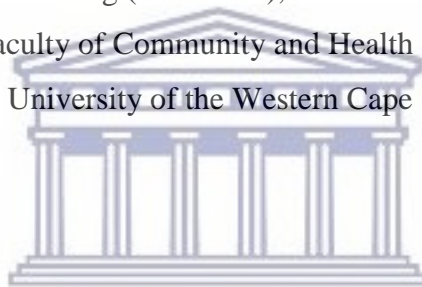


**REFINING SERVICE-LEARNING DEFINITION IN A SCHOOL OF
NURSING AT A UNIVERSITY IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Teboho Kenneth Ramasasa

2863632

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master of Nursing (Education), School of Nursing,
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences,
University of the Western Cape



Supervisor: Prof Hester Julie
UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE
Co-supervisor: Dr Ntombizodwa Linda

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i. Keywords

Definition

Higher Education

Higher Education Institutions

Nursing

Refining definition

Service-learning

Service-learning institutionalisation



ii. Abstract

Background: Service-learning links academic acquisition with community-based work within a partnership framework, which is underpinned by values such as respect, reciprocity, relevance and reflection. This pedagogy has its roots in the northern hemisphere, but has become popular with higher education institutions across the globe. According to Butin, service-learning became institutionalised in the USA after a critical mass of service-learning champions was reached in the 1990s. Hence, the majority of higher education institutions are now subscribing to the national organisation, Campus Compact, which is committed to broadening the footprint of service-learning in this sector.

Within the South African higher education sector, “service-learning” as a term became known in 1996. There is, however, wide-spread disagreement as to what is meant by “service-learning”, or exactly what it is meant to accomplish. As a result, education institutions must define it for themselves. A School of Nursing at a university in the Western Cape has defined service-learning during a baseline study that was conducted at the school and this particular definition is, therefore, regarded as a work in progress.

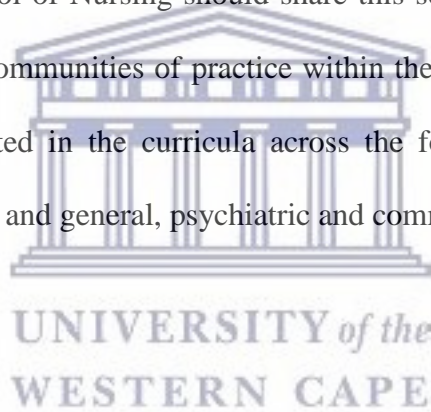
Aim: The aim of the study was to refine the preliminary service-learning definition developed during the baseline study by identifying the main concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning for this School of Nursing.

Methods: This study employed an exploratory-descriptive and qualitative research design using nominal group technique as its data collection method. This technique was used to reach consensus among the participants on the key concepts that should be included in the service-learning definition.

Results: The final voting for the five concepts to be included in the definition of service-learning were: reflective learning; socially responsive practitioners; structured community development; curriculum outcomes; and collaboration. The researcher used these concepts to formulate the following definition:

“Service-learning is a teaching method that follows reflective learning practice, which is based on real-life experiences and service, through collaborative relationships between the university, the community and service providers, in order to achieve a well-structured community development plan, whilst meeting curriculum outcomes goals and with the purpose of producing socially responsive nursing practitioners.”

Recommendation: The School of Nursing should share this service-learning definition and seek input from the various communities of practice within the school. This will ensure that service-learning is implemented in the curricula across the following nursing disciplines: nursing education; midwifery; and general, psychiatric and community nursing.



iii. Acknowledgement

I would like to thank God for the gift of life and resilience. Secondly, I would like to thank Ms Lorraine Fakude for believing in me and recommending me for the service-learning project. Finally, to Professor Hester Julie and Dr Ntombizodwa Linda, I thank them for their support and guidance throughout the research and writing process. I really appreciate it because this process has taught me a lot about research and writing.




iv. Declaration

I declare that this mini-thesis titled “*Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a university in the Western Cape*” is my own work and has never been submitted before. All sources I have used have been duly acknowledged in the reference list.

Teboho Kenneth Ramasasa

Date: November 2018



Ramasasa

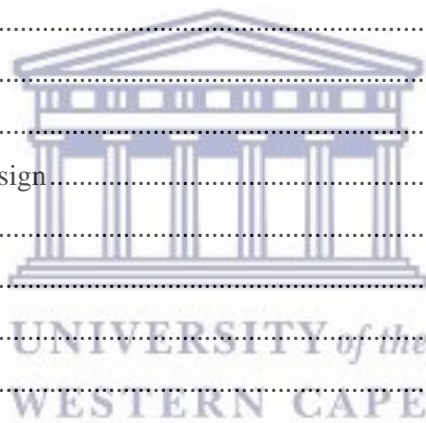
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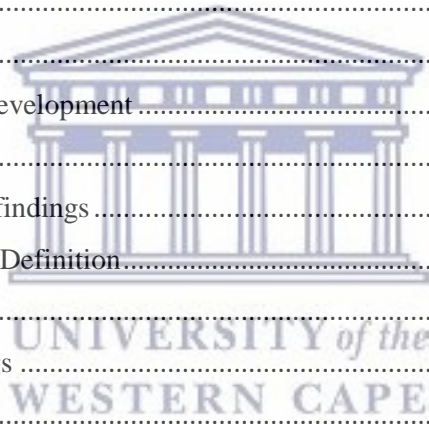
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v. List of Abbreviations

CCLC	Council for Citizenship and Learning in the Community
CE	Community Engagement
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CHESP	Community Higher Education Service Partnership
DoE	Department of Education
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
JET	Joint Education Trust
NGT	Nominal Group Technique
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SA-HE	South African Higher Education
SAHECEF	South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum
SA-HEIs	South African Higher Education Institutions
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SL	Service-Learning
SLCBP	Service-learning Capacity Building Programme
SoN	School of Nursing
SoP	School of Pharmacy

UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
UWC-CHESP	University of the Western Cape Community Higher Education Partnership



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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an orientation of the study. The background defines the concept “service-learning” before providing an overview of service-learning in the United States of America (USA) and in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). The problem statement, the research aims and objectives as well as the significance of the study are provided. Thereafter, outline of the chapters of this mini-thesis are provided, followed by the conclusion of the chapter.



1.2. Background

Service-learning provides a practical link or bridge between academic acquisition and community-based work within the framework of a partnership, which underpins values such as respect, reciprocity, relevance and reflection (Butin, 2007b:177). These tenets of service-learning are reflected in both South African and international definitions of service-learning. The hyphen between service and learning (service-learning) is intentional and an indication that academia is striving to reach some balance between the actual service provided by students and the resultant student learning (Flecky, 2011:2).

The Higher Education Quality Assurance Criteria for Institutional Audits (HEQC, 2004:26) defines service-learning in the South African context as: “Applied learning which is directed at specific community needs and is integrated into an academic programme and curriculum. It could be credit-bearing and assessed and may or may not take place in a work environment.”

Julie (2014:1839) defines service-learning as a type of community engagement (CE) geared towards developing reflective nurse practitioners, through a teaching and learning process, that sensitise nursing students to community development needs, which should be addressed within an equal partnership that is established among the university, community and service providers.

Service-learning has gained popularity with governments and higher education in countries like the USA and South Africa (SA), because of the inherent potential of service-learning to fulfil the societal expectation that universities should contribute to the greater public good (Butin, 2005; Butin, 2015; Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008:49; Julie, Adejumo & Frantz, 2015).

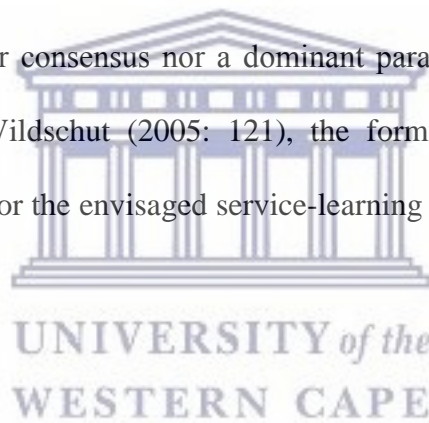
Hence, the majority of the American higher education institutions are affiliated to the national organisation, Campus Compact, which is committed to broadening the footprint of service-learning in this sector (Butin, 2007b). Campus Compact's national counterpart in the United Kingdom (UK) and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is the Council for Citizenship and Learning in the Community (CCLC) and the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF), respectively.

Service-learning emerged in the USA during the 1960s and 1970s (Stanton *et al*, 1999:135; Sigmon 1979:9) but it was only after 30 years that the country embarked on institutionalising service-learning in higher education (Butin, 2005; Furco, 2002). In addition, critical success factors for service-learning institutionalisation were developed by USA scholars (Furco, 2002; Furco & Holland, 2004, HEQC, 2006a). Within the South African context, however, the institutionalisation process was compressed into a decade since service-learning was relatively unknown in the higher education sector until the late 1990s (Larazus *et al.*, 2007; Mouton & Wildschut, 2005). Consequently, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Commission of Higher Education (CHE) commissioned various researches to

provide resources to higher education institutions which would facilitate the institutionalisation process of service-learning at these institutions (HEQC, 2004). This led to two seminal sources, which are: (1) *Service-learning in the Curriculum: A Resource for Higher Education Institutions*; and (2) *A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments for the Management of the Quality of Service-Learning* (HEQC, 2006a; HEQC, 2006b). Julie (2014) remarked that, despite the significant contextual differences between the USA and RSA, the critical success factors for institutionalising service-learning encapsulated in the self-assessment rubric of Furco (2002) are almost identical to those specified in the national policy guidelines. Though there have since been attempts by government to institutionalise service-learning, many scholars and practitioners claim that service-learning is still marginalised in their institutions in South Africa (Albertyn & Daniels, 2009: 412; Julie, 2014).

It is significant to note that the nurse educators at a university in the Western Cape Province, were championing service-learning in the nursing sector since 2002 (Julie, Daniels & Adonis, 2005; Julie, Daniels & Khanyile, 2007). Primary reasons for advocating service-learning pedagogy in the nursing curriculum were the claims related to developing better-educated students, who could then go on to become more critical-thinking citizens (Bheekie, Adonis & Daniels, 2007). Factors that influenced the implementation of the HEQC's service-learning policy guidelines in the undergraduate nursing programme were explored in 2014 (Julie, 2014b). This baseline study focused on the readiness of the School of Nursing (SoN) to institutionalise service-learning at an organisational and individual level. At an organisational level, the research indicated that the higher education institution (HEI) had successfully created an enabling environment for the SoN to institutionalise service-learning. However, implementation guidelines at school level were lacking. At the time, the biggest challenge was the personal readiness of nursing educators to implement service-learning pedagogy. The

proxies for personal readiness were service-learning related knowledge and the willingness to participate in service-learning training programmes to remediate the self-identified knowledge gaps. Most of the respondents reported that they were unaware of the existing service-learning definition whilst others indicated that the term was used inconsistently across the campus (Julie, 2015; Julie, Adejumo & Frantz, 2015). This conceptual confusion and the absence of an accepted definition of service-learning, adversely influenced the adoption of service-learning as a relevant teaching strategy in the SoN. Respondents also indicated that they needed information about national service-learning policy guidelines, as well as theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of service-learning. Some indicated a willingness to attend service-learning development training (Julie, Adejumo & Frantz, 2015). Since there was “neither clear consensus nor a dominant paradigm in service learning”, as remarked by Mouton and Wildschut (2005: 121), the formulation of a service-learning definition was a prerequisite for the envisaged service-learning institutionalisation at the SoN (Julie, 2015).



