

**THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS
INVOLVED IN A COMMUNITY
SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT**

by

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RESEARCH ESSAY**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment for the
requirements of the degree**

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring two stylized hands holding a sunburst, is positioned behind the text. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG' is faintly visible in the background.
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my parents, Cassim and Saeeda Petker who remain committed to improving the lives of the less fortunate members of the community.

Mom and Dad you taught me that:

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these”

George Washington Carver



“The simple idea that none of us on our own will ever have as much to cherish about our own lives if we are out there alone as we will if we work together”

Bill Clinton

I am forever grateful.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning (CSL) project. This study comes at a time in which CSL is increasingly being incorporated into the higher education context and draws on the views of proponents of CSL who argue that it has the potential to positively benefit the academic-intellectual, personal, interpersonal and social development of those who participate in CSL activities.

The research strategy for this study was grounded within the interpretative research paradigm using qualitative research methods to explore how teacher education students make sense of their realities, situations and experiences while participating in a CSL project. This qualitative study employed in-depth interviews, participant observation and photographs as data collection methods. The data was analysed using the constant comparative method of data analysis to search for recurring themes and patterns.

From the findings, it was clear that the participants had overwhelmingly positive experiences of the CSL project. They reported that relationships were forged and strengthened, that their perceptions about themselves and others changed, that CSL offered another dimension to teaching and that their service encounter awoke a desire to continue service after the CSL project was complete. Students cited some limiting factors that they felt prevented them from optimally benefiting from the CSL experience. These included a perceived lack of structure, difficulty in communicating with the children at the site and the emotionally draining nature of the experience. I conclude with a number of implications for the curriculation of CSL in teacher education.

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THE EXPERIENCES OF A GROUP OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS INVOLVED IN A COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions both in the international and the South African context offering teacher education programmes face enormous challenges because they have to prepare students to function effectively as professionals for a future in schools which are very different to those they knew as students. In addition, teacher education students also have to be equipped to take on leadership roles in improving and restructuring these schools and they have to be trained to become “significant actors within their communities and society at large for the betterment of both” (Giles & Wutzdorff in Shine, 1997:115). My argument in this study is that Community Service-Learning (CSL) has the potential to be a vehicle for achieving these goals within teacher education. As a form of experiential learning it allows students to engage in organized activities that jointly address human and community needs together with promoting student learning and development (Jacoby, 1996:5). CSL thus has the potential to deepen students understanding of social problems and enhance their skills in working collaboratively. It also has potential to develop skills of critical reflection (Kamai & Nakano in Community Service-Learning (CSL) Workshop Reader, 2003:73).

Although CSL is not extensively used in all South African higher education institutions, interest in this pedagogy is “growing at a time of curriculum change in teacher education and institutional change in Higher Education in South Africa” (Castle & Osman, 2003: 105). In 2003

the Faculty of Education at the ¹Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) now part of the new University of Johannesburg (UJ) embarked on a pilot project to implement a CSL-based module into the pre-service teacher education curriculum. This essay focuses on the experiences of one group of teacher education students involved in the piloted CSL project (with a curriculum component in HIV/AIDS awareness education). The aim hereof is to gain a deeper understanding of these students' experiences and to report on them in order to contribute to the growing knowledge base of research into CSL in teacher education.

The first part of this research essay begins with the statement of the problem followed by the motivation and aim for the study. The following section is the literature review that draws on the field of community service-learning (CSL) and teacher education literature in higher education. Thereafter, I describe the strategy and methodology I used and the process for data-analysis. Next, I present the findings as well as a discussion thereof. Finally, I conclude the essay with some implications for practice/curriculum action within teacher education programmes as part of higher education in South Africa.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The theory of community service-learning (CSL) is well established in higher education mostly in North America where research into this field has been documented and theorized about considerably (Erickson & Anderson, eds. 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Rhoads, 1997;

¹ This study commenced before the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) became apart of the University of Johannesburg thus, I continue using the name RAU in this study.

Shine, 1997; Wade in Waterman, 1997). Proponents hereof generally argue that exposure to CSL projects generally allow students to “appreciate the difficulties encountered by other groups” and to “develop respect for the courage with which they are born and to view individuals free from common stereotypes” (Stephens, 1995:154). It also offers students the opportunity to develop a more advanced understanding of diverse cultural identities” (Rhoads, 1997:154) and it encourages “civic participation as well as the development of civic virtues and political knowledge” (Annette as cited in Lawton, Cairns & Gardner, 2000:78).

Despite the enormous challenges facing higher education in South Africa some of which have been mentioned previously, there is a growing interest in CSL. However there remains a limited amount of documented evidence on research in CSL in South Africa in comparison to our overseas counterparts. Fortunately, it is becoming apparent that CSL has found a place within South African Higher education institutions. A snap web-based search of higher education institutions in South Africa that are in the process of revising specific courses to include CSL are: The Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), The Witwatersrand College of Education (WITS), The University of Cape Town (UCT), The University of Natal, The Durban Institute of Technology, The University of Pretoria, The University of Stellenbosh, Peninsula Technicon (Pentech), The University of Transkei (UNITRA), The University of the Free State (UFS), The University of The Western Cape (UWC) and The University of Pietermaritzburg (UNP). As many higher education institutions within South Africa are actively promoting CSL and incorporating it into their curriculums, it provides opportunities for researchers to research CSL within the South African higher education system and contribute to the growing base of research on this topic in the South African context.

This study aims in a small way to make a contribution to research in the field of CSL within the South African context by focusing on the experiences of a group of final year teacher education students in the B.Ed teacher education programme at the RAU involved in a CSL project. As this is part of a pilot project within the Faculty of Education the experiences of these students has not yet been researched and documented, and will be used to feed into the future teacher education curriculum.

In light of the above the main research question guiding this research is:

What are the experiences of a group of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning project?

3. AIM OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning project.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

As a child I was exposed to and involved in a number of community education and community development projects because my parents were dedicated to providing for and uplifting the less fortunate members of our community. In many ways, my involvement and exposure to these projects had a positive impact on the development of my character and I believe it helped me grow as a person. I now know the sense of satisfaction of aiding those in need. Thus, I entered my inquiry with the assumption that the teacher education students involved in the CSL HIV/AIDS education component of the Professional Studies 4A (PS4A)

course would be inclined to have similar positive experiences. I assumed that this experience would present them with an opportunity to help the less fortunate, become involved in their lives, empathize with them and possibly develop an ethic of care for these individuals. I believed that the inclusion of the CSL component into the teacher education curriculum would add another dimension for these teacher education students in that they would improve their teaching skills, increase their knowledge about HIV/AIDS education and develop an ethic of care.



5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Introduction

As this investigation focused on gaining an understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning (CSL) project, it has been informed by research literature in the field of service-learning, experiential learning, teacher education and higher education.

This section begins with an overview of CSL wherein I clarify the terms community service-learning (CSL), experiential learning (EL), reflection and reciprocity as these terms in my view are essential to an understanding of the issues I will be addressing in this section. I then briefly discuss the rationale for including CSL in teacher education. This leads to the focus of my argument in this literature review that including CSL into teacher education has potential positive benefits on students' academic-intellectual development, personal, interpersonal and social development. Lastly, I conclude this section with a brief summary where I sum up the benefits of including CSL in teacher education.

5.2 COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING, RECIPROCITY AND REFLECTION

5.2.1 Community Service-Learning and Experiential Learning

Many definitions of community service-learning ²(CSL) exist. In some of the literature CSL is referred to as service-learning (SL). I prefer to use the term CSL as used by Petersen (2004:1) because it most aptly

² The terms Community Service-Learning (CSL) and Service-Learning (SL) will be used interchangeably

describes how participants involved in CSL activities learn. According to Petersen (2004:1) students *learn* through *service* in a *community*. Thus the “tool to enhance the students learning is service in the community”. Below I explore a variety of definitions found in some literature sources.

Jacoby (1996:8-10) refers to CSL as a *program*, a *pedagogy* and a *philosophy*. As a *program*, CSL focuses on the achievement of goals to meet human and community needs with “intentional learning goals and with conscious reflection and critical analysis” (Kendall cited in Jacoby, 1996:9). As a *pedagogy*, CSL is viewed as a form of experiential education that relies on reflection to ensure that learning occurs. Given that CSL falls under the general rubric of experiential education, it is important to clarify the term experiential learning (EL). Mc Millan (2000:3) describes EL as a process that involves students “reflecting” on their “experience by identifying what happened”. The reflection and experience is then analysed in order to understand what it means. Thereafter, the reflection is transformed into new learning that in turn becomes guidelines for new experiences. According to Mc Millan, (2000:3) this process is a “recurring cycle”.

The “model of the experiential learning cycle” used by David A. Kolb (cited in Smith: <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm> 16 Sep. 2001) is a well-known model of EL. According to Smith, Kolb’s model of EL provides a practical tool to analyse how CSL can function as a *pedagogy*. The EL model was created out of four elements namely: concrete experience, observation, reflection, formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. This four step cycle can be used in CSL to organize service and learning activities as well as emphasize the importance of reflection (Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:xii). It should be noted that EL is a gradual process of acquiring knowledge and skills

through life, work experience and study that is not attested through any educational or professional certification.

