty participants. I also spent time with the seminar facilitator whose doctorate was on the topic of reflective practice and whom I interviewed three times. I maintained regular contact with a large number of academics; exchanging ideas and literature with them, and even collaborating with some on publications and presentations. This contributed to dialogic validity of the study and was in line with Lincoln's (1995) recommendation that the overarching principle for interpretive inquiry is recognising the centrality of the relationship between the researcher and the participants of the research.

### **3.7.2 Sampling strategy: focusing on the population being studied**

Because service-learning is a collaborative activity, it was necessary to gain an understanding of the social context in which the pedagogy is used. This requires data that 'focuses on the people and the process' (Shumer, 2000a, p. 79). In my first year of research I aimed to become more familiar with the context by conducting a pilot project. I interviewed a number of students regarding their reactions to different methods of reflection; this included interviewing 11 students either individually or in small groups of 3 or 4 and conducted two focus groups, with about 15 students per class. I wanted to see if reflection was a separate exercise or whether it was an overarching concept that ran through their service-learning classes. This would give a perspective of the reflective practice of their teachers. I interviewed one community partner, whose responsibility was to coordinate the service-learning students who served at the agency. I also had a small number of informal conversations with clients of community agencies. These conversations were not recorded because firstly, it could have raised ethical issues of data gathering; secondly, they were not the focus of the research; and finally because it would have added a considerable amount of administration to secure consent with the individual and the community partner.

The pilot project helped to identify some of the complexities of investigating reflection in service-learning including: the different emphasis placed on

reflection within the service-learning courses; and that the learning outcomes from using reflection varied depending on the ethos of the institution. Most importantly, it pointed to a difference in the reflection conducted by students and by teachers.

### **3.7.3 Purposeful sampling: talking to the right people**

According to Richardson (1994, p. 7) ‘teachers are as good as, if not better than researchers in producing research that is more valid and relevant for their own classrooms.’ I use the term academic to cover a number of activities connected with the use of service-learning as a pedagogy including: teaching, researching, service-learning administration and staff development. All of the interviewees taught using service-learning or taught about the pedagogy, though their teaching responsibilities varied from undergraduate and master’s levels to the level of staff development seminars.

It is generally hoped that a sample will mirror the population from which it comes; however, there is no guarantee that any sample will be completely representative of a population since those not included in the study may differ from those who participated (Rubin, 2008). Lincoln (1995) highlights that any text is partial and can only represent an element of the truth.

I accept that sampling error (choosing an unrepresentative sample) can occur through chance. Sampling error can result in a sample that is not typical of the desired population and the sample being skewed or biased. However, my sample was not random; by selecting participants who matched a set of criteria every effort was made to achieve a representative cross-section of a particular community of practice. The criteria I used in selecting participants were as follows:

- Participants work in a third level institution<sup>12</sup>, either teaching or coordinating service-learning at undergraduate or postgraduate level

---

<sup>12</sup> An exception was made for one participant who worked in second level; her interview was included because of her deep insight into the topic and her extensive experience of using of creative reflection techniques.

- Participants use service-learning as a pedagogy in at least one course or teach other staff how to use service-learning
- Participants coordinate students who provide either direct or indirect service to a non-profit community organisation
- Participants have between three and twenty-five years experience in the use of service-learning

A variety of participants was sought in order to demonstrate ‘openness to multiple voices’ (Zeller, 1986, cited in Lincoln 1995, p. 282) and to achieve a ‘balance of stakeholder views’ (Lincoln, 1995, p. 277). I chose to focus on those with many years experience. This was done so that I could have access to the deep understanding built up by these academics. Many of them were eminent research figures in US service-learning and six interviewees had written seminal works on different aspects of US service-learning. One had worked with Paulo Freire, another with David Kolb, and a third with Harry Boyte. One had been an academic and was promoted to the position of university president. He was an advocate for the civically engaged university, and during his tenure his institution achieved the Community Engagement Classification with the Carnegie Foundation. Three of these leading researchers in the field were acknowledged as having very differing views on service-learning and how to research it. Though they would all be advocates of service-learning, they would disagree on how it should be implemented and researched. This was the closest I could get to discordant voices in the sample.

#### **3.7.4 Scope of the sampling**

I used a purposive sampling strategy because it was seen to generate a sample that could address the research question, provide a rich and deep narrative data

and fulfil the criteria I had set out (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Shumer (2000a, p. 80) states that service-learning is context driven and as such there is a need for data that focuses on the people and the process because without the insight and reflections of teachers, ‘one cannot get a true sense of the technical and artistic qualities involved in this pedagogy.’

My sample was stratified by choosing participants with varying degrees of experience, though they all used service-learning for a minimum of three years. I sought out those with considerably more experience so as to get a deeper insight into their practice. I also chose participants who had published academic work on service-learning: firstly, they would have critically reflected on their experience as a part of their research; and secondly, their views would have been critiqued by peer review. Some of the interviewees had published widely and were recognised in the US and internationally as leading authorities on aspects of service-learning.

Because the pedagogy of service-learning is not discipline specific, I did not limit myself to practitioners in a particular academic field. However, since service-learning is most prevalent in the humanities, the majority of my interviewees taught subjects in the social sciences. The age and gender balance was random: of the 18 men and 25 women, ages varied from mid-thirties to mid-sixties (one interviewee retired before the end of the study).

I interviewed staff from 12 higher education institutions throughout the US. The institutions varied in size, were both urban and rural, and included secular State universities, a community college and a faith-based university. Some of the academics interviewed had worked at a variety of higher education institutions and some had also taught at secondary and primary levels. Personnel from six other colleges were consulted – though not formally interviewed – and these informal conversations informed my research.

‘Texts are always partial and incomplete; socially; culturally; historically; racially; and sexually located; and therefore never represent any truth except those truths that exhibit the same characteristics’ (Lincoln, 1995, p. 280). Though I sought to achieve a broad sample of participants, the experiences they recount

are contextual. It is possible that with a broader or more diverse sample the results may have been different. However, given the level of agreement on issues which arose in the interviews, I believe that the results are an accurate representation of experiences in the field.

### 3.7.5 Participant demographics

Though I had a limited duration in the US and limited funding to travel to potential participants, following my return to Ireland in January 2008 I took the opportunity on 5 occasions to interview service-learning academics who were visiting from the US. There are no clear guidelines for the optimum sample size in qualitative research with the literature suggesting anything between 15 and 60, however Mason (2010) believes that saturation should be a guiding principle. Saturation is reached when data gathering renders little new information. I made every effort to interview as many stakeholders as possible within the timeframe I had and strove to reach saturation level of data.

<b>Principal Occupation</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Lecturer/teacher	19	16	35
Service-learning coordinator	4	1	5
Researcher	1	0	1
Secondary school special-needs teacher	1	0	1
College president	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>

Fig. 2: Breakdown of interviewees by occupation.

Strauss (1987) observes that there will always be new issues that can be pursued arising from the issues raised in the interviews. I realised that I had reached the saturation point when many of the same points were being discussed by participants and it was apparent that no new information was being uncovered

from new interviews. Below in Fig. 2 is a breakdown of the interviewees by occupation.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instrument: the Interview Procedure**

Since reflection is one of the principles of service-learning, it was important that the research methodology should also be one that arises from personal and professional reflection. 'It is... the robust stories about the lives of those who participate in service-learning that will ultimately provide the substantive data that makes the case about its value and effectiveness as both a philosophy and a method' (Shumer, 2000, p. 81). Getting at these detailed stories required a method that engaged participants directly through conversational interviews. This is supported by Lillis (2005, p. 16) who states that 'conversational learning has a remarkable record of reliability. It is the principal medium for learning in community.'

Furthermore, Richardson (1994, p. 5) notes that 'there has been a strong movement towards research that gives voice to academics, allows them to communicate their wealth of knowledge to other academics, and helps them improve their practice.' This is supported by Anderson and Herr (1999) who posit that dialogic validity can be achieved through having critically reflective conversations with fellow practitioner researchers. The interviews I conducted bore a strong resemblance to a reflection session: using questions and prompts to uncover assumptions and examine them critically.

I chose the interview as my principle method of data collection because it gave participants the opportunity to tell their story. The interviews were semi-structured to allow me to access the information I needed by using probing questions, yet it gave me the freedom to follow interesting lines of discussion as they arose. I informed participants of the aim and method of my study and when participants agreed to be interviewed we chose a suitable location. Usually, I

would visit the campus and interview participants in their office. Alternatively, I would interview them at the Campus Compact office when they visited for a meeting or workshop. On the occasions when it was not possible to meet, I would conduct the interview over the telephone.

The interviews were recorded between March 2006 and November 2009, in various locations in the US, and in Ireland with visiting US academics. The semi-structured interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes; the shortest being 10 minutes and the longest made up of 3 one hour interviews. The duration varied depending on the participant's schedule, and therefore, on how much I could let participants discuss particular issues before moving on to the next question. Every effort was made to put the interviewees at ease. A small recording device was deliberately chosen so that it would be inconspicuous. A strong effort was made to make sure questions did not lead the interviewees towards specific or predetermined conclusions but instead encouraged participants to clarify and elaborate.

The interviews generated over 35 hours of raw audio data. Most of the interviews were one to one, but four interviews had up to four participants, because it was the only time that the different group members had available. The group interviews did not prove as satisfactory as the one to one interviews. It was harder to get into depth with each individual with three other waiting at the same table. Due to their expertise in the field of reflective practice, one of the participants was interviewed three times (totalling three hours), and a second was interviewed twice (totalling over one hour).

### **3.8.1 Interview questions**

Every effort was made to formulate probing questions, to achieve insight into the research topic. To do this, I consulted with my academic supervisor and other colleagues in the area of education who had experience of using the interview as a data gathering instrument. The interview instrument was carefully developed to access the data that would answer the research question: how do service-learning academics reflect on their engaged practice? To do this I needed

information about the participant's use of service-learning, their teaching style and their reflective practice. I had to establish what factors would lead to a variety of data, such as how much the participant used service-learning, the amount of experience using the pedagogy, how the teaching was influenced by context and the discipline in which it was set. The experiences of a junior lecturer who has used service-learning with undergraduates to teach English literature for three years would necessarily be different to an academic who has used service-learning for 25 years in the area of social policy at a postgraduate level. I needed to learn about their style of teaching and how this may impact on their reflective practice. I also needed to find a way to gain insight into process that academics used to reflect on their teaching, what they learned from that and how.

I sought insight regarding each of these elements through splitting the interview into three sections and by asking academics firstly about how they used service-learning, then about their teaching, and lastly about their manner of reflection. A full list of questions can be found in Appendix 2. The order of the questions depended on the flow of the responses with the use of some follow-up questions for clarification. Ezzy (2002) discusses the process of honing questions to provide a much more sophisticated understanding of the experience being studied. I gave some details about my background and the aims of the research. In order for me to understand the context in which a participant was working, I asked a number of preliminary questions about their position, how much teaching they did and in what subject areas. This also served to establish a rapport with the participant before discussing questions of a more probing nature. I wanted to understand why these practitioners did what they did, the way they did it.

Brookfield (1995, p. 49) suggests that 'the most significant and most deeply embedded influences that operate on us are the images, models, and conceptions of teaching derived from our own experiences as learners'. I wanted to discover something of the participants' background and what drew them to the vocation of teaching so I asked them if teaching was a vocation that was a part of their

background and about their own education, to see if it was a positive or negative experience.

- Describe your overall experience with your own education.
- Was there teaching in your background?

Some described the negative impact of didactic teaching and made an effort to be more interactive. Others described an influential teacher and sought to emulate that style. Central to reflective practice is the question, ‘why do I do what I *do*, the way I do it? I sought to address the first part of that by asking ‘why are you a teacher?’ Discussing the motivation to teach began the interview on a deep and personal level, with the interviewee speaking about the very personal topic of vocation. Doing so automatically established an atmosphere of trust and also gave me an indirect perspective of the interviewee’s philosophical standpoint. I followed with questions such as:

- Describe a pivotal learning experience of yours.
- What makes a good teacher?
- Why are you a teacher?

Often the pivotal learning experience was connected to civic engagement and for many it inspired them to use service-learning in their teaching. Furthermore, by encouraging interviewees to discuss the qualities of a good teacher, they would elaborate on the kinds of teaching they were trying to emulate. These questions were formulated give an insight into how much consideration interviewees had given to their own skill as educators and the impact they were having on their students. Having established something of the interviewee’s past and present (why they had chosen the road to where they now were) and to elaborate on the interviewee’s philosophy of education and hopefully give an insight into their goals of good teaching. The judgements about good and bad pedagogy based on their personal experience would influence the teaching styles that they would adopt.

Teaching in general is different from engaging with the community and depending on whether the interviewee was a lecturer or service-learning

coordinator I would discuss engaged pedagogy by choosing some of the following questions.

- What is the public purpose of your discipline?
- What should be the role of the university in the community?
- What are your aims in using service-learning?
- Society has a huge number of problems with many contributing factors; how can service-learning change the world?
- Tell me some of the ways you have ‘sold’ service-learning to higher education management.
- Describe some of the weaknesses and pitfalls of using service-learning. Talk to me about things that can go wrong in terms of running a service-learning course.

In only a few of the universities I visited was service-learning mandatory; therefore, almost all of the academics I spoke to made a choice to use service-learning. I wanted to see what influenced that decision, and how the thought process had worked around that choice. This would give an insight into how much the participants considered their teaching strategy and the factors influencing their civic engagement.

When I asked teachers about the courses that they taught and why they chose service-learning as a pedagogy, I found that the replies became caught up in the details of the course and how service-learning addressed the learning outcomes. This continued into issues of the course content and examples of the service-learning projects that their students conducted. This was not directly relevant to the research question, and these interviews produced data that during the analysis phase, proved not to be as productive as following interviews. So as to circumvent being distracted with a discussion of course content, I changed the importance I gave to these questions after the sixth interview. It was important to keep the interview focused on the research topic therefore, the interview guide was legitimately adapted to steer the interview towards certain themes, though not towards desired answers (Kvale, 1996, Seidman, 1998).

I wanted to discover if interviewees asked themselves the question ‘why do I do what I do, the *way* I do it?’ Though I did not expect them to use those words, I

wanted to see what form their introspection took. I sought to elicit answers which would describe how participants considered their teaching practice; the modes of reflection they used; the frequency of which these modes were used and how their reflection impacted on their practice. Questions about reflective practice included:

- How do you get feedback on your practice from others?
- How do you use reflection in your personal learning?
- Is there a safe space in which to discuss the practice of academia amongst peers?
- What questions do you have about reflection?

I adopted a systematic approach to asking academics to discuss their practice from different perspectives. This included the reflection they used with their students to see if they used any of those techniques to reflect on their own practice. It also included asking about practices that may not have been considered to be reflection techniques such as getting feedback from peers and students, ways of tweaking lectures and workshops; and informal critical incident analysis.

When I asked academics how they reflected their answers indicated that there was a difference between what they did and what they wanted to do. I developed the ‘magic wand’ question:

- Given all the time and resources you wanted, what else would you do to reflect on your practice?

It took some time to hone the wording of this question so that interviewees were clear that I was asking them about their own reflection as opposed to the use of reflection in class. Many had never considered the idea of what they would do if they had unlimited resources. It gave in insight into the needs of academics regarding reflective practice as well as the barriers which existed to them achieving their goals. I quickly learned that I had to give plenty of time to allow participants to consider the question. Many responded initially with ‘good question’ and took a few moments to formulate an answer. Other said that the

question was useful and could be applied in other areas of their practice. Long pauses in normal conversation may seem uncomfortable but I learned to overcome the instinct to fill the ‘dead air’ by allowing the interviewee the time to give due consideration to the question I had posed. This contributed to the atmosphere and I believe it put interviewees at ease, as they understood that I was interested in their deep thoughts, I was not in a hurry and I did not expect them to have instant answers for probing questions.

There was a period at the beginning of the data collection process during which I worked on honing the slate of questions and the wording of the questions themselves. After each of the first six interviews I reflected on the answers and tweaked the questions slightly. I noted the questions that may not have been clear, and tried a different syntax or sentence structure the next time. I reflected on the responses of the first few academics to evaluate if the interview questions were achieving their aim. I honed the list of questions and amended or dropped some depending on the responses I was getting. I used the direct question ‘how do you reflect on your practice?’ and initially this was met by some interviewees with a little confusion, sometimes with the response ‘I would have to think about that’ or a discussion about one technique used. It became clear during the first six interviews that many of the academics had not explicitly reflected on their own reflection process. This is not to say that they did not reflect on their use of service-learning, but they may not have given as much consideration to the *process of reflecting on* the use of service-learning. I saw that I would need to ask questions around the topic of reflection to be able to access the data from different angles. This required more than the direct question of ‘how do you reflect on your practice?’ so I worked up to the topic by discussing teaching and service-learning first.

When first developing the interview questions, I considered if there was a link between the reflection techniques that academics used and their personal learning style. Though this seemed like an avenue of investigation that would lead to interesting discoveries, I dropped the question after the sixth interview because I realised that in order to pursue the topic systematically, I would have needed to conduct a test to ascertain interviewees learning style using a survey

such as Kolb's (1999a) or Honey and Mumford's (1992). Furthermore, it became clear from the responses to this question that service-activities usually had enough variety to stimulate all learning styles, and that more than one method of reflection was usually used. There was a consensus that multiple methods of reflection were most effective for reflecting on service-experiences and likewise most academics used more than one reflection technique. Upon reflection, what I thought would be an interesting insight into reflective practice became redundant. This was confirmed in the literature by Eyler *et al.* (1996) who suggest that students should be provided with a range of reflection techniques to cater for all learning styles.

I developed an interview schedule, which had a list of questions that would cover a broad range of topics related to reflection in service-learning. However, because time was not always unlimited and I was using an unstructured interview that ran the risk of meandering with some interviewees, I knew I would not get the chance to ask ever single question. When I had only a short time available I adapted the format of the interview to fit the slot but yet make it worthwhile. On these occasions I needed to focus less on service-learning and more on reflective practice. I wanted to have insight into how much the interviewees had thought about their own teaching and the application of a particular pedagogy in practice. In the shorter interviews, I used the following opening questions:

- Can you tell me why you are a teacher?
- What makes a good teacher?
- What are your assumptions about your students?

The remainder and majority of the interview was then focused on reflection; both with students and individually. These questions would be followed by prompts to discuss personal reflection techniques, and the issues around reflecting on one's practice.

- How do you use reflection effectively in your classroom?
- So how do you get them to get beneath the description?
- Tell me how you use reflection in your own learning?

- Given all the time and resources you wanted, what else would you do to reflect on your practice?
- What are your questions about reflection?

The exact wording of the questions depended on the context of the conversation. Sometimes they were worded as prompts rather than direct questions in an effort to link themes to the interviewee's train of thought. Each interview began with the participant stating his or her name and occupation, to ensure that audio files could not be misnamed or misquoted. The overall atmosphere was that of a conversation, however, I was careful to keep my contributions limited to questions and prompts so as to give room to my interviewee. Though I wanted to give the impression to the interviewee that we were having an informal conversation, that discussion followed a carefully considered structure, was systematically executed, and focused on drawing the answers I could from my interviewees.

### **3.9 Ethical Data Collection**

Lincoln (1995, p. 284) discusses research with what she terms the *sacredness* of 'a profound concern for human dignity, justice, and interpersonal respect' which involves creating relationships that are based on 'equality and mutual respect, the granting of dignity, and a deep appreciation of the human condition' (ibid.). In gathering the data, I made every effort to ensure that it was done according to an ethical and respectful protocol.

All participants were requested to provide an interview. All participated voluntarily. Many expressed an interest in receiving copies of the completed research. All of those interviewed were aware that I was new to the field and was consulting them because of their prior experience in service-learning.

The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder. In a small number of examples, I was asked to pause the recording of the interview because the interview was interrupted (e.g. by a telephone ringing, or by someone entering the room). However, at no time did any interviewee ask to stop the interview because they were dissatisfied with either the questions or the manner in which they were being interviewed.

All participants in the study were formally requested for their consent to use the interview as part of the data. A copy of the consent form is in Appendix 3. The name and contact details of the academic supervisor of this research were clearly stated for further query in case there was cause for complaint. Prior to the interview, participants were given the background and aim of the study. Interviewees were aware that the research project sought to contribute to the field of service-learning in general and to the area of reflection in particular and some expressed a desire to participate for these specific reasons.

To adhere to protocol, the research question and method of data gathering were outlined to the participants, and they were given the option to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice or repercussion. Participants were told that pseudonyms would be used instead of their own names and that every effort would be made to ensure their anonymity by altering or omitting details such as their name and that of their course and university. The participants are referred to in this work by fictional forenames, none of which correspond to the real forenames of any participant. Though it may seem informal in an academic work not to refer to interviewees as 'Dr Smith' or 'Participant 23', using forenames reflects the conversational atmosphere in which the interviews took place and the personal nature of the relationship between researcher and participant.

I assured all participants that they would be provided with a copy of the findings directly by me. The interviews were kept confidential and available only to me, my academic panel and on occasions to a professional transcriber.

Because of the large amount of data being considered, I used a professional transcription service to transcribe some of the interviews. Cohen *et al.* (2011, p.

542) highlight that ‘given that some qualitative data may be sensitive or personal, the researcher will not only need to consider who will perform any transcription, but the ethical conditions (e.g. of confidentiality) to which the transcriber must be subject.’ Where the services of a professional transcriber were used, the audio file was accompanied by a confidentiality clause which bound the transcriber to confidentiality, assured that information from the audio files or typed transcripts would not be shared with anyone and, finally required that copies of transcript data would be deleted from computer hard drives and disks. See Transcriber’s Confidentiality Clause in Appendix 4. Some of the interviews I transcribed myself and some remained in audio form. As per the University’s ethics protocol for research data, the digital recordings were erased after the interviews were transcribed, and the hard copy transcriptions will be kept in a locked cabinet for five years.

An expert in computer software was consulted for training in the use of NVivo, the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Some samples of the raw data were visible to him during the training sessions; however, by this stage the real names of the participants had been removed. The tutor has a blanket confidentiality agreement with the National University of Ireland, Galway, and therefore, the anonymity of the participants was not compromised.

Many of the participants said that their motivation for providing me with an interview was to contribute to the development of the pedagogy. Many of those interviewed have either kept in touch by e-mail and some have sought to collaborate on research projects with me following the initial meeting.

### **3.10 Data Coding and Analysis Process**

I used a general inductive approach to the data analysis and though it is not always explicitly labelled as such, it is discussed in the literature on qualitative data analysis (Bryman & Burgess, 1994, Dey, 1993, Thomas, 2006). ‘Inductive analysis refers to approaches that primarily uses detailed readings of raw data to

derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher. The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies' (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). Inductive data analysis strategy is guided by the research question, which gives the focus for analysis, but it does not follow previously held expectations of what the inquiry will find (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Thomas, 2006).

It involves reading data transcripts numerous times and isolating topics which are sorted for ease of analysis (Jain & Ogden, 1999, Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Thomas, 2006). Meaningful units of text are identified as being related to the research question, and relevant segments of text are collected together in labelled codes (Creswell, 2002). These codes are 'commonly created from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments' (Thomas, 2006, p. 241). Unlike quantitative coding, individual segments of text may be stored in more than one code and segments of text that are not relevant to the research question, need not be coded at all (Thomas, 2006). The codes are regularly revisited and revised and segments that no longer fit that code are moved or collected together in a new code. As new codes emerge from the data a frame can develop, and with further rereading categories, broad themes and concepts can surface through the analysis process (Jain & Ogden, 1999, Thomas, 2006). This framework can take on the shape of a tree (Bazeley, 2007) with categories branching out into themes, which contain topics. Decisions are made regarding what is then seen to be most relevant data and what is less relevant to the focus of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Thomas, 2006). The data which is less effective in answering the research question is left to one side.

'The outcome of an inductive analysis is the development of categories into a model or framework that summarizes the raw data and conveys key themes and processes' (Thomas, 2006, p. 240). When no new themes emerge it is seen that the major themes have been indentified and the analysis is complete (Marshall, 1999).

Thomas (2006) posits that the general inductive approach produces findings in the form of a description of the most important themes. He continues by differentiating this from other approaches such as grounded theory (which describes theory that include core themes); phenomenology (which recounts the narrative about an experience); and discourse analysis (which describes multiple meanings in text).

The coding and data analysis stage of qualitative research is similar to a reflective exercise. It is necessary to organise and sort the large amount of data into codes and categories before being able to identify what the data says. The critically reflective aspect goes beyond simply describing ‘what’, but highlights why the information is important and what can be done with it, thus linking it to future action. The data analysis process followed Borton’s (1970) ‘what, so what, now what?’ model of reflection.

#### *What?*

In order to deal with the large quantity of data I subjected it to 5 stages of coding. Coding Phases 1 to 4: broad coding, grouping by topic, cross-coding, distilling. These four coding phases isolated *what* was said regarding different topics and places the data into principal categories of subject matter. Coding Phases 5: coding on, isolated the six most important topics within the category of Reflective Practice and subjected them to further coding into sub-topics.

Chapter 4 Findings describes in greater detail what the interviewees said and isolates the key issues which arose from the data. The chapter highlights and discusses the six practical needs and the three philosophical needs that interviewees have regarding their reflective practice.

#### *So what?*

Chapter 5 Analysis and Model highlight why the information is important and the implications that the findings have for practice. Through analysis of the data and the context of the research topic, the *so what* phase established what could then be done with the data. Drawing on the analysis of the data and the existing literature, I propose a model which could address the practical needs and philosophical needs of engaged academics.

*Now what?*

Chapter 6 The Promotion of Reflective Service-Learning in Ireland and Chapter 7 Recommendations and Conclusions put the results of the data analysis into the context of Irish higher education. The challenges which exist for the application of the model are discussed and recommendations are made for how these challenges may be overcome.

One of the aims of this research is to facilitate change, an idea which is influenced by critical theory. As someone who believes in aspects of critical theory, I think it is important that we have a critique of how we understand education, teaching and learning. There must be continuous critique of higher education and why we do what we do, the way we do it. Critique is not just negative condemnation, but a close examination of the institutional system. This critically reflective aspect of what can be changed so as to contribute to the future practice of academics was central to the coding and analysis of the data.

I reflected with peers and mentors on the issues which emerged from the data, over the twelve months during which the data analysis was being conducted. Some issues arose during my analysis of the pilot project such as: the impact that learning styles may have on reflection, the confusion that some academics had around reflective practice and the practice of silent contemplative reflection. I pursued these issues in later interviews and some took on more importance than others. Certain issues which arose in the analysis were set to one side *to let them stew*, so to speak. I then completed the reflective cycle at a later date by discussing the new ideas that had developed with peers.

### 3.10.1 Data coding with CAQDAS

Data analysis involves the examination of information and drawing meaning from it in relation to the research question. As recommended by Bazeley (2007, p. 114), I used computer assisted qualitative data analysis software for its 'rigorous sorting and matching capacity'. NVivo is widely accepted as a tool that offers efficiency and transparency to the qualitative researcher (Richards, 2009). The software can automate many of the time-consuming administrative aspects of data analysis, leaving more time for the researcher to critically reflect on the data. The software allows the data analysis process to be clearly tracked and monitored to assure the transparency required for rigorous academic research.

There is a critique that CAQDAS has the potential to make qualitative data analysis a rigid and automated process when it actually requires human interpretation (Kelle *et al.*, 1995). It is the task of the researcher to interpret the data, examine relationships, conceptualize and develop theories, and using CAQDAS allows the researcher more time to spend on interpretative analysis because many of the clerical tasks are automated (Bringer *et al.*, 2004). The length of time taken to analyse the data and the organic manner in which conceptualisation developed would counter the criticism that using CAQDAS could be an automated analysis of text. Bringer *et al.* (2004) draw attention to the criticism that because NVivo is usually taught using built-in demonstration software which has its own embedded epistemological assumptions, this can influence the researcher. They suggest that one of the ways to overcome this potential problem is if the researcher is taught CAQDAS by a suitable qualified qualitative researcher (Bringer *et al.*, 2004). I did not use the demonstration tutorials when learning to use NVivo but received training in the use of the software from an authorised and experienced NVivo trainer. Furthermore, I received regular input from my academic supervisor on the process of the data coding and analysis.

NVivo can assist the analysis process because of its ability to manage and sort such a large quantity of data, giving easy access to interview transcripts and

the ability to search for particular segments. It is a sifting and sorting tool, which manages the segments and allows for continuous arranging and re-arranging of segments of data as would happen with analysing data that was cut up on bits of paper. NVivo also allows for the coding of audio, so that I could return to particular segments that were significant and code them without the need to transcribe the entire interview which may not have been as relevant.

Segments with similar topics were placed in folders. These folders grew organically and in some cases had sub-folders within them that developed around a particular topic; for example the code dealing with the topic of 'Reflection Methods' contained sub-folders dealing with 'Written', 'Verbal' and 'Creative' methods of reflecting.

NVivo has a text searching feature which can collect coded segments according to word frequency. However, I did not use the text searching feature to automatically code the data as this is a mechanical process which carries the risk of missing significant segments. All of the coding was done manually, by rereading the data, and maintaining familiarity with the data by repeatedly listening to the interviews.

### **3.10.2 Importing data into NVivo**

All interviews with the 43 service-learning academics were imported into NVivo, either as audio or transcribed text. 21 interviews were transcribed which included 23 interviewees and 13 audio interviews imported which included 20 interviewees. Four of the interviews were focus groups which involved more than one interviewee.

Each interviewee was logged as a case and each case was given attributes of relevant information which included, time, place and duration of interview; the gender and occupation of the interviewee.

### 3.10.3 Coding phase 1: broad coding

As I read the whole transcript or listened to the complete interview, I asked myself ‘what is being said here?’ and ‘what does this say to me?’ I searched for terms which would encapsulate the different angles. Within NVivo, I created folders according to the topics that were being discussed. I struggled with folder titles, so as to find the best way to group segments of data together. This was not a mechanical process with codes being generated by NVivo, but rather a human process of trying to make sense of the different segments of the interviews. When I had decided on the correct title, I then copied and pasted segments of the interview into these folders.

The folder titles were created in one of two ways; (1) *in vivo* codes; and (2) emerging codes.

1. *In vivo codes* are phrases or ideas that pop out of the text which can act as coding classifications. An example of this kind of code is ‘Rubrics and Methods of Reflection’ that had segments referring methods of reflecting either for students or for faculty. It can be single methods for drawing meaning from experience or frameworks such as DEAL, ABCs of Reflection, or Kolb’s learning cycle.
2. *Emerging codes* refers to code titles which emerged slowly after listening to the interviews a number of times and it became clear that the segments could be grouped by topic e.g. when something significant was stated by a number of interviewees like ‘perspectives of reflection’ I kept that concept in mind when rereading the rest of the interviews and considered the data differently. I asked myself – if they are talking about perspectives, could they be discussing ‘Frames of Reflection?’ I then created a new folder and pasted segments to it which could be examined in this context.

By the end of the first phase of coding, I had generated a total of 42 code folders listed in Fig. 3. Segments of interviews were cut up and grouped together by topic in different folders.

Advocacy and Direct Action	Encourage others to reflect	Reflective Practitioner/Teacher
Agent of Change	Engaged Faculty	Responsibility to Students
Aims of Service-Learning	Good Teaching	Role of University
Anecdotes	Learning from Experience	Reflection Rubrics & Methods
Assumptions about Students	Learning Styles	Safe Space
Civic Engagement	Frames for Reflection	Selling Service-Learning
Common Good	Motivation to Teach	SL – Change the World
Communities of Learning	Partnerships	Silent Reflection
Community	Passion	Teaching Experience
Community-Based Research	Peer Reflection	Teaching Practice
Creative Reflection	Personal Reflection	Theory to Practice
Cultural Context	Pitfalls of Service-Learning	Verbal Reflection
Depth of Reflection	Power-shift	Voice
Discussion of Reflection	Questions about Reflection	Written Reflection

Fig. 3: Names of topic folders created during first stage of coding.

Appendix 5 Coding Phase 1: Broad Coding, gives more details about these coding folders. It illustrates the entire 42 topic folders listed in Fig. 3. Each code has a description of the criteria for inclusion in that folder. The table shows how many sources (interviewees) have segments of their interview coded to the folder and how many segments of interviews are stored there. A more detailed description of the coding criteria process follows immediately below.

### **3.10.4 Coding according to criteria**

Folders were created in NVivo to store segments of interviews that had something in common; these folders had defining criteria and only data which satisfied these criteria was coded to it. Below are three examples of coding criteria listing the folder title and its description.

*Causing Change:* Practitioners discuss the issues they have about reflective practice that relate to behaviour, changing behaviour, or causing change in society.

*Learning Communities:* References to groups of people with shared expertise and motivation for joint learning. Also seeks to discover if interviewees have a forum to reflect with peers and to what degree they use it, whether it is formal or informal and the reasons they do or do not avail of the opportunities to reflect with peers.

*Peer Reflection:* Direct question – ‘How do you get feedback on your practice from others?’ Also seeks to discover if interviewees have a forum to reflect with peers and to what degree they use it, whether it is formal or informal and the reasons they do or do not avail of the opportunities to reflect with peers.

### **3.10.5 Coding phase 2: grouping by category**

Examining reflective practice required discussing the procedures of pedagogy in general and service-learning in particular. Because the participants were asked for more than just their response to the research question itself, the conversations covered a wide spectrum of topics regarding the practice of engaged pedagogy. It was necessary to narrow the range of data to that which referred directly to the research question. Similar to axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) the codes are collected together into distinct categories, so that the codes in each category are connected in a particular way. The topics of responses which had been coded could be categorised under the following headings:

*Reflective Practice:* Topics that refer to the general use of reflection as a part of the practice of implementing service-learning. This includes reflection by students and reflection by academics.

*Pedagogy:* The practice of teaching in general, not necessarily using a pedagogy engaged with the community. It deals with academics' own experience in education, and what they have learned through teaching.

*Service-Learning:* Topics that refer to the practicalities of implementing service-learning.

In order to isolate the data that was most relevant to the research question some of the data had to be left to one side. Therefore, all of the 42 coding folders were moved into one of these three category folders.

Eight folders went into the Pedagogy category and fourteen were grouped into the Service-Learning category. The remaining twenty folders were categorised under Reflective Practice. When this regrouping was done, the data took on a new shape which resulted in it being divided into the following three broad categories: Reflective Practice; Pedagogy and Service-Learning.

As stated earlier in section 3.8.1 the interviews had been conducted to cover the three areas of service-learning, teaching and reflection. The answers given to questions on these three areas often crossed over into the other two areas, so for example a question about reflection methods may easily have included elements that were relevant to service-learning and pedagogy. Had I only asked the questions on reflective practice I would have missed other relevant data about reflection that arose when discussing pedagogy and service-learning. It was necessary therefore, in the following stage of coding to insure that each category contained all the references made to that issues but which may have been coded into one of the other two categories.

### 3.10.6 Coding phase 3: cross-coding

At the beginning of coding phase three, all of the data had been segmented into topics with each segment being coded into one of the 42 folders and each folder relocated into one of the three major categories.

All of the folders were re-examined to ensure that none of the data was out of place. If a segment no longer fitted into a folder topic, or any other existing folder, a new folder was created to cater for it. If data in a particular folder made reference to a topic in another folder, that segment was cross-coded to the second folder. For example, a reply that discussed the experience a practitioner had as a teacher in secondary schools was coded in the 'Teaching Experience' folder. At the cross-coding phase, because this segment contained a reference to that practitioner keeping a journal about their teaching, it was also coded to the folder called 'Written Reflection'.

Finally, I went through each folder meticulously to ensure that all the data was correctly coded by category. Therefore, every reference to reflection (regardless of how brief) had been coded in the appropriate folder under Reflective Practice category, and likewise for the references to Service-Learning and then Pedagogy. This way I was positive that there were no segments relevant to the three broad categories that were not coded to a folder within them.

### 3.10.7 Coding phase 4: distilling

By this stage, the three major categories of Reflective Practice, Service-Learning and Pedagogy contained folders of relevance to those topics only. As there was a need to filter out the data that was not directly relevant to the research question, further coding was required. This was called distilling. The Service-Learning category dealt with topics such as the role of the university in the community, civic engagement, administration and community partnerships. For example, one interviewee discussed how the confusion over the definition of service-learning can impede her implementation of the pedagogy in her university:

**Jessica:** But a lot of folks don't know what service-learning is and I know one of the things that I'm getting tripped up right now

with, now that I've been using service-learning for fifteen years – you get new administrators in, new people in – and there are so many different definitions floating around about what service-learning is, how do you do it, who's responsible for it, and should it go in the academic side of the house or the student services.

The Pedagogy category dealt with topics such as assessment, learning styles and teaching experience. An example of a segment in this category stored in the folder Teaching Experience is the following:

**BÓD:** *What are the courses that you teach regularly throughout the year?*

**Dorothy:** So, I teach some courses on what we call Connected Learning, which is helping students think more systemically and in a more holistic manner. I teach courses that are internship courses and field study courses. I teach a couple that focus mostly on rural community development.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest that selecting themes in data analysis has to be subject to reflexivity. I struggled with the data to draw out the dominant categories and leave the rest aside, though it was no less valuable. Towards the middle of the analysis process, I saw that there were aspects of engaged practice covered in the interviews that related to programme implementation (such as service workload) and to teaching in general (such as module content and assessment techniques). This data did not deal with the reflective practice of academics and I reluctantly left it to one side to focus on addressing the more important topics that emerged. Though it was rich in the wisdom and experience of seasoned practitioners, I had to focus only on the data that related to the research question.

The data in the Service-learning and Pedagogy categories was of less significance to the research question than the data in the Reflective Practice

category. As the data in the two former categories was less relevant to the research question, any coded segments that may have been overlooked in these two categories were coded-on to a relevant folder in Reflective Practice category for further consideration. After this cross-coding was done, the categories of Service-Learning and Pedagogy were left to one side for the remainder of the study. Appendix 6 Coding Phase 4: Distilling, shows the two categories Pedagogy and Service-Learning and the folders they contained that were no longer being considered in the research

### **Coding phase 5: Coding-on**

The coding-on stage re-examines the data to see how it can be grouped so as to make analysis easier. With the categories of Service-Learning and Pedagogy left to one side, the remaining category called Reflective Practice comprised of 29 folders. These folders contained all of the data most relevant to the research question. Further coding was necessary to tease out the different topics discussed by interviewees. To organise these folders into a more manageable form, I created six new folders to cover the six general topics which were discussed by interviewees regarding reflective practice.

1. Questions about Reflection
2. Learning Community
3. Passion
4. Reflection on Practice
5. Rubrics and Methods of Reflection
6. Teaching and Learning

The Reflective Practice category underwent a total of five levels of coding-on with new folders being created to hold topics that were arising out of this coding process. Appendix 7 Reflective Practice: Coding-on, tabulates the degree of coding that was conducted on the data in this category. It shows the tree-like hierarchy that developed at each level of coding. It also shows the number of sources (interviewees) and the number of interview segments that each folder

contained. An example of one of these topics was the folder called ‘Questions About Reflection’ that had the following description:

Direct question: ‘What questions do you have about reflection?’ This seeks to discover how much the interviewee understands the concept of reflective practice, and what is unclear in their minds about reflection either in theory or practice. It also provides ideas for further research and what relevant or topical questions my peers need answered in this research.

Interview segments within this area were ‘coded-on’ to specific folders, again each one with its own specific definition.

*How to address stereotypes:* Practitioners discuss their questions about how to use reflection more effectively to address stereotypes and prejudices that their students (or they themselves) may have.

*Questions about questioning:* Practitioners discuss the difficulty and questions they have with the process of questioning in reflective practice, either with students, peers or alone.

*Making connections:* Practitioners discuss the problems they have around making connections through reflection.

*Causing change:* Practitioners discuss the questions they have about reflective practice that relates to behaviour, changing behaviour, or causing change.

*Headspace:* Practitioners discuss how to create the headspace necessary for reflection.

*How to reflect:* Practitioners refer to the question how to reflect, or how to reflect better.

The tree structure formed by the codes in the category of Reflective Practice organised the data in a framework that made it easy to examine the six general topics in more detail. Each of these topics was now ready for analysis and fed into the overall findings described in the next chapter.

### 3.11 Data Analysis Process

#### *Generating analytical themes*

The coding strategy provided a framework for examining the data in clear and organised manner. In its mechanical nature it was rigorous and rational. By this stage I was so familiar with the data that what was said it began to take shape in a more organic manner, and two themes percolated through all the conversations which had been dissected and coded. In my analysis of the data the two key themes that emerged were *space and voice*. When I examined the codes in the Reflective Practice category in the light of space and voice, I could see that what academics were saying about their reflective practice resonated with these two analytical themes.

*Space* refers to both physical space and mental space. On the few occasions that interviewees refer to space, they do so in passing or indirectly. The theme emerged from the data and what they said could be seen in terms of this concept. The scope and limitations of a physical location where reflection happens influences the kind of reflection that happens there. There is a different atmosphere on campus, off-campus or in a neutral space and this impacts on the reflective process. The concept of space also goes beyond location to headspace and the space between peers. Headspace itself was not a word familiar to many of the American academics and it refers to the mental environment for mindfulness, and the capacity to process experience and draw meaning from it. The space between people, the interaction between peers, how peers relate to each other, and the trust that was necessary for people to interact on a deep level were all very relevant to the reflective process and could be viewed in with the theme of space. Safe space refers to an environment in which to reflect with peers, open up and be vulnerable. Safe space raises questions about the criteria and inhibitors to an environment in which peers can reflect on their practice. It became clear that the environment in which reflection happened needed to be safe, so that with peers were able to be at ease with themselves and each other. The communicative space between people needed to be considered and I saw that trust between peers was essential within that space. The familiarity with the reflective space was an element that emerged from how academics reflected on their practice. Practicing reflection techniques through revisiting the reflective space with a degree of regularity made the reflective process more productive.

The form that the reflection took within the reflective space is significant and the issues around structure of reflection can be examined as an issue of space. By examining the data using the theme of space, key findings began to emerge about a suitable safe environment for reflection, a degree of regularity in reflective practice, and the ability to interact with peers in a productive and reflective manner.

*Voice* took some time to emerge as an analytical theme and before it became fully formed it went through the different shapes of language, silence and communication. Language was too tied to words and did not leave scope for the nuance of unspoken words. Likewise, silence was applicable on occasions but because there was more said in the interviews than was left unsaid, it did not work as a general theme. Although the theme of silence was relevant, it did not leave enough room or the idea of collective voice to be discussed.

Because they relate to how meaning making is expressed, the methods that academics used to reflect on their practice are connected to by the theme of voice. The theme of voice is a useful analytical tool because although the interviews recount what was said, it was clear that there was much left unspoken in relation to reflection. Some of the interviewees had to search for words to discuss their reflective practice; others paused in silence to give the question deeper consideration. The surprising fact that there was no forum for academics to reflect together, showed that there was an absence of dialogue among peers about engaged practice in a structured manner. It made me think about a place where one could voice ones reflections. It raised the question: if there was such a forum, what would be said in it, what would be voiced there?

The mode of expressing an idea influences what is articulated and how meaning is drawn from it. Even the reflection that is unvoiced takes shape in thoughts which are named by the very thinking of them. Therefore, silent contemplation is as connected to voice as a reflective conversation or a written journal entry. The expression of reflection – be it verbal or written – is an articulation of understanding and can be as heard as a solo voice or as a choir; as a communal declaration which is chanted or indeed as a cacophony of conflicting opinions. The common denominator is that meaning making is connected by voice. The methods of meaning making that the academics described were contemplative, verbal, written informal and formal, individual and collaborative and were all linked by voice.

The themes of *space* and *voice* are linked not only because they provide a way of seeing the data from conceptual perspective, but as will be discussed later in section 5.5.1 they dovetail into the concept of discourse: the voice that speaks of the space in the broader context of higher education.

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 537) say that ‘there is no single or correct way to analyse or present qualitative data’, but refer to qualitative data analysis as ‘making sense of data’ (ibid.). This is similar to the process of reflection insofar as it is *meaning making* (Hicks *et al.*, 2005, Le Cornu, 2009, Ng & Tan, 2009) and returns to my own definition of reflection of drawing meaning from experience. Understanding does not come only from individual researchers locking themselves away and reflecting on their data. The responses of others to our interpretations are a central part of the process of developing a trustworthy account. ‘Team meetings and peer debriefings provide a valuable opportunity to begin the dialogue process with other researchers early in the research process’ (Ezzy, 2002, pp. 67-68). I took a number of steps to follow Ezzy’s advice to interpret the data and develop a discussion of the research question. As a part of that process, I had regular discussions about the research process with my academic supervisor to ensure that the study was adhering to best practice in rigour, to examine areas of interest which arose in the data and to consider the implications for the field of study.

I also discussed aspects of the research and chapters with ‘critical friends’ whom Day (1993, p. 88) describes as ‘trusted colleagues who have not only technical abilities but also human relating interpersonal qualities and skills as well as time, energy and the practice of reflecting upon their own practice.’ This was a planned and purposeful part of the reflective process and contributed constructive feedback, interesting perspectives and new ways of viewing particular elements of the research. With the coding finished I was able to satisfy myself that I had distilled the quintessence of what the interviewees had discussed and identified the principal areas of interest which arose.

As a reflective practitioner, it made sense to me to approach the whole research project with a criticality that kept returning to ‘What, So what, Now what?’ Having gathered the data and meticulously sorted *what* my interviewees

had said, the next step was to ask, *So what?* What does it mean? The concluding chapter of this thesis will address the issue of, *Now what?*

In analysing the meaning of what my research participants said I drew on the experts in reflective practice in the published literature and the practitioners I had met personally at academic conferences and while collecting my data. I adopted best practice in reflection as outlined in the literature and I followed the example of my interviewees and learned from how they reflect. I used solo and peer reflection techniques which included contemplative, verbal and written reflection in the form of critical listening, critical talking, critical reading, and reflective writing.

### **3.11.1 Critical listening**

Le Compte and Preissle (1993, p. 238) suggest that ‘analysis often begins early on in the data gathering process so that theory generation can be undertaken’. I worked with the data immediately and remained familiar with all of the interviews throughout the research process. Because I gathered a large amount of data in a variety of locations, at different times, I knew I would need to be immersed in the words of the interviewees to reflect on the data effectively and draw meaning from it. The importance of listening in the reflective process has been clearly highlighted in the literature (Deeley, 2010, Hicks *et al.*, 2005, Smith, 2008). Abigail discussed how effective her listening exercise was in creating headspace to access deeper meaning of experience. A number of interviewees said that they let a question sit and ‘mulled it over’. This process was not passively ‘thinking about stuff’, and it was not trying to force experience through a processing mangle to achieve the dry insight at the other side.

Listening to my recorded interviews was a solo contemplation of the research topic. I listened repeatedly to each recording in two ways. The first was by actively examining the interview by comparing the written transcript to the audio. This took considerably longer than the duration of the interview as there were corrections to be made to the transcript, and occasions when there could be different interpretations of what was being said. An example of ambiguities of this kind can be seen in the following extract.

**Magnus:** I try to spend time getting to know the student on a personal and academic level, and what their actual aspirations are. When they're adult students, older students, I try to find out what it is that is the work they've done before, and what is the work they're doing now, and why would they wonder into my particular course title.

Was Magnus discussing the curiosity of the adult learners and their sense of wonder, or was he referring to how they were given little guidance in choosing a course? Could I have been misled by accent or does Magnus think about 'the journey' of learning (which he referred to) as an expedition through curiosity?

I also listened passively to the interviews, while walking in the countryside. I 'eavesdropped' repeatedly on the conversations I had had with practitioners. I became so familiar with what had been said that each conversation became like the scene from a favourite film, in which one knows all the lines already. Later, when reading any line from a transcript, I could name the practitioner and even remember the tone of voice used at the time. Being so familiar with the data meant that I could connect strands from different conversations and weave them together. I listened to the voices and also listened the voice of this group of people for what was being said and unsaid.

### **3.11.2 Critical talking**

The significance of critical conversation and dialogue has been well documented in the literature (Black & Plowright, 2010, Bold, 2008, Felten *et al.*, 2006, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, Lillis, 2005). Interviewees discussed the importance of reflective conversation with colleagues. In this extract, Nora talks about the variety of reflection techniques she uses.

**Nora:** Also, dialogue with colleagues, with other faculty, with other service-learning colleagues. So, it's plugging into what is the network out there. So, when I'm struggling with something, I can reach out and say, 'Can you help me make meaning of this?'

In a similar way, I developed a close working relationship with critical friends, many of whom were eminent leaders in the areas of service-learning and

reflective practice. I was lucky to be in close proximity to these people and be able to share common space with them. I discussed aspects of the research with them, though always taking care that none of the respondents could have been identified by them. Through these conversations, aspects of my thinking changed. For example, an expert in the area of situated learning challenged my ideas about the viability of communities of practice in academia by pointing to the political power play on most campuses. This caused me to investigate how the concept of the community of practice could be adapted to address the factors influencing an academic context. In another conversation with a leading researcher in reflective practice, we discussed creative and artistic reflection techniques. I saw how reflection is rooted in the articulation of thought, and learned that language links all reflection regardless of the technique used.

When presenting at conferences, I discussed ideas with practitioners that I did not know personally. During one such presentation I provided the audience with coloured markers and paper and asked them to encapsulate an aspect of their learning in a symbol. I received feedback from the audience, one of whom said: ‘I have done “no word” type models with students in my program, but I did not know it was coming [in the presentation]. It was good to be surprised and have to do it myself. I have learned from this.’ Another simply said ‘thanks for making us reflect.’ From their feedback, I realised that these practitioners may have been familiar with specific reflection techniques in the context of their teaching but not necessarily in the context of their own learning and that real learning took place when they were given the opportunity to reverse the direction. It challenged my assumption that those using reflection with their students necessarily conduct such reflection on their own practice. The critical conversations helped me to come to terms with the holistic nature of the topic and maintained a constant criticality throughout my work.

### **3.11.3 Critical reading**

Maintaining a high level of criticality while reading is a solo contemplative reflection technique. Citing Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006)

Silverman (2010, p. 280) says that ‘the constant comparative method involves simply inspecting and comparing all the data fragments that arise in a single case’. My use of NVivo allowed for the easy comparison of the opinions of numerous interviewees. So as not to exist in a bubble of community engagement thinking, I also compared what interviewees were saying about service-learning to the traditional methods of higher education and this showed the radical difference that exists between the dominant discourse and an alternative pedagogy.

I was impressed by Johann’s method of facilitating reflection with students when he would begin with a broad question and keep drilling down through replies with ‘Why?’ This is similar to progressive focusing (Miles & Huberman, 1984, Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) or funnelling (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, Silverman, 2010) and was an aspect of the reflective data analysis process that I used. I began with the broad topic of service-learning, narrowed that to reflection, and focused further on the reflective practice of the academics, which in turn was examined in more detail by focusing on various aspects of that practice in the light of space and voice.

In reading my transcripts and actively processing what had been said, I asked myself: How can I make the themes of space and voice practical? What is missing? What are the questions these people want answers to? How can I answer those questions? What is the problem in the academic community? How do I contribute to the solution? What is needed and how do I provide something that is practical? After these questions arose, I continually asked if the literature I was reading would provide solutions that were needed in this context. I also considered whether there might be gaps, similarities or contradictions between my data and the literature. Critical friends reviewed drafts of my chapters and gave me insightful feedback and alternative perspectives based on their experience and expertise

#### **3.11.4 Reflective writing**

The power of writing in the reflective process has been discussed extensively in the literature (Boud, 2001, Boyd *et al.*, 2006, Carlile & Jordan, 2007, Nash, 2004, O'Farrell, 2008). Both Keith and Jessica discussed informal writing and Benjamin and Justine highlighted the value of writing for publication in the reflective process. In this way my participants themselves indirectly helped to shape the analysis process.

Gibbs (2007, p. 25) claims that 'writing is thinking'. For numerous reasons alluded to earlier in this chapter, I did not find maintaining a reflective journal as beneficial as other forms of reflection. However, the process of rewriting chapters was more effective. I let drafts 'sit' for a period of time as I completed other work, and on rereading them would see what needed to be altered, what no longer contributed to the narrative and where answers had grown since writing the previous draft. Each draft was viewed in the light of the learning that had happened since the time of writing.

#### **3.12 Analysis of the 6 topics of reflective practice**

I used the general inductive approach to data coding and analysis to arrive at the stage where I had 6 key topics in the category of reflective practice. I reflected on the data, using critical writing, reading, listening and talking. The reflection process was formal in the theoretical approach I had adopted, and informal in the conversations I had with critical friends. It was collaborative with peers and individual in my own research project. It was external in the presentation of preliminary findings at conferences and internal in my own thought process. I examined the data using the structure of the coding process and unstructured process of the themes of voice and space.

This *Questions about Reflection* folder contained codes discussing the problems that academics had with the reflective process. They outlined what they found hard to manage in both their personal reflection and with students and where they wanted to improve their skills. From this I was able to see what were the problem areas that needed

to be addressed, and I went about investigating how these difficulties could be solved. As the analysis progressed I saw that the needs of academics went beyond practical reflection techniques but extended to a deeper philosophical level of voice and space

The *Reflection on Practice*<sup>13</sup> folder contained codes on silent, creative, verbal and written techniques that academics used to examine their practice of using service-learning. There were a number of codes related to deep thought, structured consideration, the examination of assumptions, revelations and aha moments that practitioners had. From this code I was able to document in a concise manner the specific techniques that academics used to reflect on their practice. These were the ways that practitioners voiced their reflection.

The *Learning Community* folder contained codes dealing with reference to learning from others, the interaction between peers, the dialogue and context in which that takes place, and the means of expressing that reflection. From analysis of the discussions about their interactions with colleagues the importance of peer reflection became clear. I saw that some of the barriers to reflection could be overcome through peer reflection – by colleagues sharing their voices in a safe space.

The *Rubric and Methods of Reflection* folder contained codes on reflection techniques that included: creative, silent, verbal, written and student peer-reflection. Though not exclusively so, these are primarily techniques that academics used with their students. From the discussions in these codes I got an insight into what academics considered to be best practice for reflection with students. None of the interviewees said ‘there are a number of traits of good reflection, which are...’ Instead I drew together the various examples that were described, analysed what was being used, and I was able to unpick the different aspects of reflection to isolate the elements which were, according to my interviewees, central to reflective practice. In how reflection was expressed and in the place where it was shared, these elements demonstrated that the themes of voice and space were pertinent to the topic.

In the *Teaching and Learning* folder academics go into detail about how they draw meaning from their experience through the use of various reflection techniques. They discuss the perspectives from which they examine their teaching and learn from experience. Regardless of whether they examine their practice with verbal, written or

---

<sup>13</sup> Reflection on Practice is one of the six key topics. Its folder is named Reflection on Practice to differentiate it from the general coding category of Reflective Practice, in which it is contained.

silent techniques, I saw that they instinctively adopt three positions from which to examine their practice. Through these discussions I got a deeper insight into the frames of reflection that academics used (either formally or informally), which were similar to those discussed in the literature. It was as if three different voices were singing together representing the personal, academic and civic harmonies in the song of civic engagement.

The *Passion* folder contained references to aspects of engaged practice that were insightful because they contributed to the understanding that academics want to develop their own teaching and learning, deepen their reflective practice, develop in different areas of their professional life and open a space for growth to happen.

### **3.12.1 Isolating the 3 key findings**

At this stage, the topic folders that developed during the coding process contained varying numbers of quotes from the interviews. The folders with the most quotes showed that those topics were most frequently referred to by respondents. In considering the data, I reflected on the fact that the research I was conducting aimed to contribute to the reflective practice of service-learning academics. I needed to be able to answer the research question: how do service-learning academics reflect on their practice of using service-learning. By drawing on all of the data that I had analysed in the six key topics named above, I isolated the methods that academics used to reflect on engaged practice. How academics reflected on their engaged practice had not been documented before and is in that respect is a contribution to the field. These techniques of reflection will be described in greater detail in the Findings chapter and will lead to a Typology of Reflection.

In the discussions with academics about the various topics within reflective practice I was able to unpick the tapestry to find the primary colours used in the weave. Through my analysis of the data I identified what they saw as being the elements of good reflection. These were not connected to any particular technique, group of people or environment, but were seen as essential to reflection in general. Ash and Clayton (2009a) list what they believe to be the characteristics of high quality reflection, but this list focuses on the reflection

that students conduct on their service-experience. However, I uncovered elements which were new and not previously identified regarding the reflective practice of academics. These six elements of good reflection deal with the prerequisites for how to find one's voice, and how to create reflective space, both alone and with others.

I saw little point in researching an area that would not be of use to practitioners, and in the spirit of making a difference (an important value in service-learning) I had to isolate what exactly it was that practitioners needed to have addressed. I posed the question 'what do service-learning academics *need*?' The data had been extensively coded into what practitioners said about their practice, why they do what they do, now I re-examined the data to discover what they needed in terms of their reflective practice.

I scrutinised the themes with the question: 'what does this mean?' The data described what the academics did and how they saw various aspects of their practice, but it also highlighted what they did not do and where the gaps were in terms of their practice as compared with best practice. It pointed to the areas that needed closer examination, questions that academics had and problems that they encountered. I sought to understand these issues and, by examining them from different perspectives, sought to find the reasons why academics do what they do the way they do. It became clear that these practitioners wanted to have a deeper understanding of the reflective process. Others expressed their needs in more indirect ways, for example, by discussing their busy schedule and saying that the only time they had to reflect on what they did, was during their commute to work. It became clear then, that they valued reflection but needed more time to reflect.

By identifying the sources of the problems that academics had, and striving to address those problems, I developed a vision of what needed to happen to overcome the barriers to reflecting on engaged practice. This centred on how to create a space in which academics could voice their reflection. As will be discussed later, I wove what academics do, what they should do and what they want to do in terms of their reflection into a space where they could find their

own voice, share that voice and develop through that sharing to improve their practice of using service-learning.

### **3.12.2 Answering the questions**

Ash and Clayton (2004) posit that reflection should move from lower to higher order thinking. This is in parallel with Le Compte and Preissle (1993, p. 238) who suggest that ‘the aim of qualitative data analysis is to move from description to interpretation to the generation of theory.’

Having described the issues raised by the interviewees, I sought to interpret what was significant about what they said. Through critically reflecting on the data and the literature, it became clear to me that certain aspects of the problems that engaged practitioners faced had been addressed in part by other models of reflection. However, these jumbled parts of the jigsaw needed to be assembled in the context of the practical and philosophical needs of a specific community. I saw that there were aspects of the reflective practice of engaged academics that had not been addressed by the existing literature. Though there were various techniques for reflection, these were mostly focused on student reflection. Furthermore, these techniques were product oriented in terms of learning outcomes, and though they have their place, the service-learning reflection techniques discussed in the literature do not include the more abstract factors such as space and voice.

There was such a depth of tacit experiential knowledge among practitioners regarding how to use reflection well that had not been documented, and needed to be put to use. It struck me that across the diversity of the individuals, from differing locations, and various disciplines, the common trait among the service-learning practitioners I interviewed was the desire to keep learning. This was significant and it pointed towards the fact that they all had questions that they wanted answered. I as a researcher was in a similar position and so I followed the example of reflective practitioners by engaging in more comprehensive critical reflection on my data.