1.3. Problem Statement

The School of Nursing (SoN) has moved towards the implementation of service-learning in the undergraduate nursing programme. However, Julie and Adejumo (2014) reported that the SoN was not ready to institutionalise service-learning. The two main reasons cited by the school’s educators were (1) the knowledge gap related to service-learning and (2) a lack of guidance at the operational level of the SoN in terms of how to implement service-learning pedagogy in the curriculum. Hence, a framework to institutionalise service-learning in the undergraduate programme was developed (Julie, 2015). Two prescriptive elements were indicated for the service-learning implementation framework for the SoN, which include: (1)

developing a conceptual service-learning definition for the SoN and (2) developing a service-learning scholarship to overcome the knowledge gap related to service-learning (Julie, 2015).

Furthermore, Julie (2015) also recommended that the preliminary service-learning definition for the SoN be refined by a cohort of nurse educators who have successfully completed an accredited service-learning training programme (Julie, Adejumo & Frantz, 2015). In this regard, ten educators, comprising academics and clinical co-ordinators, were identified as potential service-learning champions in their respective disciplines or year-level teaching teams and funded to complete an accredited course on service-learning and community engagement in 2013 (Julie, 2015).

Since a common understanding is crucial for service-learning implementation, it was imperative for these champions to reach consensus on what service-learning entails in order to operationalise service-learning in the nursing programmes of the SoN.

1.4. Research Aim

The aim of the study was to refine the preliminary service-learning definition of the SoN which was developed during the baseline study (Julie, 2014; Julie, Adejumo & Frantz, 2015). Hence, the key concepts that should be included in the formulation of this service-learning definition for the SoN had to be explored.

1.5. Research Objectives

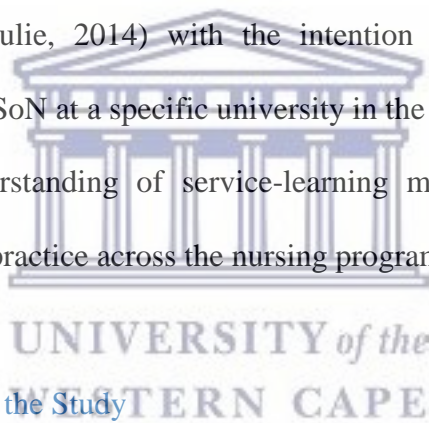
The following objectives were formulated:

- 1.5.1. to explore the nurse educator's understanding of service-learning;
- 1.5.2. to identify the main concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning; and
- 1.5.3. to formulate a final service-learning definition for the SoN.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the study used an exploratory-descriptive design that was embodied in a qualitative research approach. The nominal group technique (NGT) was used, which is a weighted ranking method that allows a group to generate and prioritise issues within a highly structured process that gives all participants an equal voice. The NGT was used to reach consensus among participants on the key concepts that should be included in the formulation of the service-learning definition for the SoN.

1.6. Significance

The significance of this study is two-fold. Firstly, it refines the corporately developed service-learning definition (Julie, 2014) with the intention of institutionalising service-learning pedagogy within the SoN at a specific university in the Western Cape. Secondly, it is hoped that this shared understanding of service-learning may facilitate the operational processes of service-learning practice across the nursing programmes at the SoN.



1.7. Outline of the Chapters in the Study

The thesis consists of the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

This chapter provides an introduction to the study and incorporates the background and rationale for conducting the research; the research problem statement; the formulation of research aims and objectives; the significance of the study, and, finally, an overview of the chapters contained in this mini-thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the reviewed literature is explored focusing on: the global background of service-learning in higher education (HE); service-learning in the South African context; service-learning at a specific university in the Western Cape; understanding service-learning; dimensions, benefits and challenges of service-learning; principles in organising and conducting service-learning programmes; and, finally, essential elements and reflective practice pertaining to service-learning.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology used for the study. The research methodology is discussed in terms of: the research setting; the research design; population; sampling; data collection; data analysis; and ethical considerations. The research design allowed the researcher to achieve the aim and objectives of the current study. The study used an exploratory-descriptive design that was embodied in a qualitative research approach to refining the existing service-learning definition in a SoN at a university in the Western Cape. The nominal group technique (NGT) was used, which is a weighted ranking method that allows a group to generate and prioritise issues within a highly structured process that gives all participants an equal voice. This technique was used to reach consensus among participants on the key concepts that should be included in the formulation of the service-learning definition for the SoN.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter the research findings of the study are presented. The findings of the study are presented according the steps of the NGT implemented in the study, i.e.: round-robin recording of ideas; preliminary voting and discussion of preliminary voting; final voting; and the formulation of a final service-learning definition.

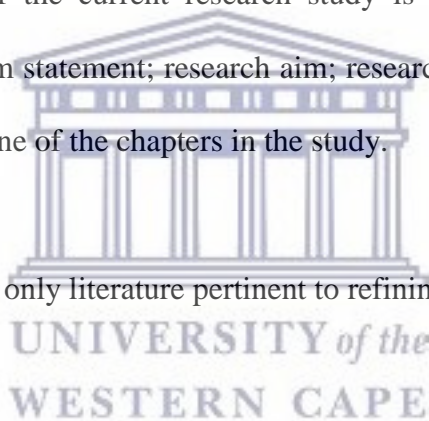
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Chapter 5 presents an interpretation of the collected data, along with an in-depth discussion of each of the objectives of the study. A summary of the study is provided and a conclusion is made based on the findings of the study. Limitations to the study are also outlined. In addition, recommendations are made based on the main findings of the study.

1.8. Conclusion

In Chapter 1 an overview of the current research study is described. It consists of the background; rationale; problem statement; research aim; research objectives; the significance of the study as well as an outline of the chapters in the study.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, only literature pertinent to refining the service-learning definition is discussed.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature review conducted on service-learning from an international, national and local perspective. Also, a historical overview of service-learning from the 1800s to the current century is provided to capture the changing context of engagement between higher education and communities. It is important therefore to outline the understanding of service-learning, dimensions of service-learning, and its identified benefits and challenges, which are all discussed in this chapter.

2.2. Background of service-learning in Higher Education

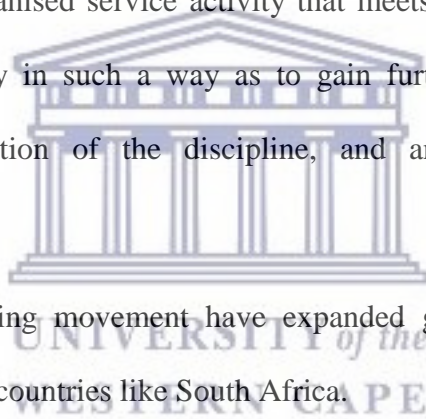
Titlebaum, Williamson, Daprano, Baer and Brahler (2004) claim that service-learning is rooted in socio-reform movements in the late 1800s. These were followed by the educational reform movement of John Dewey and other educational philosophers at the University of Chicago in the early 1990s (Titlebaum *et al*, 2004).

From the 1940s to 1950s, institutions of higher education in the USA continued to meet the needs of communities through the educational programme called the Co-operative Educational Programme (Flecky, 2011: 5). Establishment of the Peace Corps on VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) programme in the 1960s also furthered the development of the national civic and community service movement in America. This civic responsibility was promoted as service provision by colleges and universities from 1980 to early 1990 (Flecky, 2011). This societal contractual obligation was supported by Boyer's (1996)

statement that institutions of higher learning should apply their knowledge in tackling issues in their neighbouring communities.

Eyler and Giles (1999: 77) state that: “Service-learning is a form of experiential education where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems and, at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves.”

Connecting student learning with civic responsibility, Bringle and Hatcher (2004: 127) defines service-learning “as a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community goals, 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.”



Since then, the service-learning movement have expanded greatly in the USA (Flecky, 2011:6) and gained ground in countries like South Africa.

2.3. Service-learning in the South African context

Service-learning as a concept was introduced in South African higher education in 1996 as an outflow of the transformation agenda of the newly elected democratic government (Lazarus *et al*, 2007). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No 108 of 1996, signalled that the country’s aim was to establish a “society-focused democracy” (Perold, Patel, Carapinha & Mohammed, 2006). This aim became evident in the number of South African policies that mandated transformation in order to redress, and reverse where possible, the damage caused by racial segregation policies (Perold *et al*, 2006). This evolving understanding of the proposed transformational shifts was also reflected in the changing

terminology used in South African policy documents. “National service” was replaced with “community service” in the White Paper, 1997 (Erasmus, 2005; Perold *et al*, 2006: 55). “Community service” was switched to “community engagement” (CE) in order to emphasise the academic aspect of community service. However, the current trend in academia is to refer to “the scholarship of engagement” (Julie *et al*, 2007: 41).

With the introduction of the White Paper on Education in 1977, the South African government put higher education institutions under an obligation to become responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005; Lazarus *et al*, 2007); Perold *et al*, 2006: 59). As a result of this call for higher education (HE) to become responsive to societal needs, the Joint Education Trust (JET), in 1999, initiated the formal introduction of service-learning in the HE system in South Africa after a survey was conducted to determine whether the South African Higher Education Institutions (SA-HEIs) were engaging with communities (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005). The Ford Foundation made further financial assistance available to JET in 1999 to establish the Community Higher Education Service Partnership (CHESP) in eight SA-HEIs (Lazarus *et al*, 2007; Julie *et al*, 2007) with the specific aim of facilitating the implementation of service-learning in SA-HEIs (Mouton & Wildschut, 2005: 116; Erasmus, 2005: 4). Hence, CHESP worked collaboratively with national HE stakeholders, including the DoE, HEQC and South African Qualifications Authority, to develop a national network of service-learning scholars (Lazarus *et al*, 2007). CHESP established a service-learning and capacity-building programme (SLCBP) to equip potential service-learning champions and scholars, which comprised three events:

- (1) A two-year accredited graduate programme, which was created and implemented nationally, in collaboration with the Leadership Centre at the University of Natal.
- (2) Three national workshops with the first introduced at the launch of the JET initiative.

(3) Regional workshops hosted by JET in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town (Lazarus et al., 2007: 94–95).

The main focus of these workshops were to: (1) introduce HEIs to the HEQC's auditing system and its relationship to CE and service-learning; (2) provide an overview of CE and service-learning in SA-HEIs; and (3) introduce the HEQC's good practice and self-evaluation tools for managing the quality of service-learning (Lazarus et al., 2007:94-95).

As mentioned above, the CHESP worked with the SAQA, the national DoE, HEIs and the HEQC. These HEIs included the universities of Wits, Transkei, Natal (both Pietermaritzburg and Durban), Free State and the Western Cape. The HEQC developed criteria for the auditing of HEIs programmes that included service-learning (CHESP, 2003). In addition to this, the Evaluation Research Agency was mandated to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the service-learning courses implemented at the five HEIs that participated in the piloting of service-learning in academic programmes during 2001. By 2006, service-learning was incorporated into 200 credit-bearing courses across 39 different academic disciplines involving about 7 000 undergraduate and postgraduate students (Erasmus, 2005). These service-learning modules engaged students in activities that benefitted both the communities and the students (Bender, Daniels, Lazarus, Naude & Sutter, 2008).