CSL is also viewed as a *philosophy* of “human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community and a way of knowing” (Kendall cited in Jacoby, 1996:9). The important role that reciprocity plays in the social and educational exchange between students’ and the people they serve is key to understanding (SL) as a philosophy (Stanton cited in Jacoby, 1996:9)

Castle and Osman (2003:17 (1) 105); Mc. Ewen in Jacoby, 1996:68) and Eyler and Giles (1997:7) contend that CSL is a form of “experiential learning” where students obtain “academic credit for addressing human and community needs” (Castle & Osman, 2003:17 (1) 105). Jacoby’s (1996:5) view is similar, as she expresses it is a form of “experiential education” where students are involved “in activities that address human and community needs”. Whally’s (<http://www.c2t2.ca/GoodPractice/Exchange/service-learning.htm> -10 December 2003) view tallies with the views above as he contends that service-learning is a form of experiential education or learning. He argues that CSL “emphasizes reflective thinking and reciprocal benefits” for students and the community involved. Waterman (1997:xi) describes CSL as an “experiential approach to education” involving students in a variety of activities that benefit others. According to him the experiences gained by students advanced curricula goals. Root (in Erickson & Anderson, 1997:43) is of the opinion that SL includes “community service” with service “deliberately integrated with learning objectives”.

Perold (1998:34-36) refers to an extract from the University of Natal that describes CSL to be a “new form of teaching/learning which is designed in such a way that the “service enhances the learning and the learning

enhances the service” This enables the providers and the recipients to equally benefit from it. The academic team involved in CSL at the University of Cape Town (<http://www.el.uct.ac.za/sl/intro.htm> -10 December 2003) contend that CSL is a term used to indicate students involved in community service who gain credit for their learning. In addition, students involved in CSL projects have to critically reflect on their learning and engage critically with course content in a meaningful way. It is important to note that the students are not the only ones who benefit from their service. As Perold (1998:36) explains, “the benefits to the providers and the recipients are equal”. Thus CSL aims to develop a partnership of sorts between students, community and university, where all receive direct and indirect positive benefit.

The definition for CSL that I prefer to use in this study draws on the ideas mooted above and can be described as an experiential education approach that links service activities with the academic curriculum to address needs within a community while still promoting students’ learning, through active engagement and reflection (Cairn & Kielsmeier cited in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:xi). I am in agreement with many researchers in the field of CSL that, CSL activities are designed to benefit the provider and the recipient of the service equally.

5.2.2 Reflection and Reciprocity

Reflection and reciprocity are also critical components of CSL (Jacoby, 1996:5) because these fundamental concepts distinguish CSL from other community service and volunteer programmes (Jacoby 1996:6). I briefly discuss these concepts below.

As a form of experiential education, CSL is based on the principle that learning and development do not always take place as a result of experience per se but because of a reflective component planned to foster learning and development (Jacoby, 1996:6). Through reflection, students are provided with an opportunity to reflect on their experience so they are able to make a connection between their work in the classroom and that in the community. I am of the view that structured reflection is essential because it guides students through a thoughtfully constructed process that challenges them to examine critical issues related to their CSL project. In addition, this process links the service experience to coursework that in turn can enhance the development of civic skills and values that assist students' in finding personal relevance to their work. Kamai and Nakano (cited in CSL Workshop Reader, 2003:89) express a similar view that, "structured reflection can help students' make meaningful connections between their service experience and course content, and in the process develop various skills".

Stephens (1995:31) mounts a powerful argument when he contends that structured reflection is "what transforms service experiences into learning opportunities". He insists that reflection is the path to the development of critical thinking skills that can lead to cognitive development. In light of this, it is evident that reflection is key to extracting learning from CSL because students must deliberately think about experiences, analyse them, try to make sense of them, appreciate their meaning and significance and learn from and be able to apply what they have learned to other situations. Daudelin (cited in Roakes & Norris-Tirrel in CSL Workshop Reader, 2003:252), advances a similar idea that "reflection is a process of stepping back from an "experience to ponder carefully and persistently, it's meaning to the self through the development of inferences; learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that serve as a guide for future behaviour".

Reciprocity refers to a *mutual exchange* or *mutual action* between the *server* and the *served*. In my view crucial to an understanding of CSL is that in CSL the server and those being served are learners who help determine what it is they will learn and teach. The server and those being served teach and learn (Kendall, 1990: in Jacoby, 1996:7). This reciprocity creates a sense of mutual responsibility and respect between individuals in the CSL exchange. In CSL a reciprocal relationship involves service participants and recipients mutually providing and receiving a service or educational experience (Warter & Grossman, cited in: Furco & Billig, 2002:88-89). In my view the service provided should be controlled by those receiving the service, because they are more aware of their own needs.

To conclude I would like to draw on the words of Waterman (1997:3) who underscores the underlying assumptions of the practice of CSL and EL. This is that students will develop a better understanding and appreciation of academic material if they are able to put that material into practice in ways that make a difference in their own lives or the lives of other people.

5.3 The importance of including CSL-based courses into pre-service teacher education programmes

As there are many potential benefits for students participating in CSL activities (Wade & Anderson, 1994, 23 (4) 62), I focus my argument in this literature review, on the potential benefits CSL activities have on students' academic-intellectual development, personal, interpersonal, social and development. These aspects are in my view pertinent for teacher education students, who form part of this study because it influences the many areas of development of students in pre-service

teacher education. The proliferation of literature in the field (Conrad, Hendin, Greco, & Harrison cited in: Wade & Anderson, 1994:62) indicate that students participating in CSL activities develop increased self-esteem and self-efficacy, enhanced motivation, greater academic achievement and social responsibility, as a result, of community service-learning. Walsh (cited in Roakes & Norris-Tirell, in: CSL Workshop Reader: 2003:251) suggests that when SL is integrated into a traditional academic program, “students learn much more than the planned behavioral and content objectives...they learn to communicate, solve problems, think critically and practice higher level thinking skills”. In addition, Root (cited in Verducci & Pope, in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:8) suggests that social development is enhanced and that personal development in terms of outcomes such as efficacy, self-esteem, social skills and building relationships with others is increased for those involved in (CSL) activities

Although I discuss CSL in higher education the focus of my argument is chiefly how CSL is of importance in teacher education. Considering the relevance of the *experiences of teacher education students involved in a CSL project* as the area of research, I argue that it would be important to note the words of Jeremy Leeds (cited in Verducci & Pope in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:3). He aptly sums up that there are “theoretically sound and empirically demonstrated” rationales to include CSL in teacher education programmes. Some of these also cited in (The National Service Learning Clearing House NSLC Library <http://www.servicelearning.org/article/view/313/1322/> 7 July 2004) include CSL as an effective pedagogy for teaching and learning, CSL serving as a tool for cultivating critical reflection skills, fostering social understanding and civic participation. According to Verducci and Pope (cited in Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:4) CSL also provides civic, social, moral and personal benefits for participants and it has the

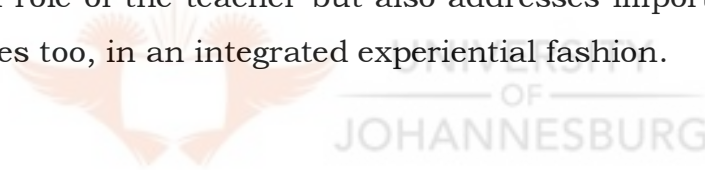
potential to prepare students for the world of work. These rationale provide some direction for including CSL into teacher education programmes. Recent research in the field of teacher education conducted by Castle, Osman and Henstock (2003, 7 (1) 3-20) in the South African context provides supporting evidence for CSL in teacher education in this context. They contend that the learning these teacher education students undergo may lead to “personal and professional development, sensitivity to cultural diversity, civic responsibility, knowledge about the self and insights into the ways in which communities and community organizations operate”.

The viewpoints expressed by Castle et al. (2003, 7(1) 3-20) and Leeds (cited in Verducci & Pope in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:3) are in line with the shift in thinking about the role of the teacher and policy revisions in the schools in South Africa. The new discourse in teacher education is about, “whole school development” linked to wider social change (Castle et al. 2003:7 (1) 6). This discourse is reflected in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Government Gazette, 2000) that sets out seven roles and competencies for educators in schools. One of the seven roles that should be noted specifically for the purpose of CSL is “*Community, citizenship and pastoral role*” which prescribes that:

The educator will practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator will uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators.

Furthermore, the educator will develop supportive relations and other key persons and organizations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this is HIV/AIDS education.

As there are now several demands placed on teachers evident in the seven roles [(1) *Learning Mediator* (2) *Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials* (3) *Leader, administrator and manager* (4) *Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner* (5) *Community, citizenship and pastoral role* (6) *Assessor* and (7) *Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist*] set out for them, it becomes increasingly obvious that CSL can and should form an integral part of teacher education as it in my view not only serves as a tool for enhancing the community, citizenship and pastoral role of the teacher but also addresses important aspects of the other roles too, in an integrated experiential fashion.



5.4 CSL and Academic- Intellectual Development

The focus of academic-intellectual development is primarily on *learning*. The words of the experiential learning theorist, John Dewey (cited in Eyler & Giles, 1999:68) accentuates an important perspective on *learning*. In his view, “it is assumed too frequently that the subject matter is understood when it has been stored in memory and it can be reproduced on demand”. He contends that, “nothing is really known until it has been understood”. His views thus imply that *learning* with understanding becomes “meaningful”, a view also forwarded by Gravett, (2001:17). Within the pedagogy of CSL, practitioners, theorists and researchers view learning as something actively constructed by the learner, and not as, simply content “given” to the learner to master. As mentioned previously learning and development in CSL takes place as a

result of a reflective component that “transforms service experiences into learning opportunities” (Stephens, 1995:31). In light of this, in this section I explore the value added to learning by incorporating CSL within the higher education academic curriculum with specific reference to teacher education.