With all of the data together, I could see connections between some of the questions and responses practitioners had given. For example, I noticed that a question about reflection posed by a junior lecturer had been answered by a service-learning coordinator, and the dilemma faced each year by a senior professor had been overcome by the innovation of a young teaching assistant. I wanted to put these people together to discuss their practice and contribute to the learning of the others. Through the process of reflection ideas occurred to me. What is needed is a space that connects this community together. The academy is my community, and even though it is usually towards the top of the power pile in campus community partnerships its members have not been focus of deep consideration in the past.

However, the answers offered in the literature and by practitioners experience did not make up a complete solution to the context I was examining. Even by assembling the pieces of this jigsaw it did not make a whole picture. A number of themes surfaced repeatedly from the data that needed to be addressed. There were barriers to reflective practice, both practical and philosophical, which practitioners needed to overcome and these were connected by voice and space.

The process of writing and rewriting helped ideas to develop. Added to the literature on best practice in reflection, and practitioner knowledge I drew the strands together to weave a concept which could address the issues of voice and space and add to the current understanding and practice in using reflection.

### **3.12.3 Validation**

With my goal of providing a practical solution to the research question, the question arose as to whether my ideas would work in practice. Ghaye (2011) suggest three main types of validation for reflecting on one's practice: 1) critical self-validation, 2) peer-group validation, and 3) public validation.

Firstly, I asked myself if I would wish to implement the ideas I was suggesting and would it be a worthwhile endeavour to reflect on my engaged practice. Based on my experience in the field and in writing up the research, I felt that I could not have learned what I did without having reflected upon it. I

remembered the spontaneous reflection session which had ‘ignited’ following a service experience with a group of fellow academics. The reflection would not have happened had I not suggested it, and the morning’s service generated a lively and constructive discussion through the use of different frames of reflection. Though there were parts of the discussion which were challenging, it proved to me that I (and others) would participate in similar discussions given the right circumstances.

Secondly, I consulted with stakeholders on the ideas I was developing and drew on their experience regarding potential pitfalls. I looked to examples in the literature of how different elements of these questions had been addressed successfully, and these will be outlined below. Cohen *et al.* (2011) suggest that because the researcher chooses what data is to be analysed s/he must be open to the input of participants in the analysis stage to insure that a faithful record of events is presented. Throughout the analysis process I consulted with mentors who gave me feedback on the development of my ideas.

Finally, I presented the preliminary findings of the research at conferences to have my ideas rigorously challenged by practitioners, researchers and leaders in the field, and I received both critique and validation in the process. One practitioner wrote in her evaluation: ‘I saw ways I could utilize his observations in SL programming at my institution regarding opportunities for faculty reflections’. Another wrote that the work was ‘specific to academics themselves – [it] implies benefit for improving practice and warding off burn-out, and identifying and cultivating engagement.’

Given the research context and the kind of data it generated, using a reflective method of data analysis fitted the research. Though other methods could have been used, it was imperative that I use a method that was congruent to the research aims and complimentary to the data generated. This chapter will apply an analysis of the data and the literature to the construction of a model of reflective practice, focused on the needs of academics who use service-learning.

### 3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the paradigm I adopted for this study. I sought to construct meaning from the experiences I had when I immersed myself in the context of the research topic. After accessing the people who had experience relevant to the research question I engaged them in deep conversation about their practice. Interviewees said that they found the act of sharing their stories a reflective exercise in itself, and that through my questioning them about why they do what they do, the way they do it, they gave deeper consideration to their own practice.

I adopted a general inductive approach to the coding and analysing the data. Phases 1 to 4 are the ‘What?’ stages of the reflective data analysis. These isolated exactly what was said, what topics were important and the weight that was given by interviewees to these topics. For example, the fact that 24 respondents referred to written reflection 48 times shows that it was a method that gained more attention than creative reflection, to which 14 respondents referred 19 times.

Using the themes of space and voice, three areas of focus emerged from the data which were: the reflection techniques used by academics, the elements of good reflection and the needs that academics had regarding reflective practice.

When discussing reflection, interviewees described in detail the reflection methods they used, both with their students and to reflect on their own practice. These descriptions of their reflective were important as a foundation of *what* they do. They also discussed what they believed – based on their experience – to be good reflection. This also was vitally important because it showed *why* they do what they do.

In Findings chapter that follows, I will discuss in greater detail the Methods of Reflection that my interviewees use and what they see as the Elements of Good Reflection, because without analysing this information I could not get a deeper understanding of the research question. The reflection techniques and the core elements that those techniques are woven together to address the needs of engaged academics which is addressed in a model.

Ezzy (2002, p. 165) describes how ‘the process of interpreting and analysing qualitative data dances between the worlds of rigorous and reasoned interpretations, imaginative visions, calculated distance and engaged political practice.’ Through a deep and reflective consideration of the data I isolated key elements regarding the reflective practice of engaged academics that I believe to be significant. The dance of drawing meaning from the data gathering experience continues in the following chapters.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

*How do service-learning academics critically reflect on their practice?*

In this chapter, I will discuss the answers from the 43 service learning practitioners who were interviewed as part of this research. Through the use of NVivo, their answers were laid out under specific themes, and then compared and contrasted with relevant literature. An analysis and interpretation of this information was used to make recommendations for the future practice of academics who use service-learning and to inform a model of reflection in the use of service-learning.

Interviewees discuss the methods they use to reflect on their teaching practice. These methods included contemplation, verbal reflection with students and peers, written reflection alone and in collaboration and the scholarship of teaching and learning. They go on to discuss how they encourage their students to reflect on their service experience. Based on this, I will highlight what academics believe are the necessary elements for productive reflection. These essential ingredients include: a knowledge of how to reflect, depth of reflective thinking, adequate time and regularity of reflection, a suitable structure to follow, appropriate communication skills and safe space in which to conduct reflection. Analysis of this data led to the development of a model of reflective practice and a typology of reflection, outlined in the next chapter.

The interviews were not simply a question and answer session; instead they were intricate conversations about reflective practice which had many threads woven through them including: personal reflection; student reflection; questions about the reflective process; difficulties and discoveries from experience; and advice. Comments concerning personal and student reflection are intertwined with each other and often difficult to unpick. One common thread was the personal nature of the story that each participant shared. To insure the anonymity of the participants, each one is referred to here by a fictional forename which

does not correspond to any of the interviewees. Forenames were used instead of numbers or formal titles such as ‘Dr Smith’ to try to recreate the informal and conversational nature of the interviews.

## **4.2 What, How and Why**

From an analysis of the results, the three main categories of reflection techniques that interviewees used to reflect on their practice were: contemplative; verbal; and written. More unusual methods included: writing poetry; painting; team-teaching; creating headspace by doing yoga; or walking. There was agreement among interviewees that reflection was an integral part of teaching and that one cannot teach well without reflecting on practice. This was captured in comments like: ‘how can you not reflect?’ and ‘doesn’t everybody reflect?’ Julian elaborates on this, ‘if we’re not doing it, it’s got to happen. We have to be doing it. I feel like my nature is one to reflect on what I do and it’s kind of naturally built into my system.’ It seems clear that many of the participants feel that reflection is a ‘natural’ or built-in process, perhaps linked to curiosity.

According to Grimmett *et al.* (1990) and Noordhof and Kleinfeld (1990), in the examination of academics’ reflective practice it is useful to begin the process by asking three questions: (1) what is the object of their reflection?; (2) how is reflection conducted? and (3) why do engaged practitioners reflect on their practice?

### **4.2.1 What do engaged practitioners reflect upon?**

The evidence from the collated data is that regardless of the reflection method, the general focus of interviewees’ reflection is on *how* to use the service-learning better. The data suggests that practitioners believe that there is more to service-learning than teaching. One practitioner put it succinctly by saying, ‘social work plus education equals service-learning’ (Jacqueline).

Based on my personal experience of attending conferences on service-learning, it has often been the topic of conversation among senior scholars that there is an over-emphasis on the nuts and bolts of ‘how to implement service-learning’ at the expense of empirical academic research into service-learning. It is not evident from the data that the philosophy of the engaged pedagogy is a subject for regular debate, nor are abstract research topics arising from engaged pedagogy. Rather, it is the process of implementing/facilitating service-learning which causes the most concern among engaged academics. It appears that service-learning academics are drawn to the pedagogy because it is good teaching and learning for the student or because it is good for the community or both. Having seen the potential for transformative learning, they are already convinced that it meets their needs. They therefore want to improve their skills to be able to manage the ‘messiness of it’. It appears that the ‘what’ that practitioners reflect upon is the ‘how’ of service-learning, this is important as it gives an indication that the area of interest of many practitioners leans more towards the practical than the theoretical.

#### **4.2.2 How is reflection conducted?**

It is noteworthy that interviewees use the words ‘reflect’ and ‘think’ synonymously i.e. I reflect on my work/practice equals I think critically about my work. Though they do not use the phrase ‘critically think’, this is in fact what was evident when they described how they thought/reflected. Later in this chapter, I will discuss the distinct difference between reflecting and *thinking about stuff*. Even for those who use reflection rubrics or models, reflection can have a broad meaning and does not necessarily specify an activity or intervention. This is in keeping with the literature, which refers to a lack of clarity about the definition of reflection (Kinsella, 2003, Procee, 2006).

The interviewees found it difficult to discuss reflection without automatically referring to the practice of their students. There was agreement among the interviewees that using multiple reflection methods with students was more effective than using only one method in order to cater to all learning styles.

Others were of the opinion that reflection should not be an activity which is separate from practice; rather it should be a mind-set that is as much a part of practice as teaching and learning.

What was most common in the responses was that practitioners agreed that the most effective reflection on their own practice used a combination of methods which included written, verbal and contemplative approaches. However, not all interviewees used a wide variety of methods to reflect on their practice. This would imply that they know what they should do, but not necessarily do it.

There was a general consensus that the reflective practitioner was a better teacher. However, there were some comments on the quality of practitioner reflection, for example Nicola who said ‘I’m just so well aware, painfully aware, that some teachers apply reflection rather mechanically’. Another interviewee, Jacqueline, who researched reflective practice, discussed her observation of a teacher who claimed she used reflection but who didn’t see that she had lost her authority in class ‘her students were walking on her’, yet the teacher reported that ‘...my students are good to me’. ‘She just didn’t even see it. So again, what’s going on with her reflections? And can she reflect accurately if she is starting from a misperception about them? [her students]’. In this example, it appears that the teacher was not in fact reflecting critically, or had considerable difficulty in making meaning of her experience. The thoughtless use of reflection is an oxymoron whether in facilitating reflection with students or considering one’s own practice.

#### **4.2.3 Why do engaged practitioners reflect on their practice?**

From the collated data, there appears to be very little evidence of ongoing philosophical reflection on questions such as: why do I choose to teach, why pick a difficult pedagogy, why work with community, why try to address social injustice? It appears that this kind of philosophical consideration happened through an ‘aha moment’ or epiphany earlier in the practitioner’s career and indeed some of the interviewees refer to examples of pivotal learning experiences which changed their belief structure and, as a result, their practice.

Others saw reflecting on their practice as natural and did not see the need to consider why they needed to reflect, they simply did.

One interviewee, Jacqueline, suggested that the one question which was at the root of reflective practice was: ‘why do I do, what I do, the way I do it?’ This question examines motivation as well as process and practice. There is little evidence of interviewees questioning their decision to use an engaged pedagogy but it appears that sources of motivation included students, community, and a love of teaching as being the reason ‘why I do what I do’ and engaged practice is ‘the way I do it’.

Jacqueline proposed that understanding why one teaches the way one does, and basing teaching practice on that understanding is a more important element of reflective practice than reflecting solely with the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of one’s practice. Improved teaching is not necessarily the objective of reflective practice, she believes.

**Jacqueline:** Part of it is taking feedback and not just improving teaching, but they [her students] will take it to spark their own questions. Improving the teaching is an outcome. It’s an end. Versus just I want to understand why I’m doing what I’m doing. And if that improves my teaching, fantastic.

I think reflection can just serve the aim of understanding your practice before you get to improving your practice. ...But there’s a meta level that I just need to understand what I am doing.

Based on the feedback and the review of literature, I believe that the consideration of the reflective process could be compared to opinions about physical exercise. Most people know that taking exercise is good for you, and doing it makes you fit, and the fitter you are the better quality of life you will have. They may simply go for a walk occasionally but may not know the combination of the various exercises which are necessary to address their personal needs, or how exercise of different kinds affects the various parts of the body. It appears that all of the interviewees used reflection to various degrees;

however, though they may want to improve their reflective practice, it may not be necessary for all practitioners to reach the (reflective) level of an elite athlete.

### 4.3 Methods used in Reflective Practice

When interviewees were asked how they reflect on their practice of using service-learning, their answers described a wide range of techniques, ranging from informal to formal and conducted alone or in groups. Contemplative reflection techniques as well as verbal and written were discussed. Responses to the question ‘how do you reflect on your practice?’ are shown in Fig. 4. below.



Fig: 4. The methods that interviewees used to reflect on their practice.

### 4.3.1 Contemplation

Meditation is a form of contemplation and can involve sitting and being aware of one's thoughts. Apart from the practice of meditation, one rarely decides to 'actively think about thinking' but usually does so as a part of another activity for example, walking, driving, reading, writing or studying.

Based on the responses of practitioners, it is clear that all of them reflect on their practice to some extent. The degree to which they reflect and the methods they use do vary. The first method is the thoughtful consideration of experience and the critical examination of teaching practice which is usually done alone, in silence and in an informal manner. It usually considers practice, both in the micro form (e.g. single class) and the macro (e.g. the long term impact of engaged teaching). Wellington (1996, p. 313) suggests that reflection is a tacit activity, and that practitioners do not realize they are reflecting 'until they encounter it in their reading, in their interaction with colleagues or as a part of their professional training.' This point was echoed by at least two interviewees.

**Nora:** ... some of the reflective process has become internalized. I no longer need to think about it or structure it in such formal ways. It's more of an internalized process and practice; almost tacit in a way until there is something that gives me greater pause and then I more actively and consciously process it.

**Jacqueline:** I don't do anything formal like keeping a journal, because I don't have time. It seems so informal. So, it's just a running chalkboard in my head.

The following interviewee included her reflection as a part of her reading.

**Bethany:** I think [being reflective] means different things to different people. Some people are reflective creatively. Other people are reflective in groups. Other people reflective individually. I am much more likely to reflect individually, to have an experience and mull it over in my head. I would seek to connect it to things that I read and to go out of my way to read things that I think might connect to it.

One interviewee, Clive, read a wide range of pedagogical theory, not to build the perfect service-learning course but to examine ‘...how do we work with students to help their own learning become richer and more connected to the world, more connected to community, more reflective, and so on’. Meanwhile, Nora discussed how she used the time walking to and from work to think about her practice. During this time, she got a different perspective on her teaching by distancing herself from it. Bethany discussed how she used the time while commuting to work, to think and ask herself questions which she found useful for stimulating her own reflection: ‘one of them is Ralph Waldo Emerson’s greeting that he used with his friends; “What has come clear to you since we last met?”’ Another question which she asked herself was ‘what difference have I made today?’ ...and if I don’t have answer, then I’m usually not very happy [laughs]’. She considered that ‘making the world a better place’ to be one of the goals of service-learning and saw herself as having a role in that, even if the difference was sometimes a small one. Clare commented that she often ponders what is fair within the class in regards to standards and student workload and also ‘what is expected of me as faculty?’

In moving from the macro to the micro, when asked how she used reflection in her own learning, Melissa replied that she ‘couldn’t imagine how can you teach without reflecting and thinking about what you’re doing and trying to sort things out.’ She said that after a class, she spent a lot of time examining how the class could be improved:

**Melissa:** Don’t people just kind of think about what they’re doing anyway? Why do you have to include a step? I think it’s something that I’ve always kind of done intuitively, without being told, “Oh, you’re reflecting on your classes and on your teaching.”

There is a tension and contradiction between the claim that reflection is intuitive and the reality that it is actually hard work and a skill that needs to be learned. Melissa assumed that everyone naturally thought about what they did. This is (for the most part) true, however, thinking does not equal reflection, and one cannot assume that everyone naturally reflects. Even if reflective practice is an

ideal, it is not necessarily intuitive. Some interviewees *mulled over* their practice, a process that for them is without effort.

**Abigail:** I just listen and it's during these moments in my own reflection that I can quiet my mind and just be still and let whatever comes, come through me. That's really the best mode of reflection. That's when I learn. I learn things. I learn about myself. I learn about things which worked or didn't work. I'm able to perceive more clearly things which might not have been apparent at first glance during the day.

This sort of reflection, this is a learning experience because the clouds dissipate, the fog goes away, and just little pieces of things become very clear and eventually, very gradually, they come together to make a picture.

One interviewee said that he would like to have a separate space and time in a 'contemplative environment' away from the pressures of teaching life.

**Magnus:** I would need, on a regular basis, to probably go away for no less than a week and probably a month or more and be in a contemplative environment. I just don't do that. I keep myself busy. ...I don't do it. I don't do it enough.

Keeping track of where to expend energy and the problem of always being busy leads Clive to ask himself 'what are all the 99 things that you could let go in order to do the thing that really matters the most?' Julianne discusses the examination of what people are saying, 'make connections and take a more anthropological approach to history', the subject that she teaches. Some practitioners *mull over* their practice, a process that is without effort.

Abigail's description of her reflective process is interesting insofar as it seems to assume that there is a pre-existing clarity which is simply obscured by the clutter of everyday life. When given the necessary time, space and stillness the pieces of the jigsaw fall into place. However, does that mean that there is only one way for the pieces to fit together or is it more like a collage or mosaic which creates a different image when the pieces are moved? It is similar to the

Buddhist concept that we do not actually create clarity, peace or balance, but instead simply remove the obstacles that block, insight, harmony and equilibrium. Is the picture that Abigail sees in the collage, similar to what anyone else would see, or is it that it appears so because it is perceived through her lens, from her perspective within her own frame of reference? The practitioners I interviewed suggested that there is no correct answer, but that the process of asking the questions is how the insight happens.

It is interesting to note that academics are able to discuss the reflection techniques that they use with their students; however, they find it more difficult to describe their own reflective practice in as much detail. The service-learning practitioners (as interviewed in this research) agreed that reflective practice, though ill-defined and difficult to describe, is central to engaged teaching and learning to the extent that it is just built-in and natural. One could ask how Melissa got to the stage where reflection was intuitive for her, and how did she develop that skill?

#### **4.3.2 Thinking about ‘stuff’**

The concept of reflection has many interpretations and there is no clear and agreed definition as to what it is, a point which is often highlighted in the literature on reflective practice. There is the question of whether reflection is an active exercise or a tacit thing that happens ‘intuitively, without being told’ as Melissa put it. One cannot reflect on one’s practice without thinking about it, although thinking about it may not be the same as reflecting on it. An interviewee, whose doctorate was on the topic of reflection, was asked if reflecting was simply *thinking about stuff*?

**Jacqueline:** Well, in an academic sense it’s thinking about stuff in connection to what you have learned. It’s connecting to course content, bringing those two together and connecting the course contents and saying, “What did I learn out there in the field that wasn’t in my book? Oh my gosh, was my book wrong?” There is more. It’s synthesizing stuff. It’s not just thinking about it. It’s analyzing and synthesizing. “That didn’t feel good to go to that homeless shelter? Why didn’t that

feel good? Because they were all dirty. Well, why were they dirty?” [just] thinking about it can be like, “Hmm. There was ten guys getting a meal today and I thought there’d be five”. So, it’s critical thinking, it’s analyzing and synthesizing...

She continues in the conversation by discussing the racial make-up of a homeless shelter, questioning why one race is represented more than another and examining the root causes for this. For her, critical questioning is the vehicle for reflection. It is through asking questions and drilling down through each answer with another ‘why’ that she gets to deeper understanding. This is the kind of questioning of assumptions which is referred to in the literature and demonstrated by many of the interviewees. It shows the importance of critical questioning to achieving deeper reflection. Therefore, a deep examination of practice requires critical questioning. Another interviewee addresses the difference between reflecting and just thinking:

**Dorothy:** I think, there’s a fair amount of reflection that’s just thinking about stuff. I think that’s a fair criticism or comment, depending on how you take that. Some of the work that I do in the classrooms in America, we have these guiding questions that we want the students to be really thinking about. They are - Who am I? What do I value? What is my world view? How do I learn? How do these connect? Those might not be the questions that are asked straight out to help guide the reflections, but they’re in there somewhere. If we’ve gone on a site visit or a fieldtrip of some kind, what did you learn? What do you think about this type of learning?

I have a colleague that was joking a bit, but also very, very honest too in saying, “You also have to ask – so what and who cares? Why is this really actually relevant? Why does this matter to what you’re doing?” I think very often that kind of question takes you from thinking about stuff - a lot about stuff - to have kind of sorting out “well, is this stuff meaningful? Is this stuff relevant? Does this stuff have a *why for* attached to it?”

Once again this points to the importance of critical questioning, moving beyond the ‘what’ to the ‘so what’ and the ‘now what’. It is apparent that the difference between

reflecting and simply thinking is the criticality, the focus of what is being considered and the idea that there must be some sort of result to the reflection, either in improving a class or contributing on a larger scale. Max van Manen (1991, p. 98) says that in some senses to reflect is to think but in the educational context it ‘carries the connotation of deliberation, of making choices, of coming to decisions about alternative courses of action.’ Clive sees reflection and action as being totally intertwined causing you to ‘stop and think about what you are doing here; or, you have talked enough, it is time... to act on this.’ Another interviewee isolated the concept of ‘change’ as the difference between *thinking about stuff* and critical reflection.

**Benjamin:** So how conscientious somebody is in systematically collecting information from multiple sources. And then openness, how open are they to change, to revisions, to questioning what they are doing. It would seem to me to be two qualities that a really reflective practitioner would have over somebody who says, “well I think about what I do all the time”. ...I think that is a piece of what a really reflective practitioner is, that they can map that change or growth in their professional development, given how they’ve been conscientious and open.

This connects with Nicola’s comment about frames of reflection and the need to be open on a personal level before examining assumptions on a broader level, (see section 4.8). There is little point in using the three frames to examine assumptions if you are not open to changing those assumptions. Benjamin also makes the link between reflection through critical questioning and transformation as described by Mezirow (2006). Therefore, a deep examination of practice requires critical questioning from different perspectives with the openness to change.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 3) use Schön’s term *reflection-on-action* when they say that reflection is much more than ‘just thinking about what you do’ or ‘private, self-indulgent navel-gazing’. They say that ‘reflection on practice is not just about learning from experience in a private and solitary way; it is a complex process of knowledge production that has the potential to enlighten and empower teachers’ (ibid.). It is through regular practice of the skill of reflection that one arrives at the stage when this becomes intuitive, as described by some of the interviewees.

Brookfield (1995, p. 8) claims that reflection is not, by definition critical, he says that ‘it is quite possible to teach reflectively while focusing solely on the nuts and bolts of classroom process such as the whiteboard or flipchart, deadlines, assessment choice’. Brookfield, who is firmly located in the school of Critical Theory, posits that what makes reflection *critical* is a consistent scrutiny of assumptions and power within the education system and society. This is mirrored by Jacqueline whose questioning about her teaching moves from ‘what did I do?’ to ‘why do I do what I do, the way I do it?’

**Jacqueline:** Am I approaching it the right way? So, it’s not just, is my grading policy, or whatever, effective with my students? But wait a minute, why am I even doing it the way I’m doing it? Because it’s important. Why do you think that’s important? Why do you think that’s more important than, “can they chew gum in class?” Yeah, who cares?

Why are you making your judgment that one’s more important than the other? It’s the nature of knowledge, and epistemology and all those things, versus did it work? No. They’re thick. I don’t care. I’m not going to change anything. That’s probably unreflective. Or, maybe I should change my teaching. But, not because I really tried to get at why I was doing it that way in the first place.

It is not surprising that the academics I spoke to reflected on their practice. Teaching is not a robotic assembly line of knowledge transition, but an interpersonal experience with many different individuals. Using service-learning in particular, because of its connection with issues such as social justice raises many moral questions for both students and teaching staff to consider. The salient point regarding what interviewees report about their contemplative reflection on their practice is that they are doing more than considering what they did on a particular occasion; but questioning what they do and why they do it, with the view to developing their practice. The advantage of solo contemplation of practice is that it gives one a firm foundation in deciding ‘this is what I believe’ and ‘these are my questions about what I do’. As will be seen later, considering one’s beliefs is an important *prelection* step before reflecting on engaged practice with peers. Welsh asks practitioners to have considered questions like ‘what does “civically engaged scholarship” mean or look like to you?’ before discussing reflecting on practice with peers. The limitation of solo

contemplation of practice is that it is a one-sided conversation, and does not tap into the experience of others. Moon (1999b, p. 64) captures this when she says ‘reflection will have involved the process of thinking, but it may be aided by the process of articulation of the thinking orally or in written form’.

There is a considerable difference between critical reflection is simply pondering. Judging by the responses of the interviewees, it appears that the vehicle for critical reflection is critical questioning which digs deeper than the level of ‘what’ into the level of ‘why’. This kind of questioning needs to be conducted from different perspectives to cover the numerous aspects of service-learning and must be done with the openness to change. Reflection is not thinking about stuff but as Raelin (2002, p. 66) puts it ‘it is thinking about our thinking’. Though it has numerous elements and is complex, it can become a manner of seeing rather than a way of looking, or a way of being rather than a way of doing. Melissa asked ‘don’t people just kind of think about what they’re doing anyway?’ and the answer is yes they do but they do not necessarily critically reflect.

### **4.3.3 Verbal reflection with students**

Moving on from the quiet consideration of their own practice, academics discuss getting an insight into their practice through discussion with others. This includes informal conversations with students and more formal student evaluations in order to assess student learning and as a result assess teaching. Clive held classroom discussions about the process of learning, asked his students *if* they were learning and what they needed to increase their learning. In the interview, Clive referred to a colleague who spent the first two classes of a semester discussing learning techniques with her students and reported that she saw an improvement in their learning as a result.

**Clive:** And so I think, in any class, some of my classes deal explicitly with learning, but even if they don’t, I bring it in. I would have discussed learning, and how I learn, how I teach, how I think about

teaching and learning. I ask about what they think about it, how they learn, and then we talk about this as we go along.

Clive could easily have stated his policy on teaching and learning to a silent class, but instead he used questions to prompt discussions on the topic of learning. Giving time to the topic demonstrated that it was important. Giving voice to the students showed openness and a willingness to share power within the classroom, all of which contributed to the establishment of trust so that reflection on service projects could happen in a safe environment.

Nora mentioned an occasion in which a disagreement among students regarding an assignment became a teachable moment on how to learn, during which she said ‘I am here, yes, as the instructor and as your faculty, but also, this is a dialogue and that we are going to learn from and with one another.’ Brookfield (1995) maintains that because of the power academics hold, students are reluctant to give honest feedback until trust has been established. Melissa however, said that her students were not shy in giving feedback, so it can be assumed that there was an atmosphere of trust within that classroom. The importance of an environment of trust in which reflection can take place is significant and will be revisited later in this chapter.

Bethany discusses using the Angelo and Cross (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques: ‘it can be anything from how they felt about the class today or a content-based question, not for a grade but just to see how many of them got it. I have never had a formal assessment of teaching.’ Rather than questioning her students, Harriet examines her students’ questions:

**Harriet:** And I would also have responded always to students’ reaction and their questions to me as an indication that I had not effectively covered the subject matter and that their questioning told me that they were not clear about what I had said.

Whereas other interviewees questioned their students, Harriet questioned her students’ questions, which is an interesting and novel avenue of reflection. Clayton and Ash (2005) posit that reflection with students on one’s teaching contributes to developing a collaborative learning community. It gives academics a deeper understanding of their

practice and allows them the opportunity to model the skills they want their students to develop. Harriet corroborated this view, stating that the best way to teach reflective practice to students is to model it in one's own practice. In this regard, it can be seen that reflection is both a teaching and a learning tool.

When considering one's practice of teaching, it would seem logical to ask for feedback from those who are on the receiving end. Asking for written (and anonymous) feedback from students can contribute to learning about one's teaching practice and is quite impersonal. Discussing teaching and learning with students openly requires a degree of mutual trust and a space in which to be critical as well as complimentary. Seeking feedback also impacts on the power dynamic between teacher and student and may seem like handing over power to students. Clare is open to her students being a part of the process of constructing the course, such as: deciding the group system within the class, dealing with interpersonal disputes and the flexibility of service hours. However, she does not allow her students to dictate course standards. Bethany said that she also asked herself 'how much power and ability to structure the course am I really willing to turn over to the students?' She worried about how much of her personal reflection was appropriate to share within the class. The advantage of gaining feedback from students is that they have firsthand experience of being on the other side of the academics' teaching practice. However, there are limitations to the weight academics can give this information, as students may have many external factors influencing their feedback. Furthermore, students for the most part, will not have the pedagogical expertise to draw upon that teachers would have. Since students will usually spend only three years studying for their degree, they may not be able to take a longitudinal perspective of teaching practice that a teaching colleague could.

#### **4.3.4 Verbal reflection with peers**

When interviewees discussed how they reflected on their practice with peers, they referred mostly to informal conversations. These were of the form of unstructured 'chats' with a trusted colleague or with others who would have an understanding of the context of using service-learning.

Magnus discussed the importance he placed on reflecting with others and said that 'it's all blended. I don't go anywhere, even on vacation, that I haven't figured out three or four people I ought to see while I'm on this trip' with whom he will reflect on his

teaching and researching practice. Nora likewise described the ‘dialogue with colleagues, with other faculty, with other service-learning colleagues’ referring to them as a network which she can ‘plug into’ and get support with her teaching. Two of Nora’s network – with over twenty years experience in service-learning – had mentored her through her graduate studies and have participated in this research. Benjamin, a senior scholar, agreed that he has a number of colleagues with whom he discussed teaching issues, saying that ‘it may be because I’m disappointed in a test performance or have another issue, sometimes particular to a student. And I’ll seek out advice, feedback, commiserate with colleagues and we’ll talk about those things.’

Meanwhile Dorothy, team-taught some of her service-learning modules with either a graduate student or an upper level undergraduate student. She saw the student as a colleague and they met every two weeks to discuss the progress of the classes, ‘it’s both for their learning and my learning. That’s ongoing.’ Likewise, during residential community service projects she meets community partners every couple of days and examines or discusses the students’ ongoing learning using different frames, such as their potential needs, their interaction with the community partners, and how the learning experience can be enhanced.

Harriet described having conversations with academic colleagues and community partners in the kitchen of a food project as they worked together. Though this was informal reflection it was not just a chance conversation. As they worked together, they discussed the social issue being addressed by the project, what policies needed to be adopted and how to create change in a meaningful way. Likewise, a senior administrator and former academic, described facilitating reflection sessions with peers after working together at a service site by asking:

**Simon:** ...a few key questions like “what struck you today?” and that opens up a whole – and where there is an immense amount of learning that just goes on across the board and it’s really rich.

So for myself, it is looking on the context and reflecting with other people, doing it just by myself is not as profitable, not as challenging, not as nourishing as doing it with other folks. People collectively get much more.

Simon's interesting word choice indicates that he saw reflection to be a critical yet beneficial task, with a clear aim of development. He highlighted the advantages of a group discussion, generated by questions and held in an environment where all are given space to voice their opinions. This kind of peer reflection is discussed in the literature, with Brookfield (1995, p. 36) claiming that reflection is 'essentially a collective endeavour... we need colleagues to help us know what our assumptions are.' Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 6) concur with this view when they say that 'making sense is not just a process of having a private conversation with yourself about your teaching, it also involves coming to know through teacher talk and the sharing of experiences.' They go on to describe what they call the 'reflective conversation' which is central to the skill of critical reflection by which practitioners examine their work in terms of the value structure and assumptions that they hold. It involves asking questions like:

- What is my teaching like?
- Why is it like this?
- How has it come to be this way?
- What are the effects of my teaching [on my students]?
- How can I improve what I do? (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, p. 20)

The academics I interviewed demonstrated that though they examined the practicalities of teaching, they also probed deeper into the process of using service-learning. The advantage of this kind of reflection is that it is informal, and can happen spontaneously. It provides practical support as well as personal reassurance; it can also challenge one to reconsider practice or experiment with different techniques. The limitations are that, because it is informal, it may not happen with regularity and may not be very rigorous. It generally does not happen unless there is an atmosphere of trust, and shared understanding of the issues that can arise from using service-learning. In summary, to achieve the most benefit from peer reflection there must be the necessary space and understanding of experience; there must be a degree of frequency and rigour; and that there must be recognition that these conditions do not happen by accident but must be consciously created.

#### **4.3.5 Written reflection: solo**

The reflection methods described in sections 4.1 to 4.3 involve thinking and talking and are mostly informal in nature. A more formal method of reflection involves the use of written reflection. This can be separated into solo and collaborative writing. Solo writing can in turn, be broken down into two subsections: reflective journals and solo evaluation of practice.

##### ***Reflective journals***

Interviewees reported that the creation of reflective journals is a form of reflection that they often require their students to use. In its most rudimentary form ‘free-journaling’ is merely a description of a learning experience. An example of this would be: ‘...keeping a journal of what worked, what didn’t, overall project. Not too strict. It was the first time I did the class and I wanted it to help me with the next class’ (Jacinta). When asked how she reflected on her own practice, Nora replied: ‘writing a lot – to try to put it onto paper, to begin to articulate because part of what’s difficult is, you have these experiences and ...there’s a million things going on. So, to try to calm the noise, so to speak, and to really focus.’

Free journaling has limited value for reflection and for this reason is disliked as a method of reflection for students by many of the academics I interviewed. Moon (1999a) contended that ‘free-writing’ a journal is an alien activity for many learners. A number of interviewees referred to students writing what they think the teacher wants to hear, which can happen when reflection is used for assessment. This was dubbed ‘warbling’ by one interviewee (Keith). On account of this, it is common for academics to require their students to follow a structure or set of prompts when journaling. When the interviewees discussed the use of journals for their own reflection, it became obvious that they did not use free-writing.

**Keith:** For me? I keep a journal. Mm-hmm, right here.

**BÓD:** *You keep a journal to hand, right beside you. I see.*

**Keith:** I use it all the time. I also keep a journal for every class, and it's a combination of a log, diary and journal, so I can keep track of who was there, what happened. It's just kind of to refresh my memory, but I can also talk about how I felt, a little bit, and how class went. Like, "Tonight was a great class because..." or "Tonight I felt really badly because this happened..." or "I wish I would have done this differently." So I reflect on my teaching.

It seems that the exercise of journaling appealed greatly to the following interviewee:

**Jessica:** I do reflection all the time though, ...I have three different journals that I use, I have a teaching reflection journal, I have a personal journal that I use – and now you can't call me a geek on this one – but I am an avid cyclist I love to bicycle ...I even have a bike journal.

She also discussed the practice of writing up notes after an academic conference when she attends presentations and has conversations with peers; a process that for her elicits ideas and understanding. Jacob discussed the use of a semi-structured journal as a part of a professional development workshop and reported that he found it helpful to review how a class went. He reviewed the journal before (if he had worked with the class on a previous occasion) and after teaching, with the view to making changes to enhance his teaching practice. Jacob contended that 'it really has made me a better teacher.' He reviews the journal before teaching a class a second time and evaluates his teaching with the view to making changes to enhance it.

Only a small number of practitioners that were interviewed said that they kept a journal. The reasons for this are unclear. Firstly, it is possible that the absence of time is a contributing factor, a point which is supported by Cowan and Westwood (2006). Secondly, the difference in 'cognitive complexity' may also be a factor i.e. academics who encourage their students to use journals may feel that they are beyond the need to journal and prefer to use more complex and

advanced methods of reflecting such as reflecting with peers or researching aspects of their practice in a formal way.

Thirdly, there is the possibility that journaling did not appeal to the learning style of the interviewees.

**Harriet:** I just think that both [written and verbal reflection] are essential. As an extrovert who loves the classroom controversial discussions, I probably don't do enough of looking at my own behaviour on my own. That's for the journaling or some private form, individual form.

Speaking from my personal experience, I maintained a learning journal throughout this study, but similar to Harriet, I preferred to discuss my learning process with peers. It was also much more time-efficient to discuss a topic with a peer than write it down and look for feedback. Furthermore, there was an absence of an effective structure for the learning process I had undertaken; though I considered examining my practice using Clayton's frames (academic/civic/personal) I quickly realised that the act of conducting academic work – though contributing to academic development – had only a minor civic element at the time, and the personal development was slow. The development of my ideas and the coming to new understandings through the process of research was documented in the drafting of the thesis and therefore, did not need to be documented a second time. It was, in fact, the redrafting of the thesis which was the reflective element of my practice, and because that lasted a number of years, it accrued developments too slow to try to document in a journal. Some of the reasons why I did not find journaling effective are related to my own learning style and because I was journaling about a long term project which was conducted, for the most part, alone. Others with a different learning style may find journaling effective in different circumstances.

Cowan and Westwood (2006) conducted an experiment with seven university academics who required their students to keep reflective journals. These academics were asked to write a journal on their own professional development. Cowan and Westwood posit that compared to reflecting alone, the

reflection was deeper when it was conducted as a part of a peer reflection group and facilitated by a peer. What must be noted about this article is that although the journals were read by a peer and received feedback, there was a clear learning objective to the exercise, and within the structure of the experiment there was an obligation to write the journals. Though journaling can keep track of one's practice and reflecting on one's journal can give insights into practice, it has the limitations of solo reflection insofar as it does not draw on the experience of others unless it is shared.

### *Solo evaluation of practice*

Some interviewees gathered information on their teaching by writing reflections following a class or by reviewing evaluations of a course written by students. When practitioners were asked about methods of written reflection, few mentioned making notes on class plans. It is possible that this may be more prevalent an activity than expressed in the interviews, because it simply is not being viewed as a 'method of written reflection'.

**Bethany:** I reflect after every class as to how effective I was. I make notes in the text or on the syllabus about what worked and what didn't work, what made me feel good about what I was doing.

**Ruben:** I use written recollections of things, I make notes. I take some time immediately afterwards to jot down some notes so that you can recapture what went on and what bothers you, and then process that.

Both Bethany and Ruben highlighted that the element of making time and reflecting regularly were important for them in their practice. Shauna reported that she was required to write about her engaged teaching in an end of year review and that she integrated this learning in the following year's teaching. Jason regularly wrote a column on ethics in a local newspaper, so it was relatively easy for him to move to reflecting on his practice when he began to use service-learning.

Whereas journaling or note-taking refers to examining one's practice by reviewing what one has written; interviewees reported that examining what others had written was a useful form of reflection. The formal exercises of collecting students' written evaluations and correcting student's exam scripts give feedback to teachers on their performance. The evaluation asks 'how did that go?' and examines the process of teaching. Clare says that she reads student evaluations and reflects on their project work.

Some practitioners expressed concern that student evaluations are not necessarily a valuable source of reflection. In an effort to evaluate students campus-wide, a standardised form is often used to facilitate the analysis of data from different departments. Such a standardised evaluation does not always meet the needs of academics using different pedagogies. One practitioner commented on standardised student evaluation forms.

**Dorothy:** Of course, there's end of semester evaluations that we do. The university has preset questions which never answer any questions I want to know about. So, we always do like a second set of questions for that kind of thing [i.e. to assess student learning].

While the evaluation of teaching practice examines the effectiveness of the teaching, critical analysis is deeper and examines the broader issues of one's practice. As an example:

**Ruben:** When I do evaluations, I can't evaluate anything unless I have an understanding of why you're doing it. And there are a lot of people who do this stuff, and they're not really clear as to why they're doing it. It's just good pedagogy. So, that goes back to the philosophy. If you don't understand what the philosophy is of the people doing it, and you don't understand what the philosophy of the institution is that's supporting it, then you really need to assess that, if you're really trying to do high quality service-learning.

In this example, Ruben highlighted the importance of going beyond mechanical evaluation. He pointed to the need for critical questions at a much deeper level, which go beyond the 'how did it work' to 'why' questioning so that an

understanding of the epistemology can be established before the pedagogy can be implemented correctly.

Jacqueline – who gave staff training on service-learning – had an opportunity to review the written work of those who attended her seminars, observe their practice and see in practical terms how effective her teaching and their learning was.

**Jacqueline:** But, there are things like in the end [of the workshop] they have to turn in this portfolio. So, that's telling of what stuck and what didn't, so to speak. Then, watching their practice afterwards. So, the reflection isn't just during that course. I have the opportunity to then see how they used what I taught them, which not all professors would have.

Clayton and Ash (2005) noted that it was not unusual for service-learning practitioners to reflect on their practice by using journals, writing up classroom experience for promotion purposes, or having informal and even semi-structured discussions with peers. Though these methods have certain value, they say that academics should engage 'openly in reflection alongside our students, using the same mechanisms we ask them to use and sharing at least some of our reflection products with them just as we ask them to share theirs with us, [this] can contribute substantially to our professional – and personal – development' (Clayton & Ash, 2005, p. 164).

Brookfield maintains that examination of one's teaching through the eyes of one's students can be a productive learning experience. He continues that 'the most fundamental metacriterion for judging whether or not good teaching is happening is the extent to which teachers deliberately and systematically try to get inside students' heads and see classrooms and learning from their point of view' (Brookfield, 1995, p. 35).

It appears from the collated data that all of the interviewees reflected to some degree on the nuts and bolts of the practice of teaching. There is also evidence to show that they considered other aspects of their practice such as social and personal development, however, it appears that 'how to teach better' was of primary concern. What is interesting here is that examining 'how can I be a better teacher?' does not necessarily involve 'how can I be a better reflective practitioner?', given that reflection is such a central aspect of engaged teaching

and learning. This may be due to the fact that teaching techniques are more tangible, with visible outcomes contrary to reflection techniques. I believe that if given the appropriate circumstances in which academics could monitor their reflection and the developments to which it contributes, it could result in a broadening of their idea of teaching techniques to include reflecting on their practice.

#### **4.3.6 Collaborative writing with peers (not for publication)**

Some of the interviewees discussed the reflective value of collaborating on teaching and learning resources that are not for publication. Benjamin met teams of colleagues within his department at the end of the year to discuss common elements across different courses. They shared their experiences – both formal and informal – and incorporated the learning into the following year’s module. The preparation of faculty training seminars and the outcome of curriculum review workshops can be seen as methods of reflecting on practice with the view to documenting improvements to practice.

**Benjamin:** I also am a reflective teacher because I conduct workshops, I give lectures, I have more formal discussion with faculty at [my university] about teaching. So I, in the course of an academic year, may conduct six to ten workshops focused on teaching, documenting teaching, assessing teaching, implementing teaching strategies. And certainly through the preparation, the activity and the evaluation of those workshops, I’m a reflective practitioner, doing reflection in that regard. So I guess some of them are very formal. I’m organizing presentations and having discussions with faculty and reflecting on my own practice as I engage in those activities.

The writing down of one’s reflections on one’s teaching practise is more formal than silent consideration, whilst the sharing of those written reflections with peers is yet more formal and structured. In the discussion that surrounds the preparation of a working document such as a syllabus, there is the need for debate and the sharing of opinions and insight which can make the written reflection process more rigorous.

Leona is a service-learning coordinator at a community college and she discussed giving staff development workshops. She sometimes co-presents with a faculty member who has experience in using service-learning, and by drawing on their experience in different departments within the university, she can ‘dispel some of the myths’ about the pedagogy ‘speaking from their examples, that’s probably one of the best methods I’ve used’.

Another, Abigail (a senior academic), discussed how she shared her knowledge and experience for the benefit of others:

**Abigail:** So by the service-learning program really expanding into all of the other areas, that affords me an opportunity to help to educate other service-learning professors through some of these experiences that I have already had designed, and planned and implemented with my students. So I feel like it has been a great advantage to me because I have been able to infiltrate all of these other courses with objectives that I believe are really important.

A number of the universities I visited had training courses for academics on how to implement service-learning. These ranged from lunch-time ‘brown bag’ seminars on a specific issue or a more comprehensive training programme. One university required academics to attend a series of seminars before they were *allowed* to run a service-learning programme. This consisted of eight 2 hour seminars held over a full semester and facilitated by an external service-learning trainer. The programme was facilitated by Jacqueline and by attending as a guest; I saw firsthand how peer reflection was integral to the teaching process. Participants were given literature to read prior to the seminar with a theme to consider, the readings were discussed in class and follow-up tasks were given based on the discussion; this followed Eyler’s (2001) reflection map that suggests reflecting before, during and after, a service experience.

The exercise of meeting colleagues to review a particular module or course is not unusual, regardless of whether it is using engaged pedagogy or not. What is significant here is the fact that peer reflection on teaching practice is seen by academics as a productive reflective exercise. From the interviewees’ experience, the working-together on documents, policy and curricula adds a level formality

and consensus to a reflection process. Even though the resulting document is not to be published, it is to be shared outside the peer group, and therefore must encapsulate consensus. The process of arriving at this consensus can bring insight and reflective development which can extend beyond the academic (as Benjamin pointed out). There is a degree of structure to the process of collaborative writing, it is a required element of curriculum development, and is likely to be more rigorous than informal conversations with colleagues.

The limitations of reflection through collaborative writing is the fact that it happens at irregular intervals, perhaps only once at the end of the year. Furthermore, because the objective is generally the improvement of an academic course, the focus will most likely be on the academic, and/or civic, rather than the personal or professional development of the teaching staff (though this may be a secondary outcome). This mode of reflection is significant because it highlights that to improve reflective practice, one must have frequency, rigour and structure to the practice and furthermore, one must use different frames of reflection so as not to focus solely on academic development.

#### **4.3.7 Scholarship of teaching and learning with peers (for publication)**

Those of the interviewees, who had published widely on service-learning, agreed that preparing a document for publication was in itself a reflective exercise.

**Benjamin:** See, I think of research on teaching and scholarship on teaching as being a reflective activity about my teaching. So to write up my teaching practice, to write up data that I've collected from my teaching, to think about what's the best way of implementing service-learning, is for me as a teacher of a service-learning class and a designer of a service-learning class, to engage in reflection.

Because then I can think about what I'm doing, analyze it, and improve it. So I think of research being a subset of scholarship, and scholarship associated with my teaching as being a form of reflection.

When asked about reflection in her personal learning, Justine mentioned using formal methods of reflecting:

**Justine:** How can you not [use reflection]? I try to reflect in the same way as I encourage my students to reflect. I am collaborating on writing a book – what do we want to do and how? Peer reflection. To me its life, it's what you do when you want to learn something.

Justine is an award-winning scholar with over twenty years' experience in promoting social justice through education. In this quote, she highlights the importance of collaboration, rigorous academic writing, and mentorship in her work. Reflecting with her peers is clearly central to her learning process. By almost mocking the question about using reflection in her personal learning, she shows that reflection is inevitable to her. How can academics move from the 'thinking about stuff' end of the reflection continuum to the 'reflection is life' end? Can it be encouraged by collaborating with peers, by modelling reflective practice to students and colleagues and conducting published engaged scholarship? I believe that these are certainly building blocks, however, the development of a reflective practice must have the secure foundation of a space in which critical reflection is fostered, otherwise these blocks will collapse.

One group of interviewees combined reflection and scholarship, and the process encouraged them to publish the knowledge that was generated in order to share it with others. Whilst the rigorous requirements of publication encouraged them to reflect on their use of service-learning in a focused manner, the 'legitimation' of their practice of peer-reflection gave them standing within the institution, thereby ensuring that reflection was not viewed as just 'thinking about stuff'. One member of this group discussed their reflection on what it meant to be civically engaged as follows:

**Maurice:** Because, well, the glue that kind of holds us together is a project that involves writing. Very personal writing answering that very question as well ...so it's a personal journey in service-learning and civic engagement. That's sort of part one in our narratives. And part two is more a case study of a particular community-based research project or a class that we've taught and it's kind of the "how to". So, we are in the middle of this writing.

Brookfield (1995) suggests three autobiographical learning methods with which academics can reflect on their practice: (1) graduate study; (2) professional development workshops; and (3) academic conferences. As the majority of my interviewees had completed their doctorate, further study would take the form of research. Some of the interviewees said that preparing to present a paper at a conference was a reflective exercise. A number of them referred to the benefit of reflecting on conference proceedings and professional development workshops and others had also facilitated such workshops. The interviewees viewed formal academic writing as a form of reflection, particularly if conducted in collaboration with colleagues.

I had expected that when colleagues met to reflect upon teaching practice – either with a view to publishing or not – the focus would be mostly on the academic or civic elements of engaged practice. However, a number of the interviewees reported that the personal development of the participants of these groups would also be discussed, and in fact would arise quite naturally during conversation. The primary reason for this was because the group had established trust and it was safe to disclose such information there.

As is evident from the examples above, groups of engaged academics who conducted reflection together in either an informal or formal manner considered it to be beneficial to their practice. Because the exercise was focused on a product (i.e. a course curriculum or an article for publication), there was both a clear understanding of what needed to be done to achieve that goal and depth to the level of reflection which covered academic, civic and personal issues. The reflection was conducted in a structured manner and resulted in generating knowledge which was seen in tangible products applicable to their practice. Specific time was set aside in which to conduct the work and a forum in which to do so was provided. It is significant that there was a safe space that was conducive to learning. Clearly, no single element mentioned here supports a holistic reflective practice.

#### 4.3.8 Multiple methods of reflecting on practice

There was agreement among the interviewees that the use of multiple reflection methods with students was more powerful than using only one method, so as to ensure that all learning styles were catered for. Nora mentioned a variety of exercises and rubrics and used ‘an amalgamation of different things, I try to engage in several different ways’. Jacob required his students to keep a log of their service experience, answering questions about how the service relates to what was being studied in class. They then had a weekly class discussion guided by themes, and at the end of the semester a formal written reflection paper had to be submitted.

When asked how she encouraged her students to be reflective practitioners, Harriet replied:

**Harriet:** Hopefully, by modelling and participating myself in some of the check-ins. Also, by acknowledging those who are checking in appropriately and also the dialogue that follows. Some people are more comfortable speaking up in class. Others, it takes a little bit longer, but that’s why we limit our class size to a smaller amount so that we have more of a comfort level, an optimum level for conversation within the class.

The literature also confirms that when teachers model reflection for students, it has benefits both for the academic and the student (Clayton & Ash, 2005, Rogers, 2001) and through this modelling; the academics gain an understanding of what it is like for the students to reflect on their service-experience. Clayton and Ash (2005) suggest that modelling reflective practice for their students is one of the principle incentives for academics to reflect on their teaching. They contend that when academics and students reflect on their practice, it leads to a greater sense of community between both and a greater willingness to share the personal risk and intellectual peril that are part of reflecting together (Clayton & Ash, 2005). From my own experience, the practicalities of reflecting in different ways became less abstract when used in relation to a real life experience (such as the one outlined in the Preamble).

Harriet discussed the multiple methods of getting feedback from others and reflecting on her practice as:

**Harriet:** Our students are placed... and I speak with their supervisors in the middle of the semester. We have an evaluation paper that the students work through with their supervisor, which I receive towards the end of the semester. And again, in reading the logs that we have and then always having an openness with the site so that people feel free in calling us if something is not going as it should be, or something is going wonderfully well and they want to inform us. And we also have service-learning committees on campus and I participate as well. And the university senate committee which deals with urban and university affairs which we have started and the university office for community service where we work very closely with in terms of placements.

The use of multiple methods of reflection was more productive than using only one method, as this ensured that all learning styles were catered for. Justine said that she would never use only one reflection method and provided opportunities for her students to use whatever method was appropriate to the learning context. Marian said that she gave students the freedom to express their feelings and ‘allowed space to be a storyteller’ because she said, in her experience, she would ‘never have gotten to the depth if I had allowed only one modality.’ Russell integrated the reflection and course content and used different kinds of assignments that ‘require reflection on the experience but connected to other assignments, readings, course discussions.’

It was repeatedly stated that the choice of reflection method depended on variables such as the topic of study, the literacy levels of students, the cognitive complexity of students, their past experience with reflection and the context of the service experience. It is evident that the interviewees encouraged their students to use both personal and peer-reflection. Reference was made to the limited efficacy of unstructured journaling when it was merely a description of a service experience. After practicing different modalities, some teachers let students choose the reflection method they preferred, with the condition that specific elements were addressed within the reflection process such as

development on the academic, personal and civic levels. If reflection was to be graded (which was not the norm) a rubric was provided, and the elements required in the reflection were highlighted. Some teachers returned draft reflection essays to students with comments on what was missing and how it could be improved for grading.

Likewise Benjamin discussed the multiple methods of reflecting on teaching practice.

**Benjamin:** One would be student feedback after or during the class session. So I would see how that classroom activity, class meeting went. Secondly, in my academic unit, we always collect student satisfaction information. So I have the benefit of seeing the results of that.

It's both quantitative and qualitative, so it's giving me student feedback about areas like preparation, rapport, organization, fairness of evaluation, and it's also asking the students to identify on the back of the form what are the strengths and weaknesses of the course. So I get that information.

And then I've also done research on my teaching and I think that's a reflective activity. So those are some of the ways I get – I'm reflecting and get information that feeds reflection.

In contrast to these rigorous and formal methods of reflection, other more creative methods are also used to support reflective practice:

**Marian:** I do art, journal writing, write poetry, discussion, use music. I use acrylic paint. I trained as an art educator using art therapy. I bring in dancers from the community to give opportunity to my students.

Abigail sits in her back garden and listens to the birds to clear her mind to 'let whatever comes, come through me'. She also writes poetry as a way to reflect 'I just feel inspired about many of the things that I do because if I'm not inspired by it I'm not going to do it'. As a part of a service-learning module Abigail, a biologist brought her students to a nature reserve to listen to the different varieties of frogs.

**Abigail:** And we get them out there and they have to sit there alone in the silence and count what they hear as frogs, how many different species and what is the cadence of communications among these frogs, just write down everything that you hear and whatever occurs to you while you are listening to it, just kind of keep a journal of listening for an hour and a half or so.

And some of the stories that come out of that very brief period of time are profound from these students and it is frequently reflected on as one of the most memorable experiences of their college experience here. They have to write on it, and they have to discuss it. We follow up with discussions and there's never enough time for that. I've had students actually cut following classes so they can continue these discussions which they think are great. It's a very popular aspect of this particular course. It's probably what brings in the registration more than anything.

Based on her own personal experience of growing up on a nature reserve, Abigail knew that, in the peace that the solitude provided, as well as hearing the frogs, students would also hear their own thinking, perhaps for the first time. The important aspect of this example is the deliberate creation of a space in which to reflect. It is perhaps ironic that Abigail brought her students off campus, to a place one would not consider suitable for scholarly work. Experience of this place actually enhanced the reflection that happened back in the classroom. Abigail was not the only interviewee to highlight the fact that the campus was not necessarily the most conducive space for reflection.

It is worth noting that there is a tension in creating space for students to reflect as a formal part of their service-learning programme when some of the academics say that the formal classroom may not necessarily be the most conducive place to reflect. There is a difficulty in finding the balance between creating the right space and finding the correct location for reflection.

Dorothy discussed multiple methods of reflecting on her practice but sees the role for both private and public reflection.

**Dorothy:** I also keep a journal myself and talk about key moments of this worked really well or this didn't work quite as well. So, there's the

private internal part that I do, that focuses on my practice and teaching and my practice with universities and of communities, so all of that combined. But, then there's the more public sharing of that with the other teachers and with the students as we go along.

So, yeah, and I would say that's important for me as a professional, to have – not only make the time and space to do my own private reflection – but to also have a place to have that as a more public type of conversation, where all of us can sort through the practice of what we are doing. I'd be lost, I think, if I didn't have the opportunity to either or those or both of them.

Since many of the interviewees discussed multiple methods of reflection and none reported to using only one method – to the exclusion of all others – it can be inferred that in the experience of these interviewees multiple methods of reflection has proven more beneficial. Interviewees have expressed their personal preferences for how they reflect, but this research does not seek to rank reflection methods. However, efforts to improve reflective practice should include the fact that multiple methods of reflection are considered to be more effective than using any single method, whether written, verbal or silent. This is confirmed by Eyler *et al.* (1996) who recommended that a variety of reflection methods be used and that multiple opportunities are provided to use them.

More significant than *which*, or *how* many reflection methods were used, is the reflective mindset that was prevalent in many of the interviewees. I believe that reflection can be compared to a frame through which practice is viewed, like looking through a window. One sees that which is framed by the window, and the size, the shape and colour of the window influences the view. The *seeing* and the *window* are inseparable in the act of looking at the view.

Clive commented on the nature of reflection: 'I think, the reflection should be built in, so it's not like I suddenly have a separate activity called reflection'. This is a similar view to what Hicks *et al.* (2005) call 'a habit of mind and heart'. It is significant that quote by Hicks *et al.* refers to only two of the 'head, heart and hands' often cited as a rubric for reflection. They take the stance that critical

thinking and the intellectual and personal development are more important in the reflective process than the conscious activity of 'doing'.

#### **4.3.9 Typology of reflective practice**

Reflection is multifaceted and multi-dimensional activity. There have been efforts in the past to identify what exactly reflection entails. Efforts to illustrate the different types of reflection have been made in the construction of a typology of reflection; however there is no consensus in the literature regarding a single one which adequately describes the reflection process.

Showing influences of the work of Dewey and Schön, Valli (1997) compiled her typology of reflection for teacher educators, which contains five orientations and a broad focus for that type: technical reflection (general instructional guidelines); reflection-in and on-action (one's own teaching performance); deliberative reflection (specific teaching concerns such as curriculum design and classroom organisation); personalistic reflection (personal growth and relationships with others); and critical reflection (the moral, social and political aspects to education). Valli ranks them from technical reflection to critical reflection, suggesting that there are certain types of reflection which are prerequisites for others. Valli accepts the limitations of the different orientations but suggests that using all five types of reflection together can mitigate against the weaknesses of any one of them. She also highlights that reflection should not be an end in itself but must be a collective endeavour within the reflective culture of a school.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) propose what they see as the types of teacher reflection. Descriptive reflection (personal and retrospective); perceptive reflection (linking teaching to feelings); receptive reflection (connecting one's own views to those of others); interactive reflection linking learning with future action; and critical reflection (viewing the individual within the status quo. Similar to Valli, they suggest that the reflective process is enriched if different types of reflection are used. However, the types they recommend are not hierarchical or exclusive to each other and though all may not be applicable in every reflective conversation, each has its use depending on the context.

More recently, Jay and Johnson (2002) propose what they call a typology of reflection that has the dimensions of descriptive reflection, comparative reflection and critical reflection. Rather than a typology as such, what they propose bears a closer resemblance to Borton's (1970) 'what, so what, now what' model and likewise is similar to Ash and Clayton's (2004) DEAL model. Used in reflective seminars as a part of teacher training programme, their model provides a framework for students to examine their pre-service teaching experience.