In order to streamline service-learning in academic programmes, the HEQC provided stipulations (HEQC, 2004: 11) for higher education institutions to: (1) integrate service-learning programmes into institutional and academic planning via their mission and strategic goals; (2) adequately resource and provide enabling mechanisms to support the implementation of service-learning, including staff and student capacity development; and (3) review and monitor arrangements to gauge the impact and outcomes of service-learning programmes on the institution and other participating constituencies.

Generally, South African scholars are urged not to adopt American models of service-learning as the context of the USA differs from the South African context on various levels including semantics and socioeconomic status, amongst others. Some authors suggest that SA provides a vital context for understanding the premise of CE and service-learning (Bringle, Hatcher & Holland, 2007; Mouton & Wildschut, 2005). In 2007, the CHESP's funding initiative came to an end and the CHE took over the initiative of directing CE in South Africa, noting that service-learning appeared to be the most featured type of CE (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013: 86).

2.4. Service-learning at the University of the Western Cape (UWC)

UWC is a medium-sized, English-medium, higher education institution (HEQC, 2008) and is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research in order to respond in a critical and creative manner to the needs of the society in transition (UWC, 2014:2).

This university's CHESP office was established to develop best practice criteria for service-learning (Daniels & Adonis, 2003) and to facilitate the implementation of community-based service-learning programmes across the university, as well as to address needs in the underserved communities (UWC, 2005). It appeared that the full support that the CHESP office received from the vice-rector of UWC during that period was pivotal in advancing service-learning and CE at UWC. JET also provided financial resources for human resources and administration (UWC, 2005). The purpose of UWC-CHESP was twofold: (1) to establish criteria for the development of best practice in service-learning (Daniels & Adonis, 2003); and (2) to facilitate the implementation of community-based service-learning programmes across the university to address needs in the underserved surrounding communities (UWC, 2005). Between 2001 and 2007, UWC had 29 service-learning projects

supported by the CHESP, which placed this institution second on the list of universities with service-learning courses supported by CHESP (Larazus *et al*, 2007). The HEQC (2008) also commended UWC for the manner in which it has given effect to its commitment to social justice through teaching and learning.

In 2002, the UWC School of Pharmacy embarked on the development of a service-learning module in pharmacotherapy. It was reported that these service-learning experiences enhanced the skills, behaviour, attitudes and values of the pharmacy students who were involved (Bheekie *et al*, 2007). Similarly, service-learning was viewed as a teaching methodology that provided nursing students with an opportunity to develop the values of the profession (Julie, Daniels & Adonis, 2005). Nurse educators were urged to implement the HEQC's recommendation of incorporating service-learning with its reflective practice as a vital component of nursing education (Julie, Daniels & Khanyile, 2007).

Consequently, the SLCBP focused on these two schools, i.e. the School of Nursing (SoN) and the School of Pharmacy (SoP). The Heads of both schools committed themselves to the philosophy of service-learning and to the implementation of this pedagogy. It was also recommended that SLCBP become part of the capacity-building programmes for staff development in order to build a critical mass of service-learning scholars in the university (UWC, 2005).

The following definition captures the ethos of the UWC: "Service-learning should be based on an equal partnership with inter-sectoral involvement linking theory and practice through in service training and service to others and is based on an educational exchange through reflective activities and reciprocal learning. It should also have a credit-bearing component

and demands resources (financial and human) and is a learning activity that should receive appropriate academic recognition” (Daniels & Adonis, 2003: 2).

However, a study conducted within the SoN in 2012 reported that only 9% of the respondents indicated an awareness of the institution’s official definition of service-learning (Julie, 2014).

The nursing educators who participated in the development of the preliminary service-learning definition indicated that they needed information on the national service-learning policy guidelines, and expressed a willingness to attend service-learning training. It was also recommended that a tailor-made training programme be developed to address this expressed need with the aim of institutionalising service-learning in undergraduate nursing programmes (Julie, 2014).

This preliminary service-learning definition for the SoN described service-learning as “a type of CE, regarded as a teaching and learning process, which aims to develop reflective nursing practitioners who address community needs within an equal partnership between the university, the community and the service providers who share the same understanding” (Julie, 2014: 1839). Following the above recommendation and working toward the development of a service-learning definition, nursing educators and clinical teachers were enrolled and completed a short, accredited CE and service-learning course.

2.5. Understanding of Service-Learning

The explosion of service-learning publications since 2009 is an indication of scholars’ desire to support the development and theoretical basis for SL, according to Julie (2014, 2015). In this regard, it should also be noted that Sigmon’s (1994) service-learning typology is a useful tool to differentiate and understand the different foci of service-learning activities. Using Sigmon’s typology, it is possible to determine whether the focus of the service-learning

activity is on service provision or on the learning needs of the students since the primary goal of service learning could be student-centered, community-centered, or a combination of both. In community-centered activities the service provision would be the primary outcome of the service-learning activity, whilst the students' learning goals become secondary. However, should the focus shift to learning during service-learning, the students' learning goals become primary and service delivery to the communities becomes secondary. According to Furco (2002), if equal weighting is given to both, the hyphen in service-learning is used to indicate that the service provision is clearly linked with learning goals in the curriculum. Likewise, the absence of the hyphen is indicative of a disjuncture between service provision and the learning goals of students in the curriculum.

2.6. Features of Service-Learning

2.6.1. Service-Learning as Teaching Methodology

According to O'Brien (2005), service-learning is often used as pedagogy to bridge the gap between theory and practise. As pedagogy, service-learning is rooted in Dewey's (1916) experiential learning theory. The five areas of Dewey's theory related to service-learning include linking education to experience, democratic community, social service, reflective enquiry and education for social transformation (HEQC, 2006a: 17). Bheekie *et al*, (2007) points out that an approach where students' learning is geared towards alleviating societal challenges, it enforces a sense of social responsibility in future graduates and citizens. It also provides a platform for educators from which to explore the teaching and learning outside the traditional walls of lecture halls (Lategan, 2005). Service-learning as pedagogy is defined as "a credit-bearing, educational experience, based on well-structured, organized service-activities which are aimed at meeting both service needs identified by the local community and specific, matching learning needs from the students" (Erasmus, 2005: 5).

2.6.2. Service-Learning as Philosophy

Service-learning evolved from a philosophy of education that is embedded in social justice and social responsiveness in both the USA (Billings & Halstead, 2012:118; Butin, 2005) and South Africa (Department of Education, 1997). The philosophy is reflected in the definition of service-learning, the integration of service learning in the mission statement and the strategic plans of the HEI, as well any institutional reforms (Furco, 2002:5). However, the national review study conducted by CHESP indicated huge gaps across all South African HEIs (Lazarus *et al*, 2007).

2.7. Benefits of Service-Learning

Service-learning has numerous benefits for the students, faculty, institutions and the community (Billings & Halstead, 2012).

2.7.1. Student Benefits

Service-learning provides students with personal and professional growth by socialising them into their professions through direct participation and active interaction with their societies, whilst collaboratively working to address societal issues faced by communities. This also encourages more self-directed learning and an increased motivation to learn. In the process, the students get exposed to working with other disciplines and sectors which in turn builds confidence in working as part of multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral teams (Billings & Halstead, 2012: 190–191).

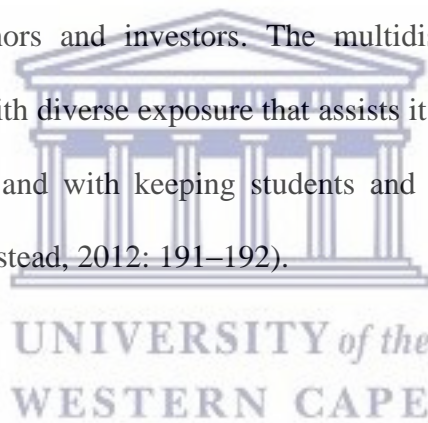
2.7.2. Benefits for Faculty

The faculty benefits from an increased commitment to using service-learning by acquiring rich research opportunities to develop best practice in the field, and by working in an

environment from which newly acquired community-based information can be generated. In addition, service-learning extends the scope of teaching and learning methodologies and contributes to the development of approaches in community engagement. Finally, being involved in community engagement and responding to community needs raise the status of the faculty (Billings & Halstead, 2012: 191).

2.7.3. Benefits for Universities

Embedding service-learning in the core functions of the university facilitates an institutional culture that is outward-looking. Hence, addressing community and societal challenges is central to the academic project of the institution (UWC, 2016). There is also an increased institutional visibility to donors and investors. The multidisciplinary nature of service-learning provides a campus with diverse exposure that assists it in regaining a strong sense of ethos within the community and with keeping students and the faculty more engaged in university life (Billings & Halstead, 2012: 191–192).



2.7.4. Community Benefits

Within the South African context, the White Paper (1997) clearly put HEIs under an obligation to make their expertise and infrastructure available for community service programmes “to promote and develop social responsibility and awareness amongst students of the role of higher education in social and economic development through community service programmes” (DoE, 1997:10). Community needs are addressed through engaging with the people in the communities via health-focused teaching and learning activities and programmes, which then bring about an overall improvement in health-related issues. This ultimately results in an increased awareness of community health needs and solutions (Billings & Halstead, 2012:192).

2.8. Challenges of service-learning

As much as there are benefits for the parties involved, service-learning also have its challenges. The implementation of service-learning is considered challenging for students and institutions of higher learning, which, according to Butin (2005), include pragmatic, political and pedagogical challenges.

2.8.1. Pragmatic Challenges

Service-learning can be highly challenging when it comes to implementing projects as they require time to plan and organise. Personnel and scholars who are unfamiliar with service-learning need to be convinced of the benefits of this methodology before they are willing to get on board. Not everyone is ultimately convinced and so this too can create delays, even conflict. Schools are also not always as tolerant of change as they need to be and networking skills that enable interaction with the “right” communities are often lacking. To ensure that the champions of service-learning receive the necessary “buy-in” from academics, researchers and service providers, these champions need the time to develop and facilitate their own delivery of effective service-learning programmes, but don’t always have it (Butin, 2005).

2.8.2. Political Challenges

These challenges are related to personnel having to negotiate the impact of implementing service-learning programmes and getting the support of politicians. People who have political power represent community interests to some extent and can therefore decline such intervention if it does not serve their mandate. Politicians can also be reluctant to buy into the idea of service-learning programmes and the implementation of such programmes as it challenges traditional teaching methods (Butin, 2005).

2.8.3. Pedagogical Challenge

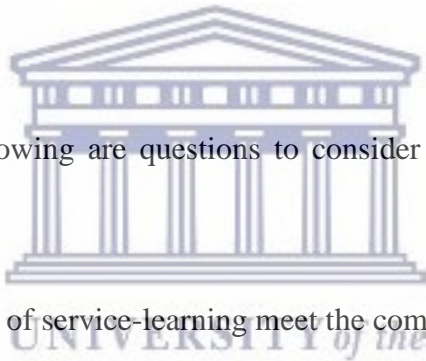
Service-learning challenges the dominant practices of a disciplinary field which may lead to resistance from academics (Osman and Peterson, 2013: 12). Furthermore, service-learning is also labelled as a “disruptive pedagogy” (Butin, 2005; Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna & Slamet, 2007) that can cause insecurity or resistance amongst educators and students who are not ready to become co-constructors of knowledge (Julie, 2014).