Learning from a constructivist perspective as explained by Gravett (2001: 18) is a process of “constructing meaning”. In this perspective it is argued that learning is not a process of acquiring knowledge to store in the brain for later retrieval but an active process of constructing meaning in order to transform understanding. According to Gravett (2001:18) when one makes meaning of something and build ideas around it, one learns. When one learns something new, the new information is understood and learned via ones existing knowledge framework. New information can be included into your existing knowledge framework or it can change the way one thinks and does things. Thus, as indicated by Gravett (2001:18) new learning is constructed through the learners existing knowledge.

In my view, CSL moves away from an emphasis on learning content divorced from social content as it is a process of constructing meaning that has the potential to transform existing knowledge structures. It is my contention that CSL has the potential benefits of helping students understand coursework better because they are actively involved in the learning process; they are not just memorizing facts but are engaging in activities that stimulate their thought processes. In my view it is especially beneficial for teacher education students to experience their coursework instead of just memorizing it from a text-book as they stand to gain additional experience in the “real world of teaching” which would enhance their confidence about “using what they learn” (Verducci & Pope as cited in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:5) when they teach

children in the future. A plethora of empirical support (Verducci & Pope as cited in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:5) suggests that through CSL based courses teacher education students can “improve their understanding of the academic content of their courses, gain valuable pedagogical skills and practice using CSL as a teaching methodology” in their own classes. The research findings of (Eyler & Giles, 1999:69) indicate that if students have “hands-on experience” of course work their learning is enhanced because they are able to apply theories and ideas practically. Eyler and Giles (1999:69) contend further that if students are involved in CSL projects they gain a “deeper more complex understanding of issues”. This would imply that the activities of a CSL experience equip students with knowledge and experience that they could make use of when confronted with complex situations in their future as teachers.

5.5 Personal Development

An additional benefit of CSL is that personal development is augmented. I argue that CSL has the potential to enhance the personal growth of higher education students. One of the goals of CSL cited in literature in a range of contexts is to increase positive changes in self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-knowledge of higher education students which could raise awareness of career paths and awareness of helping others. In addition, it assists in promoting the interpersonal development of such students that leads to an appreciation of different cultures and the reduction of stereotypes. Resultantly in my view it is significant for teacher education students to participate in CSL activities as it helps in the development of positive changes in students’ self efficacy, self esteem and self-knowledge with the concomitant beneficial effects on the children they will teach.

In this section, I therefore commence my discussion with brief definitions of self-efficacy and self-esteem as found in the literature and point out the benefits hereof for teacher education students. Bandura (cited in Waterman, 1997:4) defines self-efficacy as the perception that one has the “ability to bring about desired outcomes” while Waterman (1997:5) defines self-esteem as a term indicating the “overall value one makes regarding oneself”. Waterman (1997:4) is also of the view that an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem “is most likely to occur across different types of service-learning experiences”, with self-esteem, mediated through self-efficacy. He posits that if students’ believe that their competencies and skills can contribute to the “desired outcomes” of higher levels of skills and competencies their self-assessment will increase. Thus, self-knowledge as viewed by Waterman (1997:5) can occur if their self-efficacy and self-esteem is increased.

It is important to note that high levels of self-efficacy and self esteem can only result if students see themselves as making useful contributions to projects worthy of their efforts (Waterman: 1997:6). Various studies conducted within higher education SL based courses/programmes (Eyler & Giles, 1993; Saltz, Trubowitz & Tuller, cited in Wade & Anderson, 1994,23 (4); Wade cited in Root & Furco in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001) provide ample evidence that when students are involved in community service projects there are strong effects on the students’ personal development, career awareness, choices of service-orientated careers and self-efficacy regarding the ability to help solve societal problems. Conrad (cited in Wade, 1997:31) further adds that the most consistent finding in studies of participatory programmes is that “these experiences tend to increase self-esteem and promote personal development”. In addition, service experiences evoke intense emotion for students to “learn values of the heart” (Shultz cited in: Le Sourd, 1997:60). In my view, it would be significant for teacher education

students to engage in CSL activities so that they could acquire similar benefits. These benefits could enhance their performance as teachers because they would be confident about themselves, their ability to teach and their ability to help their learners particularly those most at risk in society.

It is my contention that a positive change in students' self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-knowledge is ultimately linked with an increase of awareness of social issues in their real world with the reward of helping others. Eyller and Giles (1995:37) express the view that the pleasure of helping others is also linked to the growing sense of personal competence. They propose that involvement in CSL has a powerful impact on how students see themselves and others. Research conducted on pre-service teachers' involved in CSL activities reveal that there are added benefits in personal and career orientation (Wade & Anderson, 1994:62). Those involved in CSL activities are more likely to value a career in helping others and CSL strengthens the service orientation of students who are already interested in a career of service. I argue that the involvement in CSL activities strengthens their service orientation thereby increasing their inclination to help and care for the children in their care. Given that many South African citizens have AIDS or are HIV positive I am of the view that these benefits would have a positive impact on the way that teacher education students respond to these members of society and the learners who are affected by this pandemic.

5.6 Interpersonal and Social Development

As I have previously argued, I forwarded the view in this study that a growing sense of personal efficacy, self esteem and self-knowledge promotes interpersonal development. To my mind, this implies that when students experience a growing sense of personal competence, they are

more confident about their roles within peer groups and more confident with regard to their interactions with others. Students' participation in CSL activities, as a form of experiential learning thus provides multiple opportunities for students to work closely with peers in their courses as well as with community members. Experiencing the chance to work with a variety of others in the community is frequently the first genuine opportunity many higher education students have to work alongside someone who is different from themselves in terms of race, culture, etc. These experiences often contribute greatly to the impact that CSL has on reducing stereotypes and increasing tolerance of and appreciation of other cultures. One of the most consistent outcomes of research into CSL across a variety of contexts is the "reduction of negative stereotypes and an increase in tolerance for diversity" (Eyler & Giles, 1999:26). In addition several studies show that those participants who complete service with "ethically and economically diverse individuals experience increased awareness of diversity issues and reduced stereotyping" (Root & Furco in: Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:93).

Another issue that is of relevance in the interpersonal development of higher education students is their experiences of campus life as compartmentalised and characterized by informal segregation which limits students interaction. Though a university has a diverse student body, this does not mean that many students' experience diversity. Often this is because students' time is consumed with class attendance and in socialising with their own preferred circle of friends. CSL projects may thus offer potential opportunities to break down ethnic segregation on campus. If students are required to work together on common projects, these interactions afford students the opportunity to have genuine, informal contact with others. These opportunities to work together "may also lead to personal friendships that are sustained beyond the CSL experience" (Eyler & Giles, 1999:29).

Another important thread of research in CSL indicates that as interpersonal development leads to an appreciation of different cultures and the reduction of stereotypes it plays an essential role in social development. Claccio (1999:64) is of the opinion that one of the most meaningful outcomes of CSL is improving students' social skills because so much of the process is a group effort. Eyler and Giles (1999:26) contend that the "outcomes of CSL in terms of social development is the creation of positive interactions". It becomes increasingly apparent that teachers and teacher education students in South Africa would derive similar benefits in interpersonal development through their participation in CSL activities as part of their training. The difficulty that most new teachers have when entering the teaching profession after graduating from colleges and universities is that they are not equipped to cope with children who are different from themselves. This often stems from their lack of experience with people from different cultures and religious backgrounds. CSL within the teacher education curriculum provides opportunities for teacher education students to work closely in a supervised setting with people from other racial and cultural groups thus increasing the likelihood of them becoming more tolerant toward children and adults they will interact with in the future in the school and the wider community.

It is, generally considered difficult to teach students' what it means to be good citizens or to participate in democracy (Barber & Astin cited in Jacoby, 1996:21) with myriad definitions of citizenship and democracy abounding. Neither is it easy to teach them how to be responsible, knowledgeable or caring citizens (Cirone cited in Jacoby, 1996:21). Students' have to be involved in the process of learning and understanding these traits of citizenship in order to become responsible, knowledgeable and caring citizens. According to Astin (cited in Jacoby,

1996:21) the most effective method of producing educated citizens who understand and appreciate how democracy works and how to become active and informed participants in a democracy is through CSL. Participation in CSL activities affords students' the opportunity to become involved in order to contribute to the life of the community because "being a member of a community means that each one of us takes part in and contributes to its life" (Dunn cited in: Hepburn, 1997:136). In addition CSL connects students' to their "community through personal interaction, creating a new sense of ownership" (Roakes & Norris-Tirrel cited in: CSL Workshop Reader, 2003:252).