Academics that I interviewed described the methods they used to reflect on their engaged practice. The methods outlined by interviewees come under the five categories: contemplation, verbal with students, verbal with peers, individual solo written reflection, collaborative writing with peers and scholarship of teaching and learning (see fig: 4).

The research shows that beyond the specific technique used, reflective practice can be seen as a number of dichotomies which influence how the reflection takes place and the potential results. Though tabulated below in fig. 5, it must be stated that each type of reflection has its own value. None are ranked higher than others because each has its use depending on the context. Prior to this research reflection was categorised by the activity, this typology emphasises the multifaceted and multi-dimensional nature of reflection. It lays out the various dimensions of reflection that should be considered in research and/or practice and shows that reflection can be examined in terms broader than the technique.

Explicit	Tacit
External	Internal
Verbal	Written
Purposeful	Ad hoc
Structured	Unstructured
Formal	Informal
Collaborative	Individual

Fig 5: Typology of reflective practice.

*Explicit – tacit*

Explicit reflection involves a deliberate act to draw meaning from experience; it is an intentional effort to reach understanding. The value of explicit reflection lies in it being active and conscious.

Tacit reflectivity is not action-based and is reflection that simply is, to the extent that it is a mindset. This tacit knowledge is based on past experience, and does not require effort to be drawn from the current experience. In the same way as one knows not to talk loudly in a library, there are engaged practitioners who simply *know* when a certain perspective is incongruent to the principles of best practice in service-learning. Its value lies in the fact that requires no action and is implicit. Tacit knowledge does not mean enlightenment; there is a fine line between ‘always already’ knowing, and unchallenged preconceptions. It is important therefore, to maintain criticality and not become complacent regarding what one thinks one knows.

*Internal – external*

Internal reflection is a silent reflective process of contemplation that one keeps in one’s mind. Its value lies in the fact that ideas and insight can develop at their own pace without the interruption from outside.

External reflection takes the form of meaning making that one shares with others by expressing it in some form. Its value lies in the fact that it becomes focused through language and can be augmented, affirmed, critiqued or enhanced through the process of sharing it with others.

*Verbal – written*

Verbal reflection is the act of voicing one’s reflections with others in conversation or debate. Its value lies in the speed with which thoughts can be

processed, and ideas debated and built upon in real time in collaboration with another.

The written reflection is the act of expressing one's reflections through the written word. Its value lies in the fact that it allows for the careful consideration through the comparatively slow pace of writing and if shared, the insight gained through feedback.

*Ad hoc – purposeful*

Ad hoc reflection unfolds in an unplanned manner. Its value is that it is spontaneous and flexible. Its limitation is that it can be unfocused, infrequent and unsystematic.

Purposeful reflection examines experience with a specific goal a focus in mind. Its value is the fact that it has a clear aim and therefore is targeted and efficient. Its limitation is that it may be outcome focused and on that account miss some of the meaning en route to a learning goal.

*Unstructured – structured*

Unstructured reflection is free-flowing and does not use a rubric or model. Its value lies in the absence of boundaries and the flexibility to be able to examine insights naturally as they unfold. The limitation is that by not following a tried and tested method important learning may be lost in the messiness of the process.

Structured reflection uses a prearranged formula or set of prompts to steer the reflection in a particular direction. Its value is that it can draw on theory to assist with the reflective process. Its limitation is that it can become over-systematised with more emphasis being put on the steps than where the steps are leading to.

*Individual – collaborative*

Individual reflection is conducted alone without the assistance of another person. Its value lies in the fact that one can reflect at a suitable pace, in one's preferred style and draw on tacit knowledge of one's practice to process experience. The limitation is that one is restricted to a single perspective and influenced by preconceptions and assumptions that may go unrecognised.

Collaborative reflection draws on the power of the group to assist the reflective process. Its value is in the pooling of knowledge, having multiple perspectives, the possibility to recognise and challenge assumptions, and be inspired and supported by colleagues in the meaning making process.

*Formal – Informal*

Formal reflection refers to drawing meaning from an experience in a prescribed and organised manner following agreed rules and may be a part of an official evaluation. Its value is that it is rigorous and can contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Its draw-back is that it may be overly focused on reaching empirical findings that may impede the organic nature of reflection.

Informal reflection happens in a casual and relaxed manner that is free of rules. Its value is that because it happens in a context that puts people at ease, it can deal with sensitive and personal issues. The limitation is that the reflection process can become little more than thinking or talking 'about stuff'.

The typology of reflection that I propose is different from those described in the literature as it points towards types of reflection, but does not suggest what to do. For specific reflection techniques one can use a model such as those already mentioned in this work. The typology does, however, encapsulate the types of reflection used by the service-learning academics that I interviewed.

#### **4.4 Elements of Good Reflection in Service-Learning**

Reflection, as described by the interviewees, is an integrated part of their engaged practice. In analysing the data, it was sometimes difficult to discern a difference between references to the reflection that the interviewees conducted on their teaching and the reflection that they encouraged their students to conduct. Because student reflection was such an integral part of the interviewees' engaged practice, it was necessary to examine their views about using reflection with their students. Understanding how they used reflection as a part of their teaching will give a context to that which they consider to be important in the reflective process.

It is likely that the reflection methods used in the classrooms of my interviewees were influenced by their knowledge of what was considered to be best practice for reflection in service-learning. As can be seen in Fig. 6, these reflection methods can be summarised by Ash and Clayton (2009b) who compiled a table of elements of high quality reflection citing literature on the topic (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999, Eyler *et al.*, 1996, Zlotkowski & Clayton, 2005).

Literature Source	High Quality Reflection...
Eyler <i>et al.</i> (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is continuous (ongoing)</li> <li>• is connected (with assignments and activities related to and building on one another and including explicit integration with learning goals and academic material)</li> <li>• is challenging (including in terms of the expectation that students take responsibility for their own learning)</li> <li>• is contextualized (to the community setting and broader public issues and to the students' own particular roles)</li> </ul>
Bringle & Hatcher (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links experience to learning</li> <li>• is guided</li> <li>• occurs regularly</li> <li>• involves feedback to the learner to enhance the learning</li> <li>• helps clarify values</li> </ul>
Zlotkowski & Clayton (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is oriented toward specific learning objectives</li> <li>• is integrative</li> <li>• is assessed in terms of critical thinking</li> <li>• includes goal setting</li> <li>• generates change in the learner's life</li> </ul>

Fig. 6: Characteristics of High Quality Reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009a, p. 35)

When I asked the interviewees to outline the reflection methods they used in class with their students, it appeared that they were using many of elements of best practice described in the table above. The reflection methods and models that the interviewees used with their students can be categorised as: written; verbal; and creative.

- **Written reflection** included written journals, essays, reflective papers, online discussions and blogs.
- **Verbal reflection** methods included classroom discussions, presentations to the class or community partners, show-and-tell and PowerPoint presentations.

- **Contemplative and creative reflection** techniques included: meditation, poetry, journaling, art, photography, role-play, painting, dance, rap, listening (e.g. to frogs), poster presentations, creating a collage, film-making, and movement oriented techniques such as Take a Stand<sup>14</sup>.

These three categories of reflection techniques have parallels with the techniques described by Eyler *et al.* (1996) who categorise their reflection exercises as writing, telling and doing. Though Eyler *et al.* include a fourth category 'reading', they stipulate that this requires debriefing orally or in writing. In concurrence with the existing literature, the practitioners I interviewed said that they believed that good reflection must involve:

- 1) Learning how to reflect including the use of multiple reflection methods (both reflecting alone and with peers).
- 2) Depth of reflective thought and connectedness of concepts.
- 3) Time and regularity of reflection.

What is significant in the data are the following elements of reflection that the interviewees discussed which are *not* mentioned by Clayton and Ash (2009a) in the table above.

- 4) A structure suitable for the learning level of the participants.
- 5) Communication skills for critical questioning and appropriate language
- 6) An environment conducive to learning i.e. a safe space with an atmosphere of trust.

Without these three further elements the potential of the mechanics, depth and frequency of reflection are underutilised and the reflective process is not firing on all cylinders, as it were.

These six elements of reflection for students should be significant in the context of the reflective practice of academics, because if academics agree that good reflection requires these elements, then it is likely that those in turn, could play a role in the academics' own reflective practice. Consequently, I grouped

---

<sup>14</sup> As a catalyst for classroom discussion, students express their opinions regarding polemic issues by standing on an imaginary likert scale.

the responses from the interviewees under these six headings to highlight the importance that they placed on these separate elements of reflection.

#### **4.4.1 Learning how to reflect**

There was agreement among the interviewees that reflection was a skill that is somewhat counter-normative and/or difficult for students to grasp and develop. It was therefore necessary to teach students how to reflect before it could become an inherent way of thinking.

**Dorothy:** I have actually found there's some things I have to teach about reflection. I don't think it comes naturally to some people. I'm working to make sure that for those students that that's not a natural practice. We have little steppingstones to help them move into that type of thing... we actually do a bit of teaching on what is reflection, how might you do that and kind of getting below surface descriptions of things.

**Jacqueline:** That's why I come back to the toolkit. If we can teach people the art form [of reflection], then I sort of don't care why it's working. It's just working.

We're trying to figure out what's going on in people's brains when they do it. I think that the challenge there is that to some extent you interrupt or affect the process, when you stop and say, "What are you thinking about now? What are you thinking about now?" but we have to do it, that's the only way.

Jacob's students tutored children as a part of their service-learning. At the beginning of the semester Jacob used a video tape of children's maths class and practiced reflecting on the example with his students so that they knew what was expected of them in their reflection. Half-way through the service placement, he scheduled time for one-to-one conversations with each student to review their reflection and give feedback on how they could improve on the process.

There is agreement in the literature that supports the argument that one must learn the skill of reflection in order to practice it correctly (Deeley, 2010,

Howard, 1998, Kolb, 1984, Moon, 1999b). Indeed, Clayton and Ashe (2004, p. 60) summarise this by saying ‘students have to learn how to learn (and teach and serve) through service-learning and many instructors have to learn how to teach (and learn and serve) through service-learning.’ As discussed earlier, reflection is not simply ‘thinking about stuff’ but a skill that needs to be learned and practiced.

Though some interviewees had a preference for particular reflection techniques, they used more than one and wove them into the service-learning module. Based on their experience, they found that they needed to teach the skill that was needed for a particular method and give students the opportunity to practice those skills in order to facilitate their students drawing meaning from the service experience.

#### **4.4.2 Questions about how to reflect**

Interviewees have stated that the first element of good reflection is having an understanding of how to reflect. They emphasise this through further discussion of the point by stating that they wanted to know how to facilitate reflection better (e.g. Dorothy, Nora, Harriet, Jacqueline, Johann) especially since they acknowledge the need to be able to teach the skill to students. They discussed a number of problems which they encounter in class and wanted to know how to overcome these difficulties: how to teach reflection, how to get students to value the process, how to steer students through the process. The dominant teaching practice in education is didactic; therefore, the discourse of critique has not been a part of most students’ learning experience. Because reflection is counter-normative to many students, it is reported that they have difficulty understanding the concept of reflection. Julian voices his frustration about trying to get his first-year community college students to reflect.

**Julian:** So before they could even reflect, what the Hell are you seeing? Do we even have your attention? Kids are on their cell phones, kids are... I mean that is where ripping them away, I mean... reflection?

People do not even know what it is. I mean seriously, they do not even know what it is.

Julian is clearly frustrated with the distractions that leave little space for students to reflect or think critically. The factors that contribute to this is the business of students lives – many of whom work part-time as well as study – and the emphasis on knowledge storage and recall for assessment within the university, which leave little space or need for critique.

Dorothy asks ‘is there a way to make it [reflection] easier? And, of course, the answer is no’ and Bethany wants to know how she can get students ‘to ask themselves the questions that service-learning can unleash, questions about themselves in the world and their relationship to the world?’ Addressing the counter-normative nature of reflection is a concern for practitioners, which is well summarised here:

**Jacob:** Some of the questions I have about reflection are, obviously – how to get the students to do it, but modelling it seems to help with that. But what’s even more problematic for me is getting them to value it. I think that I can be forceful enough to get to, at least, sound like they are being reflective. But I think the real reflection is an intrinsic thing, right? There’s no way for me to extrinsically motivate someone to reflect in a deep, meaningful way. I have not quite found all the way to get all my students to really want to be a reflective thinker. Perhaps, some of them are just not cognitively developed to that point where they really can sit down and synthesise thoughts or perhaps it’s just that I have not provided enough motivation or what. But that seems to bother me about this.

The problem of getting students to value reflection is larger than either Jacob’s teaching style or his student’s maturity, because regardless of whether it is valued in his class, it is not valued within higher education in general. If it was valued, reflection would be given a greater prominence in the dominant teaching culture, both in the classroom and in teacher training. There are some moves towards increasing the use of reflection in student learning, however, the banking method of education is still dominant. For students to accept the value and

potential of reflection they must see their teachers using it also; for them to learn how to reflect they must see their teachers modelling it and for academics to model it they must practice it.

Jacob's desire to get students to value reflection was echoed by other academics and his view regarding the 'cognitive complexity' of his students connects with Bethany's comment about the need to structure the reflection activity specifically for the level of the class. It also ties in with the conversation between Jasmine and Keith about how some students are quicker than others in achieving a deeper level of reflection. There is a degree of *chicken and egg* in this dilemma, since reflecting on issues of social justice through service-learning among what may actually contribute to students' cognitive complexity and maturity.

What is most significant about Jacob's comment is the reference to motivation, particularly if taken in the context of the reflective practice of academics. As stated above, reflection is not usually mandatory for academics, and given Jacob's comment, it cannot be forced on someone from the outside. On the contrary, it is an 'intrinsic thing' which must be encouraged through example given by 'modelling'. Bethany says 'I try to do what I'm asking the students to do, and to take it very seriously.' Barnett (1992) supports this by saying that teachers must model reflective practice in order to encourage their students to reflect. Teachers need to become reflective practitioners themselves in order to be role models for their students (Loughran, 1996, Moon, 1999b, Whitney & Clayton, 2011) and to do this they need practice in conducting reflection themselves. It appears that not all engaged academics are fully informed on how to conduct reflection and wish to understand the process more. This is unlikely to be due to not valuing reflection, since this was not evident from the data, instead, it could be due to a lack of instruction on how to reflect and a lack of space in which critical questioning can take place.

Interviewees have clearly stated the opinion that it is important to have an understanding of how to reflect. However, the questions they have about this point show that there is a gap in their knowledge. They want to expand their

understanding of the skill of reflection in (and on) their own learning process and learn how to better facilitate the reflection for their students.

#### **4.5 Depth of Reflective Thought and Connectedness of Concepts**

Interviewees unanimously agreed that reflection must go deeper than the descriptive (I *did* this or that) and must be more than an affective debriefing (I *felt* good/bad about...).

**Keith:** Reflection is hard for students. They come into it at different levels and experiences. Initially, they think it's, Dear Diary, I did this, it was fun, yadda, yadda." Very level one kind of stuff, very shallow.

Nora described how surprised she was 'that a number of students didn't really reflect too deeply at the beginning. It was very much "here's a log of what I did" and they didn't connect the theory.' Bethany said that some of her students 'know what are the key phrases and things they have to say in order to be done with their reflection' but she blamed herself for this kind of response from students because she felt she hadn't asked her students the right questions. Keith referred to this as 'warbling' which he dealt with by challenging students: 'they start to write or say in a reflection process what they think I want to hear; "Oh, this was the most amazing thing I've ever done, and I'll be changed forever." Great. How? Why?'

Johann did not focus so much on the reflection technique as on creating the right environment for critical thinking to flourish, and regardless of the reflection method being used he challenged students to justify their assumptions and conclusions.

**Johann:** And a journal can be pabulum just as much as it can be engaging. Because there are times that students will write what they think you want to hear. Not to keep hitting the same bell, but it's the

only bell that I've come up with ...the key is to [repeatedly ask] “....  
and...?”

He contended that it was preferable to ask ‘how does that mean?’ as opposed to ‘what does that mean?’ Drilling down to identify how one has arrived at a conclusion requires critical thinking and the questioning of one’s assumptions. Johann believed that this process is as important as the product or in other words, that asking the question is as important as whatever the answer may be. This attitude reflects a shift from the dominant educational culture of arriving at the ‘correct’ answer, and is a necessary means to work through the habits of didactic learning.

Others (Bethany, Nora, Dorothy) agreed that asking the right questions encouraged students to explain how they arrived at an analysis of an experience, why it was significant and how to connect it to the course content they were studying. There was general agreement that depth in reflection was important and that the challenge facing academics was facilitating the making of connections.

Clive contended that good reflection facilitation connected learning experiences through different frames: ‘how do we work with students to help their own learning become richer and more connected to the world, more connected to community, more reflective, and so on?’

Finding the right questions to ask students is not simply having a list of prompts but requires a much deeper awareness. Clive said that no matter how deeply he thinks he is thinking, he asks himself ‘what are those questions that you never thought to ask. And they may be some of the most important questions, but your own experience hasn’t prepared you... And how do you open yourself up to those questions, how do you seek them out to some extent if they are not right out in the surface?’ He believed that part of his role as reflection facilitator was to connect what he did in class to ‘what you want to do differently in the world... helping to connect and continually reconnect in learning in life, seeing life as a learning process, but also seeing learning as a living activity.’ He continued by saying ‘maybe the best teachers are the ones who can help young people – or anybody, could be old learners – help learners stay connected with

life and keep their learning alive'. Viewing learning as a living activity changes the perspective from learning as a product to learning as a process. Clive exemplified a deep curiosity and when describing his own learning process.

**Clive:** I was interested in learning. I was always reading and really interested in every aspect of learning. I mean, somebody commented on my blog about that, 'how do you just keep going?' Less kind of ways to say scattered. There's almost no topic I can think of that I'm not really interested in some way or could get interested in.

Clive does not seek to arrive at a place where the answer is, because there are always new questions. This criticality and curiosity is significant in changing the approach from the 'empty vessel' learner to the 'eternal spring of curiosity' learner. It also emphasises the perspective of reflective practice as a mindset rather than an activity, with the practice of reflection leading to a way of seeing or as Clive put it, 'a living learning process, with learning happening through living'.

Bethany echoed this sentiment when she said that: 'a good teacher inspires. A good teacher opens doors. A good teacher asks more questions than he or she answers. A good teacher enables one to connect with the world in new ways.'

Deep reflection requires critical questioning. A teacher giving only questions instead of answers shifts the responsibility of the active learning onto the student through their consideration and examination of the questions. The answers themselves are not necessarily the goal, but the process of examining the questions and learning to learn through deep questioning, is significant. One of the major challenges that the interviewees reported regarding the facilitation of reflection was how to achieve in-depth reflection so that students could achieve a deeper level of understanding. Ash and Clayton (2004, 2009b, 2009c) suggest that reflection should move from lower to higher order thinking, showing that students can first describe an experience (lower order) and then evaluate that experience and change behaviour (higher order). The reflection rubrics used in service-learning including Ash and Clayton's DEAL, Welsh's ABC's of Reflection, or Borton's 'what, so what, now what?', move from description to

analysis to synthesis showing that depth of thought is a vital requirement in reflection.

If, as the interviewees suggested, good reflection requires critical questioning, a further challenge lies in the difficulty some academics may have in taking on the role of the source of questions rather than the source of answers, which is contrary to the status of expert inherent in the role of academic. Jacqueline highlighted this problem when she said that academics need to see the community partner as a source of knowledge and be able ‘to step off the expert thing’.

Another issue appears to be that academics do not know how to teach well using critical questions. They may find it difficult to ask questions that allow students to engage and respond to the course material in ways that matter to them (the students) and have the potential to transform thinking and action. I believe that unless academics have at least some personal direct experience in the service element of the engaged project as well as practice in reflecting on community service, they will find it difficult to raise the questions necessary to reach deep reflection. This is significant, considering that the interviewees, who highlighted the issue of critical questioning, already had experience in both community service and reflecting on it.

Nora says that good reflection facilitation requires ‘being very intentional about asking good questions’ and if students do not connect theory to practice to steer the discussion back to the text being used in the class, ‘so, then, asking questions, “well, how does this connect with what we know from *The Working Poor?*” which is a book by David Shipler about poverty, “what connects?” Modeling how to ask reflective questions is an important element in developing critical thinking. The questions can involve a depth of knowledge of the subject matter or be as simple as ‘why?’

## 4.6 Time and Regularity of Reflection

### 4.6.1 Time and student reflection

Many academic exercises can be viewed as formulaic in nature e.g. study the topic, deconstruct the question, interpret the references in the literature, answer the question by including one's analysis etc. This routine generally does not require critical thinking and does not lead to transformation. Contrarily, service-learning can affect the student (and indeed the other stakeholders) on different levels and does require critical thinking skills in order for it to be productive.

The interviewees agreed that their students confirmed that the absence of time is a barrier to reflecting.

**Julian:** Part of our problem here, not only all the electronic devices anywhere in the world today, but our students are being pulled. That's what it comes to act like a student. Reflection time and talking about it. It's almost a luxury on some level. [students say] 'I don't have that kind of time'. I think a lot of our students experience that. They have jobs. God! I have students, the first day [I ask], 'How many people here are working 20 hours a week and over?' You should see; it's amazing.

**Melissa:** They [students] already work. They have families, this, that and the other, and taking a lot of classes, so it [service-learning] just takes time from the other responsibilities they have.

The result of this time poverty is twofold: practical and mental. Because students have a growing number of demands on their time, they may find it difficult to fit in all that is required of them in terms of attending class, reading, writing assessments, and completing service hours. The stress and demand of this workload can leave students with very little headspace even when time is set aside to reflect on community service. Raelin (2002, p. 66) asks whether we fill our life with frenetic activity to make up for an emptiness in the soul, and if 'constant action may merely serve as a substitute for thought?' Though time poverty may not be quite that profound, what is significant is that time is a necessary element in reflective practice.

The interviewees reported that they used reflection regularly with their students in class. With regular reflection, an atmosphere of trust is developed with the teacher, between students, and within the group as a whole. Regularity of reflection gives students the opportunities to learn what is required of them and how to use reflection as a learning technique. When particular rubrics were used or if reflection papers were being assessed, some practitioners would review the first draft and return them for rewriting and resubmission. When students became familiar with what was required of them, they were then able to transfer those skills to different modes of reflection. In the term *reflective practice*, it is implicit that the activity of reflection is repeated; otherwise it should be referred to as *reflective occasion*. Eyler (2001) suggests that reflection should occur regularly; before, during and after service experiences. An example of this would be discussing what students are expecting before they arrive at a service site. Then during a service activity, students could consider if their expectations or assumptions were met; and in the debriefing session when the work is done, what the students are feeling and how the service work connects with their course work.

As with any other skill, reflection can be improved through practice, but this does not mean mundane and mindless repetition, but an active learning process of critical questioning.

Further to the point of regularity however, it was pointed out that over-reflecting is unproductive:

**Ruben:** ...do it frequently enough so that it's meaningful, and you don't do it so frequently that it becomes meaningless and just a routine kind of thing where you've beaten the thinking out of the activity.

Some students may take more than one service-learning course, and indeed may also have reflective papers for modules that are not service-learning, to the extent that reflecting becomes mundane. Julianne reports that 'students here write so many reflection papers they know how to do it already'. Bethany referred to the problem of over-reflecting when she said 'some students know what they can get away with, what are the key phrases and things they have to say in order to be

done with their reflection’ which was echoed by Keith’s earlier reference to ‘warbling’. It is interesting to note the reference that Bethany makes to students being ‘done with their reflection’, as this implies that they see reflecting as an exercise or homework rather than a way of learning. Harriet alluded to it with the comment: ‘I just wonder sometimes that you can become a little... “ordinary” when you lead reflections in the same way.’ Both of these comments imply that reflective practice can be viewed by some students as a chore rather than a way of thinking. Though a structure may be helpful to manage the thought process and to avoid simply ‘thinking about stuff’ there is a fine line between it being meaningful and it becoming mundane. The interviewees expressed the opinion that the frequency of the reflection was important and needed to be fine tuned, in order to ensure that reflection was used to its optimum efficacy.

It is important to note that those who reflect so often that it becomes procedural may be missing the point. If reflection is always challenging, can it become mundane? There is an interesting threshold here between repetition to develop the practice and maintaining the meaningful aspect of reflection. Where is the line between reflection as a natural mindset and reflection as merely an insignificant habit, a reflection reflex in response to academic demands? The subjectivity of reflection leaves educators open to the possibility of students faking reflection and rather than it being authentic, it can become scripted because students may be able to switch into reflective mode and churn out a reflective piece. The problem is not necessarily that students are reflecting too much but that they are being asked to reflect too often. There is a grey area between over and under reflecting, it needs to be reflexive, but not mundane so as to retain its critical edge.

Nora was aware of the chance that students could fake reflection. Interestingly she believed that she needed to be a reflective practitioner, in order to address the problem.

**Nora:** Because if I don’t, if I can’t be in the moment and see that students are disengaged or not connecting or aren’t understanding how this experience is relevant to the coursework or that the coursework is relevant to anything beyond the 16-week course, that’s a problem. Like,

I need to be able to recognize that and to be able to adapt because everybody's going to have a different learning style. Everybody is going to engage differently. So, part of it is trying to realize, is the student really connected? Do they really get it? Can they fool me? Yes. Can they work the system? Yes. And, can you stop that? I'm not sure if I want to spend my energy that way. But I think that's a small percentage of the students.

Rather than chasing this small number of individual students, she preferred to focus on the responsibility of teacher; to concentrate her efforts on facilitating the reflection in a manner that met the needs of the group of students. However, she did not take on the responsibility for the students learning, if they did not wish to engage, then they lost out on the learning.

If service-learning is correctly implemented, the service experience should be enough to motivate students to *want* to reflect and make sense of what they have done. The problem of 'over reflecting' may lie in the fact that students are required to repeatedly present a *product* of reflection (particularly when the reflection is graded), when reflection should in fact be a process.

#### **4.6.2 Time and teacher reflection**

As already outlined, the elements of good reflection include knowledge of how to reflect, depth of reflection and a safe space in which to conduct reflection. These elements are dependent on having the time to reflect on practice. Though the practitioners interviewed acknowledged the importance of reflective practice, many of them expressed the fact that they did not have enough time in which to reflect. 'I think that there is less and less time to do those things. I think things are more fast-paced and we expect more to be done in a shorter amount of time (Dorothy)'. Julian was so 'tied for time', that he described our interview as a luxury. Benjamin, who delivered service-learning staff development workshops, noted that the impact of providing reflection instruction to teaching staff was valuable but time consuming: '...they've changed the way they do their teaching as result of it. But it's a very small scale, very time intensive.' Benjamin discussed other methods of reflecting on practice which, in addition to

contributing to practice, had the advantage of ‘a low threshold activity with a small time requirement’(e.g. online surveys) . These activities however, were limited to the extent that they were completed alone and were once-off events.

Clive discussed his time poverty, but viewed it in a slightly different way. Rather than making time for a particular activity, he suggested that instead we should think reflectively:

**Clive:** Yeah, I often feel like anybody that I wish I had more time for certain things. I do feel like I often let myself get caught up in doing things that are not very reflective and not very, you know, that I get caught up in this mundane. I got to finish this list, I got to get through a list. When I think, reflective teaching, reflective life I think could help us.

This brings reflection out of the domain of education and into life itself, which is logical for Clive, who earlier proposed living as a learning activity and vice versa. However, as with the counter-normative nature of reflective practice in higher education, is it any easier to live the ‘reflective life’ off campus? Raelin (2002, p. 66) is dubious about the prospect of this given that ‘society gives reflection and its counterpart – listening – short shrift. We don’t seem to be interested in the whole story. We even perfect the art of interruption so that we can show our “proactivity” and gain the boss’s attention’.

On being asked the Magic Wand question which was ‘given all the time and resources you needed, how would you reflect on your practice?’ The majority of interviewees referred to the desire to have more time.

**Benjamin:** Oh, I would take the time to much more systematically and extensively collect information from students about my teaching. I just don’t take the time. So there are the Angelo and Cross methods of evaluating classroom, not courses, but classroom. I use those periodically. Their use has ebbed and flowed over my career. But if I were really doing everything that I could, I would be using those much more extensively and doing research on my teaching much more extensively than I do.

**Harriet:** If I had also a sabbatical again that I would do the same type of work that you are doing and be able to reflect that as a result of visiting other sites, and really seeing firsthand a number of classes which have been successfully taught.

Not only is there no time allocated to reflection at the institutional level, but outside teaching, reflective practice is constrained by other priorities that make it difficult to find time to reflect. Some of the interviewees imagined the ideal life comprising of the time to meditate, think, and escape to a place of calm and quiet, all of which would assist in the reflective process. However, it is unlikely that many of us will be able to reproduce these conditions for reflection and certainly not in the classroom.

Moon (1999b) cites the three most important things that are required to facilitate reflective practice on teaching as: (1) the availability of sufficient time and space; (2) institutional support to allow practitioners to learn how to use reflection; and (3) the development of a collaborative environment. There is reference in the literature to supports the argument that reflection must be systematic and have a degree of regularity (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, Gray & Forsstrom, 1991, Moon, 1999b, Swanson, 2010, Wildman *et al.*, 1990). ‘Time spent in professional development is not wasted, and professional learning is not a disposable frill. The time spent on professional learning can (and ought to) enhance the time spent in the classroom’ (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 83). Traditional teaching and learning methods do not factor in additional time for reflection. As long as the dominant framework is seen as the ‘norm’ it will be difficult to argue for an approach that, by definition, demands more time.

#### **4.7 Structured Reflection**

The interviewees reported that they used structured reflection exercises for their students. The amount of structure for any reflection method depended on: the level of the students, the learning context, the service experience and the desired learning outcomes.

Denis provided 'structured reflection themes' for his students, and Jacqueline provided students 'with the "what, so what, now what" model so they could understand that there was a difference between description and analysis.' Nora also used this rubric and another similar structure: 'I've used your 'head, heart, hands' – what are you thinking, what are you feeling, what are you going to do? Some of those are easier and quicker things to use with large group or one time things.'

It was also agreed that the structure relied on prompts and critical questions that moved the reflection from a description of the experience to an analysis of it. Bethany commented that the amount of structure depended 'on the developmental level of the students. And so I think the less cognitively complex they are, the more structured the reflection needs to be'. Jacqueline discussed the need to take the level of the students into consideration when considering what form of reflection to use in class.

**Jacqueline:** I think there's a certain cognitive level that you need to have, that's an awareness of your own thought process that traditional age undergraduates may not yet be there. "What are you thinking? How are you thinking differently?" that cognitively they may not have reached the level where they can access their own thinking, some of them.

The difference of students' learning levels is referred to by three interviewees from the same university when discussing the reflection techniques they use. Natasha commented that her master's students are:

**Natasha:** ...looking for ways to explore knowledge beyond "I read what I had to read last night." When I give them the opportunity to do that almost all of them take advantage of it. So, I'm lucky in that way. My questions don't have to be very good to get great answers.

Maurice agreed that some of his honours undergraduate students were sometimes quicker to go deeper into their reflection than his master's students. In contrast Jasmine found that her undergraduate students resisted reflecting on their service experience, especially if the service-learning module was compulsory. This was

explained by Keith, who said that the reflection technique depends on the level of the class and the nature of the course because some students need to be ‘shepherded’ through the reflection process with the use of a reflection rubric. Keith went on to say that he used reflection in classes that are not service-learning because it was a valuable learning tool.

The students who were taught by my interviewees were of differing academic levels and had varying amounts of experience of service-learning. When interviewees refer to the students being ‘less cognitively complex’, I believe that they are referring to emotional intelligence: the maturity that is needed to be able to question critically, to challenge assumptions and to accept that some preconceptions need to change. It takes emotional maturity to process perspectives other than the academic, which is the usual frame of reference in traditional higher education. In contrast, service-learning courses require students to develop not only the skill of examining experience critically but also the maturity to accept difficult ethical and moral issues such as privilege, poverty, injustice and the other social problems encountered in service-learning. Depending on the students’ emotional intelligence, they may need more or less stewarding through the meaning-making process, which could call for either a structure that is composed of a rigid reflection rubric or a set of simple reflective prompts.

Though she did not mention the level at which her students were, Harriet described the reflection system she used with her students as:

**Harriet:** Part one is the chronology, how are they spending their time at their site with the total of hours for the week. Second part is the commentary of one or two meaningful experiences of what happened to them and how they reflect upon this experience. Part three is their plan for the next week. What do they hope to accomplish at their site. So I have an opportunity to help direct this also so that they’re not just doing paperwork or working on the computer. Part four is the issues of the week which I mentioned earlier [either critical incidents or topics related to the readings on social justice]. Part five is how is the group project coming along.

This highly structured system of reflection is connected with the course material and covers the practicalities of the service project as well as drawing meaning from learning moments within the experience. It is student led, shares the learning from different perspectives and helps to develop the group. For those who have conducted a number of service-learning projects, it may not be necessary to go into so much detail, as the students may be well versed in the logistics and usual topics for discussion, and ‘jump in’ at the deep end of the reflection without much prompting.

The topic of structure for reflection systems is addressed in the literature by Ash and Clayton (2009a, p. 28) when they say:

...given how unfamiliar most students are with learning through reflection on experience (Clayton & Ash, 2004) they need a structure and guidance to help them derive meaningful learning when they are outside the traditional classroom setting, otherwise reflection tends to be little more than descriptive accounts of experiences or venting of personal feelings.

Whilst Clayton and Ash refer to students in general, some students (comparable to those which some of my interviewees taught and who had completed more than one service-learning course) are familiar with the process of reflection.

Jason also used reflection in his philosophy courses but brought it to a much higher level when he started to use service-learning. However, he had reservations about the idea suggested by the service-learning co-ordinator, i.e. that reflection would take on the same importance as a lecture. He struggled with finding the ‘happy medium’ between content and reflection and he quipped: ‘you got to have something to reflect upon, if I haven’t done a lecture, reflecting is just putting your feet up and having a beer!’ He emphasised that the expertise of the reflection facilitator was vital to draw the line between learning and ‘whining and gnashing of teeth over nothing’. He used a simple reflection activity to provoke questions which were then discussed, before steering the discussion into the context of the philosophical theory being studied.

Benjamin discussed an online survey of community partnership conducted with teaching staff. He saw this survey as a reflective exercise that caused academics to think about the quality of the partnership and how it could be improved.

**Benjamin:** What you discover is that the buzz phrase is “assessment is an intervention” because what you discover is when you ask someone to monitor a behaviour; it alters the frequency of the behaviour. It may increase it, it may decrease it, but alters it. So, now the extrapolation of that is that we probably don’t do enough systematic evaluation of our activities. And to do more, would itself be an intervention.

The question of structure usually did not arise for the interviewees when they reflected on their own practice. In the case of Nora, her reflection process ‘has become internalized, I no longer need to think about it or structure it in such formal ways. It’s more of an internalized process and practice – almost tacit in a way until there is something that gives me greater pause and then I more actively and consciously process it’.

Having a structure contributes to the reflective process because it ensures that different perspectives are used to examine an experience thereby drawing the breadth of learning from a service experience. It avoids simply ‘thinking about stuff’, and encourages active learning, ensuring that the learning can be steered from lower to higher order critical thinking. By having structured reflection discussions, it gives space and voice to all students to participate and allows the group to learn from individual experiences. It sets ground rules for discussion and allows an opportunity to question assumption and challenge points of view.

#### **4.7.1 The problem of over-structuring reflection**

Bringle and Hatcher (1999) suggest that good reflection requires a high quality learning environment, regularity and structure. In some of the literature, particularly the DEAL rubric posited by Ash and Clayton (2004, 2009b) reflection is a highly structured exercise, which not only examines an experience through academic, civic and personal frames but also incorporates the different

levels of Bloom's Taxonomy for the articulation of the learning. Such structuring may have its purpose in certain circumstances, for example, when reflection papers are being assessed. It can also be shortened for use in classroom discussion; however, over-structuring reflection has its drawbacks as these practitioners warn.

**Nicola:** I'm just so well aware, painfully aware, that some teachers apply reflection rather mechanically. I am referring to, relying on the format to be, to stand for the thing in itself. Rather than, the spirit and intent lead, take the lead of what is the format by which you operationalize the spirit and intent. So I'm always, a little bit reserved and cautious about identifying any one method or exercise as the same as the intent or the spirit.

So I think I really don't care for the approach that the only rigorous kind of reflection is achieving what academics assume is the only academically rigorous thing which is analytic, which is breaking things apart.

Sometimes I think reflection should be about building things together, developing a gestalt, about what one experienced in the community, which is very different from breaking it down analytically.

Nicola identifies the tension for the educators between knowing that structured reflection leads students through the reflective process slowly and the potential to stifle the natural thought process. She also expresses the view that some academics may be satisfied to have encouraged their students to reach as high as Bloom's level of analytical thinking, but do not bring it to the final level of synthesis by incorporating the learning into a new perspective. This may be due to the students' difficulty with developing the skill of reflection, or the academics' confusion of how to use reflection fully.

The tensions within the level of structure needed in the reflective process are evident in the comments above and those in the previous section. There are many differing factors that are fluid. Even when using standard pedagogy with a small to medium sized group, one cannot expect to be able to teach the course exactly the same way for two consecutive years as the group dynamics change, and the

ability of the individual students change. This is accentuated when using reflection, because as well as the cognitive domain, it covers the affective and behavioural domains. Deciding on the level of structure reflection which is needed depends on the intuition and skill of the facilitator, thus adding a further level of uncertainty in the use of service-learning.

There are further warnings from interviewees about the drawbacks of reflection being too structured. Magnus says that though there needs to be particular elements to the reflection process, these ‘can be applied rather mechanically’ which does not lead to productive reflection. Abigail discusses the need to integrate everything and not to restrict the flow:

**Abigail:** Creating a rigid environment that you’re trying to push the flow through, in order to get an outcome, in my experience, that’s not productive in every case. In some cases that’s what the individual needs. My experience is outside that box. I can’t go there, so too rigid a structure for me is counterproductive.

She is discussing the difference between how she uses reflection in class and how she reflects on her own practice. Her experience guides her, as she knows what is needed for some students but likewise that that does not work for her own reflection. Clive warns about the pitfall of over processing and ‘thinking about the thinking’ about reflection and wants to find ways to steer students’ reflection better:

**Clive:** And yet I see students at times who seem to be really all caught up in sort of thinking about this, and thinking about the thinking about it and all of this. And wanting to find ways, how do you then connect that to what you might do differently in the world versus somebody who’s sort of so caught up in the specific doing that they have trouble going back. And how do you help people achieve a balance that is best for them. And some of them don’t even know what the balance is.

Clive acknowledges the challenges of having different kinds of learners in his classes. Not only will each group have a different dynamic and have mixed

abilities, but each individual will have a different learning style and move along a trajectory of developing the skill of reflection. All of this has to be managed by the facilitator, who wants to be the ‘guide on the side’ and encourage the students own learning rather than give the answers. He even refers to the importance of achieving a balance suggesting he values both kinds of thinking, theory and practice and also understands the need to examine an experience but not over-process it. The potential to get caught up in the process of reflection is echoed by another practitioner:

**Johann:** I think that one of the pitfalls is that it’s easy to get hung up in the activity and not find the learning. So that it becomes, you know, we’ve got a three entry journal or we do... da da da. Well, I think that’s a format to try and address what we are talking about here. I think the value of Experiential Ed. or service-learning is the engagement and how that engagement plays out, rather than format stuff.

I am not so sure it’s the activity where we need to be looking as much as it is what we are looking for, our outcomes and how might we challenge our students to get there.

Johan explains that the outcome is not necessarily the correct ‘answer’ but rather the development of the reflective process itself. He guides students into thinking ‘how does that mean, as opposed to necessarily what does that mean?’ by drawing explanations from his students through asking them to explain their thought process. He concludes that ‘I am not sure that there is a formula for that as much as there is an environment for that.’ This returns to the idea that the atmosphere of critical questioning is as important as the specific questions that are asked, and the process of critical thinking is as important that the answers arising from it. When in the future, the answers generated on that occasion have been forgotten, the skill of critical thinking remains.

For some students, reflection is not a new concept and in fact they may have become routine in their written reflection. Harriet considers the questions she has about facilitating the reflection process with her students.

**Harriet:** So my questions are how to find those best questions to ask them in the appropriate way and to have students understand how important – how very important – reflection is to a service-learning class. And I just wonder sometimes that you can become a little [pause] I can't think of a better word than 'ordinary' when you lead reflections in the same way. I think they have to be creative. I think they need to be challenging. I think they need to make students think in a different way so that they act in a different way when they're at their [service] site.

Harriet, like Johan, is not necessarily seeking the correct formula of questions so that her students arrive at the correct answer, but a method of how to encourage reflective thinking. Because thinking is a process, teaching the skill is not as easy as dictating to students what they must know. Clearly, she is constantly searched for creative and challenging ways of encouraging reflection, which even with her 25 years experience of using service-learning implies that it is not formulaic.

When asked what his questions about reflection were, Magnus focused on reaching the right balance between structuring the reflection activity and his personal learning from the process.

**Magnus:** How to do it. How to make it meaningful. How to push myself on remembering its importance. How to ask others how they do it. How to keep reminding myself of its importance. I think, what happens is you get tied up in the syllabus, the reading materials, the books, the sequence, the PDF files and you forget that all these things may be interesting to you, but they may not be interesting to the people that are going to take this journey with you, and they surely may not contribute to good reflective learning. We construct these things like they were the new design building. We put so much energy into it. Often it is an ideal that doesn't play out in practice.

Magnus has clearly reflected on his pedagogy, and was able to respond immediately with a list of areas on which he would like deeper understanding and insight. He strives to build *it*, the *thing* called reflection into teaching and learning yet he is unhappy with how that takes shape. He admits to getting tied up in the structure and feels like he is not achieving the balance between process

and product. He sees the reflective process as a journey, and that the structures of pedagogy may not assist in the process.

Clive quotes Dewey's stance on embodiment of learning when he says: 'the separation of body and mind is not just an abstract question; it's *the* fundamental problem of human civilization. Until we bring body and mind together in action, we can't make progress on any of the problems in front of us.' What Clive refers to is similar to Butin's (2005a) point on service-learning being an embodied process. During his interview it became clear that Clive does not separate his reflection from his doing; but his action is conducted reflectively, thus integrating reflection and practice, and removing the hyphen from reflective-practice, as it were.

The points made by Clive and Magnus are salient for other practitioners, as they point to the need to remember the centrality of reflection in service-learning and that the process of learning is more important than the teaching product which we attempt to achieve.

#### **4.8 Communication Skills and Language**

Interviewees discussed a number of topics which related to communication skills; these covered the language needed for reflective discussion, civic dialogue and finding voice. Though contemplative reflection is silent, these topics are considered together because of the fact that expressing one's reflective process uses language in one form or another.

A number of references are made to voice in the context of expressing one's opinion or truth. These references were predominantly in the context of students but also referred to practitioners and community partners. Ash and Clayton (2004, p. 139) describe the problem that students are 'unable to express articulately the substance of their learning'. Some practitioners confirm that their students may not have the language to express what they want to say.

**Magnus:** Of course. There are some students who are silent, because they haven't found their voice yet. They have a fear and a hesitancy to really say what they think. I don't know where, sometimes this all comes from. I think, some of it comes from the educational process we've put people through, and their fear of making a mistake.

Magnus may be referring to students developing an understanding of the communication skills needed for reflection. They perhaps may not be fully familiar with the concept that critical thinking involves questioning and being open to having assumptions challenged. Others believe that because a student remains silent does not mean that s/he is not learning from a discussion. That student may simply prefer other forms of reflection and can develop the process of critical thinking through different avenues of questioning.

Some said that the problem of voice may be in the literal sense because English is not the students' first language and so even the construction of sentences is difficult. Though they may be able to reflect in their native language it could be a problem in English. When asked if some students are left out when only written or verbal methods of reflection are used this practitioner replied:

**Jessica:** Yes, I think that's probably the reason why I came up with more of the oral, because I have a lot of students who I would consider ESL or ELL<sup>15</sup> learners and the writing can't capture what they really want to tell me.

In reference to native English speakers, where the issue is not a linguistic one, participants reported that students may not have the vocabulary to discuss issues in a diplomatic manner further than description. Jacqueline refers to the absence of the skill to dialogue, which she describes as 'the ability to discuss controversial issues with awareness, respect, and an ability to hear the other and consider the other'. She maintained that discussion is as much of a skill as written reflection and must be taught to some degree.

**Jacqueline:** I think that teaching students how to dialogue on community issues, which I would shorthand as a civic dialogue, is

---

<sup>15</sup> ESL: English as a second language. ELL: English as a learned language.

extremely important especially in a Fox News world where we watch supposed newscasters yelling at each other. Yes, to talk with each other about controversial issues. With awareness, respect, and an ability to hear the other and consider the other.

She elaborates on this point by saying that being accountable for one's ideas is a part of civic dialogue, and students must be taught to be diplomatic yet confident enough to express their views freely, even if it is to the community partner and the views contain criticism. Nicola uses online discussion boards and introduces them with ice-breakers and warm up exercises to get students used to the format, before bringing students to a level where they can be 'revealing of self'. In her experience, students react differently when posting reflection where their peers and not just the teacher can read them. Even though it is a written 'discussion' it is not the same as written reflection papers.

**Nicola:** It's getting very complicated but I think it's also very exciting because I have seen much greater depth and intimacy, authenticity if you will, in students reflections when they use electronic medium, which means that there is much more blurring of the self the academic and those three that we were talking about. [personal, academic and civic development]

So it's less artificial, when I then begin to lean towards the academic thing, when they have been expressing themselves more or less in a fluid manner all throughout, I'm really now a pretty big believer in the electronic medium.

I don't know that people are so guarded as they might have been if you just started out pretty cold that way. Also I think the students these days are now so accustomed to my-face, Facebook, and all those My Space rather, that being somewhat revealing posting seems to be ordinary to them, which is a whole new generation of people really.

The fact that some students prefer an electronic medium could be influenced by the fact that it is not face to face. Having a distance between oneself and another could make it easier for those who are not extraverted, to be frank with their

criticism. Furthermore, being in a (virtual) environment that is familiar and safe for students could also add to the ease of expression.

Nicola went on to explain that she would focus on the development of personal, academic and community understanding over the course of a semester and guide her students in through scaffolding the reflection exercises. This way they develop the language and communication skills necessary to discuss self awareness, sociological concepts or the social issues that community partners are dealing with. She had over 25 years experience with service-learning and her skills included a deep understanding of the reflection process, how to move from shallow to deep reflection and considerable experience in facilitation and participating in the reflection process. She suggests that it is important to provide ‘the language and concepts and tools for naming what it is that they have seen so that they can better express what it is’. Though she is referring to students I believe that it can apply to their teachers also.

In my own experience, creative methods of reflection can be powerful. Once during an academic presentation, I asked the audience to draw an image or symbol that represented something they had learned at the conference. I provided them with coloured pencils and paper but many were visibly uneasy with the request to express their reflections graphically or artistically. The exercise did however result in considerable reflective discussion as participants were pushed to reflect in a different ‘language’.

It is perhaps unwise to assume that academics are fully versed in ‘civic dialogue’ and are able to express themselves in ways other than the academic. Mitchell and Sackney (2011, p. 145) say that a lot of teacher talk uses language of deficiency and judgement which shows the ‘mechanistic and instrumental relationship between people and learning.’ They suggest that language of growth development and empowerment are necessary. Jacqueline discusses reflective decision making and suggests that language plays an important part.

**Jacqueline:** In everything I do, I have to step back and go, “Now, wait a minute. How’s that going to feel to the partner? Have I treated the partner right? Have I used the right language?” A lot of the reflective

practice is ‘have I used the right language with that?’ I would say that service-learning is ripe ground for that because we have these three different constituents: faculty, students and partners and even a fourth in the institution.

Everything takes that, at least, split second of reflection to say, “Have I covered all the bases and treated everybody with respect? Not only treat them with respect, but made them want to be a part of this collaborative effort.” It’s not linear.

Bacon (2002) highlights that academic staff and community partners use language in a different way. Different academic disciplines have their own ‘dialect’ which may cause confusion between academics. As stated earlier, even within the engaged academy, there is considerable confusion regarding the terminology used regarding engaged practice, with terms such as engagement, service, and reflection being interpreted differently depending on the context. It appears from the data that language is an important part of the reflective process and capacity building is necessary to provide participants with the necessary communication skills.

## **4.9 Safe Space for Reflection**

### **4.9.1 A suitable environment**

Practitioners discussed the environment that is optimum for reflection to take place. There are repeated references to the need for a safe space involving trust and respect in order for students to feel comfortable to examine their service experiences with peers. Many students grapple with new concepts that they have encountered in the community which may cause them to question what they know and believe. Challenging assumptions can be a daunting prospect, and having to do so in front of classmates may be new and intimidating. Jacqueline discusses how academics need to provide an environment for students to examine their non-academic growth which could include spiritual, personal, cultural and ‘all of those other areas that service-learning may really rock their world.’

**Jacqueline:** [academics should] provide the forum where it can come up and then give them [students] the resources. Maybe it just comes up in a journal. And if you see something you know you can't handle, you do then refer them [students] elsewhere. But you have to give them the opening to surface. Because some of that stuff is really transformative and really rock your world kind of stuff.

She continues by stating that academics need to be trained to facilitate this kind of reflection and if they do not have the skills, they should seek the assistance of others with experience that can assist. Keith says that in the faith-based institution where he teaches, questioning received knowledge is not necessarily seen as a positive thing: 'so, that culture, I think, intimidates students to speak out from time to time because they'll be perceived as being confrontational or rude...[and they say] "I'm afraid I'm going to offend my best friend"'. An atmosphere where one is reluctant to speak one's mind clearly is not conducive to deep reflection.

Marian works with secondary school students who have had difficulties in mainstream classes. Before asking students to write their reflections on the film *The Lost Boys of Sudan*, Marian put a lot of effort into creating trust within the group so students were able to express their feelings. They discussed the film on many occasions and had considerable help with writing skills to build their self confidence and 'when they felt safe enough to say something they jumped in.'

Dorothy says that deeper reflection has to come in an atmosphere of trust. She makes an effort to establish trust among the group at the beginning of their service-learning placement.

**Dorothy:** With the new group of students I have, some of them I've known them maybe 10 days now. We're working on some trust building things as well so that it's easier to open up and to kind of share those types of things.

Natasha tries to create a culture in her classroom which is conducive to critical thinking and to challenging so that students feel free to question. Keith discusses

civil dialogue with his students to encourage an atmosphere where critical thinking and questioning are acceptable.

**Keith:** I tried to create a space and open space for dialogue and discourse and talk about that there are diverse opinions and we can do that in a civil way. And I think I'm successful at creating a safe environment. I let students know right up front my political leanings and philosophy and then tell them that has nothing, no bearing whatsoever on their answers and their, you know – They can take a position 180° opposite of me and that's fine as long as they can justify it, be able to articulate their reasons for it, and so I just come right out and say that.

Keith always begins his service-learning modules with a new group by drawing up a charter or covenant in dialogue with his students on what is considered by the group to be suitable behaviour and language for the rest of the course. It is notable how during the interview Keith corrects himself on the use of religious language, because of the evangelical culture that exists on the campus.

**Keith:** So, it's really important to set that environment up early on and say it's okay to have civil discourse, it's okay to disagree, we are not here to convert, or - I'm not going, I don't want to use that word - to make somebody change their mind and this and that. And that's why I like making the covenants before my first night in class.

In this group discussion Keith is answered by Maurice on the topic of establishing ground rules at the beginning of the year:

**Maurice:** Yeah. I think the professor has a large role to play in setting that environment, making it clear that this is a safe environment and a respectful one. And I think I am going to do it with fewer guidelines. Some of it is just sort of commonsense and common courtesy.

Natasha adds that she has only one rule to insure confidentiality, which is based on what happens in the classroom stays in the classroom and Jasmine agrees: 'I try ...to create the environment to make everybody feel like, no matter what you say here, it's not going to leave here.'

There needs to be a safe space in which to reflect which means a supportive and trusting environment, where students know their feelings and insights will be respected (Eyler & Giles, 1999, Hicks *et al.*, 2005, Swanson, 2010). Because service-learning includes learning other than academic learning it can sometimes be difficult for students to discuss their experiences in the classroom. Whitney and Clayton (2011, p. 155) say that ‘reflection requires a safe yet critical space’ and because the process may be unfamiliar to students it must be fostered through capacity building. Being aware of the sometimes uncomfortable elements of learning through service and encouraging ‘transparent discussion helps create a safe space for students’ (Welch, 2010, p. 5).

The resistance to challenging our assumptions through critical questioning may stem from the concept held by students (and some academics) that education is a passive and purely cerebral activity. The idea that learning can be an embodied experience or as Welch (2010, p. 5) terms ‘squirm and learn’ is not necessarily what students have been used to, and the extra effort required competes with all the other demands that students and academics have on their energy.

#### **4.9.2 Headspace**

Practitioners discussed the importance of what could be described as an appropriately amenable cognitive environment for giving contemplative consideration to ones experiences; or simply put, ‘headspace’. Reference was repeatedly made to the fact that there is an absence of understanding of the peace that students needed to reflect on their experience, or to actively listen to what is going on in their own head.

Julian says that there is ‘absence of head-space’ for students to reflect. Abigail agrees that there one needs time and quiet to listen to one’s thoughts.

**Abigail:** Listening... humans have brains that are constantly busy. There’s very little time in our day when we can just be silent and listen. This is going to sound weird, OK? Listen to the universe. Listen to the energy that’s flowing around you. Just clear your head and listen to

what's going on with you. I do that best when I'm sitting on my deck out in back of my house.

This clashes with what it is assumed that teaching and learning should look like in Western universities, which is the opposite of that which allows deep reflection. Nora says that she uses journaling as a reflection technique but more importantly focuses on giving herself headspace.

**Nora:** I definitely have been doing more around, like meditation and yoga as creating space in my life for me to be able to then really reflect and to make connections. So, is that a reflection technique? No. But is it a way that allows me to better engage in reflection? Yes.

A difference can be drawn between place and space; the former is a physical site whereas the latter is as much a mental environment within a location. Earlier Abigail described the activity she used with her students whereby they were required to listen to frogs as a conduit to listening to their thoughts. At the end of the semester Nicola uses a silent, artistic reflection exercise lasting for three or four hours, in which she provides students with butcher paper and pictures.

**Nicola:** ...and in pairs they draw an outline of their bodies on butcher paper lying down on the floor. Then each person decorates his or her outline and at the very end is the only time that we speak to each other because each one then presents 'the self that I have become as a consequence of the experiences I had this semester working with the homeless'.

And you know that was super, super... almost like hair-raising when I heard the students. It was just mind boggling, so, I think I would bristle, if anybody said 'well that's not academic' well yes it wasn't, but I also asked for a paper that said "Of the five competing theories to explain homelessness which one do you think makes more sense?" you know, so it's not instead of.

These creative techniques push students to listen to their own thoughts separated from the busy environment they usually inhabit. It challenges the traditional image of what teaching and learning should look like, and facilitates students to

think in a different way about what knowledge and how to generate it through critical reflection. Another practitioner discusses reflecting on interacting with others in the service-learning context and how the skill of listening to others also takes space. She questions how she can encourage and facilitate the development of listening skills.

**Dorothy:** You know, my students this week – one of the things they're supposed to do is search out some of the older farmers in their community and go call in on them, and just chat with them and go talk to the grannies that are in their households, just chat with them and just listen. Listening takes time and I think part of reflection takes the time to listen to yourself and others and I think that's getting harder to do. So, how do you teach listening? I don't know. That's on my mind as well.

Listening, like reflection can be either active or passive. Not only does it take time, as Dorothy said, but active listening takes energy. Listening is something that may be taken for granted (an assumption perhaps?) in the traditional teaching and learning situation in that students are expected to listen to the teacher. Students for their part expect, the teacher to fill that voice space with the right answer, received wisdom.

Harriet refers to her own active listening, and learning about the students' knowledge gaps through the questions they ask. Considering that service-learning can contribute to personal and civic development as well as academic, the teacher must listen with three ears, as it were.

Hearing is not the same as listening, and you cannot listen if you are talking. Some of the interviewees mentioned the tendency for students to pay attention only for the gap in the discussion as their cue to voice their opinion, without having actively listened to what their peers had said.

In discussing active listening, Dorothy is making a deeper point above however. Not only is she suggesting active listening, but she also acknowledging the authority of other people as teachers. She clearly accepts that even though she is the 'academic', all the other stakeholders are teachers and learners, including

the older farmers and grannies in the community. Shifting the seat of knowledge is significant in service-learning, and failing to do so is often cited as one of the potential mistakes that academics can make in service-learning implementation.

The creative reflection techniques mentioned here may be slightly unorthodox, but they acknowledge that reflection requires more than simply knowledge of the techniques and the depth of thinking. Nicola says that she does not rely solely on creative techniques but also assigns her students a written reflection paper that focuses on the academic learning, however, the silent artistic exercise, addresses other forms of development that are necessary for holistic education. What is significant is that these practitioners accept that the context in which the reflection happens is important and that critical thinking requires headspace.

#### **4.9.3 Safe space for teaching staff**

Just as it is necessary to create a suitable learning environment for students, teaching staff also need a safe space in which to engage with each other about issues that arise from using service-learning. It appears that the academy is not always open to the examination of issues beyond the academic. By citing a piece of research by Harry Boyte, which discusses academics feeling isolated, Magnus says: ‘a different kind of space has to be created’ from the one that exists. He goes on to describe the usual kind of academic meeting, which in his opinion is not a conducive setting for service-learning academics to reflect together.

**Magnus:** I’ll talk about where it can’t happen. Departmental and college meetings are political theatre. Departmental meetings are probably the largest exhibition of dysfunctional behaviour than any intellectual group could ever exhibit together.

When you talk about mixing people, men and women, and the tendency is to talk, not to play, not to do art, not to get into the heart, it tends to be sitting around and talking.

When we do get together like that, it tends to be ideas and projects that hold us together. I really think that those are all only partial

representations of who we are ...whether it be for practice or whether it be ideas or whether it be for how you want to live as a human being. We don't have those kinds of spaces in the academy.

I do not believe that Magnus wants the academy to run on play, art and soul searching. Rather, I believe that he wants there to be a space in which value is given to frames of reflection other than the academic. Even when there is a meeting with the purpose of discussing practice, simply talking is not seen as necessarily productive.

**Benjamin:** And I will admit of being shy of just getting people together to talk; because they do that really well in the academy you know, committee meetings and [such like] often goes nowhere.... it's like ad lib writing from student free-write journals, ad lib talking is just 'let's get together, jabber for two hours and then walk away from it'. I now question the wisdom of that as an experience

Though the value of discussion has been highlighted by some interviewees, it is clear from Benjamin's comment that merely talking, as an experience has limited value or indeed 'wisdom' as he phrases it. He is implying that there needs to be a goal, not necessarily an answer, but the goal of learning through the process of critically reflective conversation.

According to Clive the topic of conversation needs to be broader than just the academic aspect of service-learning and student learning:

**Clive:** What they are learning, why they are learning, and how they are using that - which to me up-ends a way a whole lot of the discussion about... it is not like how do we build an ideal service-learning program.