2.9. Basic Principles in Organising and Conducting Service-learning Programme

According to Heffman (2001), the following critical questions need to be explored by HEIs prior to implementing service-learning programmes : engagement, reflective, reciprocity and public promulgation.

2.9.1. Engagement

Within this category, the following are questions to consider when implementing service-learning projects:

- 
- Does the “service” part of service-learning meet the community needs?
 - Has a needs analysis for the community been conducted?
 - Was the community consulted?
 - Have the proposed boundaries been discussed with the community?

2.9.2. Reflective Practice

Concerning reflective practice, the following questions should be answered:

- Are there guidelines and support in place that encourage students to be mindful of their learning objectives?
- Are the services provided linked with the course work and are the reasons for and importance of providing the services being reflected on?

2.9.3. Reciprocity

In this category, the aim is to determine whether there is evidence in terms of the “service” part of service-learning. Is there a method in place to monitor the development and progress of work done by the students? Reciprocity means that all parties, individuals, organisations and schools, involved in service-learning partnerships function as both educators and learners. The participants should be viewed as colleagues rather than as servers and clients.

2.9.4. Public Promulgation

The most important question to ask within this category is: Was the community consulted about the student’s activities to be undertaken in order to address the needs of the community?

2.10. Elements of Effective Service-learning

The National service-learning Corporate (1998) provided general, essential elements to creating effective service-learning projects. These elements, such as the four basic principles discussed under 2.1.4, should be well considered and thought through in order to have service-learning projects that are successful and sustainable. These general, essential elements to effective service-learning should include:

- Setting clear academic objectives that can be applied as course work, coupled with skills from the realms of education, which involve students in a constructive engagement with knowledge and development.
- Engaging students in activities that are both cognitively and developmentally challenging.
- Making use of assessment methods as an approach with which to improve student learning, whilst also being able to document and evaluate how well students have fulfilled the course objectives and acquired the necessary skills.

- Ensuring that service activities have defined objectives and meet the needs of the university and the communities will have valuable subsequent outcomes on the learning and development of students and the communities they are serving.
- Promoting communication with communities and interaction among students, universities and their respective communities, and encouraging partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders, government and private service providers.
- Getting students ready for different aspects of their future work, including a defined understanding of tasks, time management, communication, knowledge and sensitivity to the different people that they will be working with.

2.11. Reflective Practice

Reflecting practice is an essential component of service-learning and usually begins when students reflect on what is to be learned from the service they are going to provide (Hoebeke, McCoullough, Cagle & St Clair, 2009). This can be done midway through or at the end of projects, taking into consideration the learning objectives. Students should, however, remain consistent in their reflection practice choice, once made, and apply it throughout their placement. When reflective practice is effective and optimally used, and service-learning programmes are conducted accordingly, it provides a number of benefits to the students, university, community and stakeholders (Goldberg, Richburg & Wood, 2006).

According to Chupp & Joseph (2010), if reflective practices are not utilised adequately, the educational experience will not be meaningful and will have a less positive impact on achieving the learning objectives. Reflection is a learning tool that serves to maximise students' highly individualised learning experiences by directing them to think of service-experience in line with learning outcomes that are linked to the course and curriculum (Billing & Halstead, 2012). The authors further assert that reflective practice combines

cognitive and affective activities in a manner that bridges the gap between service-experience and the course work.

According to Yoder (2006), reflective practice should be structured and intentional because structured reflection allows students a safe space to change perceptions in a way that will alter further practice, to use this experience in their future careers. The main objective of reflection in service-learning is to assist students to understand and articulate the learning that occurs during service-experience. Furthermore, facilitated reflective group discussion is highly recommended because it provides the students, the community and supervisors with an opportunity to interact, to learn from each other and to provide feedback, as well as to engage in reflective dialogue that is not one-sided. This enhances communication and increases the depth and breadth of learning (Billing & Halstead, 2012: 197). Students should be trained how to reflect and extract meaning from the service they provide. In this way, they can make sure that the learning that is going to take place is of value and speaks to the learning objectives. Most importantly, schools, according to Lautar and Miller (2007), need to decide on how they would like their students to go about reflecting; what will work best for educators, supervisors and the school; and how to monitor and direct students' reflective experiences in order to achieve the prescribed learning objectives. In general, students' reflective experiences can be practised by using a variety of media or methods like speaking, writing or multimedia.

2.12. Conclusion

This chapter broadly covered the literature review of service-learning internationally, nationally and locally. It covered the understanding of different definitions and basic principles of organising and conducting service-learning programmes. Essential elements of effective service-learning, reflective practice and the related dimensions, benefits and

challenges are also discussed in this chapter. Based on this, it is clear that any schools wishing to use service-learning should be able to define the term in a manner that will make sense to the implementers of service-learning.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is focusing on the following: the research approach; design; method; appropriateness of the design; the setting in which the study was conducted; the population; the sample used; the inclusion and exclusion criteria; the data collection method; and the data analysis; and the limitations of the study. The chapter also discusses the trustworthiness of the findings as well as the ethical considerations. It will aim to refine the preliminary service-learning definition of the SoN by identifying the key concepts that should be included in the formulation of the service-learning definition for the SoN. To achieve this, the following objectives were formulated, namely to:

- Explore nurse educators' understanding of service-learning.
- Identify the key concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning.
- Formulate a final service-learning definition for the SoN.

3.2. Research approach

This study followed the qualitative paradigm to understand the participants' viewpoints because subjectivity is valued in qualitative studies (Grove, Burns & Gray 2013:27; Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter 2011:20). The qualitative research is both exploratory and descriptive in order to collect rich data from the viewpoints of the participants.

3.3. Design and Methods

Exploratory-descriptive, qualitative research designs are conducted to deal with challenges in need of solutions (Grove, Burns & Gray, 2013). In this study, the challenge relates to the

difficulties that the SoN was experiencing regarding the envisaged institutionalisation of service-learning in the nursing programme. Julie (2014) recommended that nurse educators, who have successfully completed a service-learning training course, refine the preliminary definition since a lack of baseline knowledge was identified as a big challenge (Julie, 2014).

3.3.1. Exploratory design

The researcher employed this design because, although it does not give the final answers to the question (Brown, Suter & Churchill 2013), it was very helpful in gaining a better understanding of the knowledge and insight of the participants, together with their reasoning as to why these concepts should be ranked as the most important to be included when defining service-learning. Brown, Suter and Churchill (2013) also stated that this design can provide very rich and meaningful information to better understand how challenges are seen. Exploring the insight and knowledge of the participants, the researcher allowed substantiating statements from the participants to clarify the concepts they proposed. In this way, participants could share their understanding of the concepts and reach consensus on the five most important ones in order of priority.

3.3.2. Descriptive Design

A descriptive design clearly and in detail describes what and where the challenges are and the reasons for their existence (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011). This design, according to Grove, Burns & Gray (2013:26), allows the researcher to discover a deeper meaning and thicker description of what actually exists. In this study, participants had to develop a service-learning definition. The researcher allowed participants to interact with one another to enable them to reach consensus on the concepts to be included when defining service-learning. This

design allowed the researcher to present the findings of the study as complete because of the accuracy with which they were obtained.

3.4. Appropriateness of the Design

This study used the exploratory-descriptive design, embodied in a qualitative research approach, in order to refine the existing service-learning definition in the SoN at a university in the Western Cape. The researcher considered an exploratory-descriptive, qualitative research approach essential for the study for the following reason:

1. This research design addresses the underlying understanding of concepts that need to be included when defining service-learning by allowing participants to explain the concepts they proposed.

3.5. Setting

This study was conducted at a School of Nursing in the Western Cape in South Africa. The school offers both undergraduate and post-graduate nursing programmes. The residential undergraduate programme offers undergraduate nursing training to approximately 1200 students, in accordance with the standards and guidelines of Regulation 425 of the South African Nursing Council Act. Upon successful completion of this undergraduate programme, these students are registered as professional nurses in general nursing, community nursing, psychiatric nursing and midwifery. The post-graduate programmes include doctoral and masters programmes. The most popular Masters in Nursing programme is the structured programmes leading to registration as an advanced psychiatric nurse, advanced midwife, or a nursing educator (UWC, 2017).

3.6. Research population

Brink (2006) defines research population as the whole group of people that is of interest to the researcher. Moreover, the participants should meet the criteria in which the researcher is interested (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2006). In this study, the research population constitutes nursing educators (10 lecturers and clinical supervisors) working at a university in the Western Cape and teaching in the following nursing discipline teams: nursing education; general nursing; community nursing; psychiatric nursing; and midwifery.

3.7. Inclusion Criteria

Only the nursing educators who had participated in a preliminary definition of service-learning study and had successfully completed the accredited short course on service-learning and CE in 2013 qualified to be included in the study. These educators were regarded as key informants in terms of service-learning knowledge since they were equipped with the necessary theoretical background (Julie, 2014). They were also familiar with the NGT that was employed to refine the preliminary definition.

3.8. Sampling

Christensen *et al*, (2011: 150) define sampling as a strategy for drawing elements from the population. No sampling was done because all 10 participants were invited to participate in this study. Five participants responded which was sufficient for using the nominal group technique (NGT) for data collection, as 5–7 participants are suggested. The participants had participated in defining the preliminary service-learning definition and had also completed the accredited short course on service-learning and CE in 2013 (Julie, 2014). During the time of data collection, the portfolios held by the participants included: Head of the Undergraduate Programme; Clinical and Module Co-ordinator for psychiatric nursing; Co-ordinator of Nursing Education for Postgraduate Nursing Education; and Module and Content Developer

of Nursing Education for Postgraduate Nursing Education, who is also a Midwifery Speciality lecturer.

3.9. Data Collection Method

The nominal group technique (NGT) is a weighted ranking method that allows a group to generate and prioritise issues within a highly structured process that gives all participants an equal voice. It was employed to collect the data in order to formulate the service-learning definition, as it provides a constructive, problem-solving approach that permits equal participation by all group members (Dobbie, Rhodes, Tysinger & Freeman; 2004). The NGT process was audio taped to allow the researcher to verify the findings by immersion into the details of the NGT (Tappen, 2011).

Steps associated with the NGT allowed for a shared understanding of service-learning to emerge, which was instrumental in seeking consensus among participants regarding the key concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning. This technique is widely used in education and health (Dobbie, Rhodes, Tysinger & Freeman, 2004). Strong consultation and the democratic methods that are intrinsic to the NGT allowed the participants to:

- (1) Verbalise his or her respective understanding of service-learning.
- (2) Engage and clarify as to how and why his or her own understanding was either similar or different to those of other participants.
- (3) Provide justification informed by service-learning theory during the steps prior to the ranking process.

(4) Take ownership, through the consensus-seeking process, of how service-learning praxis was envisaged for the SoN.