I would thus forward the view that CSL is one form of direct and active participation for higher education students and particularly for teacher education students in the school and in the community. According to Wade (1997:14) the essential components of *civic education*: intellectual understanding, participation skills, civic attitudes and direct participation in schools and communities could be brought together through CSL. Civic attitudes and participation skills then no longer become topics of discussion in class because students involved in CSL activities learn such skills in a collaborative environment accompanied by communication and practice in the field. In addition, CSL can "produce more productive, informed and impassioned citizens" (Harris, Denise & Thomas cited by Roakes & Norris-Tirrel, in CSL Workshop Reader, 2003:252). Perold (1998:35) expresses the view that exposure to CSL experiences also produces students' who are "socially aware" and feel committed to contribute to the upliftment of their community. This view aligns itself with those of other researchers in the field like Eyler and Giles (1999:158) who state that CSL affects "students' valuing of social justice and the need for political change, as well as their belief of the importance of having an impact on political change". Annette (in

Lawton, Cairns & Gardner, 2000:78) also contends that CSL encourages “civic participation as well as civic virtues and political knowledge” and Battistoni’s (1997:36) view is that there are “important civic attitudes and participation skills that can be developed through CSL.” I argue that the substantial bulk of empirical literature which indicates that CSL provides these outlined above benefits, are equally applicable to teachers and teacher education students in the South African context.

Another benefit CSL activities have on social development is developing an *ethic of care for others*. Wade (1997:15) affirms that CSL provides students with a means for “self development” and “the development of civic attitudes” like “concern, care for others, tolerance, respect, compassion, fairness and integrity”. Root and Furco (in Anderson, Swick & Joost Eds, 2001:94) and Root (cited in Anderson: 1997:53) contend that CSL can strengthen students’ *ethic of care*. They explain that the concept an *ethic of care*, is derived from “Noddings’ care theory”. In this theory, the primary moral value is not the duty performed but the “love and natural inclination” that flow out of a caring relationship (Noddings cited by Root & Furco, in Anderson, et al, 2001:95). Noddings (cited by Root & Furco in Anderson, et al, 2001:95 and Root in Anderson: 1997:53) advocates that teachers guided by an ethic of care are concerned with their students’ cognitive development and growth as “acceptable persons”. Research (cited in Root & Furco, in Anderson, et al 2001:95) indicates that CSL provides a growing sense of “warmth and caring” coupled with a “willingness to serve others”. Research results also show that there is an increase in “compassion and care for others” for those who participate in CSL activities.

In South Africa at present, there are a growing number of orphaned and abandoned children or children at risk. This is attributed to a number of factors some of which are that parents are dying of AIDS and other

diseases or because parents encounter financial and personal problems. I am of the view that such socially related problems place enormous pressure on the children who not only have to be confronted with difficulties in mastering academic content but who also often have to deal with adult issues at a very young age. I contend that teachers and particularly teacher education students who are guided by an ethic of care are able to express compassion, tolerance, respect and care for children in these or similar situations. My view is consistent with the views expressed by Wade (1997:15), Root and Furco (in Anderson, Swick & Joost, 2001:94) and Root (1997:53) that those actively involved in CSL activities are inclined to develop an “ethic of care” for others. With the ever increasing societal problems facing South African children there is a deepened urgency for teachers to demonstrate care and it is my view that all the above mentioned benefits of CSL already discussed in this section would be useful to teacher education students as they learn to teach under increasingly difficult circumstances in school and society. Teachers could then be in a position to be equipped to create a stable and supportive learning environment for children.

5.7 CONCLUSION

In this literature review, I drew on the relevant literature in the field of service-learning (SL), experiential learning (EL), teacher education and higher education to gain an understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service learning project. I began by presenting an overview of CSL, EL, reflection and reciprocity. I then focused my argument on the importance of including CSL-based courses into the pre-service teacher education curriculum as it in my view has potential benefits for the academic-intellectual, personal, interpersonal and social development of teacher education students'. In summary, I believe CSL is an educationally and socially powerful

intervention that shows great benefit for enhancing the learning and development of teacher education students’.



6. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS

6.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Each person has a “basic set of beliefs” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Guba in Shaw, 1999) or a paradigm that guides their actions. These beliefs shape how they see the world and act in it. In the sphere of research too, researchers are always guided by a particular philosophical framework, which determines the design, methods and methodology they use when conducting research. In addition, the choices of design, methods and methodology are also influenced by the aim of the study they are undertaking. In this study, the aim of the inquiry was to gain an understanding of the experiences of a group of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning (CSL) project. I was therefore interested in closely examining the words and actions of these participants in order to understand the situation as they experienced it (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:2) in a sense gaining an insider’s view or “the emic” perspective as referred to by Merriam (1998:6-7).

My philosophical framework for this research essay is grounded within the interpretative research paradigm. An interpretative research orientation as described by (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:10-13) is one that embraces the following six postulates: the existence of multiple socially-constructed realities, the interdependence of the knower and the known, how values mediate and shape what is understood, how multi-directional relationships can be discovered, how explanations are tentative for one time and place only and that the phenomenologist aims to discover propositions. “The above postulates shape the way researchers’ approach problems, the methods they use to collect and analyse data and the type of problems they choose to investigate” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:11).

For the purpose of this study I choose to use qualitative research methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Shaw, 1999; Silverman, 2000). The choice of using this research method, stems from both my research orientation and the aim of this study. This study also lends itself to other aspects associated with qualitative research methods because, as researcher, I will be the “primary instrument for data gathering and analysing” (Merriam, 1998:20). In addition it will also “involve fieldwork” where I will physically go to the field to observe behavior in the “natural setting” (Merriam, 1998:7).

6.2 SAMPLING

Given the qualitative, interpretative research base of this enquiry and the focus of the research toward gaining an understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a (CSL) project, “purposive sampling” (the purpose was embedded in the aim of the enquiry and in the unit of analysis) was utilized to identify those students who would serve as “information-rich cases” (Merriam, 1998:61; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45-47; Patton, 1990:169-172; Silverman, 2000:104). There are different forms of purposive sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994:27-29; Merriam, 1998:62-64; Patton, 1990). I chose to use maximum variation sampling because I could select “information-rich cases” to increase the likelihood that variability was represented in the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45). The issue of convenience and cost were also of importance to me as researcher and influenced the selection of a final sample.

As the teacher education students involved in the CSL project were encouraged to select a community which matched one of their areas of

specialization, they could choose to offer service in an organization dealing with Environmental, Entrepreneurship or HIV/AIDS Education. The students with a curricula component in HIV/AIDS education were clustered at one main community organization, namely the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital (STDH). This group of students traveled together to the site and offered service at the organization in the same time slot each week. This was therefore the one site at which a relatively large group of students could be observed in one place and time slot thus canceling out logistical problems for the researcher in terms of data collection. Secondly, and most importantly it became apparent after the first visit, that although the students were aware that they would be interacting with patients who were HIV positive, the CSL project presented them with an extremely challenging learning experience. This was because they had to confront both their own fears in dealing with HIV/AIDS/tuberculosis and the hardships/difficulties this community encountered on a daily basis. This group of students was thus, purposively chosen from the larger class group as I considered that their experiences within the CSL project was best able to provide data which would illuminate the main research question. Further details about the procedures I followed in the selection of my sample are discussed in greater detail in the section on ethical considerations.

6.3) DATA COLLECTION METHODS

For the purpose of this study, I collected data via participant observation with supporting field-notes, photographs and in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants (Merriam 1998). I utilized multiple sources of information because as researcher, I wanted to pursue some form of “methodological triangulation” (Mason as cited in Silverman, 2000:98) to corroborate and “substantiate the findings” (Merriam, 1998:96).

Firstly, the purpose of selecting participant observation was to have a first-hand encounter with participants and their behavior in the natural setting and to allow me the avenue to interact in the environment when necessary (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:98; Merriam, 1998:94). My main reasons for the photographic data was to strengthen and confirm aspects which I had noted during my observations, to corroborate what the students said during their interviews and to help me in presenting a detailed explanation of the students' experiences for the reader to experience it vicariously. Lastly, I chose to use in-depth semi-structured interviews with the intention of obtaining a "special kind of information" (Merriam, 1998:71) as well as a way of finding out what the participants were thinking (Patton, 1990:278). Conducting interviews enabled me to gain access to the words of the participants and so doing I was able to present the participants descriptions in a way that most aptly described their experiences and perspectives. I made use of an interview schedule/guide (Merriam, 1998:81-83) with one main open-ended question supported by probing and clarifying questions. I conducted a pilot interview (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 83; Patton, 1990:324) to test my questions and thereafter I conducted the rest of the interviews using only the one open-ended question. I did this to avoid asking leading questions and interviews drifting off the topic. I conducted all the interviews and transcriptions myself.

6.3.1) PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Participant observation is an effective technique to gather qualitative data (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:157). As a requirement of the PS4A course, participants were to offer service in weekly visits to the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital (STDH). The weekly visits to the STDH were intergrated into the curriculum and allowed them the opportunity to link

theoretical subject knowledge with their experience at the field site (STDH) and reflect on their learning in the class and in the field placement. Observations took place on days when students' were at the site. By observing the students' I developed a "fresh perspective" (Merriam, 1998:96) of their encounters. The visits were noted mainly (according to the "checklist" in Merriam, 1998: 97-98) in terms of:

- The physical setting- naming the venue and time allocated for the visit;
- The participants- who were they, how many, their roles and what brought them together, as well as the relevant characteristics of the participants;
- Activities and interactions- what was happening and what sort of interaction was taking place between the students themselves, between the students and the nursing staff and between the students and the children;
- I noted what the participants said about their experiences to fellow students while they were conversing casually and
- Subtle factors- such as the attitudes or approaches of the participants and those they served. I took note particularly of non-verbal communication between participants and those they served because the silences and non-verbal behavior added meaning to the exchange.