Because service-learning is counter-normative, it can be daunting for some teachers who are new to it, in the words of Leona, a service-learning coordinator: 'For some it's very scary'. Were asked, there was general agreement among academics that a forum to reflect with peers would be positive. Only a few academics referred to the existence of a forum in which to reflect with colleagues. Nora said that she used to organise 'brown-bag lunches about every six weeks, where faculty from all over would come together and discuss different SL-related things. We still have them on occasion.' Dorothy sees reflecting with her peers as an important part of her reflective practice.

**Dorothy:** I would say that's important for me as a professional, to have – not only make the time and space to do my own private reflection – but to also have a place to have that as a more public type of conversation, where all of us can sort through the practice of what we are doing. I'd be lost, I think if I didn't have the opportunity to either or those or both of them.

It is interesting that Dorothy should say that she would be 'lost' without the environment in which she feels safe to reflect. It is in contrast to the idea of being lost and disorientated in an open space or indeed the idea that those new to reflective practice may feel out of place in a space where critical questioning is an accepted discourse. This may explain why there is resistance (as referred to by Jacqueline earlier) from some academics to becoming involved with civic engagement. It is important to accept that the space that we work in has its accepted discourse and to either change the discourse or to draw those from one into another is not as simple as a technical training seminar on pedagogy. Again it returns to the reflective mind-set and how one chooses to view the world.

When practitioners refer to safe space they usually mean an environment of trust in which participants feel comfortable enough to discuss issues which arise from their community experience. Though the safe space is usually meant metaphorically, there was one example of a physical location. Jacinta describes the garden that students and volunteers created from waste ground as a part of various service-learning projects. The garden was the location in which the interview took place and was also used for classes and reflection sessions with staff and students.

**Jacinta:** The nature of this... place that we're in, it lends to people hanging out before and after the class, for people to sit down like this and talk story.

It is interesting to note that as well as creating a metaphorical space they had literally reclaimed what was waste ground and were using it as a safe space for reflection.

#### **4.9.4 The challenge of space**

It has been established that for good reflection to happen there needs to be a space, in which participants feel safe to express themselves honestly. There are repeated references in the literature to reflection arising from being pushed out of one's comfort zone, which applies as much to staff as to students. The comfort zone and the safe space are not incongruent; in fact, an environment of support is needed to encourage the making of meaning of the 'uncomfortable situation'.

People will not feel comfortable enough to challenge and be challenged unless they are in an environment where it is acceptable to be vulnerable, open, and able to admit mistakes. Academics say that they want to discuss what went wrong with a service-learning course, as there is not as much to be learned from what went right, therefore, there must be a supportive collegiate atmosphere for this to happen.

Moon (1999a, p169) describes the emotionally supportive environment in which reflection can take place.

It will be a good learning environment socially for participants... in which learners feel safe to take risks in their cognitive explorations. It will be an environment in which there is understanding of the emotional concomitants of reflection – and one in which these can be supported. It will contain and help those who react negatively to counselling, perhaps because, initially, reflection is an alien activity for them and they have difficulties with the task.

(Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 49)

One of the elements of the safe space is trust without which 'people divert their energy into self-protection and away from learning (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000, p. 49).

Bold (2008) draws on the work of Brookfield and Preskill (1999) and posits that group members need to realise that their participation and teamwork is essential. She continues that participants must 'be appreciative, active, attentive listeners and... create a climate of hospitality and trust in which all members'

contributions are valued within a structured deliberation of issues arising' (Bold, 2008, pp. 259-260).

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 23) describe the 'reflective conversations' that take place 'in a particular time and space and [are] related to a particular context. Such conversations, based on experiences, provide enlightenment and empowerment through an increased understanding of practice.'

Taylor (2008, p. 9) claims that facilitating transformative learning in students is a strategy which involves 'consciousness raising, activism, [and] fostering a safe learning environment'. To do so requires academics to gain a deeper awareness of their own frames of reference and how they can shape practice, but without this awareness 'there is little likelihood that we can foster change in others' (Taylor, 2008, p. 13).

What Taylor is saying connects the goals of service-learning and reflective practice; if you want to get a deeper understanding that leads to change, you have to critically reflect. This requires a space that can contain the elements of good reflection. Before being able to create such a space, academics must have a raised level of awareness, which they themselves achieve through reflective practice. Having a variety of clever reflection methods will not foster critical reflection without the correct environment and necessary experience of critical self-reflection.

A 'safe space' is necessary for academics to reflect on their practice and is cultivated through general ground rules such as civil discourse, confidentiality, parity of esteem, and with the objective of creating a culture of development and learning through sharing experiences. The current structure of higher education does not provide these elements and therefore, they must be created by academics themselves. Part of the reason why this has not already happened to any significant degree among engaged practitioners is because a framework has not been created to meet their particular set of needs. I believe that if there was a common framework created from best practice and based on the needs of practitioners, it could contribute to the reflective practice of service-learning academics.

#### **4.10 Questions Academics Have About Reflection**

As is evident in the previous section, the practitioners who were interviewed had a very good grasp of the role that reflection plays in student learning and how to facilitate it. But despite this, many practitioners found it a little more difficult to discuss reflection beyond the nuts and bolts of how to use it in class. In an effort to ensure that this research was targeting the concerns of practitioners and therefore, fulfilling a need within the academic community, I sought to uncover some of the issues about reflective practice with which practitioners had questions or that caused them confusion. When I asked interviewees ‘what questions do you have about reflection’ the question itself was deliberately unspecific and was left open to interpretation. On a few occasions I was asked to clarify whether I was referring to students’ reflection or not. It is noteworthy, that practitioners would usually associate ‘reflection’ with an action that their students conducted and not necessarily with their own (reflective) practice. This could imply that the reflective practice of students is given more consideration by academics than their own. Do they consider their students’ learning as being more important than their own?

Respondents would not necessarily refer to writing evaluative comments on lecture notes as ‘written reflection’, though that is really what it is. This could imply that the practitioners are more reflective than they realise, perhaps because of the ill-defined nature of reflective practice.

When asked to discuss their questions about reflection, practitioners were essentially being asked to reflect on their practice. Because of the absence of opportunities to do just that, it may not have been something they did on a regular basis, and in fact some commented that they found such a conversation constructive as it made them examine and justify their practice. Though practitioners did reflect on how to teach better, they may have interpreted teaching to mean only instruction and had not necessarily seen the direct role that reflective practice plays in teaching practice.

Most of the practitioners were primarily concerned with how to improve the standard of reflection in their classes. Many sought to improve the quality of reflection by formulating questions which probed deeper and encouraged the connection of ideas. There was agreement that reflection is difficult and so it is not surprising that the emphasis was on the mechanics of reflecting as this is more tangible than the cognitive process of reflecting.

Jacqueline is a service-learning coordinator and trains academics on how to implement service-learning and how to use reflection as a part of that. She said that there is always an interest in the nuts-and-bolts of the reflection process.

**Jacqueline:** I think it depends on what we want to learn about it. Practically speaking, I think nobody can get enough of “How do you do it?” How do *you* do it? How do *you* do it? How does that work? I mean that in a faculty development sense, which is where I spend most of my time, everybody wants more examples of things they can do, and how does that one work? How do you grade that? So it’s kind of the toolkit thing. We’re trying to figure out what’s going on in people’s brains when they do it. I think that the challenge there, is that to some extent you interrupt or affect the process, when you stop and say, “What are you thinking about now? What are you thinking about now?” but we have to do it, that’s the only way.

As well as the practicalities of different reflection methods, there was a curiosity among practitioners about the cognitive process of reflection. When there is reference to the process of reflection itself, some practitioners move beyond the practicalities of using reflection in class, to refer to the reflective practice in general or their own practice.

Nora says that there has been literature on how to do reflection and why it is important for transformative learning to happen but she says that ‘I still don’t feel like we understand how does that change really happen.’ She is curious about the interaction between language and emotion and what that means for reflection.

**Nora:** What is it about our interaction that allows the change to happen, that allows me to open, to be able to suspend my own ideas, my own judgments, to hear what you have to say. It doesn't mean that I still have to agree with it. But do I even have the space and awareness to be open to what you're presenting to me. A different story. And then, if I can be open and suspend judgment, which is a key, I think at this point, then why and how did we engage with one another in a way that can allow me to expand my understanding or to shift my understanding, how to create new connections.

Johann wants to know how to reflect more efficiently and wonders about the process of meaning making.

**Johann:** I would like to understand that better so that I would be more efficient in my own process and maybe be more efficient as I interact with other folks trying to do that. That's really why I've gotten interested in these scientific studies of how we process stuff. It's kind of an effort to get in there and figure out how do we process stuff.

There was regular recurrence of the theme of reflection as a difficult concept to understand and teach. Even if the practitioner had an understanding of the concept, many found it difficult to maintain the practice of reflection and to teach others (either students or faculty) about reflection, as this service-learning coordinator expressed:

**Jacqueline:** I was going to make it one of the sessions: 'How can you be a Reflective Service-Learning Professor'. I was going to teach reflective practice as one of the [faculty development] seminar sessions – haven't done it. It's such a hard thing to, it's such a fuzzy concept that I was like "if I teach this they'll crucify me" because it's so hard to understand. They'll think that it's soft and...

In a university where service-learning was mandatory for all students, Jacqueline struggled with the incongruence of the positivistic discourse of traditional teaching and the critical discourse of reflection in service-learning. The fact that she believed that fellow academics would see reflection as 'soft' says a lot about the status of critical discourse within the university. It is noteworthy, that even in

a fully 'engaged' university; the dominant discourse was still that of traditional teaching (even if among a minority of faculty). Why would something that may be perceived as soft or fuzzy be seen as such a threat to academic practice that the messenger would be 'crucified'?

**Jacqueline:** I think it's fuzzy. I think it's hard for me to grasp. Until you're asking me these questions, I think it's – I mean it's everything I guess I just explained. Externally it's very risky in the [campus name] environment; you know, where I'm not in the Union. I feel like I have to give them tangible things, concrete things that they can say they know they benefited from me telling them how to do X, Y, Z.

Again this highlights how radically different the discourse of critical reflection is to the traditional model of teaching and learning. Why is a different manner of teaching and learning so 'risky'? She discussed the fact that because service-learning arose out of the Student Affairs Office which she says 'is often considered a bit of a second-class citizen relative to the professors and their PhDs' and even though she has a PhD she was not considered 'academic' enough to tell academics how to teach. Though she was a staff development trainer, she said she was not in the position to decide if staff were adhering to the guidelines of using service-learning, and appearing to be the 'pedagogy police' was risky for her position. The language she uses is very strong considering that she is giving academics instruction on engaged teaching and learning (in an engaged university) and not subversively espousing political anarchy.

**Jacqueline:** So when you're doing these things, you're just putting the pieces together the way they fit, jazz is not scripted. Reflection is going back and looking at that and saying, "why did it fall together in that way?" I mean if you think about it, that's a pretty tricky thing to dissect jazz in that way.

Even with its degree of fuzziness, the study of jazz is seen as a serious academic subject and given a high level of legitimacy in a music academy, however in a liberal arts university, something equally as 'soft' is seen as radical. Why is the suggestion that academics and students should think critically and reflect, be seen as such a threat to the dominant discourse of teaching and learning? Keith points

to a possible answer, regarding the threat that traditional academics feel that service-learning represents.

**Keith:** I have colleagues who don't want their theory tested, OK? They may actually find that their theory is flawed. OK so, seriously that's a downside [to service-learning]. 'What, no, it's much easier for me to pontificate in a lecture of what theory is, and I just want you to accept it as dogma and truth'.

But personally I do see it as, and I think you heard my [Alternative Spring Break] class saying, 'yeah, all those abstractions became very real'. And they challenged some of them, and some of the things that they discovered validated, but not every faculty member wants their theory tested and challenged.

Keith uses reflection in all of his classes not just service-learning because he wants his students to consider the meaning and purpose of knowledge and examine their role in using the knowledge rather than write it out in an exam. Keith said, 'They start to make meaning and gain understanding, versus knowledge. Knowledge is knowing, knowing a definition or a concept or something.' Challenging, validating or rejecting knowledge carries a considerable amount of power, which it seems some traditional academics do not wish to hand over to students.

Clarke *et al.* (1996, p. 171) posit that reflective practice 'is difficult to conceptualize and many aspects of it are open to debate'. There is a lack of consensus as to what reflection means and the concept remains elusive and open to interpretation (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998). Citing much of the literature available at the time, Hatcher and Bringle (1997, p. 154) state that 'the vagueness about reflection in service-learning exists because the term *reflection* describes both a cognitive process... and a structured learning activity'. Wildman *et al.* (1990) highlight that teacher reflection is a difficult concept to pin down though many teachers demonstrate a naturally reflective style in their daily work, their reflection may be unintentional as well as unfocused and unsystematic. It is likely that it is the apparent unsystematic nature of reflection that is most problematic for traditional teachers, and there is a fear of not being able to

control the outcome. Once again this returns to the process versus product dichotomy which exists between service-learning and traditional learning.

Those participants who provide professional development workshops agree that the concept of reflection is difficult to comprehend and therefore, reflective practice is difficult to teach. Though there have been attempts to portray (reflective) learning in graphic format, such as Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle or the Argyris (1977) Double Loop Learning model the difficulty remains of identifying where one is in the process and the transition from one stage to another. Of all of the different aspects of service-learning, the process of reflection is the one that causes the most confusion, yet can be the most powerful.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

My interviewees have stated that they have a number of questions about reflective practice, and these questions need to be addressed. Participants acknowledged that a problem lies in the confusion around reflection. To overcome this confusion a deeper understanding of reflection is needed in order to improve practice. This must go beyond the practicalities of reflection techniques, to a deeper understanding of the process itself.

Since participants stated that they wish to have a better grip of reflection, that they achieve a deeper understanding through peer reflection but do not have enough opportunities to reflect with peer. Providing a structure in which peers can reflect on their engaged practice could go some way to addressing the problem and improve reflective practice.

Engaged peer reflection, however, must happen within a space in which reflection is seen as legitimate. But this is a chicken and egg situation, because it

will not be given the legitimacy unless it is better understood and seen as academically rigorous. Therefore, to earn that legitimacy, reflective practice must be shown to be more than ‘thinking about stuff’, but instead a rigorous academic pursuit, which is based on research, follows a set structure, with clear learning goals, and the potential not only to improve teaching practice but to produce recognised academic products. For engaged academics to be seen as rigorous within the hegemony, the language used to prove the legitimacy must be of that hegemony. If this means using phrases such as ‘increased productivity’ or ‘publishable products’ then so be it.

References to students’ reflection or reflection in general, far outweighed references to the reflective practice of the interviewee or faculty per se. I wanted to consult with academics about what their needs were regarding reflective practice, in the hopes that I could address those needs through this research. However, what arose from this question in the interviews was more than I had expected. Through analysis of the data I saw a striking correlation between some of elements of good reflection that academics identified and the areas of reflective practice with which academics had questions.

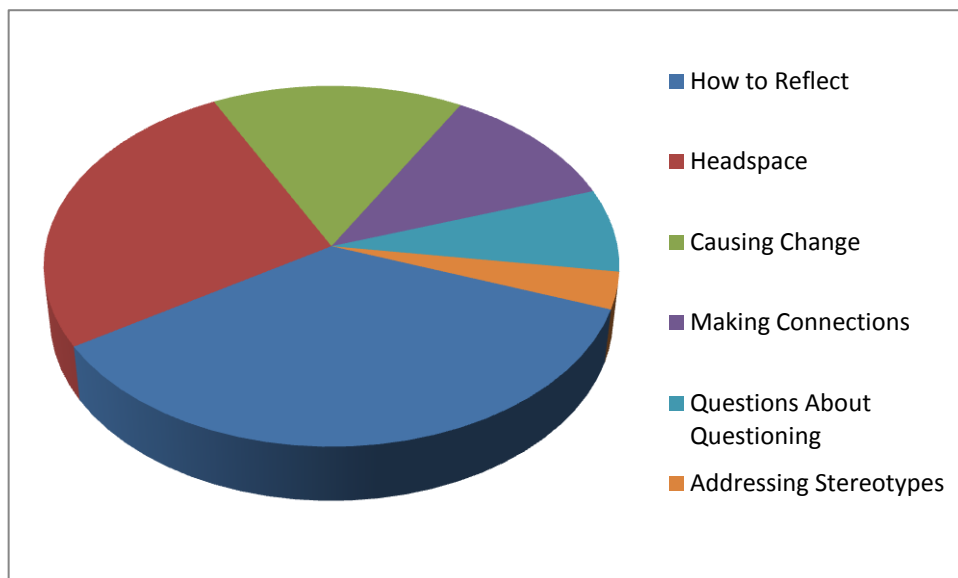


Fig. 7: Ratio of references to topics about which academics had questions.

As can be seen in Fig. 7, when practitioners were asked what their questions were about reflection, they specified issues that they were unclear to them, including the following:

- 1) How to reflect: the practicalities and process of reflecting
- 2) Questions about questioning: how to achieve greater depth in the reflection process including asking better questions and developing better reflective prompts.
- 3) Headspace: the problem of creating time and space for reflection.
- 4) Making connections: Structure the difficulty with finding the correct balance between over and under structured reflection.
- 5) Causing Change – Having an impact on students and on society.
- 6) Addressing stereotypes: encouraging different perspectives from which to view experience.

In the following chapter, I will conduct further analyses the data discussed in this chapter and address the implications of what interviewees said as it relates to best practice. I strive to tackle the problems that exist in the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning.

## Chapter 5: Analysis & Model

### 5.1 Challenging Expectations

In the previous chapters, I outlined the theoretical background to the research topic, how I gathered the data and what interviewees said about the research topic. Before continuing, I wish to take stock of what was new and unexpected which arose from the data. It is impossible to begin research without some preconceptions, and as stated above, these were challenged in numerous ways. I realised also that I had a number of *mis*-conceptions that were proved wrong during the research process. I mistakenly believed that academics who used service-learning and required their students to reflect on their service, would themselves have a deep understanding of how to reflect on their own practice. I was surprised when some interviewees found it difficult to discuss because they had not given active consideration to the process. I was surprised at the ad hoc nature of how many academics reflected on their practice, I had imagined that if they required their students to regularly reflect in a structured manner, it was because they saw the contribution to the process that structure and regularity of practice made to the process.

I did not foresee the absence of a forum for peer reflection. I imagined that engaged academics would naturally meet and draw meaning from the use of such a powerful pedagogy – particularly on campuses that were ‘civically engaged campuses’ and where service-learning was not only actively promoted but mandatory for student graduation. It struck me as similar to a gym, which does not have a space for coaches to train.

I could not understand why the literature on the reflective practice of engaged academics was so sparse since so much had been written about student reflection. There was also a dearth of literature questioning the validity of service-learning and none opposing reflective practice. However, there did appear to be a null curriculum in areas of the educational establishment, a descent by distancing and an implicit rejection of implications that full civic engagement requires.

Given that service-learning had appeared to have moved from the fringes to a more accepted place in the US education system, given that so much had been written about student reflection, and given that reflective practice had been advocated by such venerable figures as John Dewey, I was surprised at how little legitimacy was given by institutions to service-learning and reflective practice in the form of tangible resources.

## **5.2 Implications of Reflection Criteria on Academic Reflection**

Practitioners interviewed for this research described the methods they used to reflect on their practice of using service-learning. These methods include the following:

1. Contemplation.
2. Verbal reflection with students.
3. Verbal reflection with peers.
4. Written reflection: solo.
5. Collaborative writing with peers (not for publication).
6. Scholarship of teaching and learning with peers (for publication).

By examining the reflection techniques that academics encourage their students to use, we can isolate the elements which teachers believe to be significant in achieving the desired learning outcome.

These elements include:

1. A knowledge of the skill of reflection.
2. Reflection that is deeper than description by using effective prompts and questions.
3. A frequency of reflection that is habitual yet challenging, but does not become routine.
4. A structure that is suitable for the learning level of the learner yet not too rigid.
5. Suitable communication skills that give voice to participants to express themselves.
6. Suitable learning environment which has safe space and trust between the participants.

This list is significant in the context of the research question because it outlines what practitioners learned through their teaching experience to be the elements of good reflective practice. If practitioners describe what good student reflection is, can one assume that in principle these elements would also feature in the reflection techniques used by academics? Interestingly, many of these elements are not apparent in the methods of reflection that academics discuss using to examine their own practice. The question therefore arises, why do academics encourage their students to use reflection in a particular way but yet do not use reflection in that way themselves? The answer could be influenced by the context in which reflection happens.

### 5.2.1 Different learning context for student and academic

Reflection rubrics cannot be transplanted from the student realm to the academic realm without taking into account the needs of engaged practitioners. There are a number of notable differences between the learning context of the student and the teaching context of the academic. One of these is the fact that students, because they are studying, have learning goals which include personal, academic and civic development. Practitioners are socialised with the belief that because the student is ‘the learner’ and conducting the service, then the student has the incentive (reason to learn) to reflect and the object (experience in community) on which to reflect. However, academics do not have similar specific learning goals from teaching and it is unusual for academics to serve regularly in the community doing the kind of work that their students do.

In Bethany’s opinion academics should have experience in the community:

**Bethany:** And so I think it is possible to become a faculty member who uses service-learning pedagogy without having done it. But certainly if I ruled the world they would. I could certainly make that argument, but I know so many faculty who are effective in service-learning, I think, who have not actually experienced it. And so, I think it is possible but certainly not ideal.

One could not expect academics to conduct as many service hours as their students every semester. It would, however, be advisable for academics to have had *some* experience of what they expect their student to do, as it would give a deeper

understanding into the issues in that particular service project, and provide experience of reflecting on those issues with their students.

Many of the academics reported that they see themselves as life-long learners; however, this is informal learning, without pre-set learning goals. Though some mentioned the desire to improve their practice this is a rather vague target to aim for in contrast to students who achieve a grade by fulfilling their learning outcomes.

A second difference is that students are assessed formally on their learning, whereas academics are assessed primarily on their research. Some of the academics said that they found it difficult to keep up with journal articles and text books and that they were continually trying to catch up with the developments in their academic field. However, there may be a preconception that with the status of expert which comes with the position of lecturer, they feel more pressure to improve their standing as a researcher rather than their teaching skills. Given that there is considerable pressure on academics to publish and usually very few incentives to improve teaching (such as awards or recognition) it is understandable that academics would concentrate on proving their capability as a researcher rather than their skills as a teacher.

There may be an institutional or cultural expectation for academics to develop academically; however, there does not seem to be the same expectation for academics to develop civically or personally. Even though the literature calls for academics to engage with the community, (Boyer, 1996, Boyte, 2004, Macfarlane, 2005), this is a message which appears to be given lip-service by the higher education establishment. Though it varied in different institutions, research was given more weight than teaching or service. Two practitioners, Jacqueline and Keith said that in their opinion some practitioners believed that having achieved the position of 'expert' they had no need to reflect on a regular basis and indeed did not wish their students to reflect on the theory they lecture on in case it was disproved.

A third factor why teachers do not reflect in the same way as they encourage their students to reflect is the absence of a suitable forum in which to conduct reflection. Within service-learning there are preset avenues in which students conduct reflection, both alone and in groups. Reflection is built into a service-learning course to the extent that it is mandatory. Academics are not required to reflect on their practice, and beyond academic conferences and workshops they are not afforded a similarly structured forum in which to reflect. Furthermore, the 'level of cognitive complexity' is higher among academics than students (one would safely assume) and therefore academics may choose

to skip some of the more basic reflection exercises and aim for a deeper level of reflection. Reflecting at this deeper level requires considerably more headspace and support than maintaining a journal.

When reflection is successfully integrated into service-learning courses, a safe space is created for the students to be open to expressing their reflections. They then have the formal support of their teacher and the informal support of their peers when traversing the difficulties of reflecting on their service-experiences. However, a formal structure of this kind does not usually exist for academics. Benjamin, a senior academic and service-learning researcher suggested that there may be the presumption that one is expected to be an expert teacher already and to admit that needing a 'teaching support group' is an admission of deficiency. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 3) posit that 'engaging in the process of reflection is about admitting that practice can always be improved in some way' therefore, it may be seen as an admission of weakness to confess to needing to improve one's teaching skills. Though there may be acceptance that reflection is important for students, there may not be the recognition that it can be, or indeed should be, a part of professional development. Because centres for academic staff development operate within, and are established by, the institution, the predominant ethos is on academic development – the nuts and bolts – and once again, reflection on personal or civic development is not given the same legitimacy.

Finally, an important factor in why academics do not reflect on their practice as their students do, is the absence of time to examine their teaching practice beyond informal and occasional discussions with a colleague regarding critical incidents. The importance of having time to reflect has been well documented in the literature (Abes *et al.*, 2002, Allard *et al.*, 2007, Bringle *et al.*, 2009, Shockley *et al.*, 2008, Whitney & Clayton, 2011) and this is echoed by many of the participants. There is little use in a safe space, and a suitable structure for academics to reflect on their practice, if they do not have the time to do so.

However, the issue of time is more complex than the institution allotting (or indeed mandating) a certain number of hours a week for academics to reflect on their practice. The reason reflection is not made a priority is because civic engagement itself does not have the legitimacy of traditional higher education. It is seen by some as a passing fad and that higher education should have no role in moral agency (Hartley *et al.*, 2005). Given that the pedagogy is not fully accepted, it is of little surprise that the element of academic reflective practice is met with some degree of scepticism. The established

institutional norms and values must be understood by advocates of pedagogies for engagement, and both structural and ideological issues need to be tackled in order to gain legitimacy (Hartley *et al.*, 2005).

The higher education institution may ask: What exactly is reflection? How will we know that the extra time allowed for subjective reflection will be used effectively? What will be the proof of constructive use of this time? Will reflecting make you a better academic? These questions must be considered by the wider community of engaged academics. Without solid answers, given in the language of the traditional culture of higher education, reflection will be viewed as the part of volunteering when students talk about their feelings afterwards. In order to demonstrate that reflective practice is a justifiable and advantageous pursuit for academics, it must be presented in a manner that can be understood by the prevailing culture in higher education and seen to be rigorous, structured, effective and valuable. In the following chapters I hope to outline a means by which that can be achieved.

### **5.2.2 Problem outline and potential remedy**

I interviewed a representative sample of academics and asked them about their reflective practice. They described the methods that they employ to reflect on how they use service-learning. They discussed what worked and did not work for their own reflection and also for their students. No single academic said that there were six things that good reflection must have; instead I arrived at a list by amalgamating the experiences of many academics drawing on what they had learned over the years about what works and what does not work when drawing meaning from service-learning.

Through my analysis of the discussions I isolated the elements of good reflection based on the experience of these practitioners. I also discovered that these rudiments were not easy to achieve and that there was a desire to improve practice to reach these standards.

Based on analysis of the data there are a number of practical needs that must be addressed to improve the reflective practice of engaged academics:

1. How to reflect: the practicalities and process of reflecting alone and with peers.

2. How to achieve greater depth in the reflection process.
3. The problem of creating time for reflection.
4. Developing a suitable structure to follow.
5. Developing communication skills to enhance reflective practice.
6. Creating the safe space necessary in which reflection can occur.

There are further issues within the community of engaged academics which are concerned with achieving legitimacy in higher education: the problems with using a radical pedagogy within the traditional higher education structure and the problems caused by the inherent element of criticality in reflective practice.

Given that my data has indicated the concerns that engaged academics have, it is clear that there is a need for a model that would serve practitioners to engage in reflection that will strengthen the quality of their reflection, their teaching, and ultimately the learning of their students. What is required is the development of a model that allows academics to reflect in different ways with their peers, in a safe and nurturing environment on their academic, civic and personal development.

Below I will outline a model that could address these requirements of engaged practitioners. It draws recommendations from existing literature for its foundation and tackles the needs of academics who use service-learning. I will outline examples of similar models in action and draw from them to address this context.

Richardson (1994, p. 47) believes that ‘practical inquiry, is not conducted for purposes of developing general laws, related to educational practice, and is not meant to provide *the* answer to a problem. Instead, the results should be suggestive of new ways of looking at the context and problem and/or possibilities for changes in practice’. She maintains that because of the narrow focus for the purposes of generalizability, formal research methodology is too confining for practical enquiry.

It must be made clear that this study does not seek to establish the *best* way to reflect, but rather to document how academics reflect on their engaged practice, so that recommendations can be made to improve reflective practice. It

is hoped that the research will encourage teachers to critically reflect on their teaching as an integral part of their work. Rather than providing ‘*the* answer to a problem’, it is hoped that the research recommendations will provoke teachers to question their practice.

Embedding civic engagement (which includes service-learning) in higher education involves considerable change to the running of departments and to the identity of an educational institution, and many colleges are slow or reluctant to embrace change. Pedagogies for civic engagement (Boland, 2006) are viewed with scepticism in some parts of the academy by those who will quickly highlight the failures of a pedagogy that uses learning through reflection if students report that they ‘didn’t get it’. With that in mind, I strive to provide empirical research on academics’ reflective practice with which academics can legitimise the use of reflection in their teaching and learning.

### **5.3 Theoretical Foundation for Community of Reflective Practice**

There is literature on some aspects of the issues in question, and it will be discussed below; however the literature does not directly address all of the practical and philosophical issues that my interviewees highlighted.

My thesis is that, what is required is the creation of a systematic approach for the reflective practice of service-learning academics through the development of Communities of Reflective Practice.

A Community of Reflective Practice is a structured model of reflection that facilitates academics to critically reflect with their peers in a safe and nurturing environment on their academic, civic and personal development.

The Community of Reflective Practice (CoRP)<sup>16</sup> would take the form of a forum for civically engaged practitioners who meet on a regular basis to reflect

---

<sup>16</sup> The word *corp* /kurp/ is the Irish word for ‘body’ derived from the Latin *corpus*. As well as an acronym, it is also used for its figurative reference to an active, thinking, feeling organism; a collection of people or a body of knowledge.

on their practice in an environment of diverse development. The workings of the forum need to follow a set of guidelines to meet the practical and philosophical needs expressed by the practitioners interviewed which I believe are representative of academics in general. The model see in fig. 8 will follow the theoretical best practices highlighted by published literature and the various elements of it have been proven to be successful in different contexts. A fundamental aspect of the CoRP is that it is a general framework that can be adapted to suit the needs and context of a particular group of academics. The various elements of it must be discussed by the group members and through dialogue they can adapt it to suit their specific context.

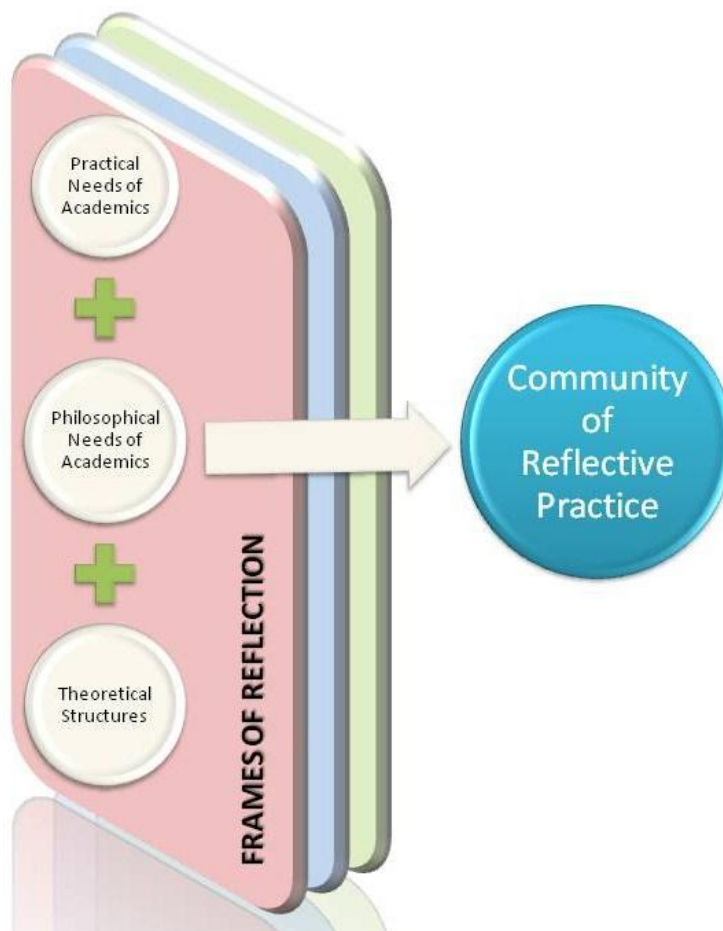


Fig. 8: Community of Reflective Practice

### 5.3.1 The case for peer reflection as a theoretical structure

There is considerable amount of literature which highlights the importance of teachers reflecting on their practice with peers, a sample of which will be

discussed here. Brookfield (1995) posits that critical reflection is important because it helps teachers take informed actions and develop a rationale for practice. He believes that it also helps teachers avoid blaming themselves for weaknesses in practice; it grounds them emotionally, enlivens classrooms and increases democratic trust. Considering that service-learning academics expect their students to reflect, they must firstly lead by example, but can only do so if they have experience of the reflective process. Boud (1999, p. 129) warns that: ‘we cannot expect students to ...engage in systematic reflection about their learning unless we model it in our own practice as teaching professionals.’ Clayton and Ash (2005, p. 165) concur by saying that ‘when our students see us engaging seriously in reflection and learning from the process, they are more apt to see reflection as a meaningful and worthwhile activity, not just as an assignment.’ It has been shown that interviewees frequently reflected on their practice alone, however, this does not draw on the potential that peer reflection offers. The importance of reflecting with peers is encapsulated by this interviewee:

**Dorothy:** Having someone else to mirror things back or to kind of help clean out things that might not be apparent to the individual is very important. I think that’s true for the students. It’s true for community development practitioners. It’s true for teachers.

It should not be something that others do, or something that is an optional add-on, but is essential for all the stakeholders of campus community partnerships. Teachers should reflect on their practice by themselves and also get feedback from students and from peers (Boud, 1999, Brookfield, 1995). Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) differentiate the process of peer reflection from critical self-reflection because it is public not private, and is done in a group rather than alone. Reflection is enhanced when conducted with others and requires a desire for personal and intellectual growth (Husu *et al.*, 2008, Rodgers, 2002). Boud (1999, p129) highlights that academics do not expect their students to reflect in a vacuum, without opportunities to reflect with their peers. Likewise academics cannot work effectively without ‘deep engagement’ with peers (ibid.) ‘This

means not acting in isolation from each other in ways that many inappropriate conventions of academic practice have encouraged us to do' (ibid.).

The literature suggests that peer reflection should not be conducted in an *ad hoc* manner. Dewey (1933) posits that reflective practice is a process of making meaning of experiences, using a structured and systematic process. Husu *et al.* (2008, p. 40) explain that this is because 'in practice, reflective analysis does not come naturally; it requires dialogue with the help of a particular method.' Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) suggest that reflective teaching and learning is evidence-based, requiring teachers to reflect in a rigorous and systematic manner on the evidence derived from their practice. They see the *reflective conversation* with others as central to reflective practice. There is agreement that conversational learning through 'story-telling' can promote reflection and contribute to changing individual practice (Correia & Bleicher, 2008, Hall-McEntee *et al.*, 2003, Lillis, 2005). This form of conversation must involve specific elements including: time, training, listening, direction, and trust, based on agreed ground rules (Brookfield, 1995, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

Critical reflection is social process, it happens best when colleagues ask each other to help to see practice in new ways (Brookfield, 1995). This however, involves taking risk (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, Hall-McEntee *et al.*, 2003) and the ability to deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity that comes from exploring new ways of doing things. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) warn that reflecting with peers requires an understanding of group dynamics and of roles and responsibilities within the group.

Both Brookfield and Boud imply that for peer reflection to happen a collegiality must exist within a given group of academics but this prerequisite cannot be assumed. 'Peer and team support are factors identified as supporting reflection in the workplace' (Murphy *et al.*, 2008, p. 77) however, trust must exist in a group for the members to feel safe, and this must be actively fostered before the group can work effectively. Allard *et al.* (2007) engaged in a process of peer reflection and in doing so came to appreciate the role of peer reflection on practice and assumptions in a supportive community. They highlight that 'the

creation of a learning community... provided a forum to take risks, challenge personal beliefs and practices (ibid., p. 309). Sharing the dilemmas that the peer group faced in their teaching was 'the first step for the development of a safe, supportive environment' (ibid., p. 305) and this sustained the next step to challenging assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Moon (1999b, p. 57) states that 'while teacher educators promote reflection among teachers, they seem to have less tendency to consider reflection as a method for their own practice than do nurse educators'. She cites a broad range of literature on reflection in education and by drawing from this, suggests that teachers rarely have the time and space to reflect on their own teaching. Furthermore, she warns, that teachers will not become reflective practitioners simply because it's a good idea. They need support from administrators to facilitate its growth; sufficient time and space in which to develop the skills and the development of a collaborative environment with support from other teacher and the institution.

Citing Dowling (2003), Clayton and Ash (2005) suggest that reflection plays an as important a role for the academics who use service-learning as for their students, and that academics need to develop the skills of reflection as their students. 'The challenge, then, is to create professional development processes that facilitates reflective activity on the part of the faculty while at the same time helping them learn how to integrate experiential, reflective teaching methods in their courses' (Clayton & Ash, 2005, p. 161).

It is clear from the literature that reflecting on teaching and learning with one's peers is an important and beneficial aspect of one's practice. There is consensus that it is a social process and the elements of constructive group interaction such as a sense of community, trust and time are important factors. It supports the claims made by interviewees that modelling reflection is necessary in order to encourage students to reflect. There is clear validation in the literature therefore, that a mechanism to encourage engaged academics to reflect on their practice should include peer reflection.

### 5.3.2 The case for a structured model

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) recommend that linking the reflection technique to the learning objectives for effective reflection and most of the interviewees would have academic, personal and civic development as their learning goals. In its Reflection Toolkit (2010, p. 1), the Northwest Service Academy, in Portland, Oregon gives reasons why reflection should be structured.

- To call attention to your natural reflection process and provide new questions you may not come to on your own.
- To introduce you to new ways of learning from your service and the people you work with.
- To share a learning process with a group of people having the same experience.
- To build relationships and understanding between people with different perspectives.
- To give you tools for leading such experiences for others.

As can be seen four of the five points relate to reflecting with other people. The need for a structure in reflection has been clearly stated, with the importance of the context also highlighted. Because reflection is a difficult concept to manage, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Rubrics and reflection models can be helpful in guided reflection, but they need to be adapted and used in a manner that fits those reflecting. This requires experience on behalf of the facilitator which grows from a deep knowledge of different reflection methods and from experience of both facilitating the use of these methods as well as partaking in them. Some kind of guide is useful to avoid ‘thinking about stuff’ and this applies more to reflecting in groups than alone. There are practitioners such as Abigail and Nicole, who prefer not to try to force the reflective process through the mangle of a complex rubric; however, even they support the use of some level of structure which is determined by the context. For Abigail her own reflection flows through writing poetry (itself a semi-structured process) and Nicola combines the three frames of reflection to achieve a new perspective.

It has been established that peers reflecting on their teaching practice is recommended by the literature and highlighted as a need expressed by interviewees. It is preferable to conduct such peer reflection in a structured

manner rather than in an *ad hoc* manner. Structure of some kind is necessary or else the reflective process becomes warbling, venting, and unfocused.

### **5.3.3 Community of Practice – a suitably flexible theoretical structure**

Moving from an informal network towards a community requires a defining identity. This identity follows criteria which differentiate the group members from any other random collection of people. Therefore, a model to enhance reflective practice needs a format which will foster the spirit of a supportive community of practice. Rather than creating a completely new model it is advisable to draw from what has already been seen to work in practice and use the relevant aspects of that model to apply to the gaps in reflecting on engaged practice.

Etienne Wenger describes a community of practice as ‘a group of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for joint enterprise’ (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 139). The concept differs from other collegiate structures such as formal work groups, project teams and informal networks because of the purpose, the membership, the binding factors and the duration are different. Communities of practice are informal, self-selecting, passion-led and last as long as there is a need or an interest in a particular issue. This is a suitably flexible structure, which takes into consideration interviewees warning about the problem of over structuring reflection rubrics.

The development of a community of practice, Wenger suggests, arises out of an informal network that already exists when it has its domain defined. This means the group adopts an identity, a purpose and a structure. If members do not feel connected to the group they will not commit energy to it. Actively and purposefully moving away from an informal network towards a cohesive community contributes to the sense of participation, and contributes to collegiality.

Wenger and Snyder (2000) suggest that for a network to move towards cohesiveness, it must bring the right people together, have an infrastructure or environment in which communities can thrive, and have the community’s value

measured in an appropriate way. Wenger's framework was developed primarily for industry with the aim of driving strategy, generating new lines of business, solving problems, promoting the spread of best practices, developing people's professional skills, and helping companies recruit and retain talent (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, pp. 140-141).

Communities of practice have also been recognised for their potential for contributing to change and transformation in an academic context. 'Thinking about our collaboration through the frames of communities of practice has illustrated the strengths of complementary collaborations, and the potential these hold for developing transformative change within a domain of practice' (Barrett *et al.*, 2009, p. 414).

The community of practice has been in use in industry instead of committees and working groups to promote creative thinking and collegiality. It has also been used in education to some extent, however, to address the issues my interviewees have highlighted it must be altered somewhat. The findings of this study highlight that there is an absence of a forum for engaged academics to reflect together, I suggest adapting Wenger's framework of a community of practice so that it has reflective practice as its defining 'domain'. Wenger's community of practice model provides the general framework needed to structure peer reflection, thus making that model a *community of reflective practice*. This would mean establishing a group of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for the joint enterprise of service-learning. Wenger suggests that non-traditional methods should be used to measure the value of a community of practice, this is pertinent in the case of engaged practice. He suggests that 'the best way for an executive to assess the value of a community of practice is by listening to members' stories' (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 145). The academic, personal and civic development of the members can be demonstrated through examples of the members' narratives, which can be shared informally through a senior manager partaking in a CoRP open workshop; or more formally in an academic publication on the engaged scholarship generated through the CoRP.

Only one practitioner (Benjamin) made direct reference to communities of practice, however, other practitioners discussed topics which match Wenger's description of a community of practice. Dorothy mentions a network of engaged practitioners which collaborate on a community campus project, and while they do identify themselves as engaged scholars, Dorothy did not describe the group functioning as a community of practice. While there are networks of service-learning practitioners (such as Campus Compact), they too focus on the nuts and bolts of *doing* the work, and not necessarily reflecting on it. Furthermore, Campus Compact is a network between higher education institutions, not within the institutions. It is interesting to note that all of the universities I visited had a cohort of engaged practitioners, however, they did not necessarily form a cohesive network, and in fact, many fellow practitioners were not known to each other even though they shared service-learning as a pedagogy. Except for one group (which will be described below) these groups of engaged practitioners showed no signs of viewing themselves as an entity or community of practice.

Barrett *et al.* (2009, p. 414) report that 'thinking about our collaboration through the lens of communities of practice has illustrated the strengths of complementary collaborations, and the potential these hold for developing transformative change within a domain of practice.' Though there is broad consensus regarding the value for teachers of reflecting with peers and some such as Boud, Brookfield and Moon suggest methods in which this can be done. There is evidence in the data that there is some peer reflection already taking place, however, it is usually unstructured and informal. I suggest the use of Wenger's concept of a community of practice as a basic structure which is suitably flexible on which to build other elements of a model for reflective practice for engaged academics.

#### **5.3.4 The case for safe space: Palmer's Circles of Trust as a theoretical structure**

Service-learning involves more than academic teaching and learning and therefore, it would be prudent to draw on a model that fosters development in the personal more than simply the academic aspects of teaching and learning. Parker Palmer (2004, 2007) gives lengthy instruction on how to create a study group to investigate the concepts he describes in the book *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer,

1998). These instructions cover membership and leadership, the creation of safe space, reflection activities to investigate topics of mind, heart and spirit and how to focus on the personal and professional development of educators. The aim of a Circle of Trust is to bridge the divide between ‘soul and role’ so as to integrate ones vocation with the context of where one teaches. He posits that ‘institutions have been known to punish people for living integral lives; when we live by the soul’s imperatives we gain the courage to serve institutions more faithfully, to help them resist their tendency to default on their own missions (Palmer, 2004, pp. 20-21).

Two of Palmer’s basic beliefs about teachers expressed in a Circle of Trust are (a) that we all have an inner teacher whose guidance is more reliable than anything else; and (b) that we all need other people to invite, amplify, and help us discern the inner teacher’s voice (Palmer, 2004, p. 25). The group has a number of features including: a clearly identified aim and scope and the time in which to achieve these aims; skilled facilitation to ensure the productive operation of group meetings; open invitations to participate; common ground where pluralism and diversity are welcomed; and a comfortable meeting environment which is conducive to dialogue. He suggests meetings of up to 2.5 hours which the use of techniques to reflect on practice including: readings, silent contemplation, communal inquiry, small break-out groups, and large group sharing of learning. Palmer warns that the atmosphere must be respectful yet challenging with ‘no fixing, no saving, no advising, no setting each other straight’ yet with ‘honest, open questions – ones that invite deeper and truer speech’ (Palmer, 2004, pp. 114-116).

These guidelines for Palmer’s Circles of Trust are applicable to a great extent to the Community of Reflective Practice as they can provide the ground-rules necessary to establish a safe space in which academics can reflect together. Palmer (2004, p. 27) claims that a Circle of Trust ‘holds us in a space where we can make our own discernments, in our own way and time, in the encouraging and challenging presence of other people’. Palmer’s concept has elements of a framework required to promote reflective practice, such as: a clear focus, facilitation of process, open invitation and safe space. It aims to develop teaching

skills and personal growth through the examination of identity and integrity in teaching.

Poutiatine (2005, p. 12) has researched Palmer's Courage to Teach programs which promotes the Circle of Trust and he discusses how it impacts on professional teaching skills. He says that:

The development of a specific set of professional teaching skills has been documented as an outcome of participation in Courage to Teach programs in all of the studies reviewed to date. These skills can be categorized into five specific areas of impact. These areas are: listening; the construction of learning environments; the use of "third-thing" pedagogy; the use of questions in the learning process; and, the use of reflective practices professionally.

He documents that adopting Palmer's manner of reflection can give the opportunity to investigate issues such as voice, identity and vocation, personal motivation and one's role as an educator.

As is evident in the name of Palmers model, the creation of trust within the group is vital. In the creation of Circles of Trust, Parker Palmer focuses on creating safe space which, for him includes the physical location, the conceptual framework of the learning environment, the emotional ethos within that framework and the guidelines for inquiry. Palmer highlights that in the creation of safe space one must be cognisant of what he calls the 6 Paradoxes of Space for effective teaching and learning. Palmer (1998, pp. 74-77) says that space should:

'be bounded and open' – the space should have guiding questions (such as frames for reflection) yet be open to investigating new avenues of discovery as they arise.

'be hospitable and charged' – the space should be inviting and trusting yet have the aim of learning through the use of criticality.

'invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group' – the space should give room for the voice of each individual to be heard, and also for the voices of the group to challenge and affirm the individuals.

This also contributes to the development of the collective voice of the group.

‘honour the little stories of the participants and the big stories of teaching learning, identity, and integrity’ – the space should give room for the narrative of real experiences as well as explore the broader theoretical meaning of those experiences.

‘support solitude and surround it with the resources of the community’ – this emphasises the need both for headspace for individual reflection and the opportunity for generating knowledge through dialogue with peers.

‘welcome both silence and speech’ – reflection and learning require silence as well as words, emphasising the need for active listening as well as dialogue.

These paradoxes could be seen as slightly abstract in terms of their practical application, however Palmer (2007, pp. 17-18) makes suggestions as to how to create safe space within a group of teachers:

- ‘Extend and receive welcome.
- Be present as fully as possible.
- What is offered in the circle is by invitation not demand.
- Speak your truth in ways that respect other people’s truth.
- No fixing, saving, advising, and no setting each other straight.
- Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.
- Set aside judgement to listen to others – and to yourself – more deeply.
- Attend to your inner teacher; trust and learn from the silence.
- Know you can get what you need.’

In the same way that reflection should be a way of being rather than an activity, Palmer’s suggestions for creating a safe space are equally about a way of being as much as specific actions. These suggestions can be discussed within a CoRP and through dialogue can be added to a charter of ground rules for the conduct of the group.

Because interviewees highlighted that they wish to reflect on a variety of aspects of their use of service-learning, and that doing so in a supportive and trusting environment is vital (which is supported in the literature) I suggest that adopting elements of Palmer's Circles of Trust regarding the fostering of trusting environment would be beneficial to a model to encourage the reflective practice of service-learning academics.

### **5.3.5 Frames of reflection**

Above I have outlined the models from which the structural elements of the CoRP can be drawn. The various elements need to be investigated in depth, discussed by the members of the CoRP and those elements which best suit their context adopted to fit the needs of that group. The reflection process within the CoRP must also be flexible and open to discussion by its members. Within a CoRP practitioners can experiment with various methods of reflection (such as written and verbal) and techniques such as using readings to spark discussion or collaborating on articles for publication. However, regardless of the methods and techniques of reflection or the degree of structure used, because service-learning is a holistic pedagogy, experience must be viewed from different perspectives in order to draw the full range of potential meaning.

Interviewees discussed the frames they used through which to reflect on their own practice, and to encourage students to reflect on their service-learning. Critical examination of an experience needs a clear perspective. Asking 'what does this experience mean?' is simply too broad a question, so it helps to focus on aspects of the experience through a conceptual frame. These frames fall into three categories: academic, civic and personal. These categories are parallel to the frames outlined by Clayton and Ash (2004) and to a lesser extent Welch (1999). The three frames of reflection outlined by Clayton and Ash (2004) could be applied to the context of academics reflecting on their engaged practice in the following manner:

- The academic development frame is the broadest and includes the learning of the academics themselves and of their students. The practitioners' academic

development includes learning about their discipline or topic, their research on teaching and their professional development, what it means to be a good teacher and how to improve their practice as teachers.

- The civic development frame covers learning (both for teacher and student) connected to, or arising from engagement with the community. It also includes their views on ‘the common good’, that is, how education can contribute to society in general or to their community in particular.
- The personal growth frame refers to how academics view their personal growth (or that of their students) and how their practice of engagement has contributed to that.

### **5.3.6 Academic development**

There is a certain degree of confusion regarding the use of the term ‘academic development’ in the context of academics reflecting on their practice. Ash and Clayton (2009a) refer mostly to academic development in their DEAL model of reflection, but also substitute it with the term professional development in applied situations such as internships. When using the term academic development in relation to professional academics, I am using it in the context that it encompasses knowledge of the academic discipline as well as the skill involved with imparting that knowledge. This research is not aimed at the broader context of professional development as this is a loose term that can refer to initiatives for academic development, staff development and quality enhancement (Gillespie *et al.*, 2010). Though the terms are similar, I see academic development as being narrower and more education focused than professional development.

Boud (1999) posits that the experience of academic isolation in traditional higher education culture does not lead to peer reflection. Though collaboration on research projects happens on a small scale it is usually with colleagues from the same discipline. In contrast, Clayton and Ash (2005, p. 163) report that ‘the convergence of reflection and faculty development produces a unique potential for the formation of a reflective learning community among faculty’.

They describe the potential for academic development through participation in such a group, as a deeper understanding of ‘ourselves as educators – why we make the choices we do in the classroom, what assumptions we hold about students, and how we bring our own past experiences into our teaching – and to realize more clearly the complexity of the tensions at the heart of inquiry-guided, experiential education’ (Clayton & Ash, 2005, p. 162). This could be summed up as a deeper understanding of ‘why we do what we do, the way we do it’. They report that benefits of becoming more reflective – such as increased self-confidence and a willingness to experiment – also apply to teachers’ non-service-learning courses.

Clayton and Ash (2005) posit that even though it is a challenge to encourage reflective practice in academics, it can achieve substantial academic development regardless of the discipline or levels of experience of the academics. Including reflective practice in the academic development of academics would provide a favourable climate for the development of communities of practice. Though these centres are not focused on civic engagement, they are a vehicle to legitimise reflection as academic pursuit and also a venue to teach academics about the techniques that may improve their practice.

### **5.3.7 Civic development**

Given that community engagement is integral to service-learning, it is necessary to include civic development as a frame of reflection used by a CoRP. This frame is one of the elements that differentiate the CoRP from Wenger’s community of practice, or Palmers Circle of Trust. The opinion that the university has a civic role to play in the community is widely held in the US (Boyer, 1996, Boyte & Hollander, 1999, Scott, 2003, Stanton, 2008) and is growing in Ireland (Boland, 2008, Davis *et al.*, 2007, Hunt, 2011, Lyons & McIlrath, 2011). Scott (2008, p165) takes the issue a step further by suggesting that ‘institutions of higher education have both the potential and the responsibility to produce reflective citizens’ a view echoed by Macfarlane (2005) who suggests that it is incumbent on the academic community to include citizenship in curriculum of higher education. If this is to be the case, academics can no longer continue to teach while ignoring the civic element of what they teach. There has to be a clear

distinction made between civic awareness and moral beliefs. It is not the role of higher education to teach students what to believe or what to think, but rather to teach students how to think so that they can form their own well-informed beliefs. Birge (2005, p. 198) points to the need for reflection on the role of community service in contributing to academic learning:

‘...while we need conversations that lead us to understand how to integrate public service with academic study, we also need to reveal the more deeply rooted understandings that draw faculty towards service-learning practice as an articulation of their belief in the liberating process of education, the role of individuals as contributors to society, and the knowledge that synthesizing distinct learning experiences produces critical thinkers.’

The dialogue in a CoRP needs to be broader than a pedagogical one and must address the role of education in society and the part that academics play in promoting that. Teaching is regarded by Larrivee (2008b, p. 344) as an ‘ethical enterprise’ in which teachers have the power to ‘become change agents who both understand *what is* and work to create *what might be*.’ Furthermore, because civic engagement is the least regarded and most ill-defined part of the academics role of teaching, research and service (Schnaubelt & Statham, 2007) it needs to be first understood by academics before it can be properly incorporated into the curriculum. There is evidence that Irish academics wish to become more engaged with the community (Boland, 2008, Lyons & McIlrath, 2011) for reasons of the civic mission and because it provides a vehicle for good teaching and learning. There have also been moves in some Irish higher education institutions to include engagement as a part of their strategic plan – though it is as yet unclear if this is being backed up by the necessary allocation of the resources required for full institutionalisation of the policy. If an institution adopts a mission of engagement, then it is clear that academics will have a central part in fulfilling the mission statement, yet there is a lack of clarity regarding exactly how academics will fulfil that role, particularly if expected to do so in a ‘resource neutral’ manner. If Irish higher education is to make such a radical change towards community engagement then it is vital that the academics who will be

spearheading the change have a forum in which to discuss the practical and philosophical issues which will arise.

### **5.3.8 Personal development**

Birge (2005) calls for the enhancement of training and technical assistance offered to service-learning practitioners with conversations and examinations focused upon what it is that grounds the work of engagement personally and professionally. Interviewees highlighted the personal growth they have experienced through engagement with the community and this needs to be recognised by the academy as a legitimate aspect of using service-learning. By its nature reflection on service-learning involves challenging personal beliefs, and assumptions to lead to understanding about why we do what we do the way we do it.

According to Palmer (2004, p. 25) ‘the journey toward inner truth is too taxing to be made solo, the path is too deeply hidden to be travelled without company, and the destination is too daunting to be achieved alone’ and therefore, reflection on the vocation of teaching needs to happen within a trusting community. That group then ‘holds us in a space where we can make our own discernments, in our own way and time, in the encouraging and challenging presence of other people’ (Palmer, 2004, p. 27).

Even though academics do rely on peers for support, there is a reluctance to appear vulnerable. The fear of losing face is great and trust must be slowly built up within the group so that members feel comfortable with discussing aspects of personal development connected with their engaged practice. Someone has to show leadership and model vulnerability, a senior academic is in a good position to begin this process. Having personal growth as a frame of reflection in a CoRP legitimises the feeling of vulnerability and removes the embarrassment that may be associated with admitting weakness or the desire to grow as a person as well as an academic and a citizen. Though personal development is an important frame with which to reflect on engaged practice, the CoRP is not meant to be

group therapy; issues not connected directly with engaged practice such as relationship problems, are better dealt with in private therapy.

In as much as learning cannot be separated into distinct and identifiable stages in Schön's learning cycle, the academic, civic and personal dimensions of using service-learning cannot be disentangled. Welch (in Diener & Liese, 2009, p. xi) who developed the ABCs reflection rubric, highlights this in his description of how engaged colleagues were 'unable to separate their political and moral reasons for teaching service-learning from their professional and personal sense of self'. Shumer (2000a) echoes this when he reminds us of the view held by many that service-learning is not a pedagogy but a philosophy. Birge (2005, p. 198) posits that 'practitioners of service-learning engage [with] the questions that reveal deeply held reasons for doing what they do, ...and [these questions] reveal an inner understanding that integrates personal values with professional activities.' Because of the holistic nature of service-learning it is fact difficult to *avoid* the opportunities for personal learning and this must be acknowledged in the mechanics of a CoRP. It was clear that there was a desire among interviewees to examine more than simply the techniques of teaching and learning but to ask 'why we do what we do the way we do it?'

Reflection is intimately connected to one's personal identity. As will be discussed later, being engaged with the community is an inexorable part of how my interviewees see themselves. Butt *et al*, (1990) see autobiography as an integral part of educational praxis, emphasising the importance of examining personal experience of teaching, and sharing that with others. Personal development is not simply about 'feelings' but involves knowing who you are as a teacher. One's identity cannot be separated from teaching practice because it is not a hat that can be removed when the mortar board is donned.

### **5.3.9 Academics use of reflection frames**

The fact that interviewees used different reflection frames implies that they found a structure helpful when examining their practice. They see that there are a number of aspects to the use of service-learning and it covers a variety of

separate yet inter-connected aspects to learning. Traditional lecture learning is focused on academic knowledge acquisition. As well as theoretical knowledge acquisition, the academic aspect in experiential learning focuses on the development of practical skills, which can contribute to personal enhancement. Applying academic and practical learning in the community involves civic development. It appears that service-learning academics chose the pedagogy because of its broad range of learning potential, and they examine their practice from the perspective of those elements. Therefore, to examine service-learning as a pedagogy without considering these three frames would overlook integral aspects of the learning experience.

An interviewee discusses using three frames similar to those suggested by Clayton and Ash (2004). She adds that the frames must function organically and should not be used mechanically, with boxes being ticked.

**Nicola:** OK, yes I have actually woven all those three threads through, but I don't do it, at least I haven't done it in the past, in a linear fashion, like number one, number two, number three. In fact, if I were to map out the course and each of those dimensions were a line in a bar graph or a chart each line would be distinct and the one about the self would start out pretty high, the one about academic would only get high towards middle to the end, and so the self and community would probably be high in the first third of the class with the academic part only towards the last half of the class. And the reason is I think of it as scaffolding, is bringing the student to levels of awareness and self-consciousness as a foundation for now introducing the element of another narrative, if you will, which is a discipline based academic frame for looking at it.