The following steps of the NGT were executed in this study: preparation and focus; silent idea generation; round-robin recording of ideas; serial discussion of ideas; preliminary voting; discussion of preliminary voting; final voting; and formulating a final service-learning definition (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al.*, 2004). These steps are discussed below.

Step 1: Preparation and focus

This step entailed preparing the venue by arranging the seating, setting out the documents and stationery prior to the set starting time of the NGT that was scheduled for three hours. Before the NGT process began, the researcher introduced the moderator and himself explaining their respective roles, i.e., that the researcher would be facilitating the NGT process whilst the moderator would be recording the concepts, tallying the scores and display these on a flipchart in clear view of everyone. Thereafter all participants signed informed consent and confidentiality binding forms. To further enhance the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, the researcher explained that numbers instead of participants' names would be used to respond during the NGT process. As a result, each participant was assigned a number, e.g. Participant 1 or Participant 2 that was to be used during the discussions.

The NGT process was outlined and the researcher ensured that all participants understood the process that was to be followed to formulate the service-learning definition. Their attention was then focused on the task at hand by reading the research question.

What concepts should be included in the definition of service-learning so that service-learning is differentiated from the other forms of curricular community engagement activities in the nursing programmes of the school?

Step 2: Silent idea generation

After introducing the research question, the researcher explained what this step entailed. Participants were given 10–15 minutes to write down as many concepts as they could generate to answer the research question without any discussion. This step was conducted in silence as the participants were thinking and jotting down their concepts (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004).

Step 3: Round-robin recording of ideas

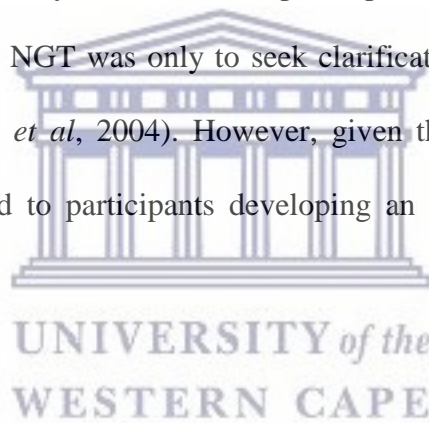
The purpose of this step was explained to the participants, namely that each participant was to share his or her concepts without any clarification or discussion (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004). Each participant contributed one concept or phrase per round. This process continued until no further contributions were forthcoming from the group. The moderator listed all the concepts or phrases on a flipchart. However, the facilitator did not allow any exploration during this step. This was to ensure equal participation and tolerance for any conflicting understanding of service-learning.

Step 4: Serial discussion of ideas

The researcher explained that the purpose of this step was to ensure that all participants arrive at a common understanding of the listed concepts. This was achieved based on the description of the concept provided by the original contributor (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004). Participants were encouraged to interrogate the concepts to develop an

understanding of the meaning assigned to these concepts. Each listed concept was clarified in order to create the initial master concept list (see Table 4.1). The researcher repeatedly inquired whether all participants understood the concepts and encouraged participants to ask questions for clarification. This provided a safe space for participants to work towards a shared understanding of the listed concepts regarded as essential for inclusion in the service-learning definition (Dobbie *et al*, 2004).

At this stage the participants already wanted to merge or change concepts as the intended meaning of the concepts became clearer to the group. This shared understanding of the listed concepts prompted the group to propose alternative concepts deemed to be more accurate as the intended meaning started to crystalize. This step was premature since the purpose of the discussion at this stage of the NGT was only to seek clarification of the concept's meaning from the contributor (Dobbie *et al*, 2004). However, given that the NGT is a democratic process, the researcher agreed to participants developing an overarching concept list (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).



Step 5: Preliminary voting

According to Dobbie *et al*, (2004), the purpose of this step is for participants to begin narrowing down the master concept list that was generated in the previous step (see Table 4.4). Hence, each participant was requested to rank the list in order of priority ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 representing the least important and 5 the most important. At this point, the moderator was supposed to tally the score and display the revised concept list. However, this and the next step of the NGT as described by Dobbie *et al*, (2004) were swapped around because participants democratically agreed that it would make greater sense to combine and rename some of the concepts based on the clarification provided by the contributors. They

were thus prompted to apply this shared understanding by adjusting the initial master concept list of 31 rather than by voting on a list that would not accurately reflect the group's emerging understanding of service-learning (see Table 4.4). The researcher constantly used validation to encourage all participants to work towards agreement, whilst ensuring that the focus remained on the end goal of final voting (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004). Participants therefore decided to first merge concepts that they understood to have similar meanings and replaced others with different concepts that captured the intended meaning more accurately. Table 4.2 provides a list of overarching concepts that was developed after some of the initial concepts were merged.

Step 6: Discussion of preliminary voting

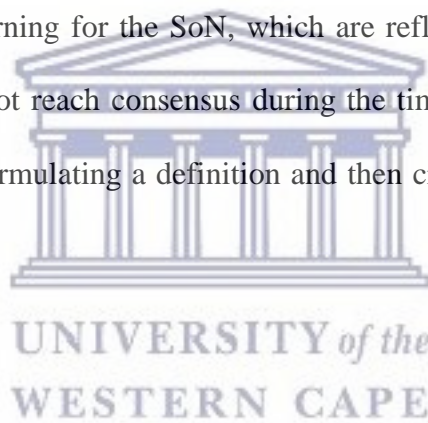
During this step, participants usually discuss and interrogate the master concept list presented by the moderator, based on the ranking of the preliminary voting (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004). However, since the discussion and interrogation had already taken place in the previous step, the revised concept list. As mentioned earlier, the researcher agreed to this modification because of the democratic nature of the NGT process as well as the fact that such research is known to be unpredictable and therefore does not necessarily follow a rigid structured process (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). See Table 4.4 for the six thematic groupings that were ranked the highest and thus constituted the final concept list to be included in the service-learning definition.

Step 7: Final voting

The final step involved indicating which five concepts from the six listed in Table 4.5 were regarded as essential for inclusion in the service-learning definition for the school. All six concepts were ranked using a scale ranging from 5 (for most important) to 1 (for least important). See Table 4.6 for the outcome of the final scoring of the five concepts that received the highest ranking and had to be included in the formulation of the service-learning definition for the SoN.

Step 8: Formulating a final service-learning definition

The list of prioritised concepts was used by the respective participants to each formulate a final definition of service-learning for the SoN, which are reflected in Table 4.7. However, since the participants could not reach consensus during the time allocated for the NGT, the researcher was tasked with formulating a definition and then circulating it to all participants for validation.



3.10. Data Analysis

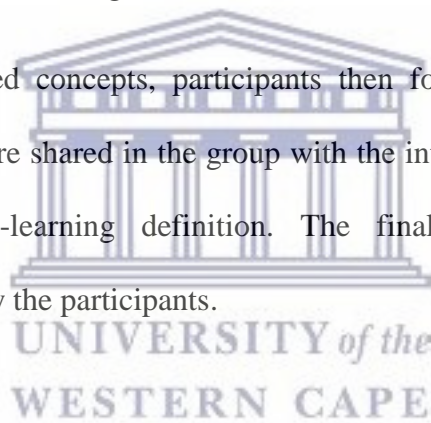
The nominal group technique (NGT) is a weighted ranking method that allows a group to generate and prioritise issues within a highly structured process that gives all participants an equal voice (Burrows *et al*, 2011). The participants generated, grouped, and synthesised the concepts themselves during the NGT process by following the proposed guidelines (Burrows *et al*, 2011; Dobbie *et al*, 2004).

The master concept list was generated by the participants themselves. Data reduction occurred when the initial master concept list (see Table 4.1) was condensed into six overarching thematic concept groups (see Table 4.2) based on an emerging common

understanding of these concepts by participants facilitated through consensus seeking discussions (see Table 4.3 and Table 4.4).

The moderator did the ranking of the concepts by tallying the scores allocated to each concept during the voting steps (Burrows *et al.*, 2011; Dobbie *et al.*, 2004) and ranked the six concepts from highest to lowest. See Tables 4. 5 and 4.6. Scoring ranged from 1–5. If the participants were of the opinion that the concept was crucial for inclusion in the definition, they would score it 5. A score of 1 would be allocated if the concept was regarded as being the least important for inclusion in the definition. During the final voting step, participants were given the opportunity to vote on five concepts that would be included in the service-learning definition (see Table 4.6) using the scale described above.

Using the five highest ranked concepts, participants then formulated their own service-learning definitions which were shared in the group with the intention of reaching consensus regarding the final service-learning definition. The final definition was circulated electronically for validation by the participants.



3.11. Trustworthiness

The main aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative study is to ensure that the participants' experiences or insights are correctly reflected (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). All four of the identified aspects of trustworthiness were considered in this study, namely credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability (Tappen, 2011; Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2006: 332).

3.11.1. Credibility

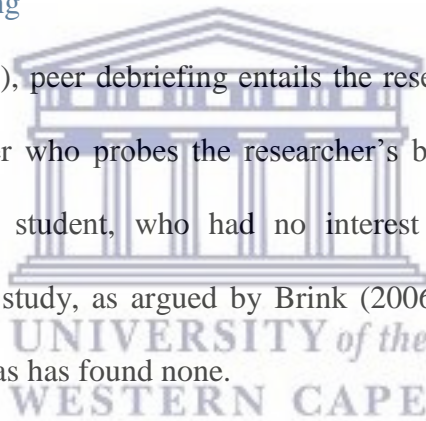
Researchers who wish to conduct qualitative studies should take the necessary steps to enhance data credibility (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2006). The researcher used member checking, peer debriefing and triangulation to ensure the credibility of the findings (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

3.11.1. 1. Member Checking

According to Polit *et al*, (2006), if the participants are given the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the findings, it improves the credibility of the study. In this study, the final concepts and rankings were presented to the participants for verification in order to formulate the final service-learning definition for the SoN.

3.11.1.2. Peer debriefing

According to Brink (2006: 18), peer debriefing entails the researcher being able to “expose himself to a disinterested peer who probes the researcher’s biases”. Hence, the researcher requested a fellow Masters’ student, who had no interest in the study, to probe the researcher’s influence on the study, as argued by Brink (2006). The Masters’ student who was enlisted to identify any bias has found none.



3.11.1.3. Triangulation of the findings

Triangulating the findings of the study with literature is important to enhance the credibility of the study (Brink, 2006; Tappen, 2011). The five concepts included in the formulation of a service-learning definition were triangulated with literature. The findings of the study are substantiated by literature in Chapter 5.

3.12. Dependability

According to Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter (2011: 19), requirements for using the technique of dependability are met when the researcher has fully demonstrated that the finding is credible. In this study, dependability was ascertained by keeping an audit trail

(Tappen, 2011; Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). All the materials used during this study were kept safe, including the audio-tape recording, flipcharts, and member checking. All progress was documented as it unfolded.

3.13. Conformability

Reflexivity is considered a strategy of conformability intended to establish trustworthiness (Tappen, 2011) by illustrating the objectivity of the data collected (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2006: 336). According to Speziale, Streubert and Carpenter (2011), reflexivity refers to a researcher's constant attempt to examine his or her preconceived ideas about the research. The researcher was vigilant not to contaminate the data collection process with his own preconceived notions about service-learning. He probed the participants' understanding whilst refraining from influencing their understanding of the concepts.