6.3.2) FIELD-NOTES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

I made field notes (a sample is attached as Addendum G) each time I observed the students. Shortly thereafter, I would write up detailed notes because it improved the reliability of the field notes (Spradley as cited in Silverman, 2000: 141-142). Photographs were taken each time I observed

the students at the site and they captured aspects like body language, expressions, etc. Some of these photographs are included and labelled for reference as (Addendums H, I, J, K, L, M, N and O)

6.3.3) INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

As stated, I used an “interview schedule or guide” when conducting the in-depth semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 1998:81-83). Merriam (1998:81-83) describes the interview guide as a list of questions the researcher intends to ask in an interview.

The interview schedule/guide made it easier for me to gain the confidence I needed to conduct more open-ended questioning (Merriam, 1998:82). For my pilot interview the interview schedule/guide consisted of one open-ended question namely:

Tell me about your experiences of the community service-learning project at Sizwe. This question was supported by probing and clarifying questions like:

- Talk briefly about your emotions/feelings throughout the project.
- What did you do at the site?
- Have you changed in any way?

The pilot interview revealed that the one open-ended question was sufficient in eliciting responses to my question.

All participants were enthusiastic and willing to participate in this research project and said that they felt free to disclose their experiences. Some participants were also very keen to have their real names used because they felt so strongly about their views and feelings.

All interviews conducted were in English because all participants except for one were English first-language speakers or quite fluent in the use of the language. (Samples of two transcriptions are attached as Addendums P and Q).

6.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Silverman (2000:119-122 and 135-136) states that data analysis should begin from the moment you start your research and it should continue up to the final report writing. My data analysis thus proceeded simultaneously with data collection and I made use of the “constant comparative method” of data analysis as put forth by (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-144; Merriam, 1998:155-197). I discuss this process in depth in Section 7.



6.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

As research is aimed at producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998:198) my aim in this section is to explain the steps I took to increase the validity and reliability of my study. In addition, I aim to convince my readers that my findings are “genuinely based on critical investigation” of the data and not just on a few well-chosen examples (Silverman, 2000:176).

Validity, is divided into two sections namely: Internal Validity and External Validity (Merriam, 1998:201-205 and 207-212). Merriam (1998:201) describes internal validity as validity that deals with “how the research findings match reality” and that in all research internal validity depends on the “meaning of reality”. Miles and Huberman (1994:278)

explain that when researchers' deal with internal validity they aim to discover if the "findings of the study make sense" and if there is an "authentic portrait" of what the researcher is looking for.

Merriam (1998:204) proposes six basic strategies to enhance internal validity namely: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research, and researchers' biases. Within this study, I utilised five of the six basic strategies proposed by Merriam (1998:204). As stated, triangulation (Merriam, 1998:204; Silverman, 2000:177) using multiple sources of data collection methods was used to confirm the emergent findings (Merriam, 1998:204). To achieve this I utilized three methods of data collection namely: active participant observation (Merriam, 1998:204), field notes accompanied by photographs (educational artifacts) and semi-structured interviews. I also consulted the teacher education students that participated in this research endeavor as well as the PS4A course co-ordinator on the credibility and plausibility of the findings by conducting member checks (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:102; Merriam, 1998:204). This is when the data and tentative interpretations are taken back to the data sources to determine if the results are plausible (Merriam, 1998:204). I also regularly consulted the PS4A course co-ordinator and my study supervisor on the emergent findings thus, complying with the strategy of peer examination. My assumptions and theoretical orientation were clarified at the beginning of this study thus my bias as researcher (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:101; Merriam, 1998:205) were also addressed.

Guba and Lincoln, (cited in Merriam, 1998:207) point out that external validity can only take place if the study is internally valid. In qualitative research, the researcher is obligated to provide detailed descriptions of the study's context. This way the readers are in position to determine the

extent to which the findings are fitting for their specific situations (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:103; Merriam, 1998:211). As with internal validity there are strategies one can employ to strengthen this aspect of rigor in the research process (Merriam & Simpson, 1995: 103). They propose three strategies namely: thick descriptions, multi-site designs and modal comparisons. Throughout this study, I attempted to provide a “rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998:211) of information so that the reader is able to determine how closely her situations matches the research situation and if the findings have relevance for her situations.

Merriam (1998:206) argues that the traditional definition of the term “reliability”, being the “extent to which research findings can be replicated” appears to be something of a misfit when applied to qualitative research. She contends that replicating a qualitative study will not yield the same results. Lincoln and Guba (cited in Merriam & Simpson, 1995:102; Merriam, 1998:206) suggest that researchers’ think of ‘reliability’ as “dependability or consistency”. This means that the researcher’s desire should be that there is agreement that the data collected makes sense, that results/findings are consistent and dependable with collected data instead of demanding that investigators get the same results. Thus, in examining the issue of reliability in qualitative studies, there should be agreement that the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:102; Merriam, 1998:206).

To increase the consistency and dependability of results, for the purpose of this study, I utilised three strategies proposed by (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:102; Merriam, 1998:207) namely: the investigator’s position, an audit trial and triangulation. In this study the measures taken for internal validity and reliability are inter-twined because the researcher’s position and triangulation form part of both. Thus, as stated earlier, I

declared and explained my assumptions and presuppositions at the beginning of the study. Secondly, I attempted to provide a detailed, clear “audit trail” (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:146; Merriam & Simpson, 1995:102; Merriam, 1998:207). Lincoln and Guba (cited in Merriam, 1998:207) explain that an “audit trail” can assist independent judges to “authenticate the findings of the study by following the trail of the researcher”. This was achieved by:

- providing an example of the extract from the original set of field-notes (Addendum G) accompanied by photographs (Addendums H, I, J, K, L, M, N, and O),
- providing an example of the original interview transcripts (a sample of two interview transcripts are included as Addendums P and Q),
- providing examples of unitised data and a provisional category (see a sample set out in Table 7), which were completed in accordance with the constant comparative method of data analysis as set out by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:126-149)
- using triangulation as discussed earlier in this section.

6.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Stake (in Merriam, 1998:214) refers to qualitative researchers as “guests in the private spaces of the world” and that their “manners should be good and their code of ethics strict”. On this basis, I consciously chose a personal code of ethics based on the list of provisions provided by Patton (1990:356) for use during the research process, and more especially during the interviews. The important ethical considerations include taking note of promises and reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality and informed consent.

To ensure an ethical study before the enquiry, I requested the necessary permission, in writing, to conduct the study with a group of teacher education students at the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) from the Vice-Rector (Research and Academic Management) (see Addendum A). Permission was then granted (see Addendum B) subject to a number of conditions all of which I complied with. With these issues in mind, I firstly consulted with my study supervisor to get her approval for my interviewing techniques, strategies and goals. I then requested, in writing, the approval of my interviewing procedures, techniques and strategies from the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education and Nursing at the RAU (see Addendum C). After the Ethics Committee gave their approval (see Addendum D), I then requested a list of names of students enrolled in the teacher education course at RAU from the Professional Studies 4A (PS4A) course co-ordinator. Once I had this list, I selected the names of students visiting the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital because these students' CSL curricular component included HIV/AIDS Education. Thereafter I personally handed out letters (see Addendum E) to each of the students requesting their participation in this research, with clear indications of my intention to observe them and conduct interviews with them. Here, I confirmed that the interview would be treated with the strictest confidence and that the participant's identity would be protected.

From the 20 students in the group my selection of a sample was curtailed by the fact that only 10 students agreed to participate. I personally handed out and collected consent forms from the 10 students (see Addendum F). The consent forms were signed by the participants', who indicated that they gave me permission to conduct interviews with them, that the interviews could be recorded, that I could observe them at the site and take photographs of my observations. I took great care to avoid capturing the interactions of the non-participating students in

photographic evidence. Participants chose the setting where the interviews would take place. It was agreed that pseudonyms were to be used to protect the identity of participants when interviews were conducted even though some were keen to have their real names used. They also indicated dates and times they expected me at the site for observations. Participants' were consulted prior to the interview and observation process this gave them the opportunity to make informed decisions about participating. In addition, they understood their responsibility regarding the authenticity of the findings. One of the conditions set out by the Ethical Committee of the Faculty was that I give feedback to the participants to ensure trustworthiness. I promised the participants' that I would give them feedback on the findings once the study was complete.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data analysis according to Merriam (1998:178) is a “process of making sense out of the data”. Merriam (1998:155) explains further that data analysis is “recursive and dynamic” and that it is “not finished when all the data is collected”. Data analysis becomes more intense as the study progresses and the ultimate aim is to organise the data into more, manageable categories and “make sense of the data” (Merriam, 1998:178). Thus, I chose to use the “constant comparative method” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-144; Merriam, 1998:155-197) of data analysis as I have mentioned in paragraph 6.4 under the section: Data Analysis. The basic strategy of this method is to “constantly compare bits of data with each other” (Merriam, 1998:159) to see if they have something in common. Comparisons lead to tentative categories that are compared to each other thus there is a search for recurring patterns in the data.

According to (Merriam, 1998:180 & Silverman, 2000:119-136) it is important to do data analysis in conjunction with data collection. As soon as I had my first sets of data from the pilot interview transcript, the field notes and photographs, I wrote down detailed field notes, examined the photographs then recorded and transcribed the interviews myself, this is where analysis commenced. Generally, the process involved ensuring that I was familiar with the data before embarking on the analysis. Once all the interviews had been transcribed, all the field-notes typed up and all photographs assembled, I coded my data pages (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:127) to make it easier for me to identify the source of the data. I coded each transcript page and field note at the top of the page with a specific code for **(a) the type of data, (b) the source of data and (c) the page number of the particular data set** (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:127). This made it easier for me to code and keep track of each “unit of meaning” on every page (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:128; Merriam, 1998:179). I used field notes and interview data to indicate what to look for in photographs as the photographs served as contextual data.