Nicola had over 25 years experience of using and researching service-learning and also provided training for academics and administrators. Her comments highlight the difference between traditional university learning and service-learning which calls for taking a longer term view of a holistic education process. Traditional lecture planning focuses on the transition of the content of Lecture One which needs to come before Lecture Two, which may or may not be connected to the content of Lecture Three. However, service-learning scaffolds

different kinds of knowledge which must be encouraged separately yet in an integrated way. Without personal awareness one cannot be open to questioning society, therefore, encouraging the questioning of self must come first. This aligns with Welch's (1999) reflection rubric in which one focus firstly on oneself, then on those in one's immediate community and then on society in general.

When one is then open to different perspectives, the academic content of a course takes on a different relevance and can be integrated into the wider perception that one has. The significance this has for academic reflection is that, not only must there be numerous frames, but their use cannot be rigid. Not every experience will necessarily contain equal amounts of knowledge in the academic, personal and civic realms, yet all must be considered.

Clive sees service-learning as holistic education and connected not only in the strands within the subject matter but beyond the classroom as well.

**Clive:** And I think, what's right about service-learning is primarily not the things that we see sometimes listed, the sort of definition of it, it's a more the fundamental notion of learning being relevant to life, that moral development can't be separated from academic and cognitive intellectual development.

It is significant that Clive should use the word 'moral' as this is traditionally seen as beyond the remit of higher education. The reference is not made in a religious context, but rather in a broader civic awareness. He does not compartmentalise the learning of subject knowledge but views education in the broad view of knowing about life. He illustrates this by again quoting Dewey:

**Clive:** "...we don't live in a mathematical Earth or a physical Earth or a biological Earth or historical Earth or literary Earth there's not a series of stratifiers. We all live together on one Earth and we have but one life to live on this Earth. Connect the school to life, and the curriculum will necessarily be integrated."

I don't like to see service-learning thought of as something you add on – 'well, let's have a service-learning course or let's do 20% of the activity in this course will be service-learning', that kind of thing.

**BÓD:** So, would you believe that education by definition is connected with the community, is engaged?

**Clive:** Yes, it's not education if it's not. That's why I don't like the hyphenated learnings because when we say, active learning, corporative learning, all these, it suggests that that's a new special, different thing that you have to learn about that's new.

As if real learning isn't that, but in fact I think, it's exactly the opposite. I think, what we've thought of as the norm, the default learning, say in the university, is we ought to be calling that inactive, uncooperative, immoral – those are where the hyphenated descriptions ought to come in.

Clive struggles with the dominant discourse of traditional education which he sees as compartmentalised and lacking in the personal and civic aspects. Clive's views of education were singular among all of the interviewees, insofar as he was slightly wary of service-learning itself becoming a new regime of truth (Foucault, 1980). For him service-learning provided one route to the broad view of education that he held. The frame he used to reflect on his practice was singularly holistic, and not limited to the academic, personal and civic development. How can such a view of education fit into the current discourse without a forum in which to air them? The fact that he maintained an online blog on which he discussed a broad range of topics connected with education demonstrates that perhaps as it stands, he does not have the space within higher education to reflect on the diverse yet connected aspects of his practice.

Another academic who was asked about the frames of reflection believes that when reflecting with peers, the discussion covers not only academic matters but civic and personal development also. He says that it is difficult to avoid the non-academic aspects of teaching and research.

**Benjamin:** I think in most of the instances, or in all the instances, it's all three. ...Though I think the academic is more intentional than the other two. Usually when we gather and talk about the issues, we're talking about all the other distractions and demands on a faculty member's life and is it worth it. So I think the personal and the civic emerge out of discussing the academic, because it's engaged work. And it can't avoid the person, about why they are doing it, what they gain out of it, why they value it. So you get to know the person and some of their motives and issues as well as the academic work.

Benjamin highlights that contrary to traditional teaching and learning; when using service-learning one cannot focus solely on the academic sphere because the personal and civic dimensions are integral to the work. This must be kept in mind when examining academics reflective practice, because to focus on one of the frames to the exclusion of the other two would mean not examining practice in its entirety. Therefore, a full examination of the practice of academic's use of service-learning, must consider the academic, personal and civic elements and this needs to be built into the CoRP.

Welch's (1999) ABCs of Reflection uses the concept of reflective frames by examining an experience from various perspectives: (A) affect, (B) behaviour, (C) cognition. Each of these frames can then be viewed from one of three contexts: 1 – self, 2 – other, 3 – global. The frames that Welch describes bear a similarity to those of Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 11) who describe Affective, Action (behavioural), Cognitive, and Social. The specifics of the DEAL and ABCs models are not as well known, as for example 'head, heart, hands'. However, it appears to be common practice to examine a learning experience from different perspectives, and seeking the connection to class-work, the community and personal growth.

Of the three categories, the majority of the respondents reported personal reasons for their decision to enter education, including the feeling of reward, to fulfil a vocation, their love for their topic and their love for learning. This would appear that most of the respondents were examining their experience from Welch's reflection frame 1 – self.

A number of interviewees cited their students as their motivation to teach. Contributing to the growth of others and facilitating the learning of young people rated high as an incentive to teach. This would be congruent to Welch's reflection frame 2 – others. Some interviewees reported that contributing to the community or to society in general was a strong motivating factor to being a teacher. This would run parallel to Welch's reflection frame 3 examining the global context of education.

Academics reported that they *do* have the opportunity to reflect with their peers on academic issues through conferences and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. However, they do *not* have a forum in which to reflect with their peers on personal and civic development in a similar manner. The opportunities which do exist for reflection on issues other than teaching and research are informal, unstructured and infrequent which reduces the legitimacy of these aspects of practice.

In the CoRP, I have suggested the combination of peer reflection (Moon, Brookfield, Boud) with a framework (Wenger) for academic and personal reflection (Palmer). Yet to focus this further for the context of civic engagement requires that, added to the academic and personal development, engaged academics want/need to examine the civic aspect of their practice also. Clayton and Ash (2004) include this third lens into their model of critical reflection which examines an experience with the goal of 'academic enhancement, personal growth and civic engagement' (Clayton & Ash, 2004). The combination of elements of these different models into a flexible structure provides a forum in which to reflect on the different aspects of using service-learning. This provides the 'room' in which the reflection can take place. The practical reflection process must be rigorous and productive; therefore, it must contain the 6 elements of good reflection which practitioners have distilled from their many years of practice. It must also address the more abstract needs of space, criticality and discourse which interviewees have raised. The following sections will outline how the Community of Reflective Practice can address the practical and philosophical needs of academics who use service-learning.

## 5.4 Addressing the Practical Needs of Academics

In the Findings chapter I outlined what the interviewees reported as being the practical needs (numbered below 5.4.1 to 5.4.6) that they have regarding the process of reflecting on their engaged practice. In the following sections I will build on what interviewees have said and show how these needs can be addressed by a CoRP.

### 5.4.1 A knowledge of how to reflect

Interviewees said that they wanted to understand the concept and process of reflection better. An example of this is expressed by this interviewee.

**Nora:** I think there has been some information about “here are different techniques of how to do reflection”. And, there has been a lot of information about why it’s important. But I still don’t feel like we understand how does that change really happen.

According to Birge (2005, p. 196) ‘many [faculty members] seek a deeper understanding of service-learning practice, but have found only limited help in their search’. Ash *et al.* (2005, p. 165) suggests that building capacity among practitioners on how to use reflection is key and requires ‘immersion: in reflective practice in general and in service learning in particular’. Brookfield (1995, p. 50) agrees with the concept of immersion and says that ‘of all the methods available for changing how we teach, putting ourselves regularly in the role of learner has the greatest long-term effect.’ Hall-McEntee *et al.* (2003, p. 1) sum up the importance of teachers acquiring a knowledge of how to reflect when they say ‘in order to develop a community of reflective learners in my classroom, I’ve needed to learn how to be reflective myself.’

Moon (1999b) highlights the lack of clarity about reflective practice, and something as fluid as reflection is very difficult to define. In order for a CoRP to work, there must be a common framework of understanding about reflection. Rather than arriving at a *definition*, the group needs to discuss a working

description of the terms of reference and these may be modified over time to suit the needs of the group.

For this to happen there needs to be capacity building on the use of various methods of reflection including silent, verbal and written reflection and how it can be conducted alone and with peers. The methods of reflection to be used by the CoRP must be based on recognised best practice of rigorous techniques. This can be informed by existing literature for example the list of best practices in reflection such as the Characteristics of High Quality Reflection outlined earlier by Ash and Clayton (2009a, p. 35).

Developing these skills can be done as a group by sharing experiences or through workshops provided by consultant trainers. Application of the techniques can be developed primarily through experiential learning i.e. learning by doing, so that academics have firsthand experience of drawing meaning from their engaged practice. Other avenues includes, senior academics mentoring junior staff, reflection retreats and regular workshops. Practitioners must adapt and develop techniques that can be applied within the context of where they work. Brookfield (1995, p. 159) says that it is pointless to ask academics ‘to participate in conversation on the basis that talking for talking’s sake is good for them’. Moon (1999b) states that there should be clear objectives to promoting reflective practice, therefore, it must be highlighted that improving one’s skills of reflection is an aim of participation in a CoRP. Practicing the skill of peer reflection cannot be done in an abstract and isolated manner, but must necessarily be developed as a part of a group of colleagues.

Interviewees said that the use of multiple forms of reflection is more effective than one single form. David Boud (1999, p. 123) supports this when he suggests the use of a variety of reflection methods to gain an understanding of why we do what we do, the way we do it and to understand the implications of our practice. Pinar *et al.* (1995) suggest using narrative to examine autobiographies so as to learn to ‘know thyself’. They suggest a variety of reflection methods involving personal writing including journaling, observations, and autobiographical pieces; as well as more practice based material such as

classroom observations and class plans. Butt and Raymond (1987) suggest verbal reflection techniques such as conversations, interviews, and audiotapes. Clayton & Ash (2005, p165) specify that their training workshops always have a variety of reflection techniques. Though Kolb's learning cycle is cited in much of the literature of the 1990's on reflection in service-learning, there has been no further development of the idea of connecting reflection activities to learning style beyond the Eyer *et al.* (1996, p. 54) recommendation that 'whenever possible, a facilitator may offer a choice of activities to allow each individual to select a method that connects with his or her learning preference'.

Based on the fact that practitioners said that using a variety of reflection techniques is more beneficial than just one technique, which is supported by the literature, I believe that range of reflection methods needs to be included in the structure of a CoRP. Though members may prefer one method over another, they need to be encouraged to try different techniques. This may be done by those with experience of success of one method and modelling it for the group. Though there are a large variety of reflection methods, they all have communication as a common denominator. Methods which involve working alone can be conducted between meetings so as to devote the group time to discussion. Published scholarship is a desirable outcome as it can demonstrate that the forum is more than simply a talking shop and is one manner in which the CoRP can be validated. Interviewees identified three principle forms of reflection: silent, verbal and written, and all of these must be incorporated into the CoRP.

### ***Silent reflection in a CoRP***

Bringing together a group of academics to only silently reflect on aspects of their teaching and learning may not be the best use of their time and would not draw on the potential of the group. Given that interviewees reported that they conducted silent reflection while alone, I suggest that CoRP members spend some time alone considering *preflection* questions, or topics that will be discussed at the next meeting. This can be done while commuting, or journaling and allows for questions to 'stew'. Addressing a question such as 'what does civically engaged scholarship mean to me?' is not an issue that can be decided in a single reflection session and requires thought over a period of

time. By keeping such a question in mind while teaching, one notices examples and forms ideas based on everyday experience of using service-learning. These thoughts can then be discussed at the next CoRP meeting. Silent or solo reflection is something that many of my interviewees said that they did but it has limitations because it is not done with the intention to be shared with others in a CoRP.

### ***Written reflection in a CoRP***

While many of my interviewees used a journal or wrote out their reflections, it was clear that this writing, being consciously personal, limited the development of reflection at the individual level. Knowing that the writing will be shared in a safe space has the potential to change the quality of the reflection and can multiply its effectiveness. Carlile and Jordan (2007, p. 26) suggest that ‘the act of writing transfers private thoughts from the purely subjective into a public domain of shared language and discourse.’ Though written reflection can be conducted alone through journaling, it can be moved from the private to the public when it is shared with peers, and done in the form of a collaboration on an academic document for publication such as Diener and Liese (2009) or conducted informally such as the example documented by Barrett *et al.* (2009). The reflection project undertaken by Barrett *et al.* was initiated to address the problem of academics feeling isolated from their colleagues. Participants of this project found that sharing their written reflections with peers using the structure of a community of practice encouraged knowledge sharing and generation between junior and senior academics. ‘Thinking about our collaboration through the lens of communities of practice has illustrated the strengths of complementary collaboration, and the potential these hold for developing transformative change within a domain of practice’ (Barrett *et al.*, 2009, p. 414). As I highlighted earlier from my personal experience, written reflection which is not shared with peers does not achieve its full potential. Pinar (1995) recommends writing communities and the sharing of written reflection, but highlights that the group members must have established a commitment to the developmental principles of the community, agreed to reciprocity between members and accept that personal disclosure is encouraged and welcomed.

### ***Verbal reflection in a CoRP***

Wheatley (2002, p. 3) claims that ‘human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change’. She says that time for conversation must be reclaimed, though unfortunately she does not suggest how to achieve this. Lillis (2005, p. 16) takes the idea a step further and connects conversation with learning when he says that: ‘conversational learning is a fundamental process; one intuitively relied upon to start us in life. While it is unfashionable to acknowledge it, conversational learning has a remarkable record of reliability. It is the principal medium for learning in community’. The concept of experiential learning is accepted as a legitimate pedagogy, but ‘learning by talking’ is not, yet it is often in the discussion about the experience that the meaning is drawn out. Developing a deeper understanding can result from verbal reflection, but sharing story can also support academics on a personal level. Dempsey *et al.* (2008) discuss the effect of sharing personal narratives as a part of a reflective group and how receiving positive feedback and encouragement from peers was transformative. Jacqueline discusses reflecting with her peers.

**Jacqueline:** ...the only time we get a forum for that is we ask for a retreat and we had one this year. And someone came in and it was great. We talked about what we do. Is this what we want to do in our department? How can we set it up differently? How can we cluster so we have different teams of people working together? It was great. Now, we’ve got to try to put that in action. But we had to carve that time out, not only in our minds and that gave us the time.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) and Brookfield (1995) connect learning by talking with teachers reflecting on their practice through the critical conversation. These authors give considerable attention to the role conversation has in teacher reflection. What is significant is the ‘critical’ element of the conversation, which uses probing questions to provoke fruitful dialogue. This criticality is what differentiates the reflective conversation of a CoRP from an informal chat, a formal presentation of a standpoint or a ‘dumping’ session to offload grievances.

As noted earlier academics already use different reflection techniques, however they usually prefer one or two as opposed to using a variety of techniques. I suggest other methods for academics to reflect on their practice, under the categories they discussed.

- Contemplation: putting ourselves regularly in the role of learner, videotaping examples of teaching.
- Verbal with students: critical incident questionnaires (student evaluations), troubleshooting discussions.
- Verbal with peers: personal narratives, role model profiles, critical conversations with colleagues, peer observation, videos, discussing selected readings, role-play.
- Writing solo: learning journals, learning profiles, teaching logs, learning audits, survival advice memos.
- Collaborative writing (unpublished): good practices audit, letters to successors.
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (published): Reading theory critically, asking epistemological questions, asking experiential questions, asking communicative questions, asking political questions.

The benefit of applying all of these approaches is that doing so caters for different learning styles within a group, it draws on the strengths of each method, and provides variety so as to keep the reflection process fresh. While discussing academics reflecting together as a group Benjamin had this to say:

**Benjamin:** Isn't it like Mom and apple pie? How can you be against it? And I think most faculty would buy into the possibility, "Yes, I believe I can improve my work and learn from other colleagues. Even some from outside my department" ...but most faculty don't avail themselves of that.

It is clear that engaged academics are familiar with the concept of reflection; they know how to use it with their students; they do reflect alone on their own practice to a certain degree and occasionally in an informal manner with peers; they know it would be a good idea to be a more reflective practitioner, yet there is a certain amount of confusion as to how to develop that.

Literature hailing the benefits of reflection outweighs the ‘nuts and bolts’ instruction on reflective practice that academics want. Having an understanding of the theoretical foundations of reflective practice can give insight into the process whilst seeing how to overcome the challenges of time, space and lack of institutional supports can inspire others to reap the benefits of rigorous examination of their engaged practice from multiple perspectives. I believe that one approach to developing the skill of reflection is to practice it with peers, experiment with different techniques, and learn through the experience – with others.

#### **5.4.2 Depth of reflection**

Interviewees said that they wanted to reach a level of reflection that is brought deeper by the use of challenging prompts and critical questioning. Larrivee (2008b) outlines the process of progressing from surface reflection to critical reflection. She suggests using prompts and non-judgmental critical questions to ‘promote higher order reflection by creating authentic dialogue’ (Larrivee, 2008b, p. 345). Practitioners have highlighted that students say what they think they should say in their reflection, and this is a natural reaction. When it is clear to a group that someone is being open and honest in their reflection, and authentic dialogue develops, it contributes to the level of trust within the group, and encourages others to be open and honest. Being frank about weaknesses in one’s practice or occasions of a teachable moment lost, shows vulnerability and is done to seek advice, encourage dialogue and contribute to the learning of others. As is often the case, admitting failure to a group will encourage others to share their experiences when their practice was not a complete success. Sharing weakness offers affirmation that service-learning is indeed messy and difficult to manage at times. Through critical questioning in a non-judgemental manner, ‘teachers move from initially asking “Am I doing it right?” to asking “Is this the right thing to do?”’ (Larrivee, 2008b, p. 344) thus moving from issues of practicality to values and beliefs (Jay, 2003, Larrivee, 2008b).

There are two concerns with the depth of practitioner reflection, how to get there and how to stay there. The first can be achieved through critical questioning and a number of examples are given here.

Butt *et al.* (1990, p. 257) list four basic questions that teachers can ask themselves when examining their practice:

- What is the nature of my working reality?
- How do I think and act in that context and why?
- How, through my work-life experience and personal history, did I come to be that way?
- How do I wish to become in my professional future?

These questions focus attention on the self; the professional and the immediate environment and society in general; they look back and look forward and are indeed probing questions. They cannot be answered without deep consideration of one's practice and examining various aspects of the overall question 'why do I do what I do the way I do it?'

Welch (2009a, p. x) describes reflection questions posed to civically engaged scholars at a retreat. In order to focus on themselves they were asked 'who am I?' To broaden the focus to immediate others including family, friends, students, community and society they were asked 'whose am I?' They were asked 'why do I do what I do?' which we can see is a central question to the reflective process, but when it is added to 'what would it mean if I didn't do this work?' it focuses attention on personal identity and living and working with authenticity. This is then brought back into the context of engagement when asked 'how do I integrate or reconcile my identity and what I do with the expectations of the academy?'

Welch asks academics to consider four *preflection* questions before they reflect on their practice together (as mentioned in the Literature Review).

- What does 'civically engaged scholarship' mean or look like to you?
- Why do you do this type of work?
- What would it mean if 'we' didn't do this type of work?
- Why are you a part of this community of scholars? (Welch, 2009a, p. xiv)

In these questions we see that Welch includes the three frames of reflection that incorporate, academic, personal and civic development. They question one's assumptions about identity and the vital 'why' question. Going deeper than the questions posed by Butt *et al.* (1990) they examine specifically ones identity

within an engaged community. It appeared that interviewees had already given deep consideration to why they identified as engaged scholars, and they were then concerned about the question of how to do it better. After an individual gives deep consideration to beliefs structure and identifies with a particular philosophy, he or she is more likely to join colleagues with similar beliefs, in the same way as political parties are formed. For a CoRP to grow, members must have at least considered fundamental questions of philosophical beliefs and professional identity. With the need to maintain criticality, it is important that each member has questioned their own assumptions before questioning those of colleagues. I believe that one of the reasons that reflection groups for engaged academics have not already become established is because there was not a reflection model to follow which catered for the needs of engaged academics. A part of strengthening and/or sustaining a CoRP on an institutional level is to demonstrate that the reflection has substance (depth) and is not just ‘thinking about stuff’. This requires a framework that makes reflection less ad hoc and increases the possibility of it being deep and transformative. The CoRP model presents a systematic approach to ensure that the reflection is productive.

This leads to the second issue of maintaining criticality after one has explored deep reflection, both alone and with the group. The aim is that the reflective process becomes more of a mindset than an activity, a way of being rather than a way of looking. Maintaining an ‘always already’ reflectivity can become intuitive when it is based on a set of principles and beliefs that are the result of deep consideration. The analogy can be drawn with a vegetarian who does not even consider looking at the meat section of a menu, and who does not have to reconsider whether or not to eat meat because that decision is always and already made. Having identified as a vegetarian, it is simply a reflexive question of what is the most attractive non-meat dish available.

Though set prompts or a list of questions are not necessarily required to maintain a mindset of reflection, is likely that one particular question will resonate with an individual and become their mantra; such as Bethany’s ‘what difference have I made today’ or Clive’s quote ‘how can I connect life as a learning process, and learning as a living activity?’ Participants of a CoRP can

share and update such questions and prompts that can be used to maintain reflectivity. Brookfield (1995, p. 215) posits that teachers must develop knowledge of their own practice in their own context, ‘this involves their recognizing and generating their own contextually sensitive theories of practice, rather than importing them from outside. Through continuous investigation and monitoring of their own efforts practitioners produce a corpus of valuable, though unprivileged, practical knowledge’. It is recommended that one of the exercises of a CoRP is the compilation of a *Book of Learning* so as to document as a living archive the knowledge generated in the group and insure that it does not dissipate with the turnover of membership. This could also include an agreed charter for the group, the theoretical foundation on which it is built, reflection techniques, knowledge generated, case studies, and narrative examples of experience.

#### **5.4.3 Time and regularity of reflection**

Interviewees said that reflection is time consuming, and requires ‘headspace’, furthermore; reflection needs to be conducted with a degree of regularity so that the process is effective. It has been noted in the literature that time is an important element in the reflective process and the absence of time is a major barrier to reflecting on practice (Cowan & Westwood, 2006, Davis, 2003, Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998, Gibson *et al.*, 2011, Hubbal *et al.*, 2005, Issitt, 2003, King, 2002, Loughran, 2002). There is also reference to the need to make reflection a ‘habit of mind’ (Allard *et al.*, 2007, p. 310). Developing a critical mindfulness can become a ‘habit of mind’ if given the opportunities to reflect on the process as well as the content of one’s work (Langer, 1989, Murphy *et al.*, 2010). Brookfield (1995) encourages regular reflective conversations and Bold (2008) suggests that peer reflection activities are enhanced and encourage deeper reflection when they were conducted regularly. Boud *et al.* (2006) suggest that reflection is an ongoing process and its dynamics change over time; therefore, it must be approached with a long-term view allowing the process to develop over time. Mitchell and Sackney (2000, p. 83) go so far as to say that ‘time spent in professional development is not wasted, and professional learning is not a

disposable frill. The time spent on professional learning can (and ought to) enhance the time spent in the classroom.’

CoRP meetings must be regular enough to be effective yet not so frequent as to become impossible to include in academics’ schedule or that they become routine. The regularity of meetings is dependent on the group but the most favourable timeframe would be as often as it takes for reflective practice to become a way of thinking mindset as opposed to an activity. I would suggest three times a term would be a minimum with solo work to be prepared for each meeting.

Pribbenow (2005) documents the benefits that academics felt by interacting with each other at service-learning workshops. He says that ‘the sense of community and collegiality created from these interactions connected faculty to each other, enhanced their commitment to the institution, and assisted some in overcoming isolation’ (Pribbenow, 2005, p. 33). Similar to the retreat described in section 2.6.2 by Welch (2009a) out of which the Civically Engaged Scholar Cohort at the University of Utah, a reflective retreat at the start or end of each year would be beneficial aspect of a CoRP. One practitioner informally recounted the example of a Californian university that held a reflection retreat for staff from Friday to Sunday evening. The retreat was conducted at a comfortable location off campus and spouses were invited. The group reflection work was conducted in the mornings and the afternoons were for personal reflection and/or socialising with colleagues. This format of retreat showed staff that they were being valued for their engaged work. They did not feel that a weekend of their personal time was taken up working away from home. It gave colleagues the opportunity to meet and build up trusting relationships with each other and strengthened their commitment to their engaged practice.

Headspace or the peace of mind needed to reflect, is an issue that cannot be regulated. However, it was clear from the interviewees that they used down time to give consideration to issues arising in their practice. Having *preflection* questions or topics to consider in between CoRP meetings may be a way of using

practitioners down time to ‘mull over’ questions which will be discussed at the next meeting.

There is need for regularity but not regulation of reflection, one cannot impose reflection from above but the research does suggest that the greater frequency the greater the opportunity for reflective process to deepen and foster development in the participants. The aim is that reflection becomes habitual, yet not to the extent that it becomes mundane. Routine reflection can be avoided by maintaining criticality within the group and keeping the questions challenging. Variety of topics for consideration, using different frames of reflection in succession, and using various activities can contribute to keeping the reflection fresh. Ultimately, the participants need to experiment with the regularity of the reflection sessions until a suitable equilibrium is reached.

### ***Time poverty in service-learning implementation***

There is a growing belief expressed in the literature that academics should reflect on their teaching (Boyer, 1990, Brew & Boud, 1996, Brockbank & McGill, 2007, Brookfield, 1995, Cranton & King, 2003, Hubbal *et al.*, 2005). Given that reflective practice is central to the pedagogy of service-learning (Eyler *et al.*, 1996) and accepted as a beneficial pursuit for academics (Brookfield, 1995), it is important to consider the context which encourages or discourages its use in higher education when examining how service-learning practitioners reflect on their practice.

Shockley (2008) reports that though teachers consider what they are doing, they have little opportunity or experience with ‘reflection in action’. Even if a teacher is willing to address personal assumptions, risk isolation from colleagues by appearing to be radical, challenge the power structure of the institution or even question the status quo of society; time is the greatest barrier to doing so (Abes *et al.*, 2002, Allard *et al.*, 2007, Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007, Bergstrom, 2004, Bold, 2008, Brookfield, 1995, Cowan & Westwood, 2006, Hubbal *et al.*, 2005, Murphy *et al.*, 2008, Whitney & Clayton, 2011). The literature offers little by way of solution to the problem of the time that is needed to reflect. Moon

posits that ‘an overfilled curriculum is one of the greatest disincentives for teachers to give time for reflection and for learners to take time to reflect’ (Moon, 1999b, p. 166). Reflection has a legitimate place in the curriculum – for both students and teachers. Reflection should be able to legitimately claim time from the curriculum if we are serious about enhancing the quality of learning. The reason such an idea is so quickly dismissed is because there is no model, or structure to demonstrate how this might work, and work well. Moon (1990b) cites a broad range of literature on reflection in education and drawing from this she suggests that because teachers rarely have the time and space to view their own teaching, they will not become reflective practitioners simply because it is a good idea. They need support from administrators to facilitate its growth, sufficient time and space in which to develop the skills and the development of a collaborative environment with support from other teachers.

Implementing change requires extra time and more effort and the time and attention of academics is the scarcest resource on a campus. Accessing this resource is difficult if an activity is viewed as additional to one’s core duties of teaching and researching (Hartley *et al.*, 2005, Hirschhorn & May, 2000). There is general consensus that using service-learning involves greater time and workload than pedagogies which are not engaged with the community. Many academics who would be interested in using service-learning may be discouraged from doing so because of the extra workload. Those who already use service-learning also face limited time and the ever increasing demands of academic life to teach, research and conduct service.

Advocates of service-learning are used to hearing colleagues say ‘I couldn’t use service-learning as I simply can’t add-on any more to my courses’. Their reply is usually ‘service isn’t an add-on, it is part of the pedagogy’. I would adopt the same argument regarding practitioner reflection. It is not an add-on; reflection is integral to the use of service-learning. To use service-learning unreflectively – at best – does not access the full potential of the pedagogy and – at worst – does a disservice to the stakeholders.

It must be accepted that time constraints are an impediment, both to using service-learning and reflecting with peers. It needs to be addressed in a systemic manner by university management. The time required to reflect on ones practice with peers could be considered as a part of the time that is allotted for the preparation and planning of individual courses. However, given that it is known that service-learning courses take more time and have reflection as an integral element, it is inconsistent for an institutional to offer service-learning courses and not allow the time needed to implement them rigorously. Rather than viewing time release as a concession, it should be seen as an investment in staff development which avoids the cost of contracting trainers and consultants for once-off workshops. Academics are often given time release for in-service training, based on what interviewees have said, I believe that active reflective practice is as valuable as occasional once-off training workshops.

The issue of time is deeper than the institution allotting (or indeed mandating) a certain number of hours a week for academics to reflect on their practice. Davis (2003) reports that there is a lack of institutional recognition of reflective practice and a lack of appreciation for the additional time burden that it puts on academics. The reason reflection is not made a priority is because the legitimacy of civic engagement (and by implication reflective practice) is in question. Hartley *et al.* (2005, p. 210) posit that ‘some scholars question the very propriety of promoting civic engagement.’

However, it is ironic that reflection is scheduled into service-learning programmes and is seen as legitimate for students but not for academics. It could be argued that students are in higher education to learn, whereas academics are not. But what of the importance given to ‘life-long learning’, and does this not also apply equally to academics. It seems that there is a belief in the traditional higher education culture that academics learn only through research, but the experiential learning from teaching is not ‘real’ learning unless it can be the foundation for an academic article.

The higher education institution may ask: what exactly is reflection; being so subjective; how will we know that the extra time allowed for reflection will be

used effectively; what will be the proof of constructive use of this time; will reflecting make you a better academic? Those who *do* reflect will often say that using service-learning and reflecting on its use is an essential part of engagement – you cannot have one without the other; likewise that it is transformative and has made them who they are, engaged academics. If an institution wants to have a policy of civic engagement, it must have engaged academics.

***Timescale: causing change over time***

Some academics claimed that service-learning can have a transformative impact. Through reflection on *aha moments* and on critical incidents, reflection can contribute to long term incremental effects. One of the problems that academics referred to was the fact that there may not be immediate results from the service-learning project and the reflective process.

**Clive:** I think, good teaching is like good gardening. It's nurturing, about life and living things and so I think, it's about understanding the fullness of life that people are engaged in and helping to connect and continually reconnect in learning in life, seeing life as a learning process, but also seeing learning as a living activity.

It was noteworthy that a number of practitioners in different locations used the metaphor of planting seeds through service-learning, which is similar to Tuohy's (1999) use of the metaphor for the school itself. Ruben (in an unrecorded personal conversation) spoke of the need to turn over soil to aerate it and encourage growth, and likewise, experience must be turned over through reflection in order to encourage growth.

Practitioners said that their students' attitudes had changed on account of their preconceptions having been challenged however, that transformation is difficult for academics to track and quantify. Interviewees respond to this issue by saying that all they can do is 'plant the seeds' and provide the best environment for growth. One of the difficulties, they say, is letting go of their own desire to push the civic and personal development process to produce immediate results. This may be difficult in an institutional atmosphere where

identifiable results are valued over potential results of an unknown quantity at some time in the future.

Those who refer to the idea of planting seeds seem quite sanguine regarding immediate results for example Felicity said ‘there are some things that are necessary for the soul. I have to sit back and let it work’. Benjamin said that service-learning may take a considerable length of time to manifest change, ‘some graduates get involved in the homeless issue and 10 and 20 years out become advocates for it.’ Clive uses the seeds metaphor when he says that ‘good teaching is like good gardening. It’s nurturing, about life and living things and so I think, it’s about understanding the fullness of life that people are engaged in and helping to connect and continually reconnect in learning, in life.’

Clive discusses his frustrations with his own education because it was disconnected from his life and he believed the only justification for what he was doing was that it was preparation for a distant future.

**Clive:** Yes, it’ll be good for you someday, but we can’t even tell you when. But someday, thirty years from now, you’ll be glad you learned the quadratic equation because you’ll be sitting there ... thinking I’m so glad that I can use that right now.

It is ironic that this paradigm of education demanded immediate results in the form of exam grades, for information that may (or in Clive’s opinion may not) be applicable in the future. Interviewees reported change in the present that would have long term impact.

**Keith:** ...you will hear students tell their personal narrative like Lee<sup>17</sup>. I mean that, the fact that she’s thinking of changing her major is literally transformative, because transform means change. So the fact that she’s pondering and contemplating changing her major that is a direct outcome of her experiences.

It turned out that Lee decided to continue in her chosen study programme but was determined to use her privileged social position in the education system to

---

<sup>17</sup> Lee, who was studying biochemistry, had completed two Alternative Spring break programmes, focused on issues of disaster relief and immigration.

fight for social justice as an active citizen and in her future career in the pharmaceuticals industry. Many of the interviewees recounted transformative experiences (similar to the one I describe in the Preamble) which shaped the kind of academic they wanted to be, to the extent that they identified themselves as a ‘community engaged academic’.

Bethany is concerned with the impact she has by using service-learning and uses the question ‘what difference have I made today?’ as a part of reflecting on her practice. Bethany’s question is difficult, if not impossible to answer accurately, however, I believe that systematically receiving feedback from students can help to give an indication and answer the question. If this is not possible, hearing the stories of peers who have had feedback from students after graduation can provide encouragement and insight into one’s practice.

Although service-learning seeks to plant seeds for the future, it is not focused solely on the future as it deals with very current critical issues such as social justice in the present. Clive used service-learning because of its potential for change both in the long term and the short term. He was reluctant to use the labels of ‘hyphenated learnings’ and preferred to refer to education in general. He had a particularly high regard for John Dewey whom he quotes often during the interview:

**Clive:** Education isn’t preparation for something else... not only is that almost impossible because we don’t know what the future’s going to bring, but worse than that it’s self-contradictory because life is not about doing something today that you might use some other day. Or about looking, you know, from today looking to the past. Life is about being fully engaged in the moment in which we live – being connected to the people, sights and sounds and experiences around us and fully engaging with that. So thinking of education as something separate from the lived experience is itself self-contradictory, because then we wouldn’t be living to the fullest.’

This echoes Nora’s comment about being present and in the now, which is an awareness achieved through being reflective. Learning is not solely about a product either for current social issues or future preparation, but the process of

living in the now. Reflective practice should be a part of this active living in the now, not something that is separate, but a part of living.

The long-term impact of service-learning is not the topic of this study, and is addressed in other fora but it relates to this research insofar as it impacts on how academics regard their practice, value what they are doing and receive affirmation or criticism of their teaching and research. A different view of education is required, which nurtures learning as an integrated part of life, and which is connected with the different aspects of living in the world. Reflective practice can be viewed in a similar manner: it is integrated into living, not a separated activity, it is current and though cognisant of the past and future, it is not rooted in either. As the long-term effect of service-learning is a concern expressed by some academics it needs to be taken into consideration when examining the reflective practice but is beyond the scope of this study.

There are two conflicting philosophies of teaching and learning in question here and the institution favours one over the other. Reflective practitioners and service-learning academics do their best to carve out a space to teach using a pedagogy they feel to be transformative. Though they can ‘plant seeds’, they are fighting against the limitations imposed by a positivistic model. How do you plant seeds and anticipate growth over time when the time is limited and sliced into subjects and disciplines, identical classrooms, mass lectures, specific time slots, etc? Likewise, how can one encourage the connection of ideas across disciplines when surrounded by the culture of knowledge silos? The dominant institutional paradigms of teaching and learning is pitted against teaching and learning that is seen as cultivation of learning (process) rather than the reaping of fruit (products). This means that even with all the elements of good reflective practice (understanding of reflection, criticality, time structure, and safe space) the overall discourse of reflectivity is what needs to change. This requires a shift in the thinking in higher education, not just a strategic shift towards civic engagement as an institutional policy.

#### 5.4.4 Suitable structure

Practitioners said that they want a structure for reflecting that is suitable for the needs of the participants. There are a number of reflection rubrics, models and structures in the literature but none are focused on the specific needs of service-learning academics; however, many have elements which would be useful in the examination of engaged practice. What is clear from the analysis of the data is that a framework of some sort is needed on which the reflection activities can be hung and there is literature available that can provide a guide as to how this can be done. Larrivee (2008b, p. 345) posits that ‘without carefully constructed guidance, prospective and novice [teachers], as well as more experienced teachers seem unable to engage in pedagogical and critical reflection to enhance their practice’.

Since the CoRP draws heavily from the Community of Practice model, it is useful to consider the discussion by Wenger *et al.* (2002) about structure. They say that because a community of practice is an energetic and organic entity, it must be designed in such a way that it can change its structure to suit its needs. The structure should be a ‘catalyst for community growth’ instead of a preordained finished product (Wenger *et al.*, 2002, p. 63). Therefore, the participants need to have a role in defining what the structure is and how it is adapted to their needs and preferences. This raises a tension between structure and over structure as highlighted by the participants that can be addressed by having a flexible structure that can meet the specific needs of academics in a given context.

Brookfield offers suggestions for teacher to reflect on their work which involves using: critical incident analysis, structured critical conversations and role-play. He believes that ‘if critical conversation is presented as a structured process geared to helping teachers take more informed actions in difficult situations, it stands a reasonable chance of appealing to even the most jaded or exploited teacher’ (Brookfield, 1995, p. 159). He continues: ‘once the importance of regular critical conversation is established habits internalize, the need to refer to a model framework ...would disappear.’ Echoing the practitioners interviewed for this research, Brookfield (1995) warns against over-structuring reflection to

the extent that following the steps of a model becomes an end in itself. The key is to avoiding over-structure relates to point number one above, an understanding of how reflection works and according to Larrivee (2008b, p. 345) reflection can be developed ‘with powerful facilitation and mediation within an emotionally supportive learning climate.’ In the same way as service-learning itself is a learning process, building the capacity to adapt a given reflection structure is a learning process, with all participants contributing to the learning of the others, and a suitable structure decided upon with consensus through dialogue.

### *Frameworks to scaffold reflection*

I believe that the CoRP needs a framework which is flexible enough to not feel clunky yet structured enough to overcome the risk of a talking-shop. The structure must not overtake the overall aim of the forum and participants can choose the most suitable structural elements from existing frameworks such as: Palmer’s Circles of Trust, Wenger’s community of practice and Brookfield’s teacher’s reflection group.

Though the Clayton and Ash DEAL rubric has its place as a framework for students, it has a degree of complexity in its application to written assignments which involve moving through the six different levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning and also incorporating ten levels of critical thinking and three frames of reflection. The rubric has had success when used as a part of a service-learning course, but the more complicated aspects of its application can be left to one side by academics. The principle elements of the rubric are useful for considering critical incidents, though topics other than specific incidents (such as readings) may be better discussed without the following the whole rubric. The articulated learning questions however, are very useful, regardless of the experience being reflected upon:

- What did I learn?
- How did I learn it?
- Why was it important?
- What will I do differently based on this experience?

I would suggest that the DEAL rubric be considered by a CoRP and adapted to meet the needs of the group. Similar to ‘what, so what, now what?’, it is helpful to have the reflection mantra of ‘describe, examine and articulate learning’ to keep in mind when drawing meaning from experience.

Larrivee (2008b, p. 341) developed a very practical Reflection Self-Assessment Tool for academics to establish what level of reflection they are using so as to then develop strategies to move to higher levels of reflective practice. She describes the three levels of reflection as follows:

1. An initial level focused on teaching functions, actions or skills, generally considering teaching episodes as isolated events;
2. A more advanced level considering the theory and rationale for current practice;
3. A higher order where teachers examine the ethical, social and political consequences of their teaching, grappling with the ultimate purposes of schooling (Larrivee, 2008b, p. 342).

Larrivee believes that one must understand oneself before being able to understand others; therefore, it is vital to begin the reflective process with self-reflection. Her survey contains 53 questions on one’s teaching practice ranging from initial to higher order reflection. Completing the survey can give teachers a clear understanding of where they are on a scale of reflective practice and show the potential for development. It can be used alone, with a mentor or as a part of a group. The results contribute to clarifying the developmental aims of the individuals. The indicators in the survey can be used to identify the specific goals which can be set together, so that an action plan for improved practice can be agreed. It is a survey not an instruction manual, and does not give suggestions on how to reflect on practice. This tool is focused on reflective practice, but it does not deal with service-learning in particular. It deals mostly with the academic ‘nuts and bolts’ of teaching, however, it also covers broader reflection questions such as the role of education in society, questioning the status quo, the ethical ramifications of classroom policies and one’s observation of self in the thinking process. Though mostly weighted in favour of academic development, the survey includes some personal and civic development and as such would be a useful tool as a part of the CoRP.

Shumer's Self-Assessment for Service-Learning (2000b) is an instrument designed for academics and administrators who use service-learning to evaluate and improve their programme management and implementation. It is similar in some regards to a SWOT<sup>18</sup> analysis, with instructions on how to generate an action plan arising from the process. It is rigorously designed according to established best practice in service-learning and was tested with service-learning practitioners in eight states in North America over a period of three years (Shumer, 2000b). Topics that are examined include: culture and context; philosophy and purpose; policy and parameters; practice and pedagogy; and assessment and accountability. The survey is both formative and summative and is centred on a list of 23 reflection prompts to evaluate not only the 'nuts and bolts' of a particular programme but the philosophical stance on which it is based. It also combines aspects of solo reflection and peer reflection in the overall process. Shumer states:

One of the most consistent things we learned during the three years of piloting this process is that instruments, by themselves, have limited value. The self-assessment process is enhanced most when individuals take the responses to the surveys and discuss the results with others knowledgeable about service-learning and educational reform. We encourage you to do the same (Shumer, 2000b, p. 4).

Shumer highlights that: (1) reflection is a necessary part of teaching with service-learning, (2) the combination of solo and peer reflection is vital and (3) instructions on how to reflect and the use a rubric of some kind are beneficial in moving the process along and gain depth in the reflection process. I contend that the Shumer Self-Assessment Survey has a role to play as a tool in the reflective-practice of academics who use service-learning. It could also be a very useful tool with which to begin the process of reflecting on engaged practice as a part of the CoRP as it provides clear instructions on how to reflect, uses questions which are insightful and provides a structure for practitioners to follow. It would be useful as a *pre-flection* exercise to generate debate for peer reflection. However, even though it is focused on examining service-learning, it is a programme

---

<sup>18</sup> An examination of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of a situation.

evaluation instrument and not designed as a tool for ongoing reflective practice. It was not developed exclusively for use in higher education; it assumes that the service-learning programme is already functioning and it does not address the issues of an institution's discourse of engagement (or lack thereof). Finally, and most importantly, it is focused on the development of the service-learning programme and not on the service-learning practitioner or the ongoing facilitation of peer reflection.

I suggest that members of a CoRP examine Clayton and Ash's DEAL rubric, Larrivee's Reflection Self-Assessment Tool and Shumer's Self Assessment for Service-Learning and incorporate some or all of these reflection techniques as useful elements of reflecting as a group on their engaged practice, taking into consideration the academics' needs and the context in which they are working.

### ***Facilitation***

There needs to be a facilitator for each meeting, which could to begin with be a consultant or trainer from outside the group giving a workshop on facilitation skills. It is preferable however, that the meetings be facilitated by a member of the group as this can lead to deeper and more effective reflection (Cowan & Westwood, 2006). This role of facilitator should rotate (Barrett *et al.*, 2009) so as to avoid dominance of any individual and to insure that the forum is democratic. It also pushes members out of their learning comfort zone and shares the learning that goes with leading reflection. The facilitator must be a reflective practitioner who is open to self-disclosure, with enough awareness to not let their personal views hinder the facilitation, and who is able to remain open to conflicting views and challenge the assumptions of others (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Larrivee, 2008a). Given that the role of facilitator will rotate from person to person, these are skills which all participants will have the opportunity to develop. Citing Elliot (1977), Day (1993, p. 88) suggests that the 'best way to improve practice lies not so much in trying to control people's behaviours, as in helping them control their own by becoming more aware of what they are doing'. It is important that the

CoRP meetings are facilitated in a manner which meets the needs of the group, encourages open dialogue and fosters trust and criticality.

### *Ground rules*

As a part of the structure of a CoRP it is preferable that the members establish guidelines for the running of the group. Again, these will depend on the context and the needs of the group but should not simply be assumed that they will develop of their own accord. Time must be taken to discuss and agree on what the group aims to accomplish and how those aims can be achieved. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) set out a list of values for group reflection which could easily be adapted for a CoRP. They are as follows:

- Develop a sense of community
- Exercise care and compassion
- Foster self-determination and participation
- Maintain respect for diversity and alternative ideals
- Adopt a professional demeanour

Other topics for the discussions about guidelines could include:

- Roles and responsibilities: who does what within the group, and what is expected of members.
- Criticality: open and honest challenge of assumptions is expected and welcomed but conducted with the intension of broadening perspectives.
- Space: the commitment to fostering a safe and trusting environment with openness to new ideas and learning. The issue of confidentiality of group meetings must be discussed to stimulate trust and openness. This must be given careful consideration if the group is to collaborate on material arising from the CoRP which may be published.
- Dialogue: the assurance that all members will be encouraged to find their voice and that all will be listened to. Though conflict will not be avoided resolution of disagreements must be through discussion.

Reflection can contribute to the process of change but cannot necessarily cause change; the person himself must cause the change. CoRP participants must be

open to change/transformation, and starting from ‘knowing that you don’t know everything’ may be the key. A helpful beginning is to accept the fact that – as well as having expertise – one also has learning needs. When participants are motivated to contribute to their own learning and to that of others (they are teachers after all) the atmosphere of reciprocity within the group is created.

#### **5.4.5 Communication skills**

Though language and discourse are intertwined, I wish to draw the distinction between the two in the context of this research; the former refers to the practical needs of practitioners and the latter refers to issues connected to their needs on a more abstract and philosophical level. Here, I will address the practical issues around communication skills in reflection, the more intangible issues of voice and identity will be dealt with separately.

#### ***The role of communication in a CoRP***

There needs to be agreement regarding the language used within a CoRP. It is very difficult within the higher education sphere to reach the right balance between being critical and criticising. Discussions must be conducted in an atmosphere of nurturing, with the overall aim of personal and group development. This can only happen when there is trust within the group, which is a cornerstone for the success of the forum. Trust can be established through honesty, acceptance, non-judgementalism, and a willingness to show vulnerability through admitting weakness in one’s practice. Interviewees describe ‘civic dialogue’ which is respectful of all the stakeholders, it allows space for differing points of view and *civil* in its interaction between peers.

The megaphone debate between Dan Butin and Stanley Fish, (detailed in Butin, 2005) demonstrates that challenge and critical questioning are a part of the cut and thrust of the academy’s jousting tiltyard. They are often feared as the slings and arrows of the campus life, however, it is the role of the facilitator to

ensure that challenge within a CoRP is non-judgemental, and criticality is in the interest of growth.

If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? The sound waves are in fact created but the perception and interpretation of them is lost without an observer. Likewise, listening is a vital aspect of group reflection. Wheatley (2002, p. 3) suggests that ‘we can change the world if we start listening to one another again’. Wenger and Snyder (2000, p. 145) suggest that ‘the best way to assess the value of a community of practice is by listening to the stories of its members’. Deeley (2010) posits that it is through listening to peers recount their experiences of service that we can understand our own more clearly. Hicks *et al*, (2005) draws a correlation between an increase in listening and an increase in the development of one’s own voice.

As mentioned above, Parker Palmer believes that listening is one of the five core professional skills of a teacher (Poutiatine, 2005). Palmers (2004) outlines that components of a critical way of being, are listening to the truth of others and asking each other honest, open questions. He continues by saying ‘as our listening becomes more open – and speakers start to trust that they are being heard by people whose only desire is to make it safe for everyone to tell the truth – their speaking becomes more open as well’ (Palmer, 2004, p. 120). Similar to using affective language, active listening is not a skill that has been developed in the traditional role of the academic. The teacher talks, the students listen and thus shall it be. However, taking the time to listen to the experiences of others creates headspace which allows one to process one’s own thoughts.

Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 10) discuss learning through narrative and they posit:

...that we live and grow in interpretive or meaning-making communities; that stories help us find our place in the world; and that caring, respectful dialogue among those engaged in educational settings – students, teachers, administrators – serve as the crucible for our coming to understand ourselves, others and the possibilities life holds for us.

It is significant that they would suggest that sharing stories in a reflective community is a way of reaching deeper understanding. Being able to compare one's own experiences to those of peers can reveal a different perspective. What one thought was perhaps an insignificant and mundane occurrence, could be shown to have a depth that was not initially apparent. Likewise, something that one felt was a personal failing could be shown to be a problem shared by others.

All reflection returns to language: written, spoken, even creative reflection must be explained. Citing the literature available at the time, Larrivee (2008b, p. 345) posits that helping 'teachers acknowledge, articulate, and challenge their beliefs enhances reflection.' Because reflecting on service-learning requires cognitive, affective and behavioural analysis (Welch, 1999) teachers may be unfamiliar with examining experience beyond the use of academic parlance.

Clive does not rank any particular reflection technique over another, but suggests using reflection in whatever way makes sense for the individual.

**Clive:** It's less about... how would you do reflection, what format would it be in, what medium, et cetera how many points does it get, all those kinds of things. And more about creating an environment in which people are really communicating with one another and care about their impact on each other and care what they learn from others. So, in that kind of environment, and I as a teacher, become somebody who can help you do the best possible.

This comment is important because it highlights that reflection is not about technique per se, but about the meaning making. A rubric can indicate a way of looking at an experience, but it not an effortless fast-track to insight. Clive speaks about the broader issue of the environment conducive to good reflection. Both the space and the technique are intertwined; a useful technique will not succeed easily without the environment in which it can be used. Likewise, a suitable environment is an empty space without some degree of guidance through it.

#### 5.4.6 Safe space

The topic of *space* was referred to by a number of interviewees, and it became a dominant theme of this research on two levels, that of the safe and trusting environment in which to reflect with peers and the space in which to use service-learning within higher education. I will deal with the first of these here and the broader issue of the macro issue of space in a following section.

On a micro level space referred to physical location such as places which were conducive to reflection and those which are not. Within those physical locations there was the issue of trust and it being a safe space in which participants felt comfortable both to be vulnerable with others and comfortable with challenging others beliefs. Lieberman and Miller (1991, p. 103) claim that ‘there’s no safe place to air one’s uncertainties and to get the kind of feedback necessary to reduce the anxiety about being a good teacher or at least an adequate one.’ They suggest that there is a fear of being ‘found out’ to be an inadequate teacher. Haddock (1997) suggests that creating a safe environment for reflection can contribute to participants opening up and share their experiences. Brookfield (1995, p. 244) goes so far as to say that ‘the importance for critical reflection of belonging to an emotionally sustaining peer learning community cannot be overstated’. Creating the safe space necessary for peer reflection to happen is intertwined with the other elements of the Community of Reflective Practice. It cannot be created without the other elements of good reflection (highlighted by practitioners), but those elements are less potent without the space. Interviewees suggested that the campus is not necessarily the most suitable location for reflection; however, the physical location is not necessarily the core element.

Grumet (1988b, p. 90) says that ‘we need to re-create safe places, even in schools, where teachers can concentrate, can attend to their experience of children and of the world, and we need to create community spaces where forms that express that experience are shared. The process of creating those spaces will be as important as the spaces themselves.’ Safe space cannot be created instantly by gathering people in a location; building the trust necessary for a safe space is a process, in the same way as reflection itself is a process. This is confirmed by Whitney and Clayton (2011, p. 155) when they say that:

‘...reflection requires a safe yet critical space, meaning that the risks associated with meaning making need to be acknowledged and minimized while adhering to high standards of rigor in reasoning; learning through critical reflection is often an unfamiliar (therefore risky) process, which requires intentional capacity-building’.

In the competitive environment of a university campus, with diverse loyalties and background politics, establishing trust among academics across different disciplines or within a department may not be a feature of an academic’s experience. It must be acknowledged that fostering a trusting space within a CoRP may be a delicate and slow process; however, it is vital for the successful functioning of the group.

Brookfield (1995, p. 227) says that ‘understanding that critical reflection is a social process spurs us to build a supportive reflection group’. I believe that building a supportive reflective community helps build the trust necessary for it to grow. There is an inherent dilemma in creating safe space: you cannot have the safe space for a group without the trust, and you cannot have trust without the safe space within the group. Pinar *et al.* (1995, p. 524) highlight that ‘time, relationship, space and voice are prerequisites for collaborative work’, however, I suggest that – because engaged practice can be transformative – peers collaborating to reflect on their engaged practice will contribute to fostering the relationships, finding the voice, and carving out the time and space. Creating a safe space is an ongoing process, one which a CoRP must foster in the manner that fits its context.

### ***Dysfunctional groups***

Even when optimum conditions exist to partake in reflection, there must be a willingness on behalf of the practitioner to engage fully with the process (Murphy *et al.*, 2010, 2008). Similar to the folly of mandating the use of service-learning, the voluntary nature of communities of practice cannot be overstated. Furthermore, regardless of the trust and cohesion within the group, it is natural to expect there to be disagreement and conflict to some degree. In fact criticality is

vital and it would be difficult to maintain criticality if everybody agreed with each other. Since there may be conflict or disagreement within any group steps should be taken to manage it.

The valid question also arises regarding how to create trust within a dysfunctional group such as a university academic department. Dempsey *et al.* (2008, p. 33) suggest that to create a cohesive reflective group one must address factors which cause group dysfunction such as ‘group composition, size, facilitation, agreements regarding conflict resolution, trust building and engagement of member commitment to agreed goals/actions’. They recommend ‘opening up discussions about carrying negative experiences from past groups into the new peer supervision group, engaging an outside facilitator and having separate groups for senior staff members (Dempsey *et al.*, 2008, p. 39).

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) address the issue of team building in educational learning communities and give lengthy instruction on how to address the absence of trust, the fear of conflict and the lack of commitment to the group’s aims. They say that the ineffective team is the opposite of an effective one and they focus on developing the elements of cohesive collaboration. They suggest that the group itself has flexibility of form, is informal, comfortable, relaxed and tension free. As outlined above, the CoRP is an organic group and it is as much a process as a product in the same way that reflection itself is a process not a product. Mitchell and Sackney (2011) suggest that time is provided for members to understand their task and get to know each other, with new members being mentored by veteran members. Mitchell and Sackney (2011, p. 73) recommend a process of naming and framing ‘to generate some common knowledge and shared understandings about the team and the task.’ With the development of ground rules (Brookfield, 1995) the CoRP can develop clear aims and objectives regarding how members wish to reflect and what they choose to reflect upon.

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) continue with advice regarding the free sharing of knowledge, having clear goals, and not avoiding conflict. Democratic leadership is an important part of the CoRP and the rotating of roles within the

group avoids power conflicts and spreads responsibility of commitment evenly among members. It should also allow all voices to be heard equally, giving space to everyone to speak, or not to speak as they choose. Barrett *et al.*, (2009) highlight that taking on different roles such as leader, writer, ideas generator, contributed to the collaboration within their community of practice. Doing so also assists in breaking down the hierarchical norms that exists on a university campus and helps develop horizontal collaboration. They suggest that disagreements should be ‘dealt with in a spirit of respect so as to encourage each individual to speak freely about any issues, solutions, goals or actions they wish to address (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 74). Similar to the CoRP, they highlight that criticality is vital; it must be frank yet constructive and never personal.

There are many aspects of group dynamics which come to play when creating trust; and it is beyond the scope of this research to elaborate on all of the factors. However, in my experience the common denominator of engaged practice created a collegiality among academics who used service-learning. There appeared to be a common bond because their role in education was focused on contributing to the development of students and community. This common link is important and its value must not be overlooked.

Ghaye and Ghaye (1998, p. 3) posit that ‘teachers do or do not improve their practice according to whether they perceive a need to address anything in their teaching that is problematic.’ Engaging in the process of reflection is risky and involves admitting that practice may need to be improved in some way, which could be damaging to a teacher’s reputation (Brookfield, 1995). The safe space in which to make an admission of that sort does not usually exist on a university campus.

Brookfield highlights a number of other risks of participating in critical reflection. Questioning the nature of power can create conflict with institutional administration. He highlights the lack of confidence many teachers have in their skills as teachers, and citing a study on the social realities of teaching points out that ‘...there is no safe place to air one’s uncertainties and to get the kind of

feedback necessary to reduce the anxiety about being a good teacher or at least an adequate one' (Lieberman & Miller, 1991, p. 103). This may be compounded by the fact that one does not need any teacher qualification to teach in an Irish university, so though an academic may have expertise as a researcher, their teaching may not be to the same standard. The fact that excellence in one's teaching is a criteria for promotion and yet no experience or qualification is necessary for the job itself is a strange paradox. Murphy *et al.* (2010) highlight that the context of the university and community partner plus the interdependence between stakeholders is important in whether or not a reflective environment can be established. Brookfield (1995, p. 244) offers a method of mitigating some of the potential risks of becoming a critically reflective teacher when he says 'the importance for critical reflection of belonging to an emotionally sustaining peer learning community cannot be overstated'.

Even for those who wish to improve their practice, there may be a reluctance to be seen to 'need help'. Admitting vulnerability by joining what could be misperceived as a 'teacher's self-help group' could make some academics apprehensive about participating. The solution is to ensure that the aims of the CoRP are clearly academic, civic and personal development, focused on enhancing assets within the group rather than addressing deficiencies.

The barriers to reflective practice are real and must be addressed if a CoRP is to succeed. This can be done by examining the context in which one is working, and indentifying the potential obstacles that exist (both practical and ideological). Adapting a CoRP to meet need the needs of practitioners can mitigate the challenges which exist. Examining the experience of others (such as those I interviewed), reflecting on their mistakes and successes, drawing together the needs of practitioners and creating the conditions required to meet those needs, is in itself a process of experiential learning.

## **5.5 Addressing the Philosophical Needs of Academics**

As well as the practical needs of academics discussed above, there is evidence from the data that there are more abstract issues which need to be considered when fostering the reflective practice of academics who use service-learning. These topics refer to discourse, space and criticality.

### **5.5.1 Discourse: the negotiation between dominant and alternative perspectives**

In the traditional higher education module, academics teach numerous modules about different topics within the discipline of their expertise. The modules were separate Lego blocks which, when clicked together, would create an education of an average standard for most, with a minority achieving either a high standard or low standard. The view of education advocated by Plato is that of the search for theoretical knowledge, not the wisdom to know what to do with it, and the ‘dead hand of Plato’ is still to be felt in the academy (Benson *et al.*, 2005, Hartley *et al.*, 2005, p. 210). In contrast to that traditional model, the opinion voiced by many of the academics I interviewed, was that education is a broad and holistic process, interconnected, and ongoing. The weave of its various elements and influencing factors cannot easily be unpicked.

In a similar manner, there are many influencing factors that contribute to the successful collaboration of a group of engaged practitioners to reflect on their practice of community based education. Based on the evidence I have analysed, it appears that a community of reflective practice could address some of the needs of engaged academics. The CoRP has a number of interwoven strands which are dependent on each other for example: there needs to be trust in a group for good reflection to happen, and it is through good reflection that trust is built. Likewise, service-learning needs to function within the dominant discourse of higher education even though it is critical of much of what the dominant discourse represents.