3.14. Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability of the study to be duplicated in a different setting because of the robustness of the study. However, Tappen (2011) argues that qualitative studies are not designed for the purpose of making a generalisation but rather to describe a phenomenon within a certain context. Hence, an audit trail and a thick description of the NGT process are provided.

3.15. Ethical Considerations

The study complied with the ethical practices as required by the university's Higher Degree Committee for the study of human subjects. The research was written in English and clearly explained to the participants in order to obtain informed consent. An information sheet (see Appendix F) was provided to participants that included information such as the aim and

objectives of the study; data collection methods; and potential risks to which participants might be exposed. Participants were also made aware of their rights to withdraw and withhold personal information, which was emailed to them so that they could avail themselves given their busy schedules.

The Ethics Committee of the institution provided the ethical approval for the study (ethical clearance registration number: 14/7/12), which is attached as Appendix A. The researcher was granted permission by the Registrar of the university and the director of the SoN to conduct the study.

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured that participants were protected from discomfort during the data collection process by respecting their autonomy and right to confidentiality (Brink, 2006). Their right to self-determination was at all times respected because they were informed of their right to accept or refuse participation, without penalty, should the NGT data collection method conflict with their rights (Brink, Van der Walt & Rensburg, 2012). Hence, the researcher was tasked by the group to formulate the final service-learning definition and circulated it to the group for validation.

The participants' confidentiality was maintained by using numbers instead of the participants' names to protect their privacy and identity during the NGT data collection process. In addition, all the data was kept locked up in a safe place in accordance with UWC's ethical requirements.

According to Christensen *et al.* (2011), anonymity refers to keeping the identity of the research participants unknown by ensuring privacy. In terms of the NGT data collection process, however, anonymity could not be guaranteed during the process since it requires participants to interact with one another. Therefore, nurse educators were required to sign a

confidentiality binding form, to ensure that private information was kept confidential in all research communication.

3.16. Conclusion

Chapter 3 presented an overview of the qualitative methodology that the researcher employed to achieve the aim and the objectives of this study. A thorough description of the NGT is provided to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents all the findings that were elicited during the NGT, including responses to the research question about which concepts should be included in a service-learning definition for the school in order to differentiate it from other curricular CE activities in the SoN. The results are presented according to the formulated objectives of the study, namely:

1. To explore the nurse educators understanding of service-learning.
2. To identify the main concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning.
3. To formulate a final service-learning definition for the SoN.

It should be noted, however, that these findings will be presented according to the steps of the NGT in response to the research question: *Which concepts should be included in the definition of service-learning in order to differentiate it from the other curricular community engagement activities of the nursing programmes of the school?*

4.2. Exploration of the nurse educators understanding of service-learning

The initial master concept list generated by using the contributions of the participants consisted of 31 concepts. Table 4.1 summarises the contributions of each participant for the different rounds as indicated by his or her participant number.

Table 4.1 Initial master concept based on individual contributions

Rounds	Concepts Contributed per Participant				
	<i>Participant 1</i>	<i>Participant 2</i>	<i>Participant 3</i>	<i>Participant 4</i>	<i>Participant 5</i>
1	Service provision	Learning objectives	Reflective learning	Social Responsibility	Community participation
2	Uplifting communities	Community entry	Needs analysis	Experiential learning	Engagement
3	Teaching and learning	Collaboration	Co-responsibility	Leadership development	Participation and agreement
4	Real experience	Appraisal of community issues	Curriculum expectation	Community involvement	Responsible
5	Service experience	Accountability	Reciprocal learning	Shared responsibility	Beneficial
6	No contribution	Ethically sound action	Structured community service	Growth potential	No contribution
7	Improving knowledge	Relationships	No contribution	Self-development	No contribution

The clarification of the meaning and the subsequent interrogation of concepts in the above table during the serial discussion of ideas resulted in the reconstruction of concepts based on a common understanding of these concepts. A list of overarching concepts, as presented in Table 4.2 below, was developed based on the common understanding that emerged among participants. Hence, some concepts were subdivided as per group consensus.

Table 4.2: Grouping of overarching thematic concepts

Structured service provision	community	Teaching and learning	Reciprocal learning
Collaboration		Leadership development	Community uplifting
Community entry		Beneficial	Real experience
Shared appraisal of community issues		Needs analysis Community uplifting Community empowerment	Curriculum expectation

Accountability	Ethical sound actions	Participation and agreement
Shared social responsibility Responsible students Co-responsibility Shared responsibility	Reflective learning Experiential learning Growth potential Real experience Service experience Life-long learning	Needs analysis Community entry

4.3. Identification of the main concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning

Participants grouped the above table into themes based on the emergent common understanding of these concepts by the participants in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Thematic grouping of concepts

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Experiential leaning	Collaboration	Shared appraisal of community issues
Reflective learning	Partnership	Needs analysis
Lifelong learning	Community participation	
Growth potential		
Real service learning		
Reciprocal learning		
Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Community uplifting	Curriculum expectation	Leadership development
Community entry	Learning objective	Shared social responsibility
Community engagement		Accountability
Structured community service provision		

The six concepts in Table 4.4 below were identified as the final master concept list and the understanding of these concepts are captured in Table 4.5.

Table 4.4: Final master list for ranking

Number of Concepts	Concepts
1.	Reflective learning
2.	Collaboration
3.	Structured community development
4.	Shared social responsibility
5.	Curriculum outcomes
6.	Socially responsive practitioners

4.4. Understanding of the concepts for inclusion in the service-learning definition

Table 4.5: Final ranking for inclusion in the service-learning definition

Concepts	Anecdotes
Reflective learning	<p><i>“The learning activities in SL must be accompanied by reflection. Students must reflect on the activities and services they are providing to the community.”</i></p> <p><i>“This reflecting should be structured and well organised to achieve learning needs of the students. Students need to be taught how to reflect and what to reflect on.”</i></p> <p><i>“This reflecting should focus on results in the sense of growth potential and self-development.”</i></p> <p><i>“The community should be involved in these reflective activities.”</i></p>
Collaboration	<p><i>“This concept can be linked with many other concepts like co-responsibility and shared responsibility. In order to meet the needs of</i></p>

	<p><i>the community and that of the students in terms of learning, there should be shared common goals that will facilitate working together with other stakeholders for a successful project, since service-learning is both providing a service and learning.”</i></p>
Structured community development	<p><i>“Structured community service or development aims at not exploiting the communities but rather on developing them. This development and service is well planned, structured and it’s influenced by the needs of the community and students.”</i></p> <p><i>“We need to empower the community to improve their overall status, including health. It is really about uplifting communities and providing them with skills so that they can take responsibility of their own lives.”</i></p>
Shared social responsibility	<p><i>“This concept can be linked with many other concepts like co-responsibility and shared responsibility. In order to meet the needs of the community and that of the students in terms of learning, there should be shared common goals that will facilitate working together with other stakeholders for a successful project, since service-learning is providing both service and learning.”</i></p>
Curriculum outcomes	<p><i>“SL projects should assist students to achieve the planned outcomes of the curriculum. The outcomes of these projects should be embedded and talk to the curriculum expectations, these same outcomes must be mandated to develop students in the right direction to achieve their learning needs, to develop a well-grounded professional with great leadership skills in long term.”</i></p>
Socially responsive practitioners	<p><i>“During such projects students can benefit from and develop leadership skills. This ties in with self-development because students will be challenged and will have to solve unanticipated problems to keep the project going.”</i></p> <p><i>‘Develops a well-grounded professional with great leadership skills in the long term.’</i></p>

4.5. Step 6: Discussion of preliminary voting

The master concept list for voting is shown in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Highest ranked concepts for inclusion in the service-learning definition

Concepts	Participants					Total
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Reflective learning	4	5	5	5	5	24
Collaboration	5	4	2	3	5	19
Structured community development	5	4	5	4	5	23
Shared social responsibility	4	3	5	4	1	17
Curriculum outcomes	4	3	5	4	5	21
Socially responsive practitioners	4	5	5	5	5	24

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4.6. Step 7: Final voting

The concepts that were identified for inclusion in the definition of service-learning for the school in order to differentiate it from the other curricular CE activities are summarised in

Table 4.7 below

Table 4.7: Highest ranked concepts for inclusion in service-learning definition

Concepts	Participants					Final Score
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	
Reflective learning	2	4	4	5	3	18

Socially responsive practitioner	1	3	3	4	5	16
Structured community development	3	5	2	3	2	15
Curriculum outcomes	5	2	5	2	1	15
Collaboration	4	1	1	1	4	11

4.7. Formulating a final service-learning definition

Table 4.8 below summarises the service-learning definitions formulated by the individual participants.

Table 4.8: Participants individually formulated service-learning definitions

Participants	Formulated service-learning definitions
1	Service-learning is defined as a <u>structured, community development</u> process and can be regarded as a collaboration between the university, the community and the service providers through means of <u>reflective learning</u> , to achieve <u>curriculum outcomes</u> and develop <u>socially responsive practitioners</u> .
2	Service-learning is defined as a <u>structured, community development</u> process, from which to achieve <u>curriculum outcomes</u> , by <u>collaborative</u> and <u>reflective learning</u> , so as to develop <u>socially responsive practitioners</u> .
3	Service-learning is a reflective, <u>structured, community development</u> strategy, by which to develop <u>socially responsive and reflective practitioners</u> within an equal <u>collaborative relationship</u> , between the university, the community and other relevant stakeholders.
4	Service-learning is <u>reflective learning</u> via <u>collaboration</u> and through <u>structured community development</u> , for the purpose of achieving

	<u>curriculum outcomes</u> , so as to develop <u>socially responsive practitioners</u> .
5	Service-learning is defined as <u>structured community development</u> through <u>reflective learning</u> in <u>collaboration</u> with the university, community and service providers in order to produce <u>socially responsive practitioners</u> .

The following final service-learning definition was formulated by the researcher after the validation process:

Service-learning is a teaching method that utilises reflective learning, which is based on real-life service, through collaboration with the community, service providers and the university, in order to achieve structured community development and curriculum outcomes that will produce socially responsive practitioners.



4.8. Summary of the findings

The 31 concepts from the initial master concept list were interrogated by the group for clarity and resulted in a condensed list of six thematic concept groupings. The five concepts ranked as the most important for inclusion in the final service-learning definition for the SoN were reflective learning; collaboration; structured community development; curriculum outcomes; and socially responsive practitioners.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the study from the master concept list developed by the participants. These concepts were then discussed in order to have a common understanding of their meaning so that they could later be scored, ranked and included in the definition of

service-learning. The concepts were later grouped according to themes, which informed the final service-learning definition.

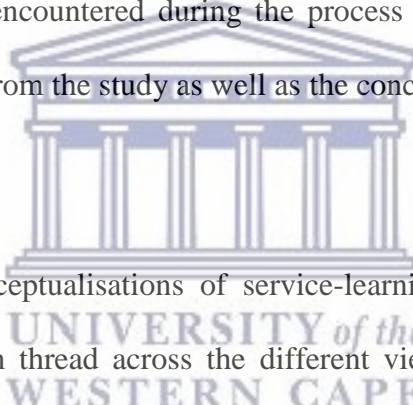


CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5 discusses the main findings of the study. Hence, the focus will be on the five highest- ranked concepts as they relate to the study objectives which include (i) exploring the nurse educators' understanding of service-learning; (ii) identifying the main concepts that would be included in the refined definition of service-learning as espoused at the school of nursing; and (iii) formulating a service-learning definition for the SoN. This chapter also covers limitations that were encountered during the process of conducting the study, plus recommendations emanating from the study as well as the conclusion of the study.