Before beginning the process of unitising the data, I made two copies of the transcript and field notes on white paper. One I set aside as a back-up copy and the other copy I used for unitising the data. I began the process of data analysis to “make sense of the data” (Merriam, 1998:178) by enclosing sections of each transcript and each set of field notes that could stand on its own as a single unit of meaning (unitising the data). I separated one unit of meaning from the next by drawing a line across the page and writing a word or phrase, which contained the essence of the unit of meaning in the margin alongside. Each unit of meaning was coded to indicate where the unit was located in the data set. An example of such a code would be T/1/C/1, which is, that unit of data can be found on page 1 of transcript 1 of Clareese (Maykut & Morehouse,

1994:129). Clareese's response, " *We were a bit nervous, you know they say TB is highly contractible and em... it's quite a serious illness and we were all worried*", to my question of her feelings/emotions throughout the project were extracted as a unit of meaning, and the words "insecurity related to TB" were written in the margin. I continued this to unitise every new set of data field notes, photographs and transcripts using this method.

After unitising all the data, I copied one additional set of each transcript and field notes onto different colour paper for instant identification. The set of coloured copies were used to cut out each unit of meaning. The cut-out units of meaning, were attached to A5 cards to facilitate handling. The themes emerging from these individual units were transferred to my discovery sheet so I could begin the process of identifying and linking emerging words, concepts and ideas. From my first interview transcript and set of field notes, about 13 provisional categories initially emerged. Listed below are some of them:

- Uncertainty related to the linking of the PS3A and PS4A course
- Uncertainty in the first visit to the site
- Insecurity related to TB
- Language barrier
- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences
- Bonding with student peers
- Impact the CSL experience had on students and children
- Bonding with the children
- Prejudices broken down
- Desire to visit the site again

I then began to place the coded units into these preliminary categories using the “look/feel-alike criteria” described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:137). I continuously used the “look/feel-alike criteria” to compare the data cards with other provisional categories. Data that did not fit into one of the preliminary categories, were placed elsewhere or tentatively named under a separate/new category.

Once I had about eight unitised data cards under a provisional category I re-read these data cards. This I did to distill the meaning in the cards so that I was in a position to write a “rule of inclusion which would serve as the basis for including or excluding subsequent data cards in the category” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 139). Refer to **Table 7.1** for an excerpt from a preliminary category with units of meaning and the rule for inclusion. Lincoln and Guba (cited in Maykut & Morehouse, 1998:139) suggest that the “rule of inclusion should be written as a propositional statement”, which would convey the meaning contained in the data cards drawn together under a category name. Thereafter the rule of inclusion became the criteria for the inclusion of further unitized data cards. Once that process was complete, I re-read each data card to determine whether it matched with the category rule or if it should be placed in another category (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:141). I used the same process of data analysis described above for all interviews and field notes until all the unitized data was placed under a suitable category name.

Once this process was completed, I reviewed the categories for any overlaps and/or ambiguity. The reviewing process assisted me in gaining a deeper understanding of the categories as well as assisting me in adjusting/ refining some rules of inclusion. I was then left with a number of “well-written propositional rule statements” which were the rules for inclusion for each of my categories (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:143).

Thereafter, I closely examined all the propositional rule statements to discover which propositional statements were more prominent than others, which ones were connected and which ones could stand alone. By connecting some propositions and identifying those that stood alone I was able to write up “outcome propositions” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:144) that formed the framework for the findings. The findings are discussed in detail in **Section 8**.



TABLE 7.1

An excerpt from a preliminary category with units of meaning and the rule for inclusion

Preliminary Category	Units of meaning and the rule or inclusion
<p>INSECURITY RELATED TO TUBERCULOSIS</p>	<p>Rule for inclusion: Many students reported that the CSL project was for them their first encounter with people living with the TB virus and that this made them fearful of contracting the disease. As a result many of them were initially uncomfortable working with these patients</p>
<p>Afraid of contracting the TB virus</p> <p>Uncomfortable that the patients had the TB virus</p> <p>Too taxing</p>	<p>T/6/I/1: “I didn’t expect the kids to have TB. So deep down I was afraid to get TB even though I knew I would not get it”</p> <p>T/2/S/2: “ My problem was TB and if I get it what will happen”</p> <p>T/1/C/1: “ You know they say TB is highly contractable and em’ it’s quite a serious illness and we were all worried”</p> <p>T/2/L/4: “ I never met anyone with TB and I’ve heard it is a contagious disease so I was a bit worried about that. I thought we would all be wearing face masks”</p> <p>T/2/A/1: “ I became a bit uncomfortable because of the idea that there was TB”</p> <p>T/2/S/3: “ My neighbour had TB, so we all had to go for tests to ensure that we didn’t have it. I was afraid because I didn’t want to go through the process again”</p>

8. FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this inquiry was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning (CSL) project. To accomplish this, I questioned the participants in interviews and collected data via participant observation with supporting field notes and photographs to afford me some insight into understanding their experiences.

The data analysis process culminated in the Table of Findings (Table 8.1) containing the categories and sub-categories identified in the data together with the outcome statements. The outcomes of this study were organised around the “outcome propositions” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:144) by prioritising them according to my focus of inquiry and their prominence in the data. This section proceeds to present and discuss the findings of the research. Each main category and its sub-categories are discussed in the order in which they appear in the Table of Findings (Table 8.1). In order to discuss the findings, I drew on the voices and realities of the participants, information contained in field notes and photographs, as these substantiate the views or conclusions in the discussion. I conclude this section with a summary of the findings.

Table 8.1: Table of categories and sub-categories with the Outcome Statements derived from the process of data analysis

Category and sub-category	Outcome Statement
<p>1. Overwhelmingly positive experiences of the CSL project related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships being forged and strengthened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relationships strengthened between students and children, and amongst students ➤ Relationships between students, their families and close friends intensified • Perceptions changing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prejudices broken down ➤ Fears conquered ➤ Lessening of tension working with those infected with TB or HIV/AIDS ➤ Understanding the importance of validating people ➤ Personal and emotional growth • CSL offering another dimension to teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CSL can be used as an effective teaching and learning tool ➤ Doors of opportunity exist for teaching outside the mainstream and making connections with community organisations • Desires awakened to continue service after the CSL project is completed 	<p>Students recognised the positive impact the CSL project had on their relationships with others, their changed perceptions and the different dimension it offered for their future roles as teachers. They acknowledged that the positive experience of the CSL project had awakened a desire to continue service after the project ended.</p>



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<p>2. Numerous factors limiting preventing optimal benefits from the CSL experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceived lack of structure<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Students not forewarned about service component in the course➤ Uncertainty regarding the link between PS4A and PS3A courses and the first visit to the site➤ Lack of consideration of children's physical health and their routine➤ Time constraints➤ CSL should be for a whole year➤ Student group too large• Communication and language barrier<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Most children at the site didn't understand English➤ Many university students visiting the site didn't speak any official languages other than English and Afrikanns➤ Realisation that the language barrier could be overcome➤ Pre-existing preferences regarding the age group of children the students had to work with• CSL experience emotionally draining for students<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Unhappy to encounter children with serious illnesses➤ Students feared being infected➤ Sadness to leave the children at the hospital➤ Students felt powerless	<p>Students encountered a number of limiting factors that prevented them from optimally benefiting from the CSL experience, such as, a language barrier, too large a group size, and the limited time available in their schedules. In addition, the discovery that some children also had TB and the deteriorating health of many of them added to the emotionally draining nature of the experience.</p>
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8.2 Discussion of Findings

8.2.1 Overwhelmingly positive experiences of the CSL project

8.2.1.1 Relationships being forged and strengthened

All students interviewed for this study recognised the positive influence the CSL project had on their relationships with others, their changed perceptions and the different dimensions it offered for their future roles as teachers. They acknowledged that the positive experience of the CSL project had awakened a desire to continue service after the project had ended.

Most of the students agreed that their participation in the CSL project forged and strengthened their relationships with their peers, their families and the children at the site. Interview data indicated that through the CSL project they were able to interact closely with their peers in a way very different to their interaction with fellow students in other courses. The pedagogy of CSL encourages interaction and co-operation between students, and between students and community members. Students were thus expected and encouraged to interact with each other, both in and out of the classroom and motivated to form learning teams. This way of working was very different to that which the students were accustomed to, as the general description of their other classes was characterized by disengagement and a lack of involvement. Clareese provides ample evidence hereof with her statement: *“Normally you would go to class, you don’t chat with the other students, you go home after the class is over and you don’t have to get to know everybody.”* For her, the CSL project offered the opportunity to get to know her peers better and form closer

relationships with people that she otherwise may not have formed. She also indicated that she *“never had that kind of connection with so many people at once”*. Most students interviewed shared similar views to Clareese. They suggested that they were able to build on existing relationships with their peers and develop new friendships with the other students while participating in the CSL project. One of the students, Kate, acknowledged that, *“the project really helped her build relationships with other students”*. According to her, *“this did a lot for the group dynamics in the PS4A class”*. Students in this group found comfort in the bonds they formed with their peers, because it resulted in them being able to encourage one another through the difficulties in engaging with a CSL-based course.