Mezirow (1994, p. 223) sees discourse as ‘a special type of dialogue in which we focus on content and attempt to justify beliefs by giving and defending reasons and by examining the evidence for and against competing viewpoints.’

Foucault (1977, p. 49) posits that discourses are ‘...practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention’. The dominant discourse of higher education has had itself accepted as being ‘normal’ to the extent that any alternative is not seen simply as *another* discourse along side, but *polar opposite* and therefore, suspicious to ‘normal’. Chowers (2004) discusses Foucault’s theories of political theory, which Butin (2006b, p. 377) in turn connects to education theory, suggesting that such discussions about discourse are in fact about ‘the need to develop spaces for knowing and questioning ourselves’ within the dominant and oppressive spaces of education.

The act of discussing alternative ideals in a CoRP is a part of the process of creating the space to do the work members value by establishing a counter discourse to the dominant discourse of teaching and learning in higher education.

Trowler’s (2001) questioning of the ideologies in UK higher education is significant as that discourse bares numerous similarities to the Irish system. He identified four major ideologies in UK higher education.

- Traditionalist: the system that has been the dominant ideology.
- Enterprise: focused on vocational education, and managerialism.
- Progressivist: focused on personal development of the student, increasing student ownership and participation of education in the form of outreach and ‘studio’ methods.
- Social Reconstructionist: motivated by the desire to empower students for social change.

Trowler suggests that managerialism has become the dominant discourse in British higher education, which he defines as the comodification of knowledge, acceptance of the status quo, with staff and students accepting a passive role in the delivery of comodified knowledge to meet the market. In managerialism, ‘knowledge is a resource, like money, which is possessed, stored, accumulated and used to acquire other desirables’ (Trowler, 2001, p. 188). Rife with fiscal language, managerialism is a return to banking method of education and

threatens to produce a ‘compliance culture’ (Shore & Roberts, 1995, p. 14) which stresses normalization and standardization and punishes deviance. The concept of education being more than a collection of Lego blocks is ‘deviant’, and instead that education could be bricks held together with the mortar of a philosophical idea (such as engagement) is not ‘normal’.

Hegemonic debate plays a part here as the criticality of service-learning does not sit well with the dominant traditional culture of higher education. Gramsci’s thought on hegemony suggests that the dominant discourse survives through both coercion and persuasion, but is in fact accepted by means of political and ideological leadership (Simon, 1982). Addressing this requires ‘a variety of social forces, unified by a common conception of the world’ (Simon, 1982, p. 25), and since service-learning is a philosophy as well as a pedagogy, engaged academics have the power to challenge and renegotiate hegemony through a rigorous critique of the current ideology of dis-engaged education. Hicks *et al.* (2005, p. 61) argue that:

‘teachers need to explore their own journeys of cultural indoctrination and assimilation, the hegemonic structures that surround and influence their thinking and practice, and finally, take some form of thoughtful, community-minded action that changes the experience of teaching and learning for both instructor and student’.

In essence this points to systematically reflecting on the practice of teaching and learning with peers with the view to questioning assumptions and causing change which is central to my argument in favour of the CoRP. Universities are loosely structured organisations with schools, departments and independent academic disciplines; and because of this, power is dispersed across the campus and cannot be pinpointed to any single location (Hartley *et al.*, 2005, Hirschhorn & May, 2000).

Furco (2007, pp. 78-79) warns that ‘there should be no expectation that the institutionalisation of an effort like service-learning, which still has not gained full academic legitimacy, is likely to occur forthwith.’ The power that a dominant discourse exerts cannot be disconnected from what it dominates. ‘Foucault

argues that resistance is already contained within the notion of power: “where there is power there is resistance”, as he puts it (Mills, 2004, p. 42). Trowler (2001, p. 196) highlights ‘the importance of active resistance to what is becoming an increasingly hegemonic discourse located in managerialist structural roots.’ He suggests that resistance to a dominant discourse involves reflective ‘work’ and analysis of the context by the participants within the discourse. Butin (2001, p. 158) sees resistance not as an isolated, quixotic event but as Foucault saw it, ‘as a means of self-transformation through the minimization of states of domination’. Using such strong language as ‘domination’ and ‘punishment of deviance’ may seem like overstatement. However, it must be seen in the context that at best engagement has been given limited encouragement in real terms (such as resources and recognition) and at worst receives entrenched opposition to the point that an advocate for reflective practice would fear being figuratively ‘crucified’ for proposing such a creed (see Jacqueline section 4.10). Service-learning and reflection are counter discourses to the hegemonic and traditional theory and practice of teaching and learning in higher education.

Trowler (2001) suggests that a discourse can be influenced from within through activity systems such as academic departments or communities of practice because they fly under the radar or exist at the fringes. According to Trowler (2001, p. 196) resistance does not just happen by itself, ‘it requires an effort on behalf of a community of practice’. ‘The community of practice may be strengthened by physical proximity and shared space’ (Trowler, 2001, p. 194) it develops its own rules, and practices, a new set of ideas, initiatives assumptions and ideologies, and most importantly it generates new allegiance to an alternative discourse. This bears similarity to the CoRP, which has its own identity, philosophical ideology, and alternative practices. Similarly civic engagement would appear to fall into Trowler’s category of social reconstructivist, and ideologically opposed to managerialism. Therefore, according to Trowler’s thinking, an activity system such as engaged academics collaborating to examine their engaged practice, could have the power to renegotiate the dominant discourse of traditional higher education.

Trowler continues by saying that ‘the ability to engage in discursive and behavioural resistance or reconstruction often depends on occupying a locale in which alternative social structures are conditioning behaviour, including the use of different discursive repertoires’ (Trowler, 2001, p. 194). But how can a community of practice occupy the locale of an alternative discourse if it is not given the space to exist? His answer is that it is the space between two discourses where change happens (Trowler, 2001).

Butin (2005a, pp. x-xi) maintains that ‘service-learning is a culturally saturated, socially consequential, politically contested and existentially defining experience’, furthermore, he contends that it is pedagogically, politically and existentially dangerous. Butin (2005b) suggests that service-learning goes against the grain of traditional higher education; however, rather than strive for an education revolution, engaged academics are well placed to change the higher education from within. He quotes Foucault:

Thus, one escapes from a domination of truth not by playing a game that was totally different from the game of truth but by playing the same game differently, or playing another game, another hand, with other trump cards. I believe that the same holds true in the order of politics; here one can criticize on the basis, for example, of the consequences of the state of domination caused by an unjustified political situation, but one can do so only by playing a certain game of truth, by showing its consequences, by pointing out that there are other reasonable options, by teaching people what they don’t know about their own situation, their working conditions, and their exploitation. (Foucault, 1997, pp. 295-296)

With this quote, Butin suggests working within the current system of higher education and using its language of results and outcomes to influence the conversation. Senbel (2009, p. 16) adds weight to the stance that one must be an insider to have one’s voice heard: ‘academics need to pay attention to the demands of the academy if they are to retain the privilege of teaching and applying pedagogical resources to community needs’. The influence that engaged academics can have is showing that the product *is* the process of learning. The

intransigence of management is one issue; however the resistance by traditional academic staff to 'progressive' ideas is also an issue to be considered and tackled when seeking to influence the dominant discourse. The profitability of a particular discourse can be increased by management when linked to career incentives. Lingard and Garrick (1997) point to an example of the implementation of a new Social Justice Strategy in Australia whereby the inclusion of 'discourse fluency' or understanding of social justice strategy was linked to promotion and tenure: 'the research showed the use of "a demonstrable commitment to social justice" as a criterion for appointment and promotion within the Department was an important factor in the extent of teachers' engagement with the Strategy (Lingard & Garrick, 1997, p. 173). Though this example relates to a secondary school and is certainly not the norm, it demonstrated the power that the dominant discourse has, be it traditional or progressive. If the dominant power sees the alternative discourse as profitable or valuable then it can actively create the space to promote it by mandating that staff engage with the discourse. In a similar manner academic staff are not contracted to produce a certain number of academic publications per year, however, there is an unwritten indenture to publish a large rather than a small number of articles.

If a university commits to a policy of engagement it is then accepting the discourse of engagement as legitimate and therefore must give equal weight to research, teaching and engagement. Even in the Irish universities that support civic engagement in their mission, it is still unclear what weighting research, teaching and engagement have compared to each other. In one Irish engaged university the criteria for promotion to senior lecturer include specific activities listed under the headings of: teaching and examining; research and scholarly status; and contribution to department, university and community. It is not stated whether the activities in these three sections are ranked. If they are ranked in order of preference by the institution, it does not bode well that 'contribution to community and public education' is listed second to last, one level above 'contribution to student clubs and societies'.

Welch (2009b, p. 36) sums up the way that his engaged practice is viewed within higher education:

What frustrates me today after teaching service-learning for more than a decade is that it is often not valued or respected by my colleagues. This is largely due to the myths and misunderstandings of what service-learning is and isn't, especially when these appear to conflict with the pedagogical status quo of talking *at* students in a classroom. We merely assume learning has taken place when students rehash what we tell them.

The negotiation between dominant and alternative discourses is ongoing, but by working with a semi-structured model such as a CoRP, service-learning academics can play a central role in negotiating for the full recognition and legitimisation of engagement.

I would strongly argue the point that similar to civic engagement, communities of reflective practice should be completely voluntary. Mandating academics to engage with community is unwise, and likewise trying to make people reflect is unproductive. Even though Jason reported that he 'was dragged screaming into service-learning' he reported that after using it he became fully committed to the pedagogy.

**Jason:** I saw that I could take service and reflection to enhance what the students were getting through the lectures and they could make connections that I wasn't making in the classroom. Even if they knew the theory they were not making real world connections and we could start doing that in the classroom with service-learning; that was when everything changed.

Jason appears to be an exception to the case of mandating academics to use service-learning. He is an example of how one can learn to work outside the dominant discourse of higher education in general, if the dominant discourse within a particular university recognises, supports and legitimises the counter discourse. The university at which he worked identified itself explicitly as community engaged; therefore, the discourse of engagement (not to mention the resources and support) were already in place. Normative consensus is not just

what kind of behaviour is acceptable within an institution but the kind of behaviour which defines the core values and identity of that institution. Hartley *et al.*, (2005, p. 217) comment on accepting engagement as legitimate when they say that ‘true normative consensus must be formed one person at a time ... individuals must conclude for themselves whether and how this work fits into their lives as scholars, teachers, administrators and students’. They continue by quoting a service-learning director:

“...we’re still moving into groups of faculty that very much believe in what we’re doing and wanted to do it but couldn’t because they didn’t have the resources. My hope is that as they talk about their experiences, we’ll move out into the next ring of faculty members who haven’t thought of this” (Hartley *et al.*, 2005, p. 220).

Academics should not be mandated to use service-learning, but should decide if it fits their needs and aims. They can be helped in making that decision by hearing the narratives of others and seeing the evidence of more passionate teaching staff and more satisfied students.

Both Butin and Trowler point to the use of communities of engaged practice to influence the dominant discourse of managerialism. However, for the discourse of civic engaged to have an influence, it must identify what it wants to say, what it seeks to achieve, and how to go about having that accepted as legitimate. These are issues of a broader scale than ‘how to teach service-learning programmes better’. It is critically important for engaged academics to reflect on their practice because it is the process of creating the framework for a discourse of reflection, not just ‘thinking about stuff’, it is systematic, political, educational, and anchored in research on quality pedagogy. The civic engagement ‘movement’ can only chip away at the foundations of the dominant discourse when those who advocate it have found a voice and identity. I suggest that a community of reflective practice is a forum in which the search for voice and identity can be fostered through the examination of the broader implications of using pedagogies for engagement.

### ***Finding voice and identity***

Higgs and McCarthy (2008) suggest that Irish academics no longer see themselves as conduits for knowledge transmission, but instead as facilitators of learning; furthermore, they are starting to view themselves as more than just teachers, but also as researchers of learning. Higgs and McCarthy (2008) continue by saying that one of the problems arising in Irish higher education is that there is a growing divide between the identity they have developed and the roles they have to fulfil. O'Farrell (2008) claims that in the Irish context, educational developers employed in 'administrative' roles rather than 'academic' positions are increasingly expected to have experience of publishing research as well as practice-based skills. Discussing an Irish network of education developers, O'Farrell says that:

...members may differ widely in their roles within the network, their institutional disciplines and their day-to-day jobs; however, the integrity of the group is founded on members working jointly on issues and passions that can override institutional concerns if necessary (O'Farrell, 2008, p. 18).

The network provides the forum for dialogue which 'is important because through it we gain the confidence to write and theorise about practice that challenges, excites and motivates us' (ibid). This is similar to a CoRP in which members are linked by their interest in engaged practice. It shows that dialogue and peer collaboration can help to form the identity of a group, and with that identity find a voice, both individually and collectively. Brookfield (1995, p. 47) believes that 'the discovery of one's authentic voice is at the heart of the critically reflective process'. However, defining the identity of the group is never a sudden event which is then fixed or static, instead it is a continuous relational process which changes organically depending on the members and their concerns (O'Farrell, 2008, Pinar *et al.*, 1995).

Exploration of identity helps to find voice, and with voice comes the manner of relating story. Sharing personal and collective story adds to identity. However, none of this can happen without the ideological space in which to carry out these explorations. This requires both the support of peers as well as the openness to

constructive critique. To achieve authentic identity, voice must be articulated, listened to, and continuously examined (Pinar *et al.*, 1995) and ‘the value and meaning of this identity will emerge only when we give others the freedom to deconstruct it’ (O’Farrell, 2008, p. 18). Having the confidence to put an alternative discourse ‘out there’ for critique and deconstruction by the dominant discourse requires a solid awareness of ‘who we are and what we stand for’. Therefore, if there is a group standing up for something, that struggle must be clarified and who the ‘we’ refers to needs to be identified. Foucault (1980, p. 146) claims that ‘this theme of struggle only becomes operative if one establishes concretely – in each particular case – who is engaged in struggle, what the struggle is about, and how, where, by what means and according to what rationality it evolves’. Given that there is some disagreement regarding a single definition of service-learning, achieving a clear identity is necessary to influence the dominant discourse of traditional higher education. This understanding can only be constructed through reflection on engaged practice. It will not happen only through ‘thinking about stuff’.

The critical nature of service-learning requires participants to speak out. This can be either publically in the form of advocacy, or within the classroom in the form of questioning assumptions. Speaking is based on language, which is articulated by voice, which stems from identity which is connected to story, beliefs and feelings. Therefore, all of these issues must be topics for investigation within a CoRP. Developing voice is a complex and multilayered process. Doing so as a part of a group does not mean losing individual identity; because as Grumet (1990a, p. 281) suggests ‘identity is a choral not a solo performance’. She suggests that one’s personal narrative is expressed with all the social cultural and political influences that we have imbibed and likewise, the interpretation of our narrative by others provides another more reflexive voice.

‘The type of self that is constructed by individuals and promoted by the society and culture in which they live has a direct impact on the nature of that society and culture’ (Le Cornu, 2009, p. 295). It appeared that the individuals I interviewed had already formed their identity as engaged academics and that they would not be satisfied if they did not have the opportunity to use service-learning

in at least some of their courses. It seemed that they had chosen service-learning because it gave the opportunity to meld identity as engaged teacher with their academic subject. However, this was a personal identity and interviewees reported that they did not have much opportunity to reflect on topics such as these to the same extent as the academic aspects of service-learning. Hence, what is missing is a mechanism for a CoRP that, through strength in numbers, would ultimately strengthen the discourse of service-learning, community engagement, and reflection, and as a result will strengthen teaching and learning.

### **5.5.2 Space: where the reflective practice happens**

The topic of space on a micro level was discussed above. On a broader level *space* refers to the mental headspace in which people can find the peace necessary to process experiences and draw meaning from them. It is connected to where service-learning and reflection stand in higher education. There are issues with the constraints of implementing a pedagogy that is at odds with the dominant paradigm of teaching and learning. The nature of reflection means critically challenging assumptions. This is difficult on a personal level of reflecting with peers and on an institutional level in which the nature of education itself is questioned. On an operational level, the shift of power moves away from the academic – who is seen as the knowledge gatekeeper with the responsibility to impart it to the student, to the student – who is seen as knowledge generator with the responsibility of learning and making meaning from his/her experience. Criticality is not always well received in the traditional culture of higher education and can be seen by some as a threat to the status quo when it extends beyond the purely academic sphere.

Clark and Young (2005) claim that service-learning, ultimately has been about the transformation of the student and not the place where the transformation happens. They posit that there needs to be a shift from transforming individuals to changing the space, which contains not only the student, but also the community, society, culture and social interaction. They maintain that space is a central part of knowledge/power establishments; it is

both a process and product of social interaction with aspects of it in flux depending on how people interact within a particular space.

Sheehy (2004) in a discussion about teaching literacy says that one cannot replace old practice in education by simply inserting new practice. Students often do not see the dominant ideologies in a space that make certain practices ‘right’ and ‘normal’ for example, one learns from books in a classroom, naturally, but though it may be a good way or even an expected way is it the only way? Moving from one space of old practice and habits through a space of uncertainty to a newly created space of new practice requires the starting point of the old space (Clark & Young, 2005, Sheehy, 2004). The space of uncertainty is often too difficult to get through before a new space is created. Because there is not belief in the new space (or new practice) one reverts back to the old space of familiarity.

Reflection is the bridge between the old space, through the uncertainty, to the new space. If as Clark and Young (2005) suggest, we attempt to make new space through service-learning, the new space needs to be conceptualised and visualised, before it can be inhabited. Challenging old assumptions without the process of creating new perspectives will leave students alienated. This applies to academics new to service-learning also. The academics, who Jacqueline fears would crucify her for her creed of reflective practice, may be so content in their own familiar space that there is no desire to create or inhabit a new one. The challenge is to encourage academics into the in-between space (the experience of the service site) and help them negotiate that space with good reflection to create a new conceptual space where power and knowledge are managed in a different way.

Sheehy (2004, p. 112) says that ‘material support is necessary if teachers want to change space, but it is not simply the availability of materials that matters. Materials have to be part of the logic of space. They have to make sense as objects in the classroom and students have to trust their circulation.’ Sheehy is referring here to teaching aids used as alternative to texts books; however, what she says has a broader application. Service-learning practitioners need more that

the material resources to encourage service-learning. The resources (be they time, training, funding or incentives) need to be a part of a change in a broader conceptual space or culture of higher education. It appears that many higher education institutions do not want to address this conceptual change because it would involve accepting that space/discourse/power hegemony is open to negotiation. There is the risk of becoming marginalised through using a counter-normative pedagogy particularly when it is rooted in critical theory which challenges assumptions.

When you teach at a University there is an underlining assumption that you are there to teach not to learn; it is difficult to challenge this assumed 'common-sense' belief. Improving one's teaching is an 'extra' and assumed that if needed you do it on your own time or within the staff development structure of workshops.

There is also the fear of letting go of control, as a number of interviewees discussed. This means relinquishing the supposed control of the students and overcoming the fear of where the messiness of service-learning will bring you. This is both a personal fear of the inability to be able to deal with the situation that may arise within the classroom, and also a professional fear of clashing with the dominant discourse of higher education through the use of a critical pedagogy. Furthermore, it is also letting go of the belief that the problems of teaching have a solution. Brookfield (1995) warns that becoming a reflective teacher can cause discomfort because in challenging one's assumptions one can remove some of the beliefs about teaching which were taken for granted, leaving one drifting and ungrounded. Overcoming one's discomfort with the aspect of discomfort in reflection is however, a small price to pay for potentially improving one's practice.

Added to the challenges of time, space, institutional support and the fear of critique; Wildman *et al.* (1990) claim that there are a number of other roadblocks hindering teachers who want to reflect seriously on their teaching, especially with other teachers. These challenges include administrators not seeing the value of reflection, and as a result viewing reflective practice as 'woolly'. There is the

added personal risk of reassessing beliefs about vocation and the impact that can have on career decisions and one's position within the university. Finally, there is the risk of having to admit the truth if and when weaknesses are uncovered in one's practice. This can involve loss of self-confidence and esteem within the academy.

Examining assumptions about teaching and learning, and challenging the authority of the dominant discourse through reflection involves risk and pushes practitioners out of their comfort zone. However, theorists as far back as Dewey (1933) acknowledge that a state of doubt and a searching to resolve that doubt is necessary for meaning to be drawn from experience. Because there needs to be an element of discomfort in the reflective process, it requires a safe space for that to happen.

### **5.5.3 Criticality: developing a reflective mindset**

Using reflection within service-learning has been seen as an activity, something one does *to* an experience in order to draw the meaning from it, but based on what academics reported, there is a more to reflection than that. Reflection is a process not a product or a specific activity. Though there may be a need to understand the mechanics of the process (such as reflection techniques) and the degree to which one may be reflective, truly reflective practice is a mindset: a way of being rather than a way of doing.

Butin (2005b, p. 101) says that 'service-learning is a fundamentally embodied process. As such, students cannot engage in an intellectual exercise. They must embrace, whether consciously or not, the actions within the experience because they are actors within it. Service-learning experiences can thus be viewed not as attempting to make a point, but to actually be the point.' I believe that the same applies to those using service-learning as a pedagogy. Though transferring or generating knowledge by using service-learning is productive, teaching how to think and learn through reflection is a much more valuable goal, with long term implications. The product *is* the process. Clive was

adamant that the action and the reflection in service-learning could not be separated.

**Clive:** If service is just like going through motions with reflection to come at the end of the semester, or the end of the day or something, it's actually non-reflective doing that. Say, go out and let's do service and then next week we'll write our reflections about it. It's actually promoting non-reflective action. Because it's saying you can do this action without reflecting. And the reflecting should be built into the action.

Though Clive was speaking in the context of students reflecting on their service, what he said applies equally to the academics. His stance is that to be reflective, one must be reflective all the time; it is an integral part of the action. Therefore, to be reflective means to be always critical, to be always questioning, and always looking closely. Maintaining criticality refers not only to the experiences of service, the 'texts' of course content, or the wider text of knowledge in the community but the broad text of service-learning itself, which must not succumb to the complacency of institutionalisation (Butin, 2005b).

Butin (2005b, p. 103) says that because service-learning is a postmodern pedagogy, it does not require academics to solve social justice, or make their students more civic minded, but it does require academics to look carefully at their own practice of the enactment of service-learning experiences and 'figure out how it works'. It was evident in interviewees' questions about reflection, and improving their use of service-learning that there was a deep desire to figure out how reflection works.

But Butin is referring to a broader criticality which implies that engaged practitioners must be reflective so that as a group they do not fall into the trap of letting service-learning become the new truth regime. This would lead to a new hegemony of engagement, and although some may prefer it to the old dominant philosophy, having the status of a Foucaultian 'regime' brings with it a power imbalance, and absence of criticality – the antithesis of what service-learning is. To avoid this, engaged practitioners must always be critical of what service-learning means, what it seeks to achieve and how it goes about this.

Debates about the meaning of service-learning can happen at the lofty level of Butin's radical treatise on postmodernist pedagogy (Butin, 2005b), which uses megaphone diplomacy to bat philosophical perspectives over and back, and documents the conservatives bashing the liberals and vice versa. It is constructive that there is a lively public debate on the philosophy of service-learning as this will fuel the development of the pedagogy. However, Clive warns of the dangers of following philosophy uncritically and recounts an anecdote regarding a letter that Myles Horton wrote to John Dewey saying:

**Clive:** "Your ideas have been so influential for us and it played such an important role in how we design our school [Highlander]. But, I have to tell you we probably haven't done it exactly as you would have wanted."

Dewey wrote back and said, "I am so glad to hear you say that because if you had done it exactly the way I said it, it would have shown you did not understand what I was trying to [say]".

This shows that even Dewey advocated criticality to the extent that his own words should be questioned and adapted to the specific context. Butin (2005a, p. viii) echoes this stance when he says that 'the normative silence on pedagogical practice by individual faculty and the higher education institutions perpetuates traditional models of teaching and learning.'

Public debate on the philosophy of service-learning can happen in the fora of peer reviewed journals and academic conferences. However, it is necessary within a specific context to discuss 'what service-learning means for us, here'.

Whilst the critical analysis of data within one's discipline is commended and considered mandatory for rigorous academic practice the application of critical theory in a broader context and the examination of power through the questioning of those who have it, is not always encouraged at an institutional level (Ó Donnchadha, 2007). If the use of critical pedagogy – as described by Freire, Mezirow and Brookfield – is revolutionary, then the use of service-learning could be seen by those who wish to maintain the status quo, as incendiary. It is encouraging however, that some universities are adopting civic

engagement as a part of their strategic plan. Even if all of the necessary resources are not forthcoming to support engagement on the ground, the fact that such a direction has become policy and is how the university is presenting its image to the public suggests the door is open to such a change in direction. The question then arises as to how service-learning academics are to fulfil the mandate to critically examine society as a part of their practice, what context is necessary to do so successfully and what understanding is required to do so and meet the needs of campus community partnerships?

In the same way that the current higher education establishment may be hostile towards critique of the status quo, there may be reluctance on behalf of some service-learning academics to ‘bite the hand that feeds them’ given that service-learning is still an alternative discourse. This level of discussion needs a forum within a university in which aspects of the pedagogy can be debated within that specific context. The CoRP would be a suitable environment for academics to debate the broader issues of engaged practice. Voicing critique of one’s own institution could be hazardous to an individual academic’s career prospects; however, there is safety in numbers when the dominant discourse is questioned by a group.

## **5.6 Communities of Reflective Practice in Action**

### **5.6.1 Examples of successful Communities of Reflective Practice**

When reviewing the literature on the use of reflection in professional training (2.6.1) and the reflective practice of engaged academics (2.6.2) I outlined examples of models of peer reflection on practice and I wish to discuss them further in light of the CoRP model. It is worthwhile to highlight the similarities that exist between these examples and the CoRP to point to the potential that the CoRP has when applied to the context of reflecting on engaged practice.

In University College Cork, a reflective framework was adopted when teaching the two year Masters in Social Work Programme. Though this

framework was developed for students, there are a number of aspects of it which are similar to a CoRP and that support the structure outlined in the last chapter.

*How to reflect:* an effort was made to equip students with the understanding of their own learning and how reflection works. A rubric based on reflection literature was used which involved ‘looking backwards, inwards, outward and forward’. A variety of reflection methods were used including contemplative, verbal and written methods, both solo and with peers (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). Reference was made to reflection as being an ongoing and evolving process rather than an activity (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Halton *et al.*, 2007).

*Depth:* the group examined their practice at a deeper level than *how to do it right* by also examining the area of *why we do what we do the way we do it* (Dempsey *et al.*, 2008). Students reported that the experience of reflective learning improved their ability to integrate theory and practice (Halton *et al.*, 2007).

*Time and frequency:* the reflection sessions and the personal reflection were built into the course and time was allotted for the work. The regularity of the reflection was highlighted as being important (Murphy *et al.*, 2008).

*Structure:* the framework used two lenses for reflection, and examined practice from the perspective of affective and cognitive development (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Dempsey *et al.*, 2008). The necessity of a reflection structure was seen as crucial to the process (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, Murphy *et al.*, 2008), while at the same time, facilitators modelled flexibility within the structure. Clear ground rules were established to ensure confidentiality, commitment and constructive feedback. The authors highlight that the peer group reflection technique was transformative and caused ‘paradigmatic shifts’ and as such, was ‘located at the coalface of personal development in the educative process’ (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, p. 635).

*Communication skills:* emphasis was put on the importance of sharing personal narrative, constructive and critical dialogue, finding voice and developing the confidence to overcome the reluctance or inability to express feelings and/or new learning. Criticality was encouraged but in an environment of interpersonal respectful behaviour. Students were required to examine their identity as social workers and the role of the profession in society (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001)

*Space*: particular efforts were made to ensure that a safe environment was created by demonstrating respect and positive encouragement, with special attention paid to fostering trust within the groups (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001). Trust was encouraged by taking the risk of sharing personal narratives, and the democratic structure of the reflection groups in which all members had parity of esteem (Dempsey *et al.*, 2008). The group was not viewed as a class but as a ‘learning community’ (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, p. 631), and this kind of learning environment was constructed based on the learning needs of the participants (Murphy *et al.*, 2010). There was a concerted effort to develop in the students a sense of self and their potential as agents of change with a responsibility for their own learning (Halton *et al.*, 2007).

The framework used on the Masters in Social Work Programme has many of the elements of good reflection as identified by my interviewees. Though there is repeated reference to reflection as a ‘tool’ it is clear in the follow-up research on the long term effects of the framework that reflection had become *a way of being* for graduate social workers (Halton *et al.*, 2007, Murphy *et al.*, 2008). The evidence of this was given in the words of graduate social workers as they discussed reflection: “I think it is a very important part of the way I work. I use it as much as I can in my casework but as much in my overall approach to my work.” “Always being conscious of my own triggers from my past and current life and the impact this may have on my work” (Murphy *et al.*, 2008, p. 76). It can be clearly seen that reflection had become a general mindset in these graduates, who had developed a high level of awareness of themselves and of their own practice. The authors incorporated into the reflection framework the need for students to develop a ‘mindfulness’ of what they (the students) were doing, how they were doing it and why they were doing it (Dempsey *et al.*, 2008, Murphy *et al.*, 2010). The authors report that ‘engagement with the tools of reflective learning in peer supervision groups led to increased awareness and mindfulness in practice’ (Murphy *et al.*, 2010, p. 182).

In a number of their publications, Halton *et al.* also discuss the dominant discourse in higher education and the fact that managerialism limits the openness to reflective learning. It is claimed ‘that neither college nor agency-based learning sites currently deconstruct sufficiently nor provide clearly constructed

frameworks for students to practise and receive feedback on proactive skills for working in anti-oppressive ways (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001, p. 639) . They suggest that the use of reflective practice can challenge the defensive and rigid discourse that favours protocol at the expense of creativity (Murphy *et al.*, 2008). This is proven in the results of the research on graduate social workers, who report that even though there is very little managerial support or encouragement for them to reflect on their practice, and they face the barriers of ‘space, time, supervision and peer learning opportunities, they were still engaged in the reflective process’ (Murphy *et al.*, 2008, p. 78). This identifies a long lasting transformation in behaviour in the students who, five years previously, had difficulty with writing a reflective journal. It also shows a change in values, whereby even when it is difficult to do so in the workplace, the graduates were still living with authenticity in the identity of ‘the selves they had become’.

The framework described by Dempsey, Halton and Murphy has many elements in common with the CoRP; however, it differs in the following ways. The framework was developed as a teaching and learning tool for use with students, although teaching staff and placement supervisors participated, it seems to have been focused primarily on the learning of the students. This framework has been demonstrated to work well with students, it holds great potential to be applied to the development of reflection of academics themselves, and as such I have applied their research to the development of the CoRP.

The frames of reflection used in the framework focused primarily on the cognitive and personal development of the participants. There is reference to examining the role of social work in society (Dempsey *et al.*, 2001), and though it very unlikely that a programme on social work did not refer to the civic development of the student, it is not apparent from the literature that this frame was given equal importance to the other two. The three frames for reflection used in the CoRP can be applied at different times and to different degrees depending on the context, however, these three perspectives are integral to fulfilling the needs of engaged practitioners.

Allard *et al.* (2007) conducted a collaborative research project in Canada that involved representatives from a body for accrediting teacher education programs, a professional development cooperative and a District School Board. There were a number of similarities in what they did to the activities recommended in the CoRP model.

*How to reflect:* the group developed an understanding of how to reflect with peers, and by using a variety of methods for peer reflection contributed to making reflection a habit of mind.

*Depth:* the group brought the reflection to a deep level and helped develop the awareness between personal and professional practice.

*Structure:* the group developed a structure which met the needs of the group, and provided a safe space for all. Had clear learning outcomes, in this case focused research questions.

*Communication:* the group developed their understanding of dialogue and narrative as learning tools, and used these in the process to critically challenge preconceptions and prejudices about teaching.

*Space:* the group succeeded in creating a safe and supportive environment in which academics could reflect together on their practice.

There were however a number of differences between the Allard *et al.* collaborative project and a CoRP. It was not a group of community engaged academics, and although the group used both the academic and personal development frames for reflection, the civic frame was not a feature. The collaboration varied from two sessions with 200 teacher trainers and smaller groups of writing groups. It was a once off project and there are no indications that the academics continued with the reflective group in the longer term, therefore the element of time and frequency was not present. Though the creation of safe space was an intentional feature of the collaboration within the groups, it is unclear if there was the same awareness of criticality or discourse analysis.

This example demonstrates that when the principles which I recommend are applied and adapted to the specific context, the model of a CoRP can have a beneficial effect on academic and professional development. Even with the differences, the Allard *et al.* project demonstrates the transformative capacity of

a community of reflective practice and showcases some of the necessary elements which were also identified by the participants in my research.

The Colloquy on Teaching and Learning at Michigan State University described by Fear and Doberneck (2004) sought to bring academics together to reflect on their practice of engaging with the community. The Colloquy was similar to a Community of Reflective Practice insofar as it contained some of the elements necessary for good reflection.

*How to reflect:* it developed an understanding of how to reflect with peers and examined their practice in a rigorous manner.

*Depth:* the group fostered a discourse of engagement based on a theoretical foundation. They considered reflective questions such as ‘why are we doing this and to what end?’ Furthermore, they discussed the role of higher education in society and developed the ethos that engagement was about causing change through learning. Engagement for them was more than an activity but became ‘a way of being’. They saw that engagement could be a part of their teaching, research and service.

*Structure:* the Colloquy was open to staff, students and others ‘from across campus and beyond’ (Fear & Doberneck, 2004, p. 13) and therefore, was not focused solely on the reflective practice of academics who engaged with the community.

*Communication:* they used democratic dialogue in a faculty learning community to inform and guide their practice. They used what they termed ‘critical intersubjectivity’ to investigate their understanding of knowledge and agreed on their own epistemology.

*Space:* they developed norms of engaging with each other and with the community which included respectfulness, reciprocity, trust and a focus on learning.

It appears that the group met only once a year to discuss teaching and learning. Though the results were impressive there is only limited potential of a group that reflects together so infrequently. The rest of the activities were dedicated to the running of the radically egalitarian and community engaged Liberty Hyde Bailey Scholars Program at Michigan State University. It must be highlighted also that the engaged learning community was funded by the Office of the Assistant Provost for University Outreach as well as two external funding bodies and

appears to have ceased to operate following withdrawal of that funding. This highlights the necessity of institutional support for a community of reflective practice, even in an environment that is open to radical and critical pedagogies.

The CoRP bears the closest resemblance to The Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort at the University of Utah, which is described in Diener and Liese (2009) and was an example of a reflective learning community. This community of engaged scholars met on a regular basis and examined in detail their use of service-learning. The Cohort of Engaged Scholars is similar to the CoRP insofar as it contained some of the elements necessary for good reflection.

*How to reflect:* the group developed a better understanding of how to reflect on their engaged practice through the use of critical questioning of why they do what they do the way they do it. They used a variety of reflection techniques including dialogue and collaborating on written scholarship.

*Depth:* the group examined their practice on a deeper level than the nuts and bolts of implementing a service-learning programme and the members felt almost compelled to give further consideration to a broad range of questions which had arisen during their first retreat.

*Time and frequency:* the group met on a regular basis for three years (at the time of writing) and maintained the momentum in between meetings by reflecting on *pre-reflection* questions.

*Structure:* they developed their own identity and became well known on the campus and gained recognition through the publication of scholarly work. They used different frames for reflection to examine their practice and viewed their work from the academic, civic and personal development perspectives. The flexible structure was democratic and leadership and responsibility was shared among the members.

*Communication:* the group used narrative to share their personal experiences and did so informally through their regular meetings and formally through their publication.

*Space:* the group members recognised the need for a venue to meet which was away from the stress and routine of their daily work and chose locations off campus. It is interesting that the meetings happened off campus and in their own homes with the sharing of food being a component that contributed to the feeling of community. Through their discussions they found their voice as a

group of engaged scholars and they solidified their identity through the collaboration on published scholarship (Diener & Liese, 2009).

The Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort at the University of Utah differs from a CoRP insofar as it did not begin with a predefined structure. The fact that the group developed a structure and identity arose from having had a shared experience and was due in no small part to the dedication of the members. The decision to adopt a goal and to collaborate on a publication added to the cohesiveness and purpose of the group. It also provided an avenue to achieve legitimacy and voice which they felt had been lacking. The circumstances that lead to the group forming were unique and random. The group also had the input of an expert in reflection in service-learning which greatly contributed to the work of the group. In the absence of such circumstances, a guiding mentor or a reflective retreat, a predefined structure would be beneficial for a group of academics who wished to reflect together.

The Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort resembles the CoRP and is an indication that a model of a community of reflective practice can succeed in practice. The CoRP model needs to be applied in light of the specific context and adapted accordingly. The examples above of peer reflection groups that resemble the CoRP give a good indication as to the potential that it holds.

### **5.6.2 An example of a failed Community of Reflective Practice**

As a part of my own personal and professional development I participated in regular meetings of a 'reading group' with engaged scholars to discuss issues of civic engagement. Members would suggest one or two articles at a time connected with civic engagement and these were read by the rest of the group between meetings. These articles were then discussed at meetings which were held at intervals of 6 or 8 weeks. Unfortunately, membership of this group slowly dwindled and the initiative collapsed. Though I have not conducted a case study of the group, I believe that the reasons for its demise were because it was not structured, and it could have benefited by adopting the principles of a CoRP model.

*How to reflect:* though there was an understanding of the concept of reflection it was not overtly stated that reflection was to play a role in the group. The group did not have clear learning goals beyond getting together to discuss scholarly articles on civic engagement.

*Depth:* The stated focus was the scholarly discussion of academic literature, and though this was done rigorously by well informed and experienced academics, the discussions remained at the level of academic dialogue.

*Time and frequency:* the meetings happened three or four times a term, however, only a small number attended all of the meetings, thus it did not gain critical mass.

*Structure:* the discussions were primarily academic and the personal and civic frames of reflection were not seen as holding equal importance. Though it did meet regularly, the role of facilitation was not adopted by any one member or rotated among the group, therefore, it had little direction or leadership.

*Space:* though the group had a location in which to meet, during which refreshments were provided, it did not have a safe space in which members were given parity of esteem. The meetings were not multi-dimensional; discussions of literature were the only form of 'reflection' used and other forms of reflection were not considered. An effort to examine the identity, role and potential of the group met with little support.

I believe that the reasons for the failure of what could have been a community of reflective practice were that firstly; there was not an acknowledgement of the elements required to create a functioning community of practice secondly; the aim of the group was limited and finally there was no structure to the group.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

In the sections above, I sought to address six of the practical needs and three philosophical needs of engaged practitioners in regards to their reflective practice. Through the structure of the Community of Reflective Practice model I believe that practitioners can draw together the various elements which will cater for their needs. It is important that a group of engaged academics who wish to reflect together take into consideration the evidence from the data of this study

and the existing literature to integrate it in a way that works for them. Though a particular group may not have all of the six needs outlined above, it is important that these elements are acknowledged, the issues not relevant to that context are relegated and those which are relevant are addressed by applying some of the suggestions I have made. It is a process which requires dialogue and agreement.

## Chapter 6: The Promotion of Reflective Service-Learning in Ireland

### 6.1 The Dichotomy of Engagement in Higher Education

In previous chapters I discussed the existing research on the topics of service-learning and reflective practice. I reported *what* interviewees said on these topics and analysed the data *so* as to isolate *what* their needs were. The importance of the data and analysis was demonstrated in the CoRP model and *now* I want to discuss *what* the implications are for Irish academics. I will examine the opinions of some of the leading advocates for civic engagement in the US regarding the role of higher education in society. This will set the background for a discussion of what is seen as the new role of Irish higher education and the calls that have been made for the sector to engage with the community. The responses to these calls will be outlined and assessed. It is in this context that I will discuss the role that the CoRP can play in contributing to the promotion of civic engagement in Irish higher education.

Astin (1997) highlights some of problems faced by US society, such as social and economic inequities, a decline in civic engagement, race relations, and inner city decay and he claims that the government there is unable to tackle these problems. He points out how the US education system has helped to create and perpetrate some of these problems by focusing on the provision of education for personal financial gain rather than the development of social capital. He claims however, that the higher education sector is in a position to contribute to the solution of some of society's problems by creating an engaged curriculum focussing on what students need to know about democracy and how it actually works, and developing skills and attitudes that students require in order to become engaged and effective citizens.

The writings of Boyer in the 1990s highlight that the US education system was being called upon to fix an increasing number of social problems, and Boyer believes that higher education must focus on a goal that is greater than simply

providing more programmes. Boyer (1996, pp. 32-33) posits that the higher education sector needs to adopt a mission to enrich the quality of life for all through engaged scholarship. He continues by saying that ‘connecting the resources of the university with the most urgent of social problems’ can make the campus an inclusive forum for social change rather than being a detached and introspective entity. The sentiments expressed by Boyer were endorsed on the other side of the Atlantic when The Council of Europe (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2006, pp. 32-33) issued a declaration on Citizenship, Human Rights and Civic Responsibility, highlighting the essential role that higher education has in fostering active democratic citizenship and it pledged to fulfil its responsibility for encouraging education for democracy in the curriculum and all aspects of institutional life.

In his seminal work ‘The Role of Universities in Advancing Citizenship and Social Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’, Ira Harkavy (2006) maintains that American higher education is not fulfilling the mission that it was founded upon, which was to develop democratic schools, communities, and societies.

How far higher education *is* from where it *should* be is also evident in the parlous state of democracy on campus (exemplified by the hierarchical, elitist, competitive culture that pervades the academy), the state of the communities in which our institutions are located, and the state of American democracy itself (Harkavy, 2006, p. 12) [emphasis in original].

Harkavy claims that the reason the mission of higher educational institutions is not being fulfilled is because ‘the forces of Platonization, commodification, and disciplinary ethnocentrism, tribalism, and guildism prevent [universities] from translating democratic mission into democratic practice’ (ibid.). He unpacks this damning indictment of American higher education and explains that Plato’s philosophy of education with its emphasis on the search for theoretical knowledge has contributed to the elite nature of higher education, which separates itself from the community surrounding it. Students’ idealism is crushed and their disengagement increased when they see their university abandoning its academic values to function as a competitive profit-making corporation by

commodifying ‘education for profit, students as customers, syllabi as content, [and] academics as superstars’ (Harkavy, 2006, p. 13). Prolonging the culture of separate and sacred *knowledge silos* (Boyte & Hollander, 1999) in academic disciplines, thwarts an interconnected education in the holistic manner that Dewey (1938) suggested.

Harkavy suggests that campus community partnerships are a solution to the problems facing higher education. He contends that ‘when colleges and universities give very high priority to actively solving strategic, real world, problems in their local community, a much greater likelihood exists that they will significantly advance citizenship, social justice and the public good’ (Harkavy, 2006, p. 33). This must be acted upon and not simply promised in the well drafted mission statements of universities that wish to get on the *engagement train*. Referring to the rhetorical promises to support community engagement, Harkavy (2006, p. 17) is scathing of universities that ‘fail to put their money (and other necessary resources) where their mouth is’.

Holland *et al.* (2004) echo the position taken by Astin, Harkavy and Boyer regarding the role of civic engagement in higher education and they challenge all third level institutions by asking if they are ready and willing to commit to engagement with the community. This commitment would not mean simply providing service-learning modules; instead it would be a commitment to having engagement with the community as a part of the institutional identity so as to fulfil the public purposes and civic mission of a higher education institution as they see it. Whilst a decline in social capital has led to a growth in civic apathy and the erosion of democratic civic participation in the US (Barber & Battistoni, 1993, Putnam, 2000), there are many in the US higher education sector who believe that connecting college students’ learning with issues of social justice in the community, can contribute to the rebuilding of social capital (Boyer, 1996, Boyte & Hollander, 1999, Harkavy, 2006, Holland, 1997, 2001). These calls have been heeded by some higher educational institutions in the US and internationally, and there is a growing number of publications, conferences, and associations to support academic civic engagement. However, when these authors call for institutional civic engagement, what is implied goes beyond PR

and policy. It requires a fundamental shift in the ethos of individual institutions and higher education in general. It calls for the academy to encourage critical pedagogy and create an environment in which it can flourish, thereby allowing members of the academy (both students, staff and indeed the community) to question received knowledge, create knowledge in a new way, and foster transformation on a personal and societal level. This means developing a discourse of engagement in which questioning is valued and critical reflection (the process of questioning) is fostered. In Bleakley's (1999) view, this kind of reflection falls within the critical emancipatory paradigm, which takes a critical stance towards the status quo. This paradigm has as its goal autonomy for learners, giving them power over what they learn and how they are assessed. With such a radical stance, it is little wonder that there has been a certain degree of resistance by the academy to fully endorsing service-learning, reflective practice and civic engagement.

### **6.1.1 The touchstone for best practice in civic engagement**

The Wingspread Declaration on Reviewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University (Boyte & Hollander, 1999) calls on the higher education sector to become 'both agents and architects of a flourishing democracy, bridges between individuals' work and the larger world' (Boyte & Hollander, 1999, p. 9) and it has become a seminal work for higher education institutions on how to renew their role in society as agents of democracy. Boyte and Hollander (1999, p. 7) advocate a return to higher education that is 'filled with democratic spirit', a view first extolled by Charles Eliot, the President of Harvard in 1908. The authors outline the prerequisites for a university to be filled with democratic spirit. The curriculum would develop civic competencies including civic dialogue, critical thinking, curiosity, listening, cooperation, and engagement with public affairs (Boyte & Hollander, 1999). Furthermore, teaching staff would take responsibility for and participate in a culture of engagement at the institution. 'Such a public culture values their moral and civic imaginations and their judgments, insights, and passions, while it recognizes and rewards their publicly engaged scholarship, lively teaching, and their contributions through public work' (Boyte & Hollander, 1999, p. 10). The institution would provide

academics with opportunities and rewards for socially engaged scholarship. They would be encouraged to form genuine civic partnerships, and based on respect and recognition of different ways of knowing and different kinds of contributions, their expertise would be ‘on tap, not on top’ (ibid.).

These prerequisites go further than curriculum tweaking or module development, they extend beyond policy and PR because they require a culture of engagement in higher education. This environment would facilitate the use of critical pedagogy and accept the epistemological implications which that would entail. Ernest Boyer refers to the role of the academy in creating this culture by calling it the *scholarship of engagement*, which he defines as ‘connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems’ (Boyer, 1996, p. 32). He refers to the scholarship of engagement as a human discourse with the purpose of enriching life for all. Boyer’s idealistic vision for an engaged academy has its appeal among many academics and students as well as institutional leaders, who strive for a closer connection with the community. However, regardless of the good intentions to engage, the standard culture of higher education is not conducive to all that is required to bring about true engagement.

Boyte (2000, p. 51) claims that academic isolation and powerlessness has detached the academy from society and that academics are ‘captives of an invisible philosophy that few would profess and many would find difficult even to name.’ Breaking free of this requires ‘a sustained, powerful intellectual movement, as well as practical strategies and action for change’ (ibid.). He argues that academics must recognise the public purpose of the academy and not let the market force their teaching standards down to the lowest common denominator of mere instruction. He espouses a philosophy of ‘civic education’ (Boyte, 2000, p. 46), which means a discourse in higher education that is open, engaged, civic minded and uses critical pedagogy.

According to these leading visionaries in engaged scholarship, for the academy to reconnect with its original role as a civic institution providing education in its broadest sense, it must engage fully with the community. Furco

(2007, p. 65) highlights that ‘despite the recent rise of service-learning in higher education, service-learning remains far from being institutionalised into the academic fabric of most colleges and universities.’ For an institution to fully engage with the community, it requires a change in culture rather than a shift in strategy. This means encouraging the discourse of engagement in which questioning is central to knowledge generation and transfer. The dichotomy of institutional isolation versus the scholarship of engagement must be overcome and this is a philosophical change rather than an operational one. My data points to the need for a change in the discourse of higher education so that engagement is legitimised, and the space is created for this change to happen.

### **6.1.2 Challenges facing Irish higher education**

Ireland has undergone considerable change since the 1980s: the cycle of economic recession and boom; the recent return to recession; the political shift from war on the island to relative peace; and the blossoming of a positive national identity far removed from a rural, colonial past. Central to the good news story, as Ireland has been perceived, is the role played by a young, highly educated population. Economic growth is one of the rewards of investment in the education system at higher level. Upgrading many institutes of higher education to university standard, broadening access to third level education and diversifying the range of disciplines has contributed positively to the development of the higher education sector (Skilbeck, 2001). The factors influencing that change include the greater demand for even higher levels of qualification, expansion in directions of knowledge generation, the desire for increased civic awareness and social justice and the implications that these changes will have on the dominant culture of higher education (Skilbeck, 2001).

In addition to the function and activities of the educational institutions, there are social factors that challenge the higher education sector; including the quest for social cohesion, justice and equity in social arrangements and for more enriching and inclusive cultures (Skilbeck, 2001). Given these challenges, it is appropriate that the form, structure and role of higher education should be

continually examined and adapted to meet the changing needs of society. As well as promoting financial and managerial innovation, universities are now expected 'to be more outward looking partners in the development of the learning society, and to provide leadership and service at local, regional, national and global levels' (Skilbeck, 2001, p. 11). To meet the expectations of Irish society, the changes in higher education must be radical, systematic and all encompassing and involve a change in the existing culture (Skilbeck, 2001). If this is to happen, I do not believe that it would require a deconstruction and rebuilding of the Irish higher education system, involving a long period of flux and experimentation with a detrimental impact on the sector. Changes of this kind have been made elsewhere, such as in the US, and the Irish higher education sector can learn from that example and adapt the philosophy of engagement to suit an Irish context.

In a more recent survey of Irish higher education by Duffy *et al.* (2007), the authors highlight the pivotal role that the sector has continued to play in the success that Ireland has seen. However, this success has not necessarily reached all quarters of society and in reference to the issue of access to higher education, they quote the Higher Education Authority<sup>19</sup> report from 2004 'Who Went to College', which shows that despite the introduction of free fees, the major determinants of whether a young person in Ireland goes on to third level education or not, continue to be postal address and a father's occupation. They warn that economic success is not the only determinant of the quality of a society. The authors continue by emphasising that the future of Irish higher education 'will be more challenging as the sector globalises at an increasing rate, the competition for talent and resources intensifies and our increasingly diversified and sophisticated society presents a new and constantly evolving dynamic' (Duffy *et al.*, 2007, p. 4). Addressing that dynamic, will involve a review of the roles and responsibilities of Irish higher education. This will necessarily mean a debate about the roles of those who make up the academy, however, such a discussion requires critically challenging the existing roles, identifying new possibilities and giving the space for change to happen. Furco (2007, p. 65) says that for service-learning to move from the margins to the

---

<sup>19</sup> The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy body for higher education in Ireland.

mainstream in higher education it ‘must become part of an institutions’ academic fabric so it can be legitimised by the faculty and supported by the administration.’ There needs to be space for a renegotiating of teaching and learning, and the possibility of more room for alternative approaches to teaching and learning that better fit the changing needs of the institution and the student base.

The challenges that face the higher education sector cannot be met through simply publishing new mission statements. Any efforts to embed a civic mission in a higher education institution must consider the impediments which exist in the dominant culture.

True institutionalization requires radical restructuring, the realigning of all the resources of the institution (structural and ideological) to a new and, in the current environment, somewhat contrarian purpose (Hartley *et al.*, 2005, p. 220).

Addressing the structural and ideological issues requires dialogue with the stakeholders including academics. One of the ways of conducting that discussion is through a forum which allows academics to create their own identity and give voice to it, thus contributing to both the structural and ideological restructuring that is needed. Given the need for restructuring in these ‘difficult’ times, universities have allies in practitioners who are committed to dialogue and collaboration that serves both the university’s interest and the community’s interest.

### **6.1.3 Calls for civic engagement in Irish higher education**

In the American higher education sector, community engagement developed in diverse directions with differing definitions and aims (Stanton, 1999). American land-grant universities, for example, have an institutional commitment to engage with the communities dating back to their inception as colleges of agriculture and rural development in the 1860s (Taylor, 2007). However, the mission of community development enshrined in the philosophy of US land-grant universities is not a tradition that is mirrored in Irish higher education.

Nonetheless, such a philosophy is becoming recognised as being relevant to Irish universities in the current climate of change (Davis *et al.*, 2007, Hunt, 2011, Lyons & McIlrath, 2011).

In his analysis of the impact of international trends on Irish higher education, Skilbeck (2001) highlights the demands on the universities to provide higher levels of educational attainment, credentials that are of value in employment and professional life and for personal and community well-being. Skilbeck emphasises the need for a more open higher education system by quoting the Dutch National Advisory Council for Education (ARO, 1994): “‘why should we place our knowledge infrastructure in institutions which are separated from their surroundings by financial, organisational and cultural walls?’” (ARO, 1994, in Skilbeck, 2001, p. 17). He posits that the higher educational sector is expected to provide leadership and service in the community, in the regional, national and international levels. He states that there is a ‘continuing democratic quest for cohesion, justice and equity in social arrangements and for more enriching and inclusive cultures’ (Skilbeck, 2001, p. 10). However, for Irish higher education to fulfil these expectations, it would require a ‘re-definition of the moral role of the university in society to foster responsible citizenship, and provide service to the community’ (*ibid.*). Skilbeck recommends a number of measures to meet these expectations and one that is repeatedly emphasised is the need to serve the local and regional community.

An OECD<sup>20</sup> (2004, p. 8) review of Irish higher education primarily discusses the economics and structure of the sector but highlights that ‘economic and social development should not obscure its role in the intellectual and artistic life of the nation and the contribution it makes to citizenship and the civil society.’ However, of the 38 recommendations made by the report to improve the sector, there are no specific suggestions as to how higher education can fulfil its role as an agent of citizenship. It is now up to the Irish higher education institutions to decide how to implement the OECD directive. Whatever course of action they take it must be based on empirical data produced from rigorous research in the

---

<sup>20</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is based in Paris and aims to promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world.

area of civic engagement relevant to the Irish context. I believe that through the development of the CoRP, this research has a part to play in filling the gap between the OECD recommendations and the practical implementation of civic engagement in higher education.

#### **6.1.4 The Need for insight**

As discussed in greater depth by Boland (2008, p. 118) one of the innovative aspects of the National Framework of Qualifications of Ireland (NQAI) was the inclusion in 2003 of ‘insight’ as a dimension of all awards within higher education. The competence of insight is described by the NQAI, as follows:

The ability to engage in increasingly complex understanding and consciousness, both internally and externally, through the process of reflection on experience. Insight involves the integration of the other strands of knowledge, skill and competence with the learner’s attitudes, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive style and personality. This integration is made clear in the learner’s mode of interaction with social and cultural structures of his/her community and society, while also being an individual cognitive phenomenon (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2003, p. 9).

It is interesting that ‘insight’ is included in the framework given how difficult it would be to teach and assess such an abstract quality using standard pedagogies currently used in Irish higher education. One way in which the development of this quality could be achieved is through engagement with the community because ‘insight’, as described above, bears a striking resemblance to the academic, personal and civic development achieved through reflection in service-learning as described earlier by Ash and Clayton (2004).

Adopting community engagement in Irish higher education coincides with the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum (Rectors of European Universities, 1988) which proposes that the universities’ task of spreading knowledge among the younger generations in today’s world, implies that they must also serve society as a whole (Kulesza, 2004). Ten years later, what became known as the Bologna Process, set about to reform the structures of the higher education

systems in 29 European countries. The Bologna Declaration (Confederation of EU Rectors, 2003) states that ‘preparedness for active citizenship’ is one of the four goals of higher education.

Engaging in educational experiences in the community can lead to insight and uncover the broader social issues at play outside the academic content of the university curriculum. Achieving such depth of understanding of a social context, however, requires the environment in which reflection can flourish. The existence of the various competing discourses such as the Bologna Declaration, the NQAI inclusion of ‘insight’ and the ground that some community engagement work is gaining suggests that the hegemony is being continually negotiated. With these steps being taken I believe that this research, and the suggestions it makes, could be a further step in realising this progression toward greater connection with the community.

Given that there is agreement that students on service-learning courses should reflect on their community-based learning, the context from which those students enter higher education deserves attention. Murphy (2006) discusses the Irish secondary school system, suggesting that there is a one-dimension emphasis on academic achievement. He highlights the evidence that the full development of secondary-school students is being inhibited by the extent to which success or failure in the educational system is determined almost solely by the amount of points that one accumulates in the final assessment cycle. Murphy (2006) says that because of their experience in secondary school, students enter higher education with a focus on academic-only achievement. Those choosing to study education and become the next generation of teachers are leaving university with the expectation to prolong the outlook of academic only achievement. Murphy (2006) suggests that in order to counteract the propagation of this narrow approach, university students ought to be provided with learning experiences in line with the ideas for democratic education as espoused by Freire (1970) and Greene (1995). He says that such education experiences will encourage student teachers ‘to become the next generation’s architects of the democratic project for society, paying particular attention to its aspects of equality, justice and freedom’ (Murphy, 2006, p. 207). He claims that the use of service-learning can ‘break-

open our conceptions about the nature and purpose of the educational project in society, especially with regard to its democratic remit' (Murphy, 2006, p. 209).

Returning to higher education, Duffy *et al.* (2007) report that there is a division in the higher education sector on the need to enhance the undergraduate experience with additional exposure to either industry or research. They call for greater access to higher education and state that 'the development of young people who have the ability to think independently and make a positive contribution to Irish society are at least as important as developing our economic wealth (Duffy *et al.*, 2007, p. 4). However, though they recommend the development of a strategy which addresses Ireland's 'national economic, social and cultural goals' (2007, p. 11) there is no direct reference in the report to the role that community engagement may play in diversifying the learning experience. It is unclear whether this reflected a lack of a widespread awareness of civic engagement among the stakeholders in Irish higher education at the time the report was compiled, or whether there was a belief that such a policy could not address the challenges facing the sector. It must be noted that while Duffy *et al.* (2007) claim that the report represents the opinions of 'key stakeholders across the sector' of higher education, no representatives of the community were included when the report was being compiled.

The Report of Taskforce on Active Citizenship (Davis *et al.*, 2007) refers to the challenges of increased diversity in Ireland and highlights the need to invest in the development of social capital through the universities. It recommends that the Higher Education Authority 'should lead an initiative, with appropriate resources, to promote, support and link together citizenship initiatives across the Higher Education sector, including "service-learning" and volunteering by students' (Davis *et al.*, 2007, p. 22). However, in the overall scope of the report there is a relatively small emphasis given to the part to be played by higher education in the development of active citizenship. In 2011 The Department of Education and Skills in Ireland published the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 which has become known as the Hunt Report. Hunt (2011, p. 9) says that 'Irish higher education institutions should have open engagement with their community and wider society and this should infuse every aspect of

their mission.’ The report states that the higher education sector needs to ‘put in place structures and procedures that welcome and encourage the involvement of the wider community in a range of activities, including programme design and revision’ (Hunt, 2011, p. 79). It goes on to say that there must be safeguards in place to ‘ensure that the intellectual autonomy that makes such engagement possible remains in place’ (Hunt, 2011, p. 13). This is a direct reference to the role of academics in fostering civic engagement, and recognises that the environment of higher education needs to adapt in order to fulfil its new responsibility within the community. The report adds that the implementation of such a mission of engagement would require:

Strong institutional leadership; change in the culture and internal business processes of institutions; and recognition of the importance of engagement activities in resource allocations, in promotion criteria and in the metrics used to assess progress at institutional, regional and national level. Higher education institutions need to become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve (Hunt, 2011, p. 78).