In spite of the different conceptualisations of service-learning globally and in SA, it is acknowledged that a common thread across the different views and conceptualisations of service-learning is the fundamental benefit that it has for students, facilitators and academics. Through service-learning, unique, contextual and experiential learning is taking place whilst practical work is done in the community. This real-life, learning context, through community-based projects and field trips, affords students the unique opportunity of facing the realities of bridging the gap between theoretical modalities of intervention and actual practice. In this way, the critical theory-practice dichotomy often characterised by the lack of integration between theory and practice and vice versa, which plagues nursing education, is somehow addressed with less difficulty (Jacoby, 1996).

5.2. Discussion of the findings: Concepts

The purpose of this study was to redefine service-learning according to how it is viewed by the teaching staff at the SoN where the study was conducted. Unpacking and defining service-learning was an essential activity to develop a critical mass of educators who had the necessary knowledge-base to implement service-learning pedagogy in the undergraduate nursing programme. Ten educators from this school had attended and completed a credit-bearing short course on service-learning at another university in the Western Cape. These lecturers were regarded as key informants because of their engagement with scholarly discourses related to service-learning during their attendance of the service-learning training course.

In Step 7 of the NGT, which dealt with final voting on concepts, five concepts were ranked as very important. This was an indication that these concepts should be included in the final service-learning definition. These concepts are discussed in turn below and include reflective learning; socially responsive practitioners; structured community development; curriculum outcomes; and collaboration.

5.2.1. Reflective learning

During Step 6 of the NGT, this concept scored the highest with 24 points, as shown in Table 4.5. “Reflective learning” was also ranked the most important with 18 points, during the final voting in Step 7, as seen in Table 4.6. This indicates that teaching and learning in service-learning are very important.

Reflection is a process and a learning tool that can aid in exploring, examining and understanding what students have to learn, how they feel while they provide services, as well

as how to achieve the module objectives (Billing & Halstead, 2012). According to the Institute of Personal Development (2015), reflective learning is a teaching and learning method that enables students to use their learning experience to assist them in the development of critical thinking since they have to critically investigate and analyse the experience and then link it to the learning outcomes of the course.

Given the fact that reflective learning scored 18, it is an indication that this aspect of service-learning should be given attention in the teaching process. According to O'Brien (2005), service-learning is often used as the pedagogy with which to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the context of addressing societal challenges. Therefore, service-learning provides educators with a platform from which to explore teaching and learning that take place outside the walls of lecture halls (Lategan; 2005; Osman & Peterson, 2013:7). This view was supported by the study participants who stated that such learning activities must be accompanied by guided reflection on the service-learning activities they are providing to the community. Authors such as Hoebeke *et al.* (2009) concur that reflective practice is a critical component in service-learning. They also state that reflection should start at the beginning of the service-learning programme or project to promote students' reflection on the overall learning from the experience (Ash & Clayton, 2004). Participants similarly asserted that reflection should be intentionally structured and well organised in order to achieve the learning needs of the students.

This means that students need to be taught how to reflect as well as on what to reflect so as to be able to extract meaning from the services they are going to deliver (Yoder, 2006). In this way, the learning that is going to take place will be of value and will speak to the learning objectives. Clearly, the processes of reflecting in and reflecting upon should provide students with a sense of growth potential and personal development. Structured reflection is therefore

an ideal method for teaching professional, degreed nursing students. Reflective practice allows students a safe environment in which to change perceptions in a way that will alter their future practice and enable them to use this experience in their future careers (Boden, Cook, Lasker-Scott, More & Sheldon, 2004). Involvement within a community in which students obtained their learning experiences via the process of reflection has both positive and mutual benefits. This viewpoint is supported by Billing and Halstead (2012) who argue that facilitation of reflective group discussions is highly recommended. Reflection as a teaching and learning approach provides the students, the community and supervisors with an opportunity to reflect, to interact and to learn from one another. Reflection does not only provide feedback to learners and the community, but more importantly, it allows involved stakeholders and participants to engage in a dual reflective dialogue. Such dialogue is conceived as that which enhances communication whilst also increasing deep learning.

5.2.2. Collaboration

“Collaboration” scored the second highest with 19 points in Step 6 of the NGT, and 11 points in Step 7. The Cambridge Advance Learner’s Dictionary (2005: 235) describes “collaboration” as two or more people working together to create and achieve the same goal. In the context of this study, it implies a need for different stakeholders to come together with the purpose of creating and achieving common or shared goals.

According to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (2007), collaboration is often used interchangeably with terms like partnership and alliance. Stanton and Erasmus (2013:71) state that it is important to collaborate when it comes to service-learning and emphasise the importance of partnerships as the basis for service-learning programme development and sustainability. The hyphen between the service and learning is intentional because the hyphen denotes equilibrium between the actual service provided and the student learning that is

taking place (Flecky, 2011: 2). In the current study, the participants also linked the concept to other concepts such as co-responsibility and shared responsibility. According to Gajda (2004), as cited in the Illinois Board of Higher Education (2007), collaboration is the ideal method for achieving goals that would not otherwise be attainable if stakeholders were to work independently. Furthermore, the author asserts that collaboration is always an intentional and planned process. This may take place in different forms which may include inter-organisational, inter-institutional, inter-professional, interdisciplinary and even interpersonal relationships. For any sound collaborative efforts to take place, aspects such as sharing of resources, power and authority should be taken into consideration in order to achieve the set objectives.

5.2.3. Structured community development

“Structured community development” scored 23 points in preliminary voting and 15 points in the final voting indicating that it was one of the top five concepts to be included in the definition of service-learning for the SoN. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2005: 1290), structure is defined as the manner in which the parts of a system or object are arranged or organised. Community development is a structured process by which different entities come together with the purpose of improving the community. This happens by taking collective, planned action in order to generate solutions to social problems and giving communities greater control over the circumstances that affect their daily lives (Frank & Smith, 2012).

The study participants stated that structured community service or development provided an ideal learning setting, when organised in such a manner that it did not exploit the communities but instead developed them. This development and service should be well planned, structured and reciprocal to meet both the needs of the community and students.

In order for community development to occur, the community and other collaborating entities, such as the university and various stakeholders, need to agree to work in partnership in order to address community needs by empowering the community to be more self-reliant and self-responsible. This would in turn help to influence student attitudes towards social problems and mobilise available resources by creating effective networks (Flora, Spears & Swanson, 1992).

Generally, collaboration should be aimed at empowering the community to improve its overall status, including aspects related to social, environmental and health conditions, to name but a few. It should focus on uplifting a community and providing them with the relevant skills, so that they can take responsibility for their own lives and become self-sufficient and self-reliant. Community development is underpinned by values of social justice and mutual respect. It also involves changing power structures in order to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect them. This concept relates directly to the political dimension of service-learning, as in the case of South Africa, where service-learning was aimed at redressing the effects of the past unjust policies of the apartheid state (Butin, 2005; UWC, 2016).

5.2.4. Curriculum outcomes

“Curriculum outcomes” was the fourth concept selected. This concept scored 21 and 15 points in the preliminary and final voting stages, respectively. The most fundamental view of what is expected of the students during the service period is to ensure that the learning that is going to take place speaks to the planned learning needs as per the different study year levels.

Curriculum includes four basic components: goals; methods; materials; and assessment of learning (Universal Design for Learning Guidelines, 2010). In this study, however, the focus was primarily on the curriculum goals. The expectation was that teaching and learning should

be made explicit in terms of providing the scope and sequencing of the skills to be included in the curriculum (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005: 305). Hence, the service-learning goals should be made clear in the curriculum outcomes.

5.2.5. Socially responsive practitioners

“Socially responsive practitioners” scored 24 points in the preliminary voting and 16 points in the final voting; consequently, it was ranked the fifth and final concept to be included for the purpose of defining service-learning. Responsive practitioners are people who are involved in skilled jobs or activities and equipped to respond quickly, positively and effectively to something or someone (Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2005).

The findings of the current study pointed to the fact that, during service-learning projects, students could benefit from these activities in several ways as well as develop leadership skills. This also ties in with students' self-development because they will be challenged to solve unanticipated problems to keep the project going. The need to develop well-grounded, professional, community nurses with great leadership skills was highlighted as one of the long-term requirements for socially responsive professionals. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) conceptualised service-learning as a strategy by which to improve cultural competence and develop social justice awareness in students. In the same vein, Bheekie *et al.* (2007:1) argue that it is important to design a service-learning curriculum that will install a good work ethic and raise social justice awareness in future graduates.

5.3. General discussion of the findings

The focus of this section is on the discussion of the concepts that were identified as those with which to refine and redefine the existing preliminary service-learning definition in preparation for implementation of a service-learning programme at the SoN. Concepts were

presented in Table 4.6 according to their hierarchy of importance and meaningfulness as ascribed by the participants. The highest ranking concepts for inclusion in the service-learning definition were then compared with the existing definitions to provide some kind of benchmark for the newly developed definition of service-learning for the SoN.

Reflective learning was the first concept that was identified to be included in the developed definition. For this reason, reflection will be integrated into service-learning as a pedagogical strategy for learning. Reflection as a pedagogical perspective of service-learning, assist students to seek deeper meaning for the service-learning activities (Sheffield, 2015; Finlay, 2008). Furthermore, it is viewed as learning that links theory and practice with metacognition and critical thinking, whilst reflecting on the service-learning activities (Patterson *et al*, 2016). The school of nursing is cognisant of the centrality of reflection to service-learning pedagogy, and realises the potential transformative impact of reflection on student learning and teaching (Boltman-Binkowski & Julie, 2014; UWC, 2014: 2). Seifer and Vaughn (2002) support the integration of service-learning in health professionals education as a national strategy.

Socially responsive practitioners received the concept scored second highest, and confirm that social responsiveness is one of the key requirements of a socially relevant and engaged university (UWC, 2016). Osman and Petersen (2013: 7) link this concept to critical citizenship by stating that “service-learning aims at enhancing and extending what is taught in higher education so that students develop a sense of caring for others and a sense of more critical citizenship”.

Structured community development and curriculum outcomes both scored 15 points. The equal rating given to these two concepts indicates that the nurse educators of the SoN regard community development as a fundamental component that needs to be addressed in the

nursing curriculum. This reflects an awareness of the political agenda of service-learning, as mandated in the White Paper (DoE, 1997). According to O'Brien (2009:65), "service-learning is increasingly being seen not only as a way to fulfil state policy directives, but a strategy by which higher education institutions can implement their own mission statements concerning community development". The equal rating of the concepts "structured community development" and "curriculum outcomes" is indicative that these educators understand the importance of aligning the curriculum outcomes (student learning) when structuring service-learning activities aimed addressing community development needs.