Strengthening existing relationships and complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses was another factor highlighted by the students. One of the students, Abigail, spoke about her friendship with a fellow student, Inez. She reported that they had been friends for many years and their participation in the CSL project made them *“realize how they complemented each other”*. She noted that, *“Inez's strengths”* were her weaknesses and her *“strengths were Inez's weaknesses”* and because they complemented each other so well, they were able to do their best in the CSL project. The views expressed by these students are in line with research conducted by Eyler and Giles (1999:49), who found that CSL creates greater “connections among students”. In my observations, I noticed at the onset of the project that the students kept to themselves or spoke only to their close friends. Two weeks into the project the students were growing closer, were communicating more with each other and were more comfortable with other students in the group (refer to Addendum H for evidence of the close interaction between students as they work together on an activity planned for the children).

The majority of students interviewed indicated that they had developed special relationships with specific children at the STDH. To them these children ceased being statistics in a project and became real people, leading in part to the development of an “ethic of care” (Root, Callahan & Sepanski as cited in Furco & Billing, 2002:223). Inez mentioned that she regarded the children as her “*friends*” and the relationship they had was more “*personal*”. She also indicated that she did not regard them as “*statistics*”. Candy added that she befriended “*one specific child*” and she “*felt special to him*”. Kate on the other hand developed a special bond with a little boy. She remarked, “*I loved him to bits and I kept thinking about him when I was not with him.*” Her views are in line with Wade (1997:15), who affirms that CSL provides students with a means of developing “concern” and “care for others”.

I observed two students in particular (refer to Addendum I) who cared for a five-month old baby. The baby was blind, HIV positive and had brain damage. Before they touched the baby, they would wash their hands and put on plastic aprons. This process became routine to protect the baby and themselves from infection. Thereafter they spent their prescribed service hours for that day nurturing the baby. This included feeding, changing, administering medication and playing with the baby. In my view, the affection they lavished on the baby was remarkable and did not stem from feeling sorry for him. They genuinely cared about his welfare. The one student, Sharon, would hold the baby in a loving way while the other student, Monique, would feed the baby (refer to Addendum I). Sometimes Sharon would carry the baby outside the hospital ward to the children’s play area and sit with the baby on her lap. Her obvious compassion and caring for this baby resulted in many of her peers commenting that they began to

see her differently than they did before. The CSL project enabled them to see a different side to her. Many reported initially viewing her as an “Ice Princess” that would never get her hands dirty or touch others different to her. The CSL project thus presented the opportunity for breaking down such stereotyping between students themselves.

Working with the blind baby also presented the other student involved with the baby, Monique, with a personal challenge that resulted in her breaking down the stereotyped view she had about herself. She admitted that she was afraid of working closely with younger children but ended up *“spending the majority of the time”* with them. This surprised her because she didn’t ever think she would *“relate”* to them so well. The interviews strengthened my observations of the bond that developed between Sharon, Monique and the baby. Both Sharon and Monique agreed that their friendship grew stronger and that they both felt intensely attached to the baby. They were in fact so committed to the welfare of the baby that they continued to visit him after the CSL project ended.

The CSL project raised an awareness in Sharon, Monique and the other students that stereotyping is unfair, because it could interfere with future relationships they will have with their peers and the children they will teach in the future. The majority of students interviewed concurred with Monique, that they *“would not have gone onto that level”*, if they had not been involved in the CSL project.

The students acknowledged that their CSL experience instilled in them the desire to help the children without expecting anything in return. For some students pleasing the children was a reward in itself. Yet pleasing the majority of the children at the STDH proved to be difficult because many of the children had emotional and physical

scaring and as a result, they preferred to keep to themselves. The students adjusted their teaching techniques to accommodate for this and many of them reported that the children responded positively. One student, Butle, explained that it was rewarding for her to gain the trust of one child. She noticed that this little girl kept to herself and *“never really smiled or responded to any of the other students”*. She then decided to pay more attention to this little girl by playing with her (refer to Addendum J) because she wanted to develop a relationship with her. After two weeks, she noticed that the little girl smiled more often and responded to her more than she did to the other students. As a result, Butle felt *“rewarded”* because she was able to establish some relationship with the child and relate to her as a guide/teacher.

Two other students, Monique and Candy had similar experiences to Butle. Each time Monique visited the site, she observed that one of the children in her group *“always kept to herself”*. She explained that she just gave the child more attention when they did activities. It made her *“happy”* when this child came up to her one day to sit on her lap. She felt that the child just *“wanted that physical contact to relate on an emotional level with someone”*. Cindy on the other hand said she *“was happy to make one of the quieter boys laugh one day”* during one of the lessons. Monique, Butle and Candy indicated that they learned the rewards of helping others from their involvement in the CSL project. This finding is consistent with the findings of Eyler and Giles (1999:25) they contend *“CSL experiences assist students in learning the rewards of helping others”*.

Most students admitted that they pre-judged the children before meeting them. They thought that the children would not like them because they were strangers. This raised a concern for me because

these were final year teacher education, students and I was perturbed that they lacked such confidence in themselves. After discussing this with them, they acknowledged that they lacked confidence at first, but the CSL experience presented them with an opportunity to spend time with these children and this forced them to challenge their pre-conceived notions and fears. Though the majority of students initially felt that the children might not accept them they indicated that spending time with the children made them realise that the children were “*pleased*” to have them around and they “*appreciated*” their company. I noticed that some of children would sit comfortably on the student’s laps while playing games. The children appeared to respond positively to the students. The photograph labelled (Addendum K) provides evidence that the children learned to interact closely with the students and the students appear to be pleased to spend time with the children. Most students admitted that they will have similar fears about the children not accepting them as teachers in the future but the CSL experience provided them with the confidence to deal with such fears.

The CSL project had positive effects on the students as well as their families and friends. Some students shared their emotions and experiences during their involvement in the CSL project with their families and friends. By doing this, they involved others in the network of caring and this created a type of ripple effect. Some family members offered to help arrange food and clothing for the children, others offered to inform members of their church groups of the existence of the hospital and that volunteers were required to assist the hospital staff. One student’s family member was so inspired by the CSL project that she wanted to introduce a similar project into her school. Some families even assisted the students with their lesson plans for each visit. Over time, the students learnt to appreciate the

support base they had in their families and friends. Three students, Susan, Abigail and Clareese, explained how much they gained by sharing their experiences with their families and friends. Susan noted that her family and friends gave her unique ideas for lessons she could present to the children at the STDH and they were keen to get feedback from her when she returned from visiting the hospital. She was overwhelmed by their enthusiasm, so much so, that she began to appreciate them more over time. Abigail indicated that her experience inspired her sister “*to involve the Christian organisation at her school in a similar project*”. This made Abigail feel grateful, because she had involved more people, and grateful that her sister was so supportive. They had grown closer as a result. One student, Clareese, explained that her CSL experience made her more aware of her own life and her family. She admitted that she learnt to appreciate her family more because the CSL experience made her “*stop and think*” about how much she had and how valuable it was to “*have family who love you*”. This was because she saw how the children had no family or support base they were alone and only had the nurses to help them overcome their fears, difficulties and illnesses.

8.2.1.2 Perceptions changing

After being informed about the CSL component of the PS4A course in their first lesson many of the students held pre-conceived notions of what their experiences would be like. Initially, the majority of them were afraid and formed negative opinions about their peers and those they would serve. Many reported that through their involvement in the CSL project their initial perceptions changed.

The students entered the CSL project with a deficit view of the STDH community. They expected the STDH to be a dreary, unhealthy place

with unattended children. However all the students remarked after their first encounter at the hospital they were forced to re-examine their original assumptions. Many of the students were pleasantly surprised to find that the STDH catered for the needs of the patients. They acknowledged that they *“expected to find the kids lying in bed unable to help themselves; instead the kids were running around and playing”*. One student, Butle, mentioned that, *“the children had everything they needed”* at the STDH, *“they had clean beds, toys, food, medication and a routine”*. Another student, Monique, noted that she was *“relieved”* because the STDH *“wasn’t as bad”* as she had expected it to be. Most of the students agreed that a lot of credit had to go to the staff at the STDH because they made sure everything ran smoothly at the hospital. The photographs labeled as (Addendums I, K and L) provide supporting evidence that the children, lived in a hygienic environment, were clothed adequately, had access to a play area, a school and a library at the hospital school. After re-examining their original assumptions, the majority of students indicated they learnt that stereotyping was unfair and that it was important for them to be more objective as future teachers. They acknowledged that stereotyping could have a negative impact on their teaching, their relationships with the children and their ability to have a positive impact in the lives of these children.