Once again, this move calls for radical change in the philosophy of the higher education sector and its own view of what role it should play in society. This view cannot be merely an abstract aspiration and but must be acted upon in practical ways with allocation of the necessary resources.

Halton’s (2010) discussion about the issue of managerialism in the Irish Probation Service bears a striking similarity to the question of clarifying the identity of engaged practice in Irish higher education.

The challenge presenting for the Service relates to the organisations’ capacity to engage in dialogue and mutual sharing with personnel, at all levels, in an effort to redefine its mission and to set about the process of reconfiguring itself as a “learning organisation”. (Halton, 2010, p. 249)

Though speaking in the context of a ‘learning organisation’ that responds reflectively to the challenges it faces (Gould & Baldwin, 2004), it is equally applicable to an organisation of learning such as a university. Redefining the

mission of an institution is more than conducting an exercise in semantics and changing the printed stationary as a result. A commitment to engagement in a university's mission statement is not enough; according to Holland (1997) there must be provision of time, support, money, and recognition for staff and students. She continues by recommending that service-learning and community-based research be incorporated into the curriculum, with community partners involved in designing, conducting and evaluating that engagement. Macfarlane (2005) suggests that higher education should strive toward 'academic citizenship', with teaching, learning, research and civic engagement coming together to fulfil the role that higher education should have in society.

It is significant that once an institutional commitment has been made to engagement, a university cannot afford not to follow through with implementation, particularly in the light of the directive from the OECD and the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030. Having an explicit commitment to engagement allows engaged academics the opportunity to argue for the necessary resources to implement it.

### ***Response to the calls for engagement***

Duffy (2007, p. 27) reports a strong overall agreement (84%) among the stakeholders surveyed regarding the necessity and benefits of undertaking structural reform in higher education. Moving from an institutional level to an individual level, however, even if individual academics wish to become engaged with the community, according to Duffy *et al.* (2007) 57% of those surveyed considered that the governance structures of institutions do not support the achievement of their (the respondents) personal ambitions. Since the Duffy *et al.* report in 2007 there is more recent evidence however, that there is some institutional movement in the direction of campus community partnership. Results of a survey of civic engagement of Irish higher education conducted by Lyons and McIlrath in 2011 show that '75% of respondents indicate that there is moderate to substantial acknowledgement of civic engagement within their higher education institution' (Lyons & McIlrath, 2011, p. 7). Though the criteria

of both surveys were different, it indicates that there have been moves in Irish higher education towards engagement.

On closer examination, however, the steps meet some but not meet all of the criteria for institutionalisation as described by Furco (2002, p. 2, Furco & Miller, 2009).

- Philosophy and mission of service-learning
- Faculty support for and involvement in service-learning
- Student support for and involvement in service-learning
- Community participation and partnerships
- Institutional support for service-learning

Institutional support for service-learning can be judged by the salary, promotion, and recognition incentives (Bringle *et al.*, 2006, Driscoll *et al.*, 1996, Furco, 1994, Furco, 2007, Furco & Miller, 2009, Macfarlane, 2005, Schnaubelt & Statham, 2007). However, according to Lyons and McIlrath (2011, p. 7) ‘over 60% of respondents indicate that promotion policies do not take civic engagement into account with regard to both teaching and research’. Furthermore, they report that ‘all [respondents] indicate that there are barriers regarding the implementation of civic engagement within HEIs, with resources (human and fiscal) and time, most commonly cited as factors’ (Lyons & McIlrath, 2011, p. 7). Based on this latest literature, it appears that the higher education sector is not providing the necessary institutional support in the form of resources to implement the aspiration of civic engagement.

There is no shortage of innovative thinking regarding what should be done to promote civic engagement in Ireland. Of the twelve recommendations made by Lyons and McIlrath (2011) one of the most important refers to changing the view of civic engagement at the power centre of higher education in Ireland. They call for ‘the Council of the HEA<sup>21</sup> to discuss civic engagement, arising from which could be the designation of a member of staff with a brief for civic

---

<sup>21</sup> The Council of the HEA is the executive management committee of the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

engagement in each Higher Education Institution' (Lyons & McIlrath, 2011, p. 42). Having civic engagement legitimised to such an extent by the HEA, would make the case for the provision of the required funding for its institutionalisation. Seeking to implement the radical changes involved with civic engagement in a 'resource neutral' manner is doomed to failure. Until the academy is prepared to make the necessary tangible investment, all of the recommendations made by the reports mentioned above will meet with the same hurdle of resources, which good will and intrinsic motivation will not overcome.

The question can be asked if the lack of investment in civic engagement in Irish higher education is an economic issue or whether, it is in fact an issue of power, and who controls the dominant discourse in higher education. If this is the case, the difficulties of legitimising a radical and critical philosophy such as service-learning, must not be underestimated, and calls for the discourse of higher education to be challenged. One of the ways of influencing the dominant discourse is by engaged practitioners, who will be implementing engagement, having their voice heard. Finding and articulating voice can be achieved through participation in a CoRP.

### **6.1.5 Achieving the aspiration of civic engagement in Irish higher education**

Although there are some positive developments, judging by the slow progress and lack of financial investment, it seems that the Irish education sector as a whole is not fully 'on board' in terms of supporting the environment necessary for civic engagement to thrive. Drawing on recent Irish literature, O'Flaherty *et al.* (2011) claim that the culture of the Irish education system is not open to issues of social justice or civic engagement. They posit that there is limited scope for a discourse on education for democracy resulting in a culture opposed to empowerment and critical questioning. They claim that Irish teachers prefer didactic teaching to constructivist pedagogies and are slow to embrace change in this direction. The focus in higher education on economic development does not foster a discourse of criticism, or civic engagement. Citing Breathnach (2004); who claims that there is a dichotomy in perspectives of the university's role in

the community and its role in contributing to economic development; O’Flaherty *et al.* (2011, p. 279) posit that the dominant features of Irish higher education could in fact ‘undermine the good work and innovation’ of pedagogies of engagement. If in the ten years after the introduction of civic engagement, Irish higher education is seen as undermining engagement rather than fostering it, there is clearly a long way to go before a discourse of engagement will gain acceptance on a cultural level. I believe that a forum such as the CoRP would be a suitable place in which engaged practitioners can examine the issues that surround influencing that discourse and create the critical mass of voices needed to negotiate the change.

On an institutional level, whilst some universities are making concerted efforts to fulfil their civic responsibility, it remains to be seen if the implications of the use of a critical pedagogy are fully appreciated by the institutes of higher education. Adopting the stance of an institution ‘filled with the democratic spirit’ like that espoused in the Wingspread Declaration (Boyte & Hollander, 1999) means the development of civic engagement approach that includes service-learning. Programmes of this nature are by definition different from standard pedagogy because of their ‘commitment to action and reflection at all levels and by all participants’ (Taggart & Hessler, 2006, pp. 156-157). This commitment to critical pedagogy not only requires considerable investment in resource allocation and capacity development, but it also demands a shift in the ethos of higher education itself, thus providing the space in which a discourse of engagement can be fostered. Engaged academics, as stakeholders in campus community partnerships, have a role in the development of the discourse of engagement. As individuals they will have little sway over the dominant paradigm of higher education, however, by uniting in a forum that gives voice to their reflections on the work of using service-learning, they can have their say on the future of teaching and learning through service-learning.

## **6.2 The Application of CoRP in Ireland**

### **6.2.1 The context and challenges of civic engagement in Irish higher education**

Civic engagement is relatively new in Irish higher education and is yet at the stage of building ‘critical mass’ with little evidence of a ‘movement’ such as may be found in the USA (Boland, 2008). A significant milestone in the introduction of civic engagement into Irish higher education was the establishment in 2001 of the Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI) at the National University of Ireland, Galway which set out ‘to nurture greater levels of civic engagement, student participation as active citizens and to bring community issues to the heart of the university’ (McIlrath & Mac Labhrainn, 2007, p. 1). The CKI was instrumental in developing the Service-learning Academy, an informal network of Irish engaged academics from three higher education institutions (McIlrath & Lyons, 2007). With a funding grant from the HEA which ran from 2006 to 2010, the Service-Learning Academy was formalised into a consortium of five institutions<sup>22</sup> called Campus Engage.

Boland posits that because of their ‘open system’ nature, what she calls Pedagogies for Civic Engagement (PfCE), are not part of the mainstream but neither are they necessarily counter-normative in Irish higher education, though they may be perceived as such. Boland’s important study of engaged pedagogy set the benchmark of the level of institutionalisation of civic engagement in Irish higher education. Among a broad range of topics, it highlighted five of the potential challenges in the future of pedagogies for engagement in Irish higher education including: 1) a deeper understanding of the reflection process 2) time resources, 3) institutional recognition, 4) relationship building and 5) issues of language and terminology.

I will discuss these issues in detail here because they correspond to the findings of this research which isolates six practical and three philosophical needs of engaged academics. Though the challenges highlighted by Boland (2008) have a large number of contributing factors, many of which stem from policy issues on a national level, I propose that the existence of a Community of Reflective Practice can begin to address some these challenges on a local level.

---

<sup>22</sup> The National University of Ireland, Galway; the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the University of Limerick, Dublin City University; and University College Dublin.

### **6.2.2 The need for a knowledge of how to reflect**

A concern highlighted in this research is the need to understand how to reflect. It has been documented that reflection is integral to the use of service-learning as a pedagogy. It has also been established that engaged academics wish to have a deeper understanding of how to reflect on their own practice and that doing so can contribute to the improved use of service-learning. Boland (2008, p. 182) reports that there is ‘no standard approach and a deal of ambivalence amongst staff about the value or legitimacy of assessing reflection... often resulting in its marginalisation or elimination from the formal assessment process’. I believe that this may be due to the absence of a culture of reflective practice within Irish higher education. Boland (2008) highlights the difficulty that both students and academics have with the use and assessment of reflection. I suggest that it is difficult for academics to instruct their students on the skills necessary for reflective practice if they (the academics) are not familiar with how to reflect on their own practice. There may be personal and psychological barriers to deeper reflection but we cannot use service-learning fully unless we understand what it is like to learn in the discomfort zone. For endorsement of engagement to happen, there needs to be an understanding of how reflection functions and how it can be encouraged and this thesis has attempted to fill this gap in knowledge and to serve as a tool for reflective practitioners who might form Communities of Reflective Practice. To move people to shift their thinking takes experience of service-learning. Direct experience of service-learning is the vehicle that can stimulate reflection and show new ways of ‘doing what I do’. Gaining ‘practice’ in the practice of reflection is a potential benefit of participating in a CoRP.

### **6.2.3 The need for extra time resources**

My data shows that time was a core issue for the engaged academics that I interviewed. The literature is clear that implementing service-learning takes more time than regular courses in higher education. Interviewees repeatedly pointed to the need for regular reflection on practice and highlighted the difficulty of creating the necessary time to reflect with their peers. Regarding the second of

the five challenges of implementing civic engagement in Ireland, Boland (2008) reports that the extra time and academic workload involved are major disincentives the embedding of PfCE. She refers to the problems of finding time within the curriculum; the time and workload involved for students and the issue of time and workload for academic staff. These findings are supported in the literature (Abes *et al.*, 2002, Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007, Hammond, 1994) and confirmed by the findings of this research.

Boland reports that ‘in institutions where teaching loads were clearly defined, promoting and supporting collaborative, innovative pedagogy was particularly challenging’, particularly where there is a culture of “looking carefully at taking on additional responsibilities” as an academic manager expressed it (Boland, 2008, p. 170). The combined impact of that history and the ‘associated inflexibility’ make it difficult to bring about changes in practices that impacted on workload. These issues are real and systemic, and she suggests that they will need to be addressed by specific policy – both institutionally and nationally – and at the level of higher education culture.

This is not a case of management mandating service-learning and the reflection time that would ensue, but accepting that reflection is an integral element of using service-learning. There is no debate around the issue of the time needed to prepare lectures; nor is it assumed that research publications can be written during lunch hour. It is accepted in the current discourse of higher education that teaching and research are not only legitimate aspects of the professional academic but that they are expected. Though some may question if the current influence of managerialism allows adequate time for even these pursuits, nonetheless they are accepted as standard to the extent that it is not questioned.

As stated earlier, to seek to embed service-learning in a resource neutral manner would be short-sighted. For universities to take the ‘pay-off’ that service-learning provides without sufficient ‘buy-in’ in terms of resources, would be a policy doomed to failure. Though Boland reports that resources and funding featured low on the list of participants concerns, I suggest that time provision is a valuable resource that management must buy into or indeed buy out.

Unless challenged by practitioners, the higher education sector will subsume service-learning into the pages of its PR brochures as simply another element of 'a multi-faceted approach to learning' without acknowledging that it is not simply another hyphenated learning, but a different way of approaching education. It is the responsibility of the engaged practitioners to articulate what the differences mean in the terms that institutional management understands, those of costs and payoffs. Have engaged academics in any Irish university done a cost benefit analysis of engagement on campus, and expressed in tangible and fiscal terms what exactly is needed for the institutionalisation of engagement? The needs of engaged academics will not be met if they do not have a voice in the negotiations that surround policy change and implementation.

When it is acknowledged that service-learning is a different form of education and the discourse changes from resource neutral-implementation to truly engaged education (and all of the logistical headaches it may cause for the sector) the question of where shall we find the time will not seem quite as insurmountable. Given that there have been calls at national and international policy levels, and it appears that higher education sector will want to claim that they are supporting engagement, the question will shift from *if* the resources will be provided to *how* they will be provided. In the meantime, however, there are a number of practical solutions that could be adopted.

Course 'buy-out' is a system whereby an institution recognises the extra workload that comes with service-learning by providing either funding or resources to relieve an academic of a certain amount of teaching/administration duties in order that they may devote the time necessary to a service-learning module. Boland (2008, p. 200) reports that remission of this kind 'is not currently available for teaching a module with a civic engagement component: it is regarded on equal terms with any other taught module of the same ECTS<sup>23</sup> rating'. It is imperative that university management recognise the extra time needed to implement service-learning, particularly at the critical mass building

---

<sup>23</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a credit system used in the European Higher Education Area that helps to design, describe, and deliver programmes and award higher education qualifications in all of the countries engaged in the Bologna Process.

stage. The remission that Boland refers to must recognise and include the time needed for reflecting on engaged practice in a systematic manner. With the economic constraints (at time of writing) impacting on academic workloads by requiring greater ‘productivity’ from academics, it is imperative that the use of service-learning is given the recognition it warrants in the form of practical incentives. For engaged academics to receive this recognition, they need a system whereby they can influence policy, through articulating the benefits of engagement for the university and justify the resources needed. I believe a CoRP would provide the forum in which issue such as policy and institutionalisation can be reflected upon and influenced with a united voice. The time necessary to reflect adequately on one’s engaged practice needs to be factored in to the time release. All of the practitioners whom I asked the ‘magic wand question’ (given all the necessary resources how would you reflect on your practice?) responded that they would spend more time reflecting on their practice. By using a model such as the CoRP, practitioners could structure this extra time for reflection, and that would help to justify this additional time that some might feel is a black hole of recourses.

With the recent influence of managerialism (Trowler, 2001) time for something as unsellable as reflection has come to be regarded as an extra or a luxury. Though critical thinking is a module box to be ticked by students, time for academics to think is not valued. We need to re-examine time and workload in terms of the importance of reflective practice as a proven catalyst for better teaching and learning. The literature points to the positive impact reflection can have on practice, and interviewees said they would be lost without the opportunity to reflect on their engaged practice. According to Astin *et al.* (2000) allocating more time for reflection can be justified pedagogically: educationally – as is evident in the long-term positive impact of service-learning on student learning; economically – in the evidence of student retention; and professionally – in the potential for integrating one’s research with one’s teaching and publishing it.

Humans have been learning from experience since before there was a word for it. The use of questioning as a learning tool can be traced as back as far as

Aristotle (at least). That tool was used to create knowledge, which has been housed in institutes of learning for centuries. When did the questioning of experience become redundant? Why was there the need to down-size criticality and restructure it to focus solely on the academic sphere of knowing? Critically reflecting on practice is not a new idea that needs to be sold to the academy, but rather an integral element of what it means to be an academic, which the academy has become too busy to remember. Structuring the time for reflection, in a focused manner, with peer support, I believe, can remind the academy of the value of academics reflecting on their (engaged) practice.

#### **6.2.4 The Need for institutional recognition of engaged practice**

The need for space was a recurring theme in this research. The literature on the discourse of engagement is clear that one of the ways of creating the space is to strive for the legitimising of engagement. I have shown that to do so, reflective practice itself must be recognised as legitimacy academic pursuit and, in fact integral to the use of service-learning. Boland reports that the third challenge facing embedding PfCE in Irish higher education is the absence of recognition within the institution. She says that this is likely to act as a disincentive ‘for academics engaged in PfCE, [because] their contribution was far more likely to be regarded as part of their teaching role than as research or even as service’ (Boland, 2008, p. 230). The possibility of greater institutional recognition has the potential of addressing the psychological block to changing one’s practice and accepting the value of CoRP. As is evident from the Utah Civically Engaged Scholars Cohort, collaborating with other academics contributed to their published scholarship and as a result increased their standing within the university. Notwithstanding this and the considerable resources the University of Utah devotes to promoting civic engagement, Diener and Liese (2009, p. 217) report that ‘it appears there is no explicit departmental or institutional motivation in the context of the formal reward structure for faculty to do this work’. If this is the result of years of scholarship and institutional support in a university committed to civic engagement, how much more difficult will it be in an Irish

context? I hope that the challenge will be made easier with a systematic approach for engaged academics to reflect on their practice.

The CoRP is not simply a self-help group for engaged academics but has the aim of contributing to the academic, personal and civic development of participants. Though there are debates regarding assessing reflection, the use of learning portfolios could be considered as a useful addition to the promotion and tenure process (Lyons, 1998). When university management sees that there can be a 'recognised' academic product as a result of academics collaborating, it may be more willing to address the systemic time and workload challenges that hinder the embedding of PfCE.

Bringle *et al.* (2006) examined the promotion and tenure policy in Indiana University – Perdue University of Indianapolis (IUPUI) which is based on the traditional categories of teaching, research, and professional service. The guidelines for promotion and tenure allow faculty members to demonstrate civic engagement through the teaching and research categories. The authors posit that academic staff development activities have the greatest appeal and integrity when they develop knowledge and expertise that contribute to (a) academics achieving their professional goals, and (b) institutions achieving objectives consistent with their mission. Once given the incentive, and academics enter into a CoRP, it is likely that they will experience a personal and professional sense of fulfilment similar to that described by Pribbenow (2005) in a sense of community with colleagues, a deeper commitment to the institution and overcoming the isolation which accompanies much of academic work. This was confirmed by Jason, the interviewee who said he was 'dragged screaming into service-learning', who later became a strong advocate for service-learning following his positive experience of using it. The intrinsic motivation in meaningful engaged scholarship must be supported through the institutional rewards structure in the form of salary, promotion and recognition.

It has been accepted that including rewards and recognition of engaged practice in the academic promotion and tenure process is necessary for the successful institutionalisation of service-learning (Furco, 2002, Holland, 1997, Macfarlane, 2005). There must be an extrinsic pay-off for academics to

encourage engagement such as the recognition given to academics in the promotion and tenure process for service on campus such as participation in committees and boards. A small number of Irish universities have researching, teaching and service as criteria for tenure and promotion, and an academic must prove excellence in two of the three categories. However, it is unclear what the de facto weightings are for each category, and whether excellence in teaching and service is equal to excellence in teaching and research.

Given that financial reward, funding, time resources and promotion are the bottom line rewards with recognition and kudos being softer rewards, unless these are in place as recognition of civic engagement any claims that an institution is ‘encouraging engagement’ will be met with scepticism among academics. Hartley *et al.* (2005, p. 220) are adamant that any institution that professes a mission of community service but expects its staff to carry the burden of that engagement out of intrinsic motivation ‘has built a Potemkin Village – an elaborate façade that, while impressive, and apt to fool an outsider for a short time, will ultimately produce quite negligible results’. Unless supported with time and space, service-learning is at best a futile effort to redefine education or at worst a misguided institutional PR stunt. The institutions that genuinely wish to fully support engagement are to be applauded for their efforts, and the CoRP is a mechanism which can justify such a commitment and contribute in a manner that has been proven by this research to be both required and effective.

### ***Gaining institutional recognition for engagement***

In a perfect world (as described by Bethany) it is very likely that most service-learning practitioners would do more service in the community and reflect on that work more with colleagues but the traditional higher education model prevents them from embodying such an approach. The promotion structure in most universities does not recognise non-academic service as a legitimate form of professional development and time is not allocated for such work.

Boland (2006) observes that where there is an absence of institutional support, the embedding of civic engagement in the curriculum survives by flying

‘below the radar’ until it gains legitimacy often fuelled by student endorsement. The task of establishing higher education’s civic role will require ‘a multifaceted strategy, at European, national and local levels’ (Boland, 2006, p. 83).

There are advantages to working within the dominant teaching and learning paradigm: firstly, not all of traditional teaching is unfit for use, and in fact, many of the interviewees use both; secondly, traditional teaching is familiar to college students and academics alike, and it is easier to innovate with what is already familiar; thirdly, working from within the traditional paradigm offers legitimacy to what engaged academics do, even when they fly below the radar so to speak and use service-learning.

To attempt to overturn the traditional paradigm would take more energy and be less effective for the community in the long run than using community engagement within the current structure. Recruiting all of the reflective engaged academics to set up an alternative university would probably not gain the same standing in the academy and not be taken seriously in Ireland. Though there are a small number of universities in the US dedicated to engagement, they also use many elements of traditional teaching and learning. One could ask, is that still the Ship of Theseus or a new ship altogether.

The engaged academics that I interviewed are radically challenging the dominant pedagogical structures in higher education. By doing that they are building pedagogical theory from reflective practice; encountering barriers and overcoming those challenges; rethinking, strategising, and ultimately questioning the dominant discourse of teaching and learning, while at the same time attempting to legitimise their own discourse of engagement. This study seeks to give voice to these practitioners and aid them in their efforts, not simply by describing what they are doing, but by showing that what they are doing is a part of renegotiating a new discourse of teaching and learning. It also begins to build the foundation for a systematic theory of reflection through CoRP towards the advancement of greater community engagement and furthering the quality of teaching and learning. Given that so much has been achieved without well defined safe space on campus, could not more be achieved with a structured forum in which academics could reflect together on the disparate aspects of engaged pedagogy?

‘Learning through critical reflection is often an unfamiliar and therefore risky process, which requires intentional capacity-building’ (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 155). In contrast with some US universities where academics must complete a set of training seminars on how to use service-learning before being allowed to use it, Irish academics are under no such obligation. Though some Irish universities offer training through their Teaching and Learning unit, there is no requirement to be trained in the pedagogy before using it. However, this could not be considered surprising given that one is not required to have *any* teaching qualifications in order to teach at higher level. Since service-learning is recognised as a complex pedagogy, I suggest that Irish academic staff should receive formal training in its implementation. This can be augmented through the participation in a CoRP, where those already using service-learning can share their knowledge regarding its use, and generate theory which is specific to their particular context.

#### **6.2.5 The need for a forum for relationship building**

One of the key findings from the analysis of my data was the fact that engaged academics in the US do not have a forum in which to reflect in a systematic manner with their peers. Though there is broad agreement in the literature that peer reflection is beneficial for teaching and learning, and there are only a handful of examples of a forum for engaged academics to reflect together on their practice. I believe that one of the contributing factors for this is that there was not a model that engaged academics could use to reflect on their practice that was designed specifically for their needs. I do not believe that the absence of a forum to reflect is a problem isolated to the US context.

Boland (2008) points out that the fourth challenge to embedding engagement in Irish higher education is the development of internal relationships between academics. She says that the disconnectedness between engaged initiatives is seen by academics as ‘a significant impediment to operationalising and embedding PfCE and a source of some frustration’ (Boland, 2008, p. 174). She claims that limitations for sustainability of PfCE were largely symptomatic of the absence of mechanisms, structures and resources for relationship-building.

Boland (2008, p. 223) reports that though practitioners have ‘availed themselves of opportunities to meet and share practice through mechanisms such as conferences, workshops and networks’ it is likely that this collaboration will be ‘characterised by individual rather than collective action on the part of practitioners.’ She suggests that these circumstances require a ‘finely-tuned and nuanced approach on the part of those seeking to institutionalise PfCE’ (Boland, 2008, p. 223). I would add that it takes the will on a personal level, of academics to take risks and participate. Jason, who during his interview admitted that he ‘was dragged screaming’ into service-learning, increased his use of the pedagogy and is an active advocate for service-learning because of his positive experience of it. Murphy *et al.* (2008) suggest that having had experience of a supportive learning community, participants would adopt a forum of this kind (such as a CoRP) into their profession life. Therefore, I believe that a CoRP can contribute to the development of service-learning by providing the personal and professional support that academics need.

Boland (2008) points out that the small scale of Irish higher education is conducive to the potential of informal networks for the institutionalisation of PfCE within colleges and within the Irish higher education sector. She recognises the valuable opportunity that the Campus Engage<sup>24</sup> network provided, and I believe that if it were to receive long-term funding, this network would be well placed to provide support in the form of facilitation and training for members of Communities of Reflective Practice on member campuses.

Given that there must be institutional input, which stops short of imposing policy, a solution to academics feeling isolated from each other is that they are provided with the time and space in which to collaborate to embed PfCE in a manner – using Boland’s words – ‘that takes account of culture and context, respects academic autonomy and harnesses institutional capacity to respond to the local environment’ (Boland, 2008, p. 224). This emphasises that the CoRP must be given the philosophical space needed in which to grow in higher

---

<sup>24</sup> Campus Engage, a network for the promotion of civic engagement activities in Irish higher education, with five institutions of higher education, was funded from 2006 to 2010 by the HEA.

education and contribute to improved teaching and learning by reflecting on engaged practice.

Hartley *et al.* (2005, p. 220) suggest that ‘perhaps our best hope is for individual institutions to continue to struggle [for structural and ideological change] but also for them to recognize that they are part of a larger movement that must challenge the norms of the entire academy to ultimately achieve complete success at the local level.’ This suggestion means that rather than waiting for the system to be changed first from the top down, the change can start at the local level with individual engaged academics collaborating to make a difference. Strong relationships with other engaged academics can be fostered on a personal level through participation in a CoRP. The experience of reciprocity gained from collaboration with engaged colleagues can in turn strengthen the commitment to reciprocity with community partners. Likewise, Communities of Reflective Practice on different campuses can collaborate as a network to strengthen the voice of engaged academics throughout the country. This could be facilitated by a network of engaged institutions such as Campus Engage.

### **6.2.6 The need for agreed terminology**

The engaged practitioners I interviewed spoke of issues to do with language and communication skills needed in the practice of reflecting on their use of service-learning, and the problem regarding terminology in engaged practice is confirmed in the literature. Interviewees discussed the need for ‘civic dialogue’ when reflecting on engagement, the need for criticality and trust when challenging assumptions and agreement on the parameters which describe the use of service-learning. A theme which arose from the analysis of the data was the need for engaged academics to have a voice with which to articulate what they do collectively and to have that voice heard so as to influence the discourse of engagement.

The fifth challenge for embedding engagement in Irish higher education as reported by Boland is to do with the language and terminology used in civic engagement. She says that ‘the connection between civic engagement as an

institutional strategy and pedagogy for civic engagement as a mode of teaching/learning was generally ill-defined and tenuous' (2008, p. 185). Distinction between civic engagement and service-learning must be clear: civic engagement is a policy of campus/community collaboration; service-learning is a method of teaching and learning. This returns to the issue of language and definition around civic engagement, as highlighted in my data and one of the topics which a CoRP is well placed to address.

'Language entails all discourse pervading our work as teacher-scholars, including verbal and written language, symbols of the field, gestures, and other texts. Ultimately, it is how we name what we do' (Taggart & Hessler, 2006, p. 161). I believe that the different cultural context in Ireland will warrant a different lexicon around civic engagement and service-learning.

McIlrath and Mac Labhrainn (2007, p. xxii) point to the problems that already exist in the Irish context with contested 'terms such as "community", "citizenship" and "engagement"'. The language used in the US such as 'mission' in the faith-based institutions, or 'civic duty' in the parlance of the state schools will not work in an Irish context. The concept of 'mission' could be interpreted in the Irish context as in some way associated with the religious missionary work, and in the present climate in which the Church has suffered a loss of standing in popular opinion, this terminology would not contribute to the clear understanding of ideas espoused by service-learning. The term 'civic duty' may carry the implication of something mandated by the State, and in the context of post-colonial Ireland, may not be helpful in describing active citizenship.

Since 'community service' is understood in Ireland as a punishment for misdemeanours, the term 'service-learning' is already problematic, with many Irish academics preferring 'community-based learning'. If language names what we do, and indeed, who we are, the broader environment must be fostered so that a local *dialect* can form which is relevant to the context. Furthermore, 'where academics espouse a civic role, how that might be expressed within the teaching role is under-developed, under-researched and needs to be problematised' (Boland, 2008, p. 230). This problem is not unique to the Irish context, and the

difficulty with definitions has been highlighted in previous chapters. This is an issue that does not have a universal solution but must be addressed within a specific context. However, it is important to address the issue of a common language so that there is at least a 'working definition' of key terms such as community-based learning, reflection, community and civic engagement etc. This consensus can be reached by those who use service-learning through dialogue with each other and the CoRP is a forum in which a common language, core concepts and the identification of roles can be negotiated within the context of a single institution. Collaboration between communities of reflective practice can contribute to reaching a consensus on a broader scale between institutions. In these terms, I believe that academics can develop a voice and identity of their own through the examination and debate of their engaged practice. The terminology and dialect of engagement is moot unless shared among those who listen.

### **6.2.7 The common needs of engaged academics**

The question could be asked that if the CoRP is based on predominantly American literature and all of the interviewees were based in the US, is the model limited to the context of service-learning as it is used there? I would argue that the needs that my interviewees highlighted are universal problems and the issues are connected with the use of service-learning in general not its application in any particular location or context. To reflect on their engaged practice, Irish academics will need to know how to reflect to a deep level, do so regularly with their peers in a structured and critical manner in a safe space. Though the context of a particular campus will influence the weight of each need, the commonality of using service-learning will bring the same challenges.

Greater reflection by academics has very real benefits, and authentic civic engagement is possible in Ireland by drawing on the knowledge that exists from other countries and adapting to fit the Irish context. The application of a model of CoRP can serve as a powerful tool to transform the way we understand education and significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all stakeholders.

Boland outlined some of the challenges which are currently being faced by Irish engaged academics. My research has highlighted similar practical and philosophical needs that engaged academics have. I believe that the CoRP approach can help improve how they reflect on their engaged practice and do so to a deeper level. It points out the need for dedicated time and a degree of regularity and provides a systematic structure for the reflection. It highlights the needs for communication skills and suggests how that issue can be addressed. It draws on existing theory to recommend how a safe and nurturing space can be created for peers to reflect. Through use of the CoRP, I believe that Irish academics can foster criticality and address the problem of having the discourse of engagement legitimised, so that engagement will be given the space to flourish within higher education.

## Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on data from the practitioners interviewed for this study, and supported by the literature, it is apparent that academics need and want to reflect on their engaged practice. However, to do so, they need to understand the process of reflection and conduct it both on their own and with their peers, using written and verbal methods. The reflection needs to have a flexible structure and examine the academic, civic and personal development of the practitioners, by delving into both the practice and philosophy of the pedagogy. It needs a favourable environment with institutional support and must happen with a degree of regularity. If institutions wish to implement civic engagement authentically, rather than merely appearing to be doing so, there needs to be a change in the resources provided for engagement. Without the necessary change in the discourse of higher education, the result will be *Service-learning Lite*, a low-fat substitute for authentic engaged education, that academics, students, community partners and other stakeholders will soon identify as fake. The authenticity of civic engagement is evident in the degree to which reflection can be nurtured and developed. Only when an institution can point to the structural changes, in the form of allocation of resources, and ideological changes in the legitimising the discourse of engagement, can it claim to be doing more than talking the talk of engagement.

There are barriers on many levels to this happening, which need to be overcome. Given that service-learning has been used in the US for over thirty years, it is surprising that so little research has been conducted on the vital element of the reflective practice of academics who use the pedagogy. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the gap in the literature by contributing insight on how service-learning academics can improve their reflective practice.

If there is such exhaustive support in the literature for every element that makes up a CoRP, why has it not been done before? If it is accepted that peer reflection works, why is it not happening among engaged practitioners in a systematic manner? The answer is because all the different strands of the issue were not woven together into one model; there was no systematic approach to follow that would meet the needs

for engaged academics. This is partly due to absence of recognition and legitimacy for academic reflective practice.

The current recessionary climate in Ireland and years of social decline may in fact contribute to the growth in civic engagement. There is the view that if government cannot address social justice on a national level during a boom then it is time to tackle some of these problems at a local level. It appears that the climate is right for students to see themselves as agents of change. The evidence for this is the increase in numbers becoming involved in volunteering and service-learning activities when structures for such is provided on campus for example the Community Knowledge Initiative and the ALIVE volunteering programme – both at NUI Galway. There have been strong recommendations at a national and international level for the resourcing and full implementation of civic engagement in higher education. It appears that there are a growing number of academics in Irish higher education who see a role for the sector in becoming an agent of social change. According to McIlrath and Lyons (2011) there are currently over 160 service-learning modules offered at undergraduate level and 32 offered at postgraduate level in Irish higher education. With this number of modules there is a growing number of academics who are using service-learning. They are currently facing the challenges outlined by Boland (2008) and I believe have similar practical and philosophical needs as those outlined in this research. As key players in the growth of service-learning in higher education, Irish engaged academics need to reflect on the disparate aspects of using the pedagogy, and I believe that I have shown that a CoRP is a suitable approach in which they can effectively do so.

Given that reflective practice is a concept with multiple definitions, unclear boundaries, undefined results, and is seen by some as a glorified way of *thinking about stuff*; it is of little surprise that it is not factored into institutional timetabling. Indeed, it is difficult for academics to lobby for the space to conduct reflection on their practice, without there being a clear understanding of what reflection is and how it would be practiced. Though Brookfield (1995) discusses teachers reflecting together, Palmer (2004) describes his Circles of Trust (section 5.3.4) and Lyons (1998) suggests the use of learning portfolios, reflective practice is not often referred to as a group activity for academics. Considering that reflection is a personal and

internal activity, even those who want to lobby for time to reflect, would find it difficult to justify the activity unless they had empirical evidence to suggest that reflecting with their peers on their engaged practice would be beneficial to their professional practice. With academic research there is a product (publication), with teaching there are the results of graduating students, with service there is an outcome, but with reflection, there is little to show for it beyond the anecdotes of reflective practitioners unless it is documented and published as scholarship of engagement. Part of the reason that I believe this work to be important is because it gives voice to those practitioners who know that engaging with the community is transformative and that reflecting on that work is vital.

### **7.1 Recommendations: Now What?**

There have been numerous reports and research projects conducted that address the issue of Irish higher education engaging with the community. I would recommend on the level of national policy, the HEA consider the full implications of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (Hunt, 2011), recommendations of Lyons and McIlrath (2011) and those proposed by Boland (2008). A properly funded network of engaged practitioners such as Campus Engage, which could fulfil a role similar to that of Campus Compact in the US, would be beneficial for the promotion of engagement in Irish higher education, by providing support to individuals and institutions.

On a local level, I suggest that there needs to be a systematic approach for engaged academics to address the needs that they have expressed concerning their reflective practice. Based on analysis of my data and supported by the literature which exists on the topic of reflective practice, I make the following recommendations:

- The concept of a Community of Reflective Practice should be given close consideration by engaged academics, and by following the model outlined in earlier chapters they should establish such a forum in which they can reflect on their practice of using service-learning. By doing so they can face the challenges that come with using service-learning and reflecting on engagement, and contribute to their academic, civic and personal development.

- Members of a CoRP should experiment with the elements of the model and adapt it to fit the specific needs of the context in which they work. They must be reflective in their reflective process which requires maintaining criticality of the model they are using. The needs of academics will differ and be influenced by the aims of the group; through experiential learning within the CoRP, members will develop a reflective *way of being* as opposed to the way of doing.
- Based on the collegiality that a CoRP has the potential to generate, and the further scholarship of engagement which it can foster, I recommend that the CoRP be used by academics to legitimise the discourse of engagement. This will have a positive impact on the stakeholders of campus community partnerships and create the space in which the scholarship of engagement can flourish.
- I would encourage further research into the area of the reflective practice of engaged academics, and hope that my research is critiqued in the same rigorously reflective manner in which it was conducted. This will lead to continuously asking the question: ‘why do we do what we do, the way we do it?’
- I would encourage future research to examine questions arising from this study such as the following:
  - What makes a CoRP function with integrity and authenticity? This would examine how integrity and authenticity can be agreed and monitored and if there can be degrees of effective functioning of such a community?
  - If a CoRP is democratic model, who initiates or leads the work of the community of practice? This would investigate the equity of investment and responsibility within the community and look at the topic of leadership within the shared space.
  - Do different communities of practice have different norms to which they ascribe, and consequently would the nature of their critical reflection differ? The topic of context is suitable for inquiry, and could reveal how context influences reflective practice.
  - Is there a typical life-cycle to a CoRP, and can different stages be identified in its progress? This would examine the development of a structured group and shed light on the factors that influence the success or failure of a CoRP.
  - How can the Typology of Reflection be adapted for use in different contexts? The potential of the typology needs to be investigated in different settings

and its application with other stakeholders in service-learning and outside the realm of engaged education deserves further research.

- What are the long-term effects on productivity and motivation of participation in a CoRP? Knowing the tangible benefits of participating in a CoRP could give weight to its use, contribute to the development of the concept and add to theory of reflection.
- What are the most effective ways of creating time and space for a CoRP? Two of the core elements of the CoRP are time and space, and though both are difficult to scrutinize, the pivotal role that they play deserves further investigation.

## 7.2 Reflective Practice: A Way of Being

Citing the claim made by Scott (2003) that the university has the potential and responsibility to foster reflective citizens, Clayton and Ash (2005, p. 165) posit that:

...reflective practice among faculty is crucial if higher education is to fill this role adequately. When our students see us engaging seriously in reflection and learning from the process, they are more apt to see reflection as a meaningful and worthwhile activity, not just as an assignment, and we have the opportunity to invite them to enter into that practice with us.

Interviewees have said that modelling is an effective way of encouraging students to reflect. They also said that reflecting on their practice has made them better teachers. The literature repeatedly states that reflecting on what one does contributes to improved practice. Having insight into why I do what I do the way I do it, is integral to being an academic.

The levels of competencies in different areas outlined by the NQAI are ranked by qualification; the highest level of Ph.D., requires *insight*, which is described as the ability to ‘scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them’ (National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2003, p. 17). This contains the elements of critique and action that are central to reflective practice as described earlier. If academics at third level – who are expected to have a doctorate in

order to teach and conduct research – are expected to have ‘insight’ then they are by definition *required* to be reflective practitioners. If in the view of the NQAI it is the stated role of academics to examine social norms and be agents of change, then is it therefore not necessary for higher education to foster that role? How do we reach the level of habitual reflectiveness as described by Justine when she said: ‘How can you not reflect?’ One approach to achieving this is through a systematic approach for engaged academics to reflect on their practice of using service-learning.

### 7.3 Summary

I set out to discover how academics reflect on their use of service-learning. I sought the answer among practitioners who had many years of experience in the country where service-learning started. I gained a deep understanding of the topic by immersing myself in the field of service-learning, and achieved a wide and deep knowledge of an extensive amount of the existing literature. I used that foundation to inform my critically reflective conversations with practitioners.

I discovered that all of those I spoke to reflected to some degree on their engaged work, either alone or with colleagues. They used various forms of writing and discussion, but there was agreement that they wished to reflect more, but that there was an absence of a forum in which to do so with peers in a systematic way. Through an analysis of the data, I isolated 6 specific practical needs that engaged academics had which were:

- An understanding of how to reflect
- The need to conduct deep reflection
- Time to reflect
- A structure with which to reflect
- The necessary communication skills with which to reflect
- A safe space in which to reflect

Overarching these needs were three themes, those of the discourse of engagement, space on a conceptual level and criticality. I searched for possible solutions to the issues I had found.

My previous research on experiential learning led me to see the importance of the reflection stage of Kolb's Learning Cycle. This involves critically analysing an experience so as to understand the concepts that had been demonstrated. That is followed by abstract generalisation and the construction of theory based on the reflection process. I reflected systematically on reflection and through critical examination drew together existing strands of theory, the data and the context; to weave it into a new perspective of reflective practice. To address the needs of a specific context I created a model that begins to build theory about how service-learning practitioners reflect. In doing so I developed a Community of Reflective Practice: a structured model of reflection which facilitates academics to critically reflect with their peers in a safe and nurturing environment on their academic, civic and personal development.

I believe that the Community of Reflective Practice can: a) address the practical and philosophical needs of engaged academics by giving guidelines to encourage peer reflection, and b) contribute to the building of a community of engaged scholarship in Ireland. In the thirty year history of service-learning, with the thousands of practitioners who have used it, there are only a handful of documented examples of a perspective of reflective practice similar to the CoRP. Drawing on existing theory, and based on rigorous analysis of the data, I believe the CoRP is a contribution to knowledge in the field of engaged scholarship.

I wish to have the model that I propose disseminated among service-learning academics so that they can use the same rigorous reflective methodology to critique it, adapt it to fit their specific context, and contribute to its development. Through publication, this work will not only give voice to the practitioners who contributed to it, but will I hope, provide a forum which will give voice to the engaged scholars who wish to have the discourse of engagement legitimised in higher education.

## 7.4 Addendum

I sat under a huge tree laden with fruit in a lush tropical garden on a university campus, deep in conversation with engaged academics. I heard a crack and a thump and was told ‘watch out for the falling mangos... look above you, look around you’. I was interviewing academics about their use of service-learning and they described how the garden we were sitting in was the result of an ongoing service-project. What had been scrub ground was restored to a productive vegetable garden.

They would hold classes and workshops in the garden, because they believed in the saying ‘in doing comes knowledge’. One said that though there were risks, if they had been influenced by the risks, the garden would never have been reclaimed. As well as literally creating a productive space from waste ground, they had created a space for reflection.

**Jacinta:** The nature of this... place that we’re in, it lends to people hanging out before and after the class, for people to sit down like this and talk story. Actually too, there has always been here the benefit of an elder, [they] always somehow come and then that person is someone that everyone goes to seek out his understanding.

We’ve been lucky because there has been a succession of [elders who is] always sharing his knowledge, they’re learning and asking questions so it all weaves together.

**Stewart:** You’ve got to have a sanctuary where people can come.

**Jacinta:** It’s a way of gaining your identity, a sense of who you are.

This occasion reflected the narrative that I was investigating and what I had learned. The garden was a sanctuary in which to share stories about learning. An authentic place of nurturing had been reclaimed in which ‘story’ was appreciated. Seeds were planted, which produced both fruit and learning through the process. There were risks involved with being in the place; literally, from falling fruit and figuratively, from being open with one another. But people looked out for each other, and there were the

opportunity and responsibility for academic, personal and community learning. However, it was more than a garden where knowledge was shared, it was a place for discovering identity, a sense of who you are.

*There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience  
and that is not learning from experience.*

Archibald McLeish

## **Appendices**

## Appendix 1: Correspondence with Interviewees

Letter of introduction sent by the director of the organisation which hosted my stay in the US. It was sent on my behalf to a service-learning practitioner who provided me with an interview and is referred to in the data as Nicola.

From: 'Contact Facilitator'  
To: Nicola  
Cc: b.odonnchadha

Date: 17 August 2006 20:15  
subject: Brian from Univ of Galway

Dear Nicola,

I think that you'll recall meeting Brian O'Donnchadha (who is "bunking" with us here at [host organisation] while in the US) at the conference in [city name] in April.

I mentioned to him that you are going to be here on Wednesday the 23rd from 1-4pm and that maybe you might have a little bit of time to meet with him prior to our meeting start (12:30 or noon?). Anyway, I'm writing to put you two in touch... perhaps Wed won't work out, but maybe you would like to set up another time instead.

His email is b.odonnchadha.  
[signed Contact Facilitator]

---

From: 042  
To: b.odonnchadha  
Date: 17 August 2006 20:59

Hi Brian,

Happy to get acquainted with you and hear more about your program of study, research and life path.

I can hang out a bit after the 1-4 pm meeting ends, but not before the meeting. Otherwise, I could plan to be out in SF on Wed the 30th to participate in a community activity at 5 p.m. I could, perhaps, meet up with you at [host organisation] around 2:30-4, to give me enough time--without rushing--to get to the Mission district, what with parking etc. Otherwise, if can meet at a coffee shop in the Mission, it could be more at 3 pm.

Otherwise, if you would like to meet closer to where I live, I could meet you at [university name] and combine it with a visit to the [service-learning office], if you haven't already done that. Open to your schedule, but I will be pretty hard to reach

between September 8 - October 27, because I have a 3-week residency at [out of State university], then lots of speaking/workshop engagements the rest of October.

Let me know what would work for you.

Meanwhile, if you have any written pieces or anything at all about you or by you that would help me to get acquainted with you/your work, by all means send it on! Here is a bit about me: [home page address]

Nicola

---

Correspondence with service-learning practitioner following our meeting at a conference. This researcher had published widely on service-learning and I made a point of introducing myself at the conference. Following the correspondence below we met informally and discussed her work and my research. At a later date she provided me with a telephone interview and is referred to as participant belinda.

From: Brian Ó Donnchadha <b.odonnchadha  
To: Belinda

Date: 4 May 2006 23:24

Subject: Many thanks

Dear Belinda,

It was a pleasure to meet you in [conference location], and thank you for your time and encouragement with my project here. After the [conference name] I attended a conference in [university name] on service-learning in research graduate colleges, which was very informative. Since then, I have been getting logistics sorted here in San Francisco, and, with an apartment and office space organized, I can now start to make headway.

As I may have mentioned, I will be back in Ireland from May 20 to mid July. Prior to my departure, I would like to take you up on your invitation to visit [participants office location], if that was feasible. Will you be there anytime over the next two weeks and available for a brief meeting or coffee? I understand that you are under time constraints and that this may be a tall order. If so, perhaps we could arrange a time following my return in the summer.

Once again, I very much appreciate all your support,

Yours,  
Brian Ó Donnchadha  
National University of Ireland, Galway

From: service-learning coordinator  
To: 18 service-learning practitioners

Cc: b.odonnchadha,

date: 24 October 2006 19:54  
subject: Agenda for Visit by Brian O Donnchadha

My sincere thanks to all of you for taking time out of your very busy schedules to meet with Brian ODonnchadha while he is here on campus October 30- November 2. Attached for you is the complete agenda for his visit. I have included your campus telephone and e-mail address on the agenda in case Brian needs to get in touch with you before he visits. Likewise, I have included his e-mail and cell phone in case you need to contact him. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Thank you,

[signed service-learning coordinator]

Attachment containing timetable of 17 events and meetings organised on that campus

## Appendix 2: Example of Interview Questions

**IDENT:**            **name**            **date**            **time**            **location**            **release**

- Why are you a teacher? (Why do you do what you do?)
- What are your assumptions about teaching? What makes a good teacher?
- What are your assumptions about your students?
  
- What gives you legitimacy as a lecturer/expert? (How have you become an expert in your field? How do you know what you know?)
- Describe your overall experience with your own education. Was there teaching in your background? Describe a pivotal learning experience.
- Do you have tenure? How important is that to you?
- Will you continue with a career in teaching? Is it a vocation?
- Were you taught how to teach?
- What is your responsibility to your students?

### **Service Learning**

- What should be the role of the university to the community?
- How do you teach your students to connect theory to practice?
- Some believe that service-learning academics should engage in service so as to fully understand the pedagogy. Do you believe this should be the case?
  
- Is there anything you would have done differently in terms of introducing service-learning in your programme?
- How do you decide the learning goals for your SL programmes?
- What is the public purpose of your discipline?
- What are your aims in using Service-Learning?

### **Your Teaching**

- What pedagogical theory do you base your teaching practice on? Kolb, Mezirow, Dewey? Are there particular texts, books that have influenced your philosophy?
- Describe your pedagogy? What teaching methods do you use, eg lecture, self-directed, workshop? Why did you choose these methods? Give examples of classroom policies
- What are your intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to teach the way you do?
- What service immersion experiences have you had? How have they changed how you teach? What did you learn about your discipline in the field that was not in the literature?
- Power shift?
  
- How were you prepared for the public purpose of your discipline?
- What does that look like, how is it used in the community? Do you do this public purpose, if not why not?
- How do you decide on your course content?
- Tell me about the assessment methods you use. Why did you choose those methods? How do you decide what to examine students on? Would you be opposed to the whole class getting an A? Do you allow students to resubmit assignments? Why?
- Are you given time off to improve your teaching practice?

### **Reflective Practice**

- How do you use reflection effectively in your teaching? Models? Depth?
- In your experience are some students left out because of using only written or oral methods of reflection? If so, how can they be accommodated?
- How do you encourage your students to be reflective practitioners?
- How do you get feedback on your practice from others? What motivates you to change the way you teach? How do you tweak the teaching methods? Why do you tweak your teaching methods?
- Given all the time and resources you wanted, how would you reflect on your practice?

## Appendix 2: Example of Interview Questions

- What is your passion? Are you able to connect your passion with your work?
- What questions do you have about reflection?
- What formal and informal methods of reflection do you use for your students?
- How do you encourage your students to be self directed learners? How flexible are you with altering course content depending on student feedback?
- What's your take on learning styles and how does that influence your teaching?
- Where do you invest the most your energy in your work.
- There is a belief that to be a reflective practitioner makes you a better teacher. What are your thoughts on that?
- How do you question your own assumptions about your discipline? How has your life experience changed your perception of your discipline? How do you question your epistemic frames of reference and the manner in which you learn?
- How do you question the cultural systems and paradigms that have shaped your point of view?
- Do you question the norms which guide your decisions making?

### **Institution**

- How has the history and culture of your workplace impacted on how you teach? Would you behave in a different way if at a different institution?
- Is there the opportunity to discuss failure of practice or systems?

## **Appendix 3: Letter of Consent to Participate in the Research**

**Working Title of Study:** The Role of Reflection in Service-Learning

**Principal investigator:** Brian Ó Donnchadha M.Ed.

**Institute:** School of Education, National University of Ireland, Galway.

### **Introduction**

As part of my PhD research, I wish to document the role of reflection in the service-learning process by getting the opinions and observations of experienced practitioners. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, this form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

### **Background information**

In 2007 I spent one year as a Fulbright Visiting Researcher in the US examining various aspects of service-learning, following that I chose to focus on the role of reflection plays in service-learning.

### **Purpose of this research study**

I hope to achieve an insight into the methods and extent of reflective practice of academics who use service-learning.

### **Procedures**

I am grateful for your time to help me with my research and for agreeing to being interviewed regarding your experiences with service-learning. I would welcome your honest and considered opinion on the learning process and hearing your experiences. The information will then be correlated and analysed using a qualitative research methodology. I wish to record the interview so as to be able to transcribe it accurately. If you grant permission for audio recording, no audio will be used for any purpose other than research. The audio will be stored securely and access to it will be restricted to myself, a professional transcriber, and only if necessary, my academic supervisor.

I attach a copy of the transcript for you to vet for accuracy. If you wish to correct, clarify, add to or withdraw any part, please return the amended script to me within two weeks.

### **Possible risks or benefits**

There is no risk involved in this study and no payment or direct benefit to you either. However, I hope that the results of the study will contribute to the scholarship of service-learning.

### **Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may also refuse to answer some or all the questions if you choose. You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice.

**Confidentiality**

The information provided by you will remain confidential. Your name and identity will also not be disclosed in the thesis and will be replaced with a code. Every effort will be made to insure your anonymity, by withholding details throughout the thesis that could lead to you being identified. However, the coded data may be seen by the academic supervision committee. By taking part in the interview, you consent to your contribution to the research being used without giving your name or disclosing your identity, as a part of a future publication.

**Available sources of information**

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. The completed research will be available to participants through the James Hardiman Library NUI, Galway. Should you wish to read the finished thesis I will be happy to send you a copy. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me; please contact me at any time at: Brian Ó Donnchadha, School of Education, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland (b.odonnchadha@gmail.com).

Alternatively you may contact my academic supervisor: Dr Kevin Davison, School of Education, National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland (kevin.davison@nuigalway.ie)

I am grateful for your assistance,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Ó Donnchadha,  
School of Education,  
National University of Ireland, Galway.

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORIZATION**

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable state, or local laws.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name

*E-mail accompanying Letter of Consent*

Dear

I hope you are well and that you will have an enjoyable holiday weekend. Though it has taken longer than expected, I wanted to follow up on the interview you very kindly did for me some time ago.

I attach a copy of the transcript for you to vet for accuracy. I had hoped to include the audio file however it is too big to send by e-mail. If you wish to correct, clarify, add to or withdraw any part, please e-mail the amended script to me within two weeks. If you would like to add any further reflections as follow-up data, feel free to do so.

I also attach a copy of the consent form, which I will mail to you in hard copy along with a stamped return envelope. If you are satisfied with the use of the data in the transcript, could you sign the form and return it at your convenience.

I must apologize for the delay with this; since we met I got a little side tracked with writing and editing a number of publications in Ireland. However, now that they have been completed, my research is continuing and I hope to be finished before the end of next year. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Once again I am grateful for your contribution, and wish you all the very best.

Yours,

Brian

## **Appendix 4: Transcriber Confidentiality Clause**

By accepting this transcription I (the transcriber) assure the complete confidentiality of the information I transcribe, will not share any of the contents of the audio or written files, and following completion I agree to delete any information relating to its content.

## Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

This table shows details of Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding; with 42 topic folders, the coding criteria, how many sources were referred to and the number of segments in the folder.

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Personal Reflection -	Direct questions - How do you use reflection in your own personal learning? What does being reflective mean to you? How do you reflect on your teaching/practice?	31	89
Discussion of Reflection	General references to reflection that, as of yet, do not fit into other nodes (Jan '10). Also references to the concept of reflection rather than the methods of reflection.	29	73
Motivation to Teach	Replies to the question 'Why are you a teacher?' The question aims to discover some personal background of the interviewee and their motivation to work in education. It seeks to reveal some of the identity of the interviewee and is expected to uncover answers which point towards vocation, which may reveal some of the reflection the interviewee has done already on the question 'why do I do what I do?'	21	59
Rubrics & Methods for Reflection -	Reference to methods of reflecting either for students or for faculty. It can be single methods for drawing meaning from experience or frameworks such as DEAL, ABCs, Kolb's cycle.	26	53
Questions about Reflection -	Direct question 'What questions do you have about reflection?' This seeks to discover how much the interviewee understands the concept of reflective practice, what is unclear in their minds about reflection either in theory or practice. It also provides ideas for further research and what relevant/topical questions my peers need answered in this research.	15	46
Teaching Practice	References to specific teaching methods that the interviewee uses or discusses.	19	44

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Theory to Practice	Direct question - ‘How do you encourage your students to connect theory to practice?’ Also references to connecting teaching theory to practice in class.	20	44
Engaged Faculty	Replies to the question ‘Should faculty engage in service in order to better understand the pedagogy of service-learning? The question arises out of my own preconception that teachers cannot fully understand the process for their students unless they have experienced it i.e. if you can’t/don’t speak French, can you teach French effectively?’	19	41
Learning from Experience	Merged nodes ‘Lessons learned’ into ‘Experiential Learning’ and renamed it Learning from Experience. References to the pedagogy of experiential learning	24	36
Creative Reflection	References to methods of reflection other than written or verbal such as art, photography, sculpture, drama etc.	17	31
Written Reflection	References to using writing as a method of reflection be it journals, term papers etc.	15	29
Advocacy and Direct Action	References to the difference between providing a direct service to the community through say a non-profit agency (e.g. food in a homeless shelter) to address the symptoms of social injustice or research that can be used to lobby for political change or address the causes of the of social problems	4	27
Good Teaching	Direct question ‘what does it mean to be a good teacher?’	14	27
Passion	Direct question ‘what’s your passion?’ Responses should indicate the level to which interviewees have considered what is important to them, and how committed they are to their work- if their work IS their passion. Connects with Palmers concepts of identity as a teacher, and the vocation of teaching. It is a left of field question used to bring the interview to a more personal level deeper than a discussion about pedagogy or academia.	18	26

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Peer reflection	Direct question - ‘How do you get feedback on your practice from others?’ Also seeks to discover if interviewees have a forum to reflect with peers and to what degree they use it, whether it is formal or informal and the reasons they do or do not avail of the opportunities to reflect with peers.	14	23
Depth of Reflection	responses that deal with reflecting on a level deeper than mere description. Responses to the direct question ‘Given all the time and resources you wanted, how would you reflect on your practice?’ This question seeks to uncover how the interviewee would reflect on their practice if there were no barriers such as time. It hopes to show that the interviewee has considered their own reflective practice.	12	22
Encourage others to reflect.	Direct question ‘How do you encourage your students to be reflective practitioners?’ Can also refer to how interviewee encourages peers to reflect.	13	21
Lenses for Reflection -	Both Clayton and Welch use lenses in their reflection rubrics: personal, academic and civic development. References to these and others which could be used as lenses through one gets a different perspective with which to draw meaning from an experience.	12	21
Cultural Context	Responses that refer to cultural context of the institution; the location of the service site; connections to race, ethnicity or religion, the culture of service and reflection etc	8	21
Role of University	Direct question - ‘what do you see as the role of the university in the community?’ Badly phrased question, often caused confusion. Sought to discover what interviewee saw as their own role in society as a part of Higher Education.	15	19

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Service-Learning Change the World	Replies to the question ‘Can service-learning change the world?’ This question hopes to reveal the interviewees opinions as to how effective the pedagogy is. The polemic wording is deliberate in the hopes of eliciting a yes or no answer. To ask if SL can have a little effect in small cases would only encourage pat agreement.	13	16
Learning Styles	‘Are some students left out when only written or verbal methods of reflection are used?’ The line of questioning on learning styles petered out as the research progressed. The idea arose out of emphasis on mostly written or verbal methods of reflection.	10	15
Reflective Practitioner is better teacher	Direct question ‘There is a belief that to be a reflective practitioner makes you a better teacher. What are your thoughts on that?’ Dumb question as nobody is going argue against reflection.	12	15
Verbal Reflection	References to using discussion as a method for reflecting.	10	14
Power shift	Direct question - ‘Discuss the Power shift that happens in a service-learning classroom?’ Service-learning involves encouraging students taking responsibility for their own learning, challenging received knowledge, testing theory in the context of the community and alternative teaching methods that reduce the teachers ‘control’. How the power shift is managed can be a factor that influences the effectiveness of SL	12	14
Teaching Experience	References to interviews experiences as a learner and/or their prior experience as a teacher.	9	14

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Assumptions about Students	Direct question- ‘what are your assumptions about your students?’ Critical reflection questions one’s assumptions and prejudices. This question seeks to discover if academics have rigid biases regarding their students. If they have questioned their assumptions, it shows that they have been reflective to some degree. A follow-up question should have been ‘how to you examine those assumptions?’ but that was not asked.	10	13
Pitfalls of Service-Learning	Direct question ‘A lot has been written about the strengths and opportunities of SL what do you see as the weaknesses and threats (pitfalls) of SL? This seeks to address the issue of rigorous SL implementation, how academics have learned through their mistakes, if they are realistic about the capabilities of the pedagogy.	7	11
Community-Based Research	All references to community-based research, how this differs from direct service provision in service-learning, the impact it has on the teachers and students and the different techniques needed to reflect on it since there may not be as much contact with a community agency or its clients as there may be with direct service provision.	2	10
Safe Space	References to a safe space in which to reflect with peers, open up and be vulnerable.	7	10
Aims of Service-Learning	Direct question ‘What are your aims in using SL’ or ‘what are the aims of SL?’	6	10
Selling Service-Learning	Direct question- ‘How have you sold SL to senior management in your university?’ An effort to get interviewees views on the benefits of SL.	7	10
Partnerships	References to campus community partnerships, how to establish and maintain them.	5	9
Community	Broad references to community and all that that might mean to interviewees.	8	9

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Common Good	...engaging in actions for the common good' is listed as best practice in SL. The question seeks to discover what interviewees saw as being broadly beneficial to society. A question to look at the macro-aims of engaging with the community and see if answers are influenced by a religion or philosophy.	5	8
Voice	References to 'Voice' in any form both literal and metaphorical.	7	7
Anecdotes	Random stories that interviewees use to illustrate a point. These could refer to learning experiences of their own or of their students. Narrative is important in the research because reflection always returns to story-telling in some form or another.	4	5
Agent of Change	References to the concept that one can be an agent of change in one's community. This is cited by students and faculty alike as being a motivating factor for participation in SL programmes. Encouraging the concept in students can be seen as a motivating factor for faculty to use service-learning.	3	4
Civic Engagement (meaning of)	Direct question 'what does civic engagement mean to you?' Definitions, interpretations and language surrounding the term civic engagement- which is generally understood to involve a strategy of engaging with the community that is broader than SL and includes volunteerism, corporate social responsibility etc	2	3
Learning Communities	References to groups of people with shared expertise and motivation for joint learning. Also seeks to discover if interviewees have a forum to reflect with peers and to what degree they use it, whether it is formal or informal and the reasons they do or do not avail of the opportunities to reflect with peers.	1	2
Silent Reflection	References to reflection that does not use written, verbal or creative reflection techniques. References to 'mulling over stuff'.	2	2

Appendix 5: Coding Phase 1 – Broad Coding

Folder by Topic	Description (rule for inclusion)	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Responsibility to your students	Answers to the question ‘What do you see as your responsibility to your students?’ This question aims at highlighting faculty’s perceived role in the students’ education on different levels as it can cover academic, personal and civic. Responses will demonstrate the level to which interviewee has considered ‘why do I do what I do’.	1	1

## Appendix 6: Coding Phase 4 – Distilling

This table shows the categories Pedagogy and Service-learning, the folders they contained, the number of sources that were cited in each folder and the number of interview segments in each folder. After the distilling process the data in these two categories were no longer considered in the research.