Collaboration was the last concept selected to be included in the refined service-learning definition for the SoN. This term is often used interchangeably with terms like partnerships and alliances, according to Gajda (2004). Bheekie *et al.* (2007:158) also emphasize the importance of collaboration to ensure sustainable, service-learning programme development. These authors argue that service-learning is "one approach that identifies and addresses community service needs and academic needs concurrently, if implemented appropriately and within a well collaborated service-learning programme". Clearly, without a form of partnership or collaborative learning, service-learning programmes would not develop, and sustaining them would be a challenge. Collaboration is key in order for universities to be inclusive of communities and assist them in addressing social problems, issues of social injustice and transformation, as mandated in the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997).

This concept is also reflected in the existing service-learning definition of SoN. "Service-learning is a type of community engagement that is regarded as a teaching and learning process, which aims to develop reflective nursing practitioners, who address community

needs within an equal partnership between the university, the community and service providers, who share the same values” (Julie, 2014: 1338).

The service-learning definition formulated in this study regard: “Service learning is a teaching method that follows reflective learning practice, which is based on real-life experiences and service, through collaborative relationships between the university, the community and service providers, in order to achieve a well-structured community development plan, whilst meeting curriculum outcomes goals and with the purpose of producing socially responsive nursing practitioners.”

A comparison of the concepts of the two definitions above, indicate some similarities in the meaning of the concepts. The two definitions correspond in the following ways: socially responsive practitioners with reflective nursing practitioners; collaboration with equal partnerships; structured community development with addressing community needs; and, lastly, reflective learning and curriculum outcomes with the teaching and learning process. However, the refined definition does not include CE as a separate concept, although service-learning is a dominant form of CE in the RSA (Osman & Petersen, 2013: 6). Both definitions reflect a strong political orientation (Butin, 2005) as well as a critical approach to service-learning (Mitchell, 2008). Service-learning as a form of CE can follow either a traditional or a critical approach, with the latter emphasising inequality and social justice. Hence, a critical stance should be reflected in service-learning because the White Paper on Education (1997) mandates universities to transform and be role players in resolving the challenges that South Africa experiences (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013).

Both definitions address the importance of public participation even though the refined definition speaks of structured community development. According to Julie (2014: 1338), the existing preliminary service-learning definition has a political focus, whilst the refined

definition does not have such a sharp political focus. Instead, it leans more strongly towards the critical approach described by Mitchell (2008).

5.4. Refining Service-learning Definition

Bratinova, Raffael & Simonean (2009) assert that validation is viewed as the confirmation, by examination and provision of effective evidence, that the particular requirements of a specific intended use are fulfilled. The newly conceptualised service-learning definition therefore needs to be placed on the agenda of the SoN.

5.5. Summary of the study

The aim of this study was to refine the existing, preliminary definition of service-learning for the SoN by identifying the main concepts that were to be included in the definition. The objectives of this study were to explore nurse educators' understanding of service-learning, to identify the main concepts that should be included in the definition of service-learning, and to then formulate a final service-learning definition for the SoN.

This study employed an exploratory-descriptive, qualitative research design because, according to Grove, Burns and Gray (2013), this type of design is used to deal with challenges in need of solutions. It used nominal group technique NGT as its data collection method with the purpose of reaching consensus among participants on the main concepts that should be included in the service-learning definition.

During Step 7, the following five concepts were selected for inclusion in the refined service-learning definition for SoN : reflective learning; socially responsive practitioners; structured community development; curriculum outcomes; and collaboration.

The researcher used these concepts to formulate the final definition. He defined service-learning as a teaching method that follows reflective learning that is based on real-life service

through collaboration with the university, community and service providers. This was done in order to achieve structured community development and curriculum outcomes that will produce socially responsive practitioners.

5.6. Conclusions of the findings

The objectives of this study were met and culminated in the formulation of a service-learning definition for the SoN. However, it is important to note that service-learning is a form of CE even though CE was not foregrounded in the current developed definition. The formulated definition reflects a strong pedagogical focus as indicated by the fact that reflective learning was ranked the highest. However, it is noted that all aspects of service-learning are interwoven and thus interdependent. This was clearly demonstrated by the equal ranking given to structured community development and curriculum outcomes. Furthermore, it indicates that the political aspect of service-learning is as important as the philosophical and pedagogical aspects, and cognisance should be taken of the fact that a definition of service-learning should be multidimensional. Such a definition should be comprehensive and also focus on the collaborative nature of service-learning, especially if sustainable service-learning projects are desired.

5.7. Limitations to the study

An important limitation of the study is that it was conducted at one institution and involved only one professional grouping of five educators.

5.8. Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings of the study the researcher recommends the following:

5.8.1. The SoN should share this refined service-learning definition and seek input from the various communities of practice within the SoN. This will ensure that service-learning is incorporated into the curricula and implemented across the following nursing disciplines: nursing education; midwifery; and general, psychiatric and community nursing.

5.8.2. The SoN's definition of service-learning should be tabled at the appropriate structures of UWC, in order to facilitate official approval.

5.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the findings of the study. The focus of the discussion was on the top five concepts, because they were voted, ranked and considered most important for the definition of service-learning for the SoN. These concepts were identified in order to differentiate service-learning from the other curricular CE activities of the nursing programme. The researcher utilised extracts from the data to support and validate the findings, and used literature to establish the credibility of the findings. After incorporating the identified concepts to formulate a refined definition of service-learning, the researcher compared the key aspects of the existing preliminary service-learning definition to those of the newly conceptualised definition. Finally, certain conclusions and recommendations were presented and the limitation of the study was highlighted.

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APPENDIX A

Ethical clearance letter from the university, the Department of Research Development



**OFFICE OF THE DEAN
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

10 September 2014

To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:
Mr TK Ramasasa (School of Nursing)

Research Project: Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a University in the Western Cape.

Registration no: 14/7/12

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape*

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, South Africa
T: +27 21 959 2983/2948 . F: +27 21 959 3170
E: pjosias@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

A place of quality,
a place to grow, from hope
to action through knowledge

APPENDIX B

Permission letter to conduct the study in the university



OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

13 October 2014

Teboho Kenneth Ramasasa,
Student number 2863632
School of Nursing
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

Dear Teboho Kenneth Ramasasa,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UWC

Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a University in the Western Cape

Thank you for complying with our requirements for obtaining permission to do research at the University of the Western Cape.

I hereby grant permission to conduct the research as requested.

Your research will make an important contribution to our knowledge base of Nursing and I wish you every success with the completion of the study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. J. Cornelissen'.

Prof J. J. Cornelissen
Acting REGISTRAR

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag x17, Bellville 7535,
South Africa T: +27 21 9592111.
jjcornelissen@uwc.ac.za. www.uwc.ac.za

A place of quality,
a place to grow, from hope
to action through knowledge

APPENDIX C

Permission letter to conduct the study in the School of Nursing



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE SCHOOL OF NURSING

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-9592274, Fax: 27 21-9592271

E-mail: kjooste@uwc.ac.za

PERMISSION LETTER

4 October 2014

Mr TK Ramasasa

Title of Research Project: Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a University in the Western Cape

You are granted permission to conduct your study at the School of Nursing.

You have to arrange the data collection with the appropriate level coordinator for a convenient time during 2014. During this phase you have to adhere to the ethical principles outlined in your study.

I wish you success with your studies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K Jooste'.

Prof K Jooste
Director
School of Nursing

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX D

Letter from the professional editor

ACADEMIC EDITOR



Revenia Andra Abrahams

Book Editor/Translator/Proofreader

[+27817304704] [rabrahams.za@gmail.com]

[Skype: andrasyme]

<https://za.linkedin.com/in/revenia-abrahams>

19 December 2018

To whom it may concern

I hereby submit this letter to verify that I have edited Teboho Kenneth Ramasasa's mini-thesis "Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a university in the Western Cape" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Master of Nursing (Education), School of Nursing, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape.

The editing process included language editing and formatting, which was done with special attention to meeting the guidelines for formatting, structure and referencing as set out in the *University of the Western Cape Thesis Guide* and the *APA referencing guide*.

Working as a book editor, I have more than 10 years experience working for various publishing companies, which include Maskew Miller Longman (Pearson), Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, and New Africa Books. Currently, I am a freelance editor for Oxford University Press Southern Africa, Higher Education section.

For more information about my professional profile, please refer to my LinkedIn page.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Andra Abrahams", with a dotted line underneath.

Ms Revenia Abrahams

APPENDIX E

Consent Form



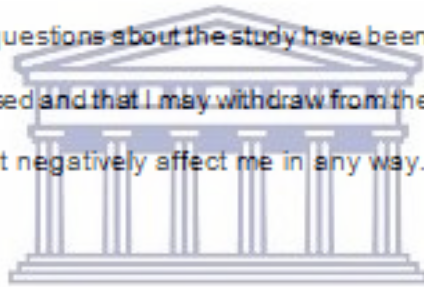
UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa
Tel: +27 21-959 2749, Fax: 27 21-959 1385
E-mail: [hjulier@uwc.ac.za](mailto:hjulie@uwc.ac.za)

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a University in the Western Cape.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.



Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

APPENDIX F

Binding Form



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2749, Fax: 27 21-959 1585

E-mail: ijudic@uwc.ac.za

FOCUS GROUP CONFIDENTIALITY BINDING FORM

Title of Research Project: Refining service-learning definition in a School of Nursing at a University in the Western Cape.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I agree to be audio-taped during my participation in the study. I also agree not to disclose any information that was discussed during the group discussion.

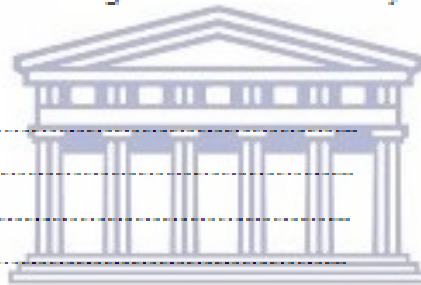
Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Witness's name.....

Witness's signature.....

Date.....



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX G

Information Sheet



UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel: +27 21-959 2749, Fax: 27 21-959 1585

E-mail: ajalic@uwc.ac.za

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Refining service-learning definition in a SoN at a University in the Western Cape.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Ramasasa T.K at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are more knowledgeable about service- learning (SL) and have completed accredited SL short-course. The purpose of this research project is to refine the existing SL definition in the SoN, University of the Western Cape.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

You will be asked to partake in a nominal group technique session, which will be used to collect as data collection method. The study will conducted at the SoN, University of the Western Cape. The sooner an agreement is reached by all participants the better but session will take no longer than 90 minutes.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your signed consent forms, audiotaped and all data collected will not be made available to any other personnel except the supervisor of the study. The already mentioned materials will be locked away in a securely locked cabinet for a period of five years before being destroyed. And no names of the participants will published or be mentioned or used in the report.

What are the risks of this research?

The risk associated with this research includes mental and physical fatigue, and thirst.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the important concepts to include when defining service learning. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of service learning.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

You will be referred for counselling, should you feel negatively affected by participating.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Ramasasa, T.K. from the department of nursing at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Julie, H. at the SoN, University of the Western Cape, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535. Tel: [+27 21 959 2749](tel:+27219592749). Email [hj Julie@uwc.ac.za](mailto:hjulie@uwc.ac.za)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:



Head of Department: Nursing

Prof K Jooste

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

Email: kjooste@uwc.ac.za

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.