Category Names	Category Folders	Sources Coded	Citations Coded
Pedagogy			
	Assessment	3	4
	Responsibility to your students	5	5
	Teaching Experience	13	18
	Powershift	16	20
	Assumptions about Students	14	22
	Learning Styles	21	30
	Theory to Practice	27	61
	Teaching Practice	27	63
Service-Learning			
	Advocacy and Direct Action	4	4
	Anecdotes	4	5
	Civic Engagement (meaning of)	4	5
	Agent of Change	10	11
	Aims of Service-Learning	11	16
	Community-Based Research	7	19
	Community	14	19
	S-L Change the World	17	20
	Selling Service-Learning	12	20
	Role of University	20	24
	Pitfalls of Service-Learning	16	24
	Cultural Context	11	25
	Partnerships	13	26
	Engaged Faculty	26	56

**Appendix 7: Reflective Practice: Coding-on**

This table shows how the data in the Reflective Practice category was coded-on by five levels. It numbers how many sources were cited in each folder and how many interview segments were in each folder.

1st Level	2nd Level Codes	3rd Level Codes	4th Level Codes	5th Level Codes	Sources Coded	Citations coded
1 Reflective Practice						
	Teaching and Learning					
		(i) Perspectives on Teaching and Learning			26	47
			(2) Civic Development		15	30
				Common Good	15	29
			(1) Academic Development		22	44
				Student Academic Development	7	13
				Practitioners Academic	18	31
				Good Teaching	23	46
			(3) Personal Development		24	48
		(iii) Learning from Experience			33	55
			Assessment		6	7
			Transformational Learning		8	9
			Learning to Learn		17	25
		(ii) Motivation to Teach			26	76
			3. Society or Community		13	21
			2. Students		15	26
			1. Personal		15	37
	Learning Communities				14	23
		b) Interview as reflective exercise			10	15
		e) Voice			13	18
		c) Safe Space			17	27
		d) Reflective Teacher			18	30
		a) Faculty Peer Reflection			24	53
	Passion				23	40

Appendix 7: Reflective Practice: Coding-on

		Working in community	6	7
		Social Justice	9	11
		Personal Spiritual and Philosophical	11	15
		Students	12	20
		Passion for Teaching and Learning	16	23
	Questions about Reflection			
		How to address stereotypes	2	4
		Questions about questioning	6	9
		Making Connections	7	14
		Causing Change	12	19
		Headspace	11	32
		How to reflect	16	43
	Rubrics & Methods for Reflection		33	71
		Verbal Reflection	19	34
		Student Peer reflection	20	37
		Creative Reflection	23	45
		Silent Reflection	7	7
		Written Reflection	27	50
	Reflection on Practice		39	139
		Creative reflection on practice	14	19
		Revelations from personal reflection	16	22
		Examine Assumptions	16	29
		Depth of Reflection	21	35
		Emotions	8	15
		Deeper questions	23	47
		Verbal reflection on practice	16	39
		Discussion of Reflection	25	44
		Mulling reflection on practice	19	44
		Written reflection on practice	24	49

## Bibliography

- Abes, E. S., *et al.* (2002) Factors that motivate and deter faculty use of service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 9(1), 5-17.
- Adler, S. (1991) The reflective practitioner and the curriculum of teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 17(2), 139 - 150.
- Ahern, K. J. (1999) Pearls, pith, and provocation: ten tips for reflexive bracketing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9(3), 407-411.
- Allard, C. C., *et al.* (2007) Becoming a reflective community of practice. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 8(3), 299-314.
- Anderson, G., *et al.* (2007) *Studying your own school: an educator's guide to practitioner action research*, (2 edn) (Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press).
- Anderson, G. L. & Herr, K. (1999) The new paradigm wars: is there room for rigorous practitioner knowledge in schools and universities? *Educational Researcher*, 28(5), 12-40.
- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, (2 edn) (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Argyris, C. (1977) Single-loop and double-loop models in research on decision making. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(5), 115-125.
- ARO (1994) *From Higher Education to Higher Learning (Summary)*. Report for National Advisory Council for Education (ARO) (Utrecht, Netherlands).
- Ash, S. L. & Clayton, P. H. (2004) The articulated learning: an approach to guided reflection and assessment. *Innovative Higher Education* 29(2), 137-154
- Ash, S. L. & Clayton, P. H. (2009a) Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: the power of critical reflection in applied learning. *Applied Learning in Higher Education*, 1(Fall), 25-48.
- Ash, S. L. & Clayton, P. H. (2009b) Learning Through Critical Reflection: A Tutorial for Service-Learning Students. Raleigh, NC.
- Ash, S. L. & Clayton, P. H. (2009c) Learning Through Critical Reflection: A Tutorial for Students in Service-learning (Instructor version). Raleigh, NC.
- Ash, S. L., *et al.* (2005) Integrating reflection and assessment to capture and improve student learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 11(2), 49-60.
- Astin, A. W., *et al.* (2000) *How Service Learning Affects Students*, (Los Angeles, Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles).
- Bacon, N. (2002) Differences in faculty and community partners' theories of learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 9(1), 34-44.
- Banerjee, M. & Hausafus, C. (2007) Faculty use of service-learning: perceptions, motivations, and impediments for the human sciences. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(1), 32-45.
- Barber, B. R. & Battistoni, R. (1993) A season of service: introducing service learning into the liberal arts curriculum. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 26(2), 235-240.
- Barnett, L. (1996) Service learning: Why community colleges? *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 1996(93), 7-15.
- Barnett, R. (1992) *Improving Higher Education: Total Quality Care*, (Bristol, PA, Open University Press).
- Barrett, M. S., *et al.* (2009) On building a community of practice: reflective narratives of academic learning and growth. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 10(4), 403-416.

## Bibliography

- Bazeley, P. (2007) *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*, (London, Sage).
- Bellefeuille, G. L. (2006) Rethinking reflective practice education in social work education: a blended constructivist and objectivist instructional design strategy for a web-based child welfare practice course. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 42(1), 85-103.
- Benson, L., et al. (2005) Problem-solving service learning in university-assisted schools as one practical means to develop democratic schools, democratic universities, and a democratic good society, in: T. Chambers, et al. (Eds) *Higher education for the public good: Emerging voices from a national movement*. (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Berger, P., L. & Luckmann, T. (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, (New York, Irvington Publishers).
- Bergstrom, R. H. (2004) *Serving To Learn, Learning To Serve: A Phenomenological Study of Service-learning*. University of Idaho.
- Biggs, J. (1999) What the student does: teaching for enhanced learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 18(1), 57-75.
- Billig, S. H. (2007) Unpacking what works in service-learning: promising research-based practices to improve student outcomes, in: J. Kielsmeier, et al. (Eds) *Growing to Greatness 2007 The State of Service-Learning*. (Saint Paul, MN, National Youth Leadership Council).
- Birge, J. (2005) The aesthetical basis for service-learning practice, in: D. W. Butin (Ed.) *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan), 195-204.
- Black, P. E. & Plowright, D. (2010) A multi-dimensional model of reflective learning for professional development. *Reflective Practice*, 11(2), 245-258.
- Bleakley, A. (1999) From reflective practice to holistic reflexivity. *Studies in Higher Education*, 24(3), 315-330.
- Bloom, B., S. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, (New York, Longman).
- Boland, J. A. (2006) Pedagogies for civic education in higher education, in: M. Sandén & A. Zdanevicius (Eds) *Democracy, Citizenship and Universities*. (Kaunas, Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus University Press ).
- Boland, J. A. (2008) *Embedding a civic engagement dimension within the higher education curriculum: a study of policy, process and practice in Ireland*. University of Edinburgh.
- Bold, C. (2008) Peer support groups: fostering a deeper approach to learning through critical reflection on practice. *Reflective Practice*, 9(3), 257-267.
- Bolton, G. (2010) *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, (3 edn) (London, Sage).
- Borton, T. (1970) *Reach, Touch, and Teach: Student Concerns and Process Education*, (New York, McGraw-Hill).
- Boud, D. (1999) Avoiding the traps: seeking good practice in the use of self assessment and reflection in professional courses. *Social Work Education*, 18(2), 121-132.
- Boud, D. (2001) Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90(Summer), 9-18.
- Boud, D. (2006) Relocating reflection in the context of practice: rehabilitation or rejection?, paper presented at the *Professional Lifelong Learning: Beyond Reflective Practice Conference*, Leeds, UK.
- Boud, D., et al. (Eds.) (2006) *Productive Reflection at Work: Learning for Changing Organizations*, (London, Routledge).

## Bibliography

- Boyd, B., *et al.* (2006) Measuring learning in the affective domain using reflective writing about a virtual international agriculture experience. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 47(3), 24-32.
- Boyd, E. M. & Fales, A. W. (1983) Reflective learning: key to learning from experience. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 23(2), 99-117.
- Boyer, E. L. (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, (Lawrenceville, NJ, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).
- Boyer, E. L. (1996) The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service and Outreach*, 1(1), 11-20.
- Boyte, H. C. (2000) The struggle against positivism. *Campus Compact Reader*, 1(2), 8-12.
- Boyte, H. C. (2004) *Everyday Politics: Reconnecting Citizens and Public Life*, (Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press).
- Boyte, H. C. & Hollander, E. (1999) *Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University*, (Michigan, IL, Campus Compact).
- Bradley, R. L. (1997) Evaluating service-learning: toward a new paradigm, in: A. S. Waterman (Ed.) *Service-Learning: Applications from the Research*. (Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum), 151–171.
- Breathnach, C. (2004) *Changing Society and the Challenges this Poses to 'The University'* (Dublin, Centre for Non-Profit Management, School of Business Studies, Trinity College Dublin).
- Brew, A. & Boud, D. (1996) Preparing for new academic roles: a holistic approach to development. *The International Journal for Academic Development*, 1(2), 17-25.
- Bringer, J. D., *et al.* (2004) Maximizing transparency in a doctoral thesis: the complexities of writing about the use of QSR\*NVIVO within a grounded theory study. *Qualitative Research*, 4(2), 247-265.
- Bringle, R. G., *et al.* (2009) Partnerships in service learning and civic engagement. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service Learning & Civic Engagement*, 1(1), 1-20.
- Bringle, R. G. & Hatcher, J. A. (1996a) Implementing service learning in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 67 (2), 221-239.
- Bringle, R. G. & Hatcher, J. A. (1999) Reflection in service learning: making meaning of experience. *Educational Horizons*, 77(4), 179-185.
- Bringle, R. G., *et al.* (2006) Sustaining civic engagement: faculty development, roles, and rewards. *Metropolitan Universities*, 17(1), 62-74.
- Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (2007) *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, (2 edn) (Maidenhead, Open University Press).
- Brookfield, S. D. (1987) *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults To Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Brookfield, S. D. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Brookfield, S. D. (2008) Radical questioning on the long walk to freedom: Nelson Mandela and the practice of critical reflection. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 58(2), 95-109.
- Brookfield, S. D. & Preskill, S. (1999) *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, (Buckingham, UK, Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press).
- Brown, D. & Tandom, R. (1978) Interviews as catalysts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 63(2), 197-205.
- Brukardt, M. J., *et al.* (2004) *Calling the Question: Is Higher Education Ready to Commit to Community Engagement? A Wingspread Statement*. Report for University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Milwaukee, WI).
- Bryman, A. & Burgess, R. (Eds.) (1994) *Analysing Quantitative Data*, (London, Routledge).

## Bibliography

- Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, (New York, Routledge).
- Burrows, D. E. (1995) The nurse teacher's role in the promotion of reflective practice. *Nurse Education Today*, 15(5), 346-350.
- Butin, D. W. (2001) If this is resistance I would hate to see domination: retrieving Foucault's notion of resistance within educational research. *Educational Studies*, 32(2), 38-57.
- Butin, D. W. (2005a) Preface: disturbing normalizations of service-learning, in: D. W. Butin (Ed.) *Service-learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan), vi-xx.
- Butin, D. W. (2005b) Service-learning as a postmodern pedagogy, in: D. W. Butin (Ed.) *Service-learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan), 89-104.
- Butin, D. W. (2006b) Putting Foucault to work in educational research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 40(3), 371-380.
- Butt, R. L. & Raymond, D. (1987) Arguments for using qualitative approaches in understanding teacher thinking: the case for biography. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 7(1), 62-93.
- Butt, R. L., et al. (1990) Bringing reform to life: teachers' stories and professional development. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 20(3), 255-268.
- Carlile, O. & Jordan, A. (2007) Reflective writing: principles and practice, in: C. O'Farrell (Ed.) *Teaching Portfolio Practice in Ireland: A Handbook*. (Dublin, Higher Education Authority), 24-38.
- Carter, K. (1993) The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-18.
- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Insider's Guide*, (London, Sage).
- Chowers, E. (2004) *The Modern Self in the Labyrinth: Politics and the Entrapment Imagination*, (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press).
- Clark, C. & Young, M. (2005) Changing places: theorizing space and power dynamics in service-learning, in: D. W. Butin (Ed.) *Service-learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan), 71-87.
- Clarke, B., et al. (1996) Reflective practice: reviewing the issues and refocusing the debate. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 33(2), 171-180.
- Clayton, P. H. & Ash, S. L. (2004) Shifts in perspective: capitalizing on the counter-normative nature of service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 11(1), 59-70.
- Clayton, P. H. & Ash, S. L. (2005) Reflection as a key component in faculty development. *On The Horizon*, 13(3), 161-169.
- Clift, R. T., et al. (Eds.) (1990) *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: An Analysis of Issues and Programs* (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Cohen, L., et al. (2011) *Research Methods in Education*, (7 edn) (New York, Routledge).
- Confederation of EU Rectors (2003) The Bologna Declaration: The European Higher Education Area Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on the 19 June 1999. In S. Bergan (Ed.) Strasbourg, Association of European Universities.
- Conrad, D. & Hedin, D. (Eds.) (1982) *Youth Participation and Experiential Education*, (New York, Hayworth Press).
- Correia, M. G. & Bleicher, R. E. (2008) Making connections to teach reflection. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(2), 41-49.
- Couto, R. A. (1982) *Streams of Idealism and Health Care Innovation: An Assessment of Service and Learning and Community Mobilization*, (New York, Teachers College Press).

## Bibliography

- Cowan, J. (1998) *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action*, (Buckingham, PA, Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press).
- Cowan, J. & Westwood, J. (2006) Collaborative and reflective professional development: a pilot. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 7(1), 63-71.
- Cranton, P. & King, K. P. (2003) Transformative learning as a professional development goal. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 98(Summer), 31-38.
- Cress, C. M., et al. (2005) *Learning Through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning Across the Disciplines*, (Sterling, VA, Stylus Publishing).
- Creswell, J. W. (2002) *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ, Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, (2 edn) (London, Sage).
- Cronbach, L. J. (1980) Validity on parole: how can we go straight. *New directions for testing and measurement*, 5(1), 99-108.
- D'Agostino, M. J. (2006) *Social Capital: Lessons from a Service-Learning Program*, (Parkville, MO, Park University International Center for Civic Engagement).
- Davis, M. (2003) Barriers to reflective practice: the changing nature of higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 4(3), 243-255.
- Davis, M., et al. (2007) *Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship*. Report for Taskforce on Active Citizenship (Dublin).
- Day, C. (1993) Reflection: a necessary but not sufficient condition for professional development. *British Educational Research Journal*, 19(1), 83-93.
- Day, C. & Leitch, R. (2001) Teachers' and teacher educators' lives: the role of emotion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(4), 403-415.
- Deeley, S. J. (2010) Service-learning: thinking outside the box. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11(1), 43-53.
- Dempsey, M., et al. (2001) Reflective learning in social work education: scaffolding the process. *Social Work Education*, 20(6), 631-641.
- Dempsey, M., et al. (2008) Introducing tools of reflective learning into peer supervision groups in a social work agency: an action research project. *The Journal of Practice Teaching in Health and Social Work*, 8(2), 25-43.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2005) The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research, in: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3 ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications), 1-32.
- Dewey, J. (1913) *Interest and effort in education*, (Boston MA, Houghton Mifflin Co.).
- Dewey, J. (1933) *How we think: a restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*, (Boston, MA, Heath ).
- Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*, (original work published Kappa Delta Pi) (1997 edn) (New York, Touchstone).
- Dey, I. (1993) *Qualitative data analysis: A user-friendly guide for social scientists*, (London, Routledge).
- Dickson, B. (2011) Beginning teachers as enquirers: m-level work in initial teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(3), 259-276.
- Diener, M. L. & Liese, H. (Eds.) (2009) *Finding Meaning in Civically Engaged Scholarship: Personal Journeys, Professional Experiences*, (Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publishing).

## Bibliography

- Directorate-General for Education and Culture (2006) *Higher Education and Democratic Culture: Citizenship, Human Rights and Civic Responsibility*. Report for Council of Europe (Strasbourg).
- Donahue, D. & Hale, A. (2007) Contextualizing Service-Learning in Teacher Education: Perspectives Across the Globe. Oakland, CA, Mills College.
- Dowling, C. (2003) New educational technologies: do they improve learning? *On The Horizon*, 11(1), 14-16.
- Driscoll, A., et al. (1996) An assessment model for service-learning: comprehensive case studies of impact on faculty, students, community, and institution. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 3(1), 66-71.
- Duffy, D., et al. (2007) *Lead or Follow: The Global Challenge for Irish Higher Education*. Report for Prospectus (Dublin).
- Dunlap, M. R. (1998) Methods of supporting students' critical reflection in courses incorporating service. *Teaching of Psychology*, 25(3), 208-210.
- Eddy, E. D. (1957) *Colleges for our land and time: The land-grant idea in American education*, (New York, Harper).
- Eisner, E. (1992) Objectivity in educational research. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 22(1), 9-15.
- Eliot, T. S. (1934) *The Rock*, (London, Faber & Faber).
- Eliot, T. S. (1943) *Four Quartets*, (New York, Harvest Books).
- Elliott, J. (1977) Conceptualising relationships between research/evaluation procedures and in-service teacher education. *Professional Development in Education*, 4(1), 102-115.
- Elliott, R., et al. (1999) Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38(3), 215-229.
- Ender, M. G., et al. (2000) Given an opportunity to reach out: heterogeneous participation in optional service-learning projects. *Teaching Sociology*, 8(3), 206-219.
- Eraut, M. (1992) Developing the knowledge base: a process perspective on professional education, in: R. Barnett (Ed.) *Learning to effect*. (Buckingham, Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press), 98-118.
- Esterson, A. (1972) *The leaves of spring: a study in the dialectics of madness*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Eyler, J. (2001) Creating your reflection map. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 114 (Summer), 35-43.
- Eyler, J. (2002) Reflection: linking service and learning - linking students and communities. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(3), 517-534.
- Eyler, J. & Giles, D. E. (1999) *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Eyler, J., et al. (1996) *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning: Student Voices and Reflections*, (Nashville TN, Vanderbilt University).
- Ezzy, D. (2002) *Qualitative Analysis: Practice and Innovation*, (London, Routledge).
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2004) *Reflective Practice in Action: 80 Reflection Breaks for Busy Teachers*, (Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press).
- Fear, F. A., et al. (2002) A model of engaged learning: frames of reference and scholarly underpinnings. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 7(3), 55-68.
- Fear, F. A. & Doberneck, D. M. (2004) Collegial talk: a powerful tool for change. *About Campus*, 9(1), 11-19.
- Fear, F. A., et al. (2003) Meaning making and "The Learning Paradigm": a provocative idea in practice. *Innovative Higher Education*, 27 (3), 151-168.

## Bibliography

- Felten, P., *et al.* (2006) Emotion and learning: feeling our way toward a new theory of reflection in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12(2), 38-46.
- Fendler, L. (2003) Teacher reflection in a hall of mirrors: historical influences and political reverberations. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 16-25.
- Fish, S. (2003) Aim Low. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 49(36), C5.
- Fish, S. (2004a) Why we built the Ivory Tower. *New York Times* (21/5/04). New York.
- Fisher, K. (2003) Demystifying critical reflection: defining criteria for assessment. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 22(3), 313-325.
- Flanagan, N. (2007) *Teacher in a strange land: yet more reflections on reflecting*. Available online at: [http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/teacher\\_in\\_a\\_strange\\_land/2007/01/yet\\_more\\_reflec.html](http://teacherleaders.typepad.com/teacher_in_a_strange_land/2007/01/yet_more_reflec.html) (accessed 18 July 2009).
- Fogarty, R. (1994) *The Mindful School: How To Teach for Metacognitive Reflection*, (Palatine, IL, IRI/Skylight Publishing).
- Fosnet, C. (Ed.) (1996) *Constructivism: Theory, Perspectives and Practice*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/knowledge: selected interviews & other writings 1972-1977*, (London, Pantheon).
- Foucault, M. (Ed.) (1997) *Michel Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth*, (New York, The New Press).
- Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, Continuum).
- Furco, A. (1994) A conceptual-framework for the institutionalization of youth service programs in primary and secondary education. *Journal of Adolescence*, 17(4), 395-409.
- Furco, A. (1996) Service-learning: a balanced approach to experiential education. *Expanding Boundaries: Service and Learning*, 2(6), 2-6.
- Furco, A. (2002) *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Service-Learning in Higher Education*, (Providence, RI, Campus Compact).
- Furco, A. (2003) Issues of definition and program diversity in the study of service-learning, in: S. H. Billig & A. S. Waterman (Eds) *Studying Service-Learning: Innovations in Education Research Methodology*. (New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates ), 11-29.
- Furco, A. (2007) Institutionalizing service learning in higher education, in: L. McIlraith & I. Mac Labhrainn (Eds) *Higher Education and Civic Engagement: International Perspectives*. (Aldershot, UK, Ashgate), 65–82.
- Furco, A. & Miller, W. (2009) Issues in benchmarking and assessing institutional engagement. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 147(Fall), 47-54.
- Garrick, J. (1999) Doubting the philosophical assumptions of interpretive research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(2), 147-156.
- Gelmon, S. B., *et al.* (2001) *Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Principles and Techniques*, (Providence, RI, Campus Compact).
- Generett, G. G. & Hicks, M. A. (2004) Beyond reflective competency: teaching for audacious hope-in-action. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2(3), 187-203.
- Ghaye, A. & Ghaye, K. (1998) *Teaching and Learning Through Critical Reflective Practice*, (Oxon, David Fulton Publishers).
- Ghaye, T. (2011) *Teaching and Learning Through Critical Reflective Practice*, (2 edn) (New York, Routledge).
- Gibboney, R. (1996) Service learning and commitment to community: exploring the implications of honors students' perceptions of the process 2 years later. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 25(4), 506-524.

## Bibliography

- Gibbs, G. R. (2007) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, (London, Sage).
- Gibson, M., *et al.* (2011) Reflective practice in service learning: possibilities and limitations. *Education + Training*, 53(4), 284-296.
- Giles, D. E. & Eyler, J. (1994b) The theoretical roots of service-learning in John Dewey: toward a theory of service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 1(1), 77-85.
- Giles, D. E. & Eyler, J. (1998) A service learning research agenda for the next five years. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73(Spring), 65-72.
- Giles, D. E., *et al.* (Eds.) (1991) *Research Agenda for Combining Service and Learning in the 1990s*, (Raleigh, NC, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education).
- Gillespie, K. J., *et al.* (2010) *A guide to faculty development*, (San Francisco CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Giroux, H. A. (1988) *Schooling and the struggle for public life: Critical pedagogy in the modern age*, (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press).
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, (Chicago, IL, Aldine).
- Glynn, L. G., *et al.* (2006) Helping each other to learn - a process evaluation of peer assisted learning. *BMC Medical Education*, 6(18), 1-9.
- Gould, N. & Baldwin, M. (2004) *Social work, critical reflection, and the learning organization*, (Aldershot UK, Ashgate Publishing).
- Gray, J. & Forsstrom, S. (1991) Generating theory from practice: the reflective technique, in: G. Gray & R. Pratt (Eds) *Towards a Discipline of Nursing*. (Melbourne, Churchill Livingstone).
- Green, A., E. (2001) "But you aren't white." Racial perceptions and service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 8(1), 18-26.
- Greene, M. (1995) *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Greene, P. (2006) Constructing meaning in student reflection: mediating learning with students in service-learning, paper presented at the *6th International Service-Learning Research Conference* Portland, OR, 12 October 2006.
- Grimmett, P., *et al.* (1990) Reflective practice in teacher education, in: R. T. Clift, *et al.* (Eds) *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: An Analysis of Issues and Programs*. (New York, Teachers College Press), 20-38.
- Grumet, M. R. (1988b) *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching*, (Boston, MA, University of Massachusetts Press).
- Grumet, M. R. (1990a) Voice: the search for a feminist rhetoric for educational studies. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 20(3), 277-283.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1981) *Effective Evaluation*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) Competing paradigms in qualitative research, in: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage), 105-117.
- Gursansky, D., *et al.* (2010) Authenticity in reflection: building reflective skills for social work. *Social Work Education*, 29(7), 778-791.
- Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and human Interests (J.J. Shapiro Trans.)*, (Boston MA, Beacon Press).
- Haddock, J. (1997) Reflection in groups: contextual and theoretical considerations within nurse education and practice. *Nurse Education Today*, 17(5), 381-385.
- Hall-McEntee, G., *et al.* (2003) *At The Heart of Teaching: A Guide to Reflective Practice*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Hall, S. (1997) Forms of reflective teaching practice in higher education. In R. Pospisil & L. Willcoxson (Eds.) *6th Annual Teaching Learning Forum February 1997*. Perth, Murdoch University.

## Bibliography

- Halton, C. (2010) Fostering reflective practice in the public service: a study of the probation service in the republic of Ireland, in: N. Lyons (Ed.) *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry*. (New York, Springer), 237-253.
- Halton, C., et al. (2007) Reflective learning in social work education: researching student experiences. *Reflective Practice*, 8(4), 511-523.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, (London, Routledge).
- Hammond, C. (1994) Integrating service and academic study: faculty motivation and satisfaction in Michigan higher education. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 1(1), 21-28.
- Harding, S. (1987) *Feminism and Methodology*, (Milton Keynes, Open University Press).
- Harford, J. & MacRuairc, J. (2008) Engaging student teachers in meaningful reflective practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(7), 1884-1892.
- Harkavy, I. (2006) The role of universities in advancing citizenship and social justice in the 21st century. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 1(1), 5-37.
- Hart, T. (2008) Interiority and Education Exploring the Neurophenomenology of Contemplation and Its Potential Role in Learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(4), 235-250.
- Hartley, M., et al. (2005) Putting down roots in the groves of academe: the challenges of institutionalizing service-learning, in: D. W. Butin (Ed.) *Service-learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. (New York, Palgrave Macmillan), 205-222.
- Hatcher, J. A. (1997) The moral dimensions of John Dewey's philosophy: implications for undergraduate education. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4(1), 22-29.
- Hatcher, J. A. & Bringle, R. G. (1997) Reflection: bridging the gap between service and learning. *College Teaching*, 45(4), 153-159.
- Hatcher, J. A., et al. (2004) Designing effective reflection: what matters to service learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*, 11(1), 38-46.
- Henry, M. E. (2007) *Reflection Matters: Connecting Theory to Practice in Service Learning Courses*. Available online at: [www.kon.org/hswp/archive/henry.htm](http://www.kon.org/hswp/archive/henry.htm) (accessed 16 March 2011).
- Hesse, M. (1980) *Revolution and Reconstruction in the Philosophy of Science*, (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press).
- Hicks, M. A., et al. (2005) From hope to action: creating spaces to sustain transformative habits of mind and heart. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3 (1), 57-75.
- Higgs, B. & McCarthy, M. (2008) The changing roles and identities of teachers and learners in higher education in Ireland: introduction, in: B. Higgs & M. McCarthy (Eds) *Emerging Issues 2. The Changing Roles and Identities of Teachers and Learners in Higher Education*. (Dublin, NAIRTL), 1-10.
- Hines, V. A. (1972) Progressivism in practice, in: J. R. Squire (Ed.) *A new look at progressive education*. (Washington, DC, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), 118-164.
- Hirschhorn, L. & May, L. (2000) The campaign approach to change: targeting the university's scarcest resources. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 32(3), 30-37.
- Hock, D. (1999) *Birth of the Chaordic Age*, (San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers).
- Holland, B. (1997) Analyzing institutional commitment to service: a model of key organizational factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4(1), 30-40.
- Holland, B. A. (2001) Measuring the Role of Civic Engagement in Campus Missions: Key Concepts and Challenges. *ASHE Symposium- Broadening the Carnegie Classifications' Attention to Mission: Incorporating Public Service*. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. & Raskoff, S. (1994) Community service-learning: promises and problems. *Teaching Sociology*, 22(3), 248-254.

## Bibliography

- Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1992) *The Manual of Learning Styles*, (Maidenhead, Peter Honey).
- Honnet, E. P. & Poulsen, S. J. (1989) *Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning*, (Racine, WI, The Johnson Foundation).
- Howard, J. (1998) Academic service learning a counternormative pedagogy. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, 73(Spring), 21-29.
- Howard, J. (2001) *Service-Learning Course Design Workbook*, (Michigan, IL, Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service).
- Hubbal, H., et al. (2005) Enhancing reflective teaching practices: implications for faculty development programs. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 35(3), 57-81.
- Hunt, C. (2011) *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 Report for Government Publications Office* (Dublin).
- Husu, J., et al. (2008) Guided reflection as a means to demonstrate and develop student teachers' reflective competencies. *Reflective Practice*, 9(1), 37 - 51.
- Hutchings, P. & Wutzdorff, A. (Eds.) (1988) *Experiential learning across the curriculum: assumptions and principles*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Hutchins, R. M. (1953) *The conflict in education*, (New York, Harper & Row).
- Hyde, A. (2009) Thought piece: reflective endeavours and evidence-based practice: directions in health sciences theory and practice. *Reflective Practice*, 10(1), 117-120.
- Illich, I. (1990) To Hell with good intentions, in: J. C. Kendall (Ed.) *Combining service and learning: A resource book for community and public service*. (vol. 1), National Society for Internships and Experiential Education), 314-320.
- Imel, S. (1998) Teaching critical reflection. Trends and issues. *Alerts*. Columbus, OH, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.
- Issitt, M. (2003) Reflecting on reflective practice for professional education and development in health promotion. *Health Education Journal*, 62(2), 173-188.
- Jacoby, B. (Ed.) (1996) *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Jacoby, B. (Ed.) (2003) *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Jain, A. & Ogden, J. (1999) General practitioners' experiences of patients' complaints: qualitative study. *BMJ*, 318(7198), 1596-1599.
- Jay, J. K. (2003) *Quality Teaching: Reflection as the Heart of Practice*, (Lanham, MD, Scarecrow Press).
- Jay, J. K. & Johnson, K. L. (2002) Capturing complexity: a typology of reflective practice for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(1), 73-85.
- Kelle, U., et al. (1995) *Computer-aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory, Methods and Practice*, (London, Sage Publications).
- Kendall, J. C. (Ed.) (1990) *Combining Service and Learning. A Resource Book for Community and Public Service*, (Raleigh, NC, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education).
- Kenny, M. E. & Gallagher, L. A. (2001) Service-Learning: A History of Systems, in: M. E. Kenny, et al. (Eds) *Learning to Serve: Promoting Civil Society Through Service Learning*. (Norwell, MA, Kluwer Academic Publishers), 15-29.
- Kerrigan, S., et al. (2003) The community as classroom: multiple perspectives on student learning. *Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum*, 14(3), 53-67.
- Kezar, A. & Rhoads, R. A. (2001) The dynamic tensions of service-learning in higher education: a philosophical perspective. *Journal of Higher Education*, 72(2), 148-171.

## Bibliography

- King, J. T. (2004) Service-learning as a site for critical pedagogy: a case of collaboration, caring, and defamiliarization across borders. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 26(3), 121-137.
- King, T. (2002) Development of student skills in reflective writing. *4th World Conference of the International Consortium for Educational Development in Higher Education*. Perth, University of Western Australia.
- Kinsella, E. A. (2003) Toward understanding: critiques of reflective practice and possibilities for dialogue. In D. E. Clover (Ed.) *23rd Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education*. Victoria, University of Victoria.
- Kinsella, E. A. (2009) Professional knowledge and the epistemology of reflective practice. *Nursing Philosophy*, 11(1), 3-14.
- Kolb, A. Y. & Kolb, D. A. (2005) Learning styles and learning spaces: enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2), 193-212.
- Kolb, D., A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, (New Jersey, Prentice Hall).
- Kolb, D. A. (1999a) *Learning Style Inventory, Version 3*, (Boston MA, Hay Group).
- Kuit, J. A., et al. (2001) Experiences of reflective teaching. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 2(2), 128-142.
- Kulesza, J. (2004) The Interpretation of the Magna Charta Universitatum and its Principles. Lodz, University of Lodz, Faculty of Law and Administration.
- Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage).
- Lachman, N. & Pawlina, W. (2006) Integrating professionalism in early medical education: the theory and application of reflective practice in the anatomy curriculum. *Clinical Anatomy*, 19(5), 456-460.
- Langer, E. J. (1989) *Mindfulness*, (Reading, MA, Addison Wesley Longman).
- Larrivee, B. (2000) Transforming teaching practice: becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice*, 1(3), 293-307.
- Larrivee, B. (2008a) Meeting the challenge of preparing reflective practitioners. *The New Educator*, 4(2), 87-106.
- Larrivee, B. (2008b) Development of a tool to assess teachers' level of reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, 9(3), 341-360.
- Lather, P. (1986a) Issues of validity in openly ideological research: between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange*, 17(4), 63-84.
- Lather, P. (1986b) Research as Praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 257-77.
- Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy With/In the Postmodern*, (New York, Routledge).
- Lather, P. (1993) Fertile obsession: validity after poststructuralism. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Le Compte, M. D. & Preissle, J. (1993) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* (2 edn) (London, Academic Press).
- Le Cornu, A. (2009) Meaning, internalization, and externalization: toward a fuller understanding of the process of reflection and its role in the construction of the self. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 59(4), 279-297.
- Leh, A. S. C. (2005) Lessons learned from service learning and reverse mentoring in faculty development: a case study in technology training. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 13(1), 25-42.

## Bibliography

- Leming, J. S. (2001) Integrating a structured ethical reflection curriculum into high school community service experiences: impact on students' sociomoral development. *Adolescence*, 36(141), 33-45.
- Lewin, K. (1951) *Field Theory in Social Sciences* (New York, Harper Torchbooks).
- Lieberman, A. & Miller, L. (1991) Revisiting the social realities of teaching, in: A. Lieberman & L. Miller (Eds) *Staff Development for Education in the 1990s: New Demands, New Realities, New Perspectives*. (New York, Teachers College Press), 92-109.
- Lillis, S. (2005) Realising community development's potential in Ireland through practice, learning and connection. *Perspectives on Community Development in Ireland* 1(1), 6-19.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1991) The detached observer and the passionate participant: discourse in inquiry and science, paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, Chicago, IL.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995) Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(3), 275-289.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (Eds.) (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*, (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage).
- Lingard, B. & Garrick, B. (1997) Producing and practising social justice policy in education: a policy trajectory study from Queensland, Australia. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 7(2), 157-179.
- Lisman (1998) *Towards a Civil Society: Civic Literacy and Service-Learning*, (Westport, CT, Bergin & Garvey).
- Loughran, J. J. (1996) *Developing Reflective Practice: Learning about Teaching and Learning Through Modelling*, (London, Falmer Press).
- Loughran, J. J. (2002) Effective reflective practice: in search of meaning in learning about teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 33-43.
- Lyons, A. & McIlrath, L. (2011) *Survey of Civic Engagement Activities in Higher Education in Ireland*, (Galway, Campus Engage).
- Lyons, N. (Ed.) (1998) *With Portfolio in Hand. Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Lyons, N. (Ed.) (2010) *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry*, (New York, Springer).
- Macfarlane, B. (2005) The disengaged academic: the retreat from citizenship. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 59(4), 296-312.
- Mackintosh, C. (1998) Reflection: a flawed strategy for the nursing profession. *Nurse Education Today*, 18(7), 553-557.
- Mamede, S. & Schmidt, H. G. (2004) The structure of reflective practice in medicine. *Medical Education*, 38(12), 1302-1308.
- Mann, K., et al. (2009) Reflection and reflective practice in health professions education: a systematic review. *Advances in health sciences education*, 14(4), 595-621.
- Marshall, M. N. (1999) Improving quality in general practice: qualitative case study of barriers faced by health authorities. *BMJ*, 319(7203), 164-167.
- Mason, M. (2010) Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), Art. 8.
- Maudsley, G. & Strivens, J. (2000) Promoting professional knowledge, experiential learning and critical thinking for medical students. *Medical Education*, 34(7), 535-544.
- McBrien, J. L. (2008) The world at America's doorstep: service learning in preparation to teach global students. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(4), 270-285.

## Bibliography

- McCarthy, F. E. (2007) The effects of community engaged learning and teaching on instructors involved in academic service learning: learning through community service. *The Australasian Journal of University Community Engagement*, 2(2), 266-272.
- McIlrath, L. & Lyons, A. (2007) Driving civic engagement within higher education in Ireland: a contextual picture of activities from the local, in: L. McIlrath, et al. (Eds) *Mapping Civic Engagement within Higher Education in Ireland*. (Galway, AISHE & Campus Engage), 19-29.
- McIlrath, L. & Mac Labhrainn, I. (2007) *Higher Education and Civic Engagement: International Perspectives*, (Aldershot, Ashgate).
- McKnight, J. & Kretzmann, J. (1993) *Building Communities From The Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets*, (Chicago, IL, ACTA Publications).
- McLaughlin, T. H. (1999) Beyond the reflective teacher. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 31(1), 9-25.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.) (2002) *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Mezirow, J. (1981) A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 32(1), 3-24.
- Mezirow, J. (1990) *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*, (Jossey-Bass).
- Mezirow, J. (1990a) How critical reflection triggers transformative learning, in: J. Mezirow (Ed.) *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*. (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass), 1-20.
- Mezirow, J. (1990b) Towards transformative learning and emancipatory education, in: J. Mezirow (Ed.) *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*. (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass), 354-376.
- Mezirow, J. (1994) Understanding transformation theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 222-223.
- Mezirow, J. (1997) Transformative learning: theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 1997(74), 5-12.
- Mezirow, J. (1998) On critical reflection. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(3), 185-198.
- Mezirow, J. (2006) An overview of transformative learning, in: P. Sutherland & J. Crowther (Eds) *Lifelong Learning: Concepts And Contexts*. (New York, Routledge), 24- 48.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*, (Beverly Hills, CA, Sage Publications ).
- Mills, S. (2004) *Discourse: The New Critical Idiom*, (London, Routledge).
- Minh-Ha, T. T. (1992) *Framer Framed*, (London, Routledge).
- Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L. (2000) *Profound Improvement: Building Capacity for a Learning Community*, (1 edn) (Lisse, Swets & Zeitlinger).
- Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L. (2011) *Profound Improvement: Building Capacity for a Learning Community*, (2 edn) (New York, Routledge).
- Molee, L. M., et al. (2010) Assessing learning in service-learning courses through critical reflection. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 33(3), 239-257.
- Moon, J. A. (1999a) *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development*, (London, Kogan Page).
- Moon, J. A. (1999b) *Reflection in Learning & Professional Development: Theory & Practice*, (Herndon, VA, Stylus Publishing).
- Morton, K. (1995) The irony of service: charity, project and social change in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2 (1), 19-32.

## Bibliography

- Morton, K. & Saltmarsh, J. (1997) Addams, Day, and Dewey: The Emergence of Community Service in American Culture. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 4(137-49).
- Murphy, M., et al. (2010) Reflective inquiry in social work education, in: N. Lyons (Ed.) *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry*. (New York, Springer), 173-188.
- Murphy, M., et al. (2008) The transfer of reflective engagement from social work education into the workplace: a study of the value of scaffolded reflection. *Irish Educational Studies*, 27(1), 71 - 80.
- Murphy, T. (2006) The civic remit of educational practice in the Republic of Ireland: a review of the potential of service learning. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 1(3), 203-210.
- Nash, R. J. (2004) *Liberating scholarly writing: the power of personal narrative*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2003) Policies and Criteria for the Establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications. Dublin.
- Nelson, C., et al. (1992) Cultural Studies: An Introduction, in: L. Grossberg, et al. (Eds) *Cultural Studies*. (New York, Routledge), 1-16.
- Newell, R. (1992) Anxiety, accuracy and reflection: the limits of professional development. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 17(11), 1326-1333.
- Ng, P. T. & Tan, C. (2009) Community of practice for teachers: sensemaking or critical reflective learning? *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 10(1), 37-44.
- Noordhoff, K. & Kleinfeld, J. (1990) Shaping the rhetoric of reflection for multicultural settings, in: R. T. Clift, et al. (Eds) *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: An Analysis of Issues and Programs*. (New York, Teachers College Press), 163-185.
- Norlander-Case, K. A., et al. (1999) *The Professional Teacher. The Preparation and Nurturance of the Reflective Practitioner*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- O'Flaherty, J., et al. (2011) Educating engaged citizens: four projects from Ireland. *Education + Training*, 53(4), 267 - 283.
- Ó Donnchadha, B. (2007) Service-learning, so what?, in: L. McIlrath, et al. (Eds) *Mapping Civic Engagement within Higher Education in Ireland*. (Galway, AISHE & Campus Engage), 192-201.
- O'Farrell, C. (2008) Writing identity through the Educational Developers in Ireland Network (EDIN), in: B. Higgs & M. McCarthy (Eds) *Emerging issues 2. The Changing Roles and Identities of Teachers and Learners in Higher Education* (Dublin, NAIRTL), 11-22.
- OECD (2004) *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. National Policies for Education: Review of Higher Education in Ireland Examiners Report*. Report for OECD EDU/EC.
- Osterman, K. F. & Kottkamp, R. B. (1993) *Reflective Practice for Educators: Improving Schooling Through Professional Development*, (Newbury Park, CA, Corwin Press).
- Ottesen, E. (2007) Reflection in teacher education. *Reflective Practice*, 8(1), 31-46.
- Owen, H. (2000) *The Power of Spirit: How Organizations Transform*, (San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler Publishers).
- Palmer, P. (1987) Community, conflict and ways of knowing: ways to deepen our educational agenda. *Change*, 19(5), 20-25.
- Palmer, P. (1998) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, (1 edn) (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Palmer, P. (2004) *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).

## Bibliography

- Palmer, P. (2007) *The Courage To Teach Guide For Reflection And Renewal*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Parlett, M. & Hamilton, D. (1976) Evaluation as illumination, in: D. Tawney (Ed.) *Curriculum Evaluation Today:Trends and implications*. (London, Macmillan), 84-101.
- Piaget, J. & Inhelder, B. (1969) *The Psychology of the Child*, (London, Routledge).
- Pinar, W., et al. (1995) *Understanding Curriculum. An Introduction to the Study of Historical and Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*, (New York, Peter Lang Publishing).
- Poutiatine, M. (2005) Finding Common Threads: Selected Summary of the Research on the Courage to Teach Program and the Process of Teacher Formation. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Pribbenow, D. A. (2005) The impact of service-learning pedagogy on faculty teaching and learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 11(2), 25-38.
- Procee, H. (2006) Reflection in education: a kantian epistemology. *Educational Theory*, 56(3), 237-253.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995a) Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-65.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995b) Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 28(4), 664-683.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, (New York, Simon & Schuster).
- Quine, W. V. O. (1953) On what there is, in: W. V. O. Quine (Ed.) *From a Logical Point of View*. (Boston, MA, Harvard University Press).
- Raelin, J. A. (2002) 'I don't have time to think!' versus the art of reflective practice. *Reflections*, 4(1), 66-79.
- Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (Eds.) (1981) *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*, (New York, Wiley).
- Rectors of European Universities (1988) *The Magna Charta Universitatum*. Available online at: <http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv.php?pid=bibliuned:REDUE-2007-12-3100&dsID=PDF> (accessed 23 April 2011).
- Reed, J. & Koliba, C. (1995) *Facilitating Reflection: A Manual for Leaders and Educators*. Available online at: [http://www.uvm.edu/%7Edewey/reflection\\_manual/](http://www.uvm.edu/%7Edewey/reflection_manual/) (accessed 5 July 2007).
- Rhoads, R. A. & Howard, J. P. F. (Eds.) (1998) *Academic Service Learning: A Pedagogy of Action and Reflection*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass ).
- Richards, L. (2009) *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*, (London, Sage).
- Richardson, V. (1994) Conducting research on practice. *Educational Researcher*, 23(5), 5-10.
- Rocheleau, J. (2004) Theoretical roots of service-learning: progressive education and the development of citizenship, in: B. W. Speck (Ed.) *Service-learning: History, Theory, and Issues*. (Westport, CT, Praeger), 3-21.
- Rodgers, C. (2002) Defining reflection: another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record*, 104(4), 842-866.
- Rogers, R. (2001) Reflection in higher education: a concept analysis. *Innovative Higher Education*, 26(1), 37-57.
- Ross, D. D. (1990) Programmatic structures for the preparation of reflective teachers, in: R. T. Clift, et al. (Eds) *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: An Analysis of Issues and Programs*. (New York, Teachers College Press), 97-118.
- Rowan, J. (1981) 'The Leaves of Spring' by Aaron Esterson: an appreciation in: P. Reason & J. Rowan (Eds) *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Inquiry*. (New York, Wiley), 167-171.

## Bibliography

- Rubin, A. (2008) *Practitioner's Guide to Using Research for Evidence-Based Practice*, (Hoboken, NJ, Wiley).
- Russell, T. (2005) Can reflective practice be taught? *Reflective Practice*, 6(2), 199-204.
- Savage, M. C. (1988) Can ethnographic narrative be a neighborly act? *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 19(1), 3-19.
- Schnaubelt, T. & Statham, A. (2007) Faculty perceptions of service as a mode of scholarship. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 14(1), 18-31.
- Schofield, J. W. (2002) Increasing the generalizability of qualitative research, in: A. M. Huberman & M. B. Miles (Eds) *The qualitative researcher's companion*. (Thousand Oaks CA, Sage), 171-203.
- Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, (New York, Basic Books).
- Schön, D. (1996) From technical rationality to reflection-in-action, in: R. Edwards, et al. (Eds) *Boundaries of Adult Learning*. (London, Routledge), 8-31.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1994) Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry, in: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage), 118-137.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1995) Farewell to criteriology, paper presented at the *Quality in Human Inquiry Conference*, University of Bath, 22 March 1995.
- Scott, R. A. (2003) The university as a moral force. *On The Horizon*, 11(2), 32-36.
- Seidman, I. (1998) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- Senbel, M. (2009) From service for meaning to meaningful service, in: M. L. Diener & H. Liese (Eds) *Finding Meaning in Civically Engaged Scholarship: Personal Journeys, Professional Experiences*. (Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publishing), 11-19.
- Sheehy, M. (2004) Between a thick and a thin place: changing literacy practices, in: K. M. Leander & M. Sheehy (Eds) *Spatializing Literacy Research and Practice*. (New York, Peter Lang), 91-114.
- Shockley, K. G., et al. (2008) Singing in my own voice: teachers' journey toward self-knowledge. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6(3), 182-200.
- Shor, I. (1992) *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*, (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press).
- Shore, C. & Roberts, S. (1995) Higher education and the panopticon paradigm: quality assurance as 'disciplinary technology'. *Higher Education Review*, 27(3), 8-17.
- Shumer, R. (2000a) Science or storytelling: how should we conduct and report service-learning research? *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Special Issue: Strategic Directions for Service-Learning Research(1), 76-83.
- Shumer, R. (2000b) Shumer's Self-Assessment For Service-Learning. University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, Center for Experiential and Service-Learning.
- Sigmon, R. L. (1979) Service-learning: three principles. *Synergist* 8(1), 9-11.
- Sigmon, R. L. (1996) *Journey to Service-Learning: Experiences from Independent Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities*, (Washington, DC, Council of Independent Colleges).
- Silberman, C. E. (1971) *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education*, (New York, Random House).
- Silcock, P. (1994) The process of reflective teaching. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 42(3), 273-285.
- Silcox, H. C. (1993) *A How-To Guide to Reflection: Adding Cognitive Learning to Community Service Programs*, (Philadelphia, Brighton Press).

## Bibliography

- Silverman, D. (2010) *Doing Qualitative Research*, (3 edn) (London, Sage).
- Simon, R. (1982) *Gramsci's Political Thought: An introduction*, (London, Lawrence & Wishart).
- Skilbeck, M. (2001) *The University Challenged: A Review of International Trends and Issues with Particular Reference to Ireland*, (Dublin, Higher Education Authority).
- Smith, J. (2008) *Evaluation of Circle of Trust Retreats*. Report for School of Education and Community Studies, University of Canberra, Australia (Canberra).
- Smith, J. K. (1993) *After the Demise of Empiricism: The Problem of Judging Social Education Inquiry*, (Norwood, NJ, Ablex).
- Smyth, J. (1989) Developing and sustaining critical reflection in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(2), 2-9.
- Smyth, W. J. (1992) Teachers' work and the politics of reflection. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29(2), 267-300.
- Sobus, M., S. (1995) Mandating community service: psychological implications of requiring pro-social behaviour. *Law and Psychology Review*, 19(153-182).
- Speck, B. W. & Hoppe, S. L. (2004) *Service-learning: History, theory, and issues*, (Westport CT, Praeger Publishers).
- Stanton, T. (1990b) Service learning: groping toward a definition, in: J. C. Kendall (Ed.) *In Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service*. (vol. 1) (Raleigh, NC, National Society for Internships and Experiential Education).
- Stanton, T. (2008) New times demand new scholarship: opportunities and challenges for civic engagement at research universities. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 3(1), 19-42.
- Stanton, T., et al. (1999) *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on its Origins, Practice, and Future*, (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass).
- Steinberg, K. S., et al. (2010) *Service-learning research primer*, (Scotts Valley, CA, National Service-Learning Clearinghouse).
- Strauss, A. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. (1998) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. 2 ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Swanson, K. W. (2010) Constructing a learning partnership in transformative teacher development. *Reflective Practice*, 11(2), 259-269.
- Taggart, A. R. & Hessler, H. B. (2006) Stasis and the reflective practitioner: how experienced teacher-scholars sustain community pedagogy. *Reflections: Writing, Service-Learning, and Community Literacy*, 5(1 & 2), 153-172.
- Tatum, B. D. (1992) Talking about race, learning about racism: the application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(1), 1-24.
- Taylor, E. W. (2008) Transformative learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2008(119), 5-15.
- Taylor, G. (1993) A theory of practice: hermeneutical understanding. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 12(1), 59-72.
- Taylor, J. B. (2007) What's the service in service-learning? Historicizing as a means of understanding, in: A. J. Wurr & J. Hellebrandt (Eds) *Learning the Language of Global Citizenship*. (Bolton, MA, Anker), 5-31.
- Teddle, C. & Yu, F. (2007) Mixed methods sampling. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 77-100.
- Thomas, D. R. (2006) A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237-246.

## Bibliography

- Tierney, W. G. (1993) Introduction: developing archives of resistance: speak, memory, in: D. McLaughlin & W. G. Tierney (Eds) *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and the Process of Educational Change*. (New York, Routledge), 1-8.
- Tierney, W. G. (1994) On method and hope, in: A. Gitlin (Ed.) *Power and Method: Political Activism and Educational Research*. (New York, Routledge), 97-115.
- Toole, J. & Toole, P. (1995) Reflection as a tool for turning service experiences into learning experiences, in: C. W. Kinsley & K. McPherson (Eds) *Enriching the Curriculum Through Service Learning*. (Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).
- Trowler, P. (2001) Captured by the discourse? The socially constitutive power of new higher education discourse in the UK. *Organization*, 8(2), 183-201.
- Tuohy, D. (1999) *The Inner World of Teaching: Exploring Assumptions*, (London, Falmer Press).
- United Nations (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In United Nations General Assembly (Ed.) *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly*. New York, UN.
- unknown (2010) *Northwest Academy Reflection Toolkit* Available online at: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/615/nwtoolkit.pdf> (accessed 12 December 2010).
- Valli, L. (Ed.) (1992) *Reflective Teacher Education: Cases and Critiques*, (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press).
- Valli, L. (1997) Listening to Other Voices: A Description of Teacher Reflection in the United States. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 72(1), 67-88.
- van der Mescht, H. (1999) Poetry, phenomenology, and “reality”. *Conference on Qualitative Research*. Johannesburg, South Africa, Rand Africaans University.
- van Manen, M. (1991) *The Tact of Teaching: The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness*, (New York, State University of New York Press).
- Welch, M. (1999) The ABCs of reflection: a template for students and instructors to implement written reflection in service-learning. *National Society for Experiential Education Quarterly*, 25(1), 23-25.
- Welch, M. (2006) Service-learning as deeper education. *Service-Learning Academy*. Athlone, Ireland, National University of Ireland, Galway.
- Welch, M. (2009a) Introduction: the journey, in: M. L. Diener & H. Liese (Eds) *Finding Meaning in Civically Engaged Scholarship: Personal Journeys, Professional Experiences*. (Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publishing), ix - xvi.
- Welch, M. (2009b) The knock on the door, in: M. L. Diener & H. Liese (Eds) *Finding Meaning in Civically Engaged Scholarship: Personal Journeys, Professional Experiences*. (Charlotte, NC, Information Age Publishing), 29-37.
- Welch, M. (2010) Shedding light on the shadow-side of reflection in service-learning. *Journal of College & Character*, 11(3), 1-6.
- Welch, M. & James, R. C. (2007) An investigation on the impact of a guided reflection technique in service-learning courses to prepare special educators. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 30(4), 276-285.
- Wellington, B. & Austin, P. (1996) Orientation to reflective practice. *Educational Research*, 38(3), 307-316.
- Wenger, E., et al. (2002) *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide To Managing Knowledge*, (Boston, MA, Harvard Business School Press).
- Wenger, E. & Snyder, W. M. (2000) Communities of practice: the organizational fronteer. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(1), 139-145.

## Bibliography

- Wheatley, M. (2002) *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*, (San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler).
- Whitney, B. C. & Clayton, P. H. (2011) Research on and through reflection in international service learning, in: R. G. Bringle, et al. (Eds) *International Service Learning: Conceptual Frameworks and Research*. (Sterling VA, Stylus Publishing), 145-190.
- Wildman, T. M., et al. (1990) Promoting reflective practice among beginning and experienced teachers, in: R. T. Clift, et al. (Eds) *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education: An Analysis of Issues and Programs*. (New York, Teachers College Press), 139-162.
- Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (1991) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*, (New York, Teachers College Press).
- York-Barr, J., et al. (2006) *Reflective Practice to Improve Schools: An Action Guide for Educators*, (Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press).
- Yost, D. S., et al. (2000) An examination of the construct of critical reflection: implications for teacher education programming in the 21st century. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(1), 39-49.
- Zeller, N. (1986) A Rhetoric for Naturalistic Inquiry. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Zieren, G. R. & Stoddard, P. H. (2004) The Historical Origins of Service-Learning in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries: The Transplanted and Indigenous Traditions, in: B. W. Speck & S. L. Hoppe (Eds) *Service-learning: history, theory, and issues*. (Westport CT, Praeger Publishers), 23-44.
- Zlotkowski, E. & Clayton, P. (2005) Reclaiming reflection, paper presented at the *Gulf South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement*, Cocoa Beach, FL.