For some students the CSL experience changed their perceptions about racial prejudice. Initially they were of the opinion that the children would react differently toward them because they were from a different race group to the children. This perception changed when they interacted with the children. One student, Inez, explained that *“the children didn’t care about class...to them we are all equal”*. She was particularly moved that the children, mostly black, accepted the *“white”* students and that *“they looked beyond colour”*. She felt that

“the skin colour and backgrounds did not matter” when she spent time with the kids. I believe that if the children had been conscious of colour, they would not have interacted so closely with *“white”* students. I provide evidence hereof in the photograph labelled (Addendum L) and would like to point out how the children sit comfortably on the laps of the students. In my opinion, the children understood that the students were different to them, yet, this did not deter them from accepting the students into their domain. I noticed one little boy in particular who called the students *“Pinky”*. When I enquired about this, the nurse reported that, he called all people with a fair skin *“Pinky”*. It was his way of acknowledging that he understood that others were different to him. When he called the students by this name they would respond positively by smiling. Over the six-week period, I noticed that the only male student in the group bounded closely with this child. Both the student and the little boy were from different race groups yet it appeared that they were unperturbed by this. I provide evidence hereof in the photograph labelled (Addendum M). An important element is the body language between the two: the little boy stands close to the student and the student accepts this closeness. The majority of students admitted that they learnt a valuable lesson regarding racial prejudice from this CSL experience. They learnt that similar situations with the children they will teach in the future might arise and that their fears of rejection would only restrict positive communicate with the children in their care as teachers.

One student, Clareese, mentioned that at the beginning of the CSL project that she was less tolerant and unappreciative of cultures different to her own. Her CSL experience forced her to acknowledge and appreciate other cultures because she had to work closely with children from a cultural background different to her own. She

admitted that this was her first experience of this nature. She said that her *“prejudices towards the children changed over time”* and she *“learnt to appreciate different cultures and different race groups”* while she was involved in the CSL project. This finding seems to be consistent with research findings of Eyler and Giles (1999:26-29), who found that CSL increased tolerance for others and promoted an appreciation for other cultures. Clareese also indicated that she appreciated her CSL experience because it made her *“realise how important it was for her as a future teacher to know that she had some form of prejudice”*. Without which she would only have realized this much later in her career, perhaps too late to rectify mistakes she could have made.

As mentioned previously, these fourth-year students had not had such close contact with so many of their peers at one time. This resulted in their initial fear of making mistakes while teaching and interacting with the children in front of their peers. I also noticed in my observations that these students were mindful of their peers watching them. They were nervous because they were teaching in an entirely different situation to what they were accustomed to. For many students the CSL experience at the STDH encouraged them to be more confident about themselves and their own teaching abilities. As one student, Abigail, noted, she had *“changed as a result the CSL project from feeling inferior to other students to feeling more confident and less afraid”*. This view is in line with Conrad (cited in Wade, 1997:31), who proposes that CSL experiences *“increase self esteem and promotes personal development”*.

Some students were initially afraid of how the children would react to them as teachers. They felt that the children were not familiar with their teaching styles or techniques. After interacting closely with these

children their fears lessened. Kate mentioned her *“fear of singing to the children”*. Her group prepared a lesson for the children that included a song in Zulu. She explained that she eventually came to a point where she was *“happy to conquer the fear”* she had of *“standing there and singing to the kids”*. Monique related her initial fear of *“holding a blind baby”* and how over time it *“became more natural”*, *because she felt that she “needed to do this...spend time with the kids and sit with them”*. She explained that she had always been afraid of spending time with *“younger children”*, but she *“surprised”* herself, when she discovered that she could *“relate and interact”* so well with them. She claimed that she allowed it to happen instead of fear it and that the CSL experience provided that learning opportunity.

Another student, Abigail, added that the CSL experience forced her out of her comfort zone and made her realise that *“there were others who believed”* in her. By *“others”*, she meant her peers and the children. She admitted that this realisation was a result of a lesson she presented to the children at the STDH School. This lesson stood out in her mind because she *“did not expect the children to be so enthusiastic”* about her presentation. In my observation, I noticed that the children were eager to participate in the learning activity she had planned for them. Although *“it was very different to the learning activities they were accustomed to”* as the schoolteacher indicated, they were still keen. The student appeared ecstatic with the response from children she showed her appreciation by complimenting each child. I provide evidence in (Addendum N) of the student’s reaction to one of the responses she got from a child. Notice how she bends down to make direct eye contact with the child, how she smiles and holds the child’s arm to make the child feel proud of the answer she gave.

Overtime the students learnt to care and feel compassion for those infected with the TB and HIV viruses as well as for those who have AIDS. This resulted from their close contact with some of the children at the STDH who had TB and others who were HIV positive or had AIDS. The students discovered that their close contact with these children lessened the tension they experienced of interacting closely with those infected with TB or HIV and those who had AIDS. One student, Candy, commented that she "*felt more compassionate*" towards those infected with the HIV and TB viruses. Another student, Butle, described how the CSL project changed her perception of those infected with TB and HIV. She said that she could "*now relate*" to them better because the experience made her more aware of "*reality*". Lee added that the CSL experience left her feeling more at ease to work with children who have HIV/AIDS she admitted that she now knew how to "*react*" to children with similar diseases in her future teaching career.

Over a period of three weeks, I observed one student in particular. She always carried her bag on her back and chose one child to play with, then, she would isolate herself from the rest of the group to play with the child. I thought this was an indication that she was still afraid of interacting with all the children at once but she still showed that she cared for the children. I would like to point out in the photograph labelled (Addendum O) that the student sits on a swing with a bag on her back, but she has a child on her lap. Though the student did not know if the child had TB, HIV or AIDS she still held the child closely and played with the child. This was an indication that she was aware that playing and holding the child did not put her at risk of contracting any of the diseases. She did display signs of affection and care for the child.

In my view, it was important for these students to have had this kind of experience because they were final year teacher-education students. This meant that when they entered the teaching fraternity they would be confronted with the growing number of HIV positive children and those with AIDS in schools the next year. Thus, it thus became a matter of urgency that they confronted their own prejudices prior to entering the profession. This would have the potential of making it easier for them to develop a compassionate attitude toward those infected with the HIV virus and those who have AIDS. It would also assist them in breaking down their stereotyped notions and it could contribute to them becoming better teachers. One student, Susan acknowledged that the CSL experience contributed to her becoming a “*better teacher*” to those “*children and parents*” infected with TB or HIV. This tallies with the outcomes of the research conducted by Eyler and Giles (1999:26-30) in which they indicate that CSL experiences contributes to the reduction of negative “stereotypes”.

The interviews also revealed that the CSL experience contributed to students understanding the importance of validating people. There was a clear indication that they came to realize that all people were equal and that “favouritism” was an unfair disadvantage to the less fortunate. One student, Monique, mentioned that she learnt that no one liked to be “*put down*” and how important it was to acknowledge and “*validate*” other people. Another student, Inez, said that her eyes were “*more open*” to the reality of validating people. She added that she was “*brought up so closed*” and this limited her exposure to the less fortunate. The students agreed that “*favouritism was dangerous*” and that all children needed the same amount of attention. One of the students, Leziel, commented about the reflection exercises she had written. She said that she realised while writing these reflections how

important it was to be “*objective as a teacher*”, because all children had similar and different needs. This student acknowledged that the CSL experience was a “*good way to learn*” such a “*valuable life lesson*”.

Some students mentioned that their CSL experience made them grow on an emotional level as well as a personal level. One student, Kate, said that the CSL experience was more of a “*personal growth than an academic one*”. Another student, Monique, explained that her experience became more of an “*emotional shift*”. This is in line with research conducted by a number of researchers (Eyler & Giles, 1993; Saltz, Trubowitz & Tuller as cited in Wade & Anderson, 1994:23) who concur that there are “strong effects” on the “personal development” of students participating in CSL activities.

The CSL experience also challenged students to “*look at*” themselves as individuals, search for flaws in their characters and work on improving those flaws. One student, Leziel, realized, that she was “*not as good as she thought*” she was in “*terms of her character*”. She also admitted that the CSL experience forced her to acknowledge that she had to “*make a lot of changes in her life*”. One other student, Annie, learnt that she needed to look at herself more when “*interacting with people*” to find what she did wrong before judging others.

8.2.1.3 CSL offering another dimension to teaching and awakened a desire to continue service after the CSL project was complete

To many students the CSL project offered another dimension to teaching. Instead of following rigid teaching methods, they felt that they were now more equipped to use CSL as a tool to introduce new

teaching and learning methods in their future as teachers. Kate said she would “*definitely incorporate CSL in the lessons she would give in the future*”. This links to the research results of Root et al’s study (cited in Furco & Billing, 2002:224), where they found that CSL participants had strong intentions to incorporate CSL into their future teaching. Kate added further that CSL offered a creative alternative to the “*rigid, boring techniques*” they were “*accustomed to*”. Another student, Abigail, mentioned that the “*CSL project opened doors of opportunity*” not only of teaching outside the mainstream, but also opportunities to connect with other community organisations.

The majority of students interviewed indicated that they “enjoyed” the CSL project and that it was a “positive experience”. These views were reinforced, when they indicated that they wanted to continue their service at the STDH after the CSL project was complete. This was because they wanted to have “*more learning experiences*” and it would also make it easier knowing that it was not the last time they would have to visit the children. For one student, Kate, it was important to visit the STDH regularly after the CSL project ended so that she could “*become a stable factor in the lives of the children*”. She planned to visit the STDH with her son to “*expose*” him to those less fortunate than him, so that they could value the “*privileged life*” they have.

8.2.2 Numerous factors limiting optimal benefits from the CSL experience

8.2.2.1 Perceived lack of structure

Students encountered a number of limiting factors that prevented them from optimally benefiting from the CSL experience, such as a language barrier, too large a group size and the limited time available

in their schedules. In addition, the discovery, that some children also had TB and the deteriorating health of many of them, also added to the emotionally draining nature of the experience.

Initially many students held the perception that the CSL project lacked structure. Many reported this because they were not forewarned about the service component in the Professional Studies 4A (PS4A) course, when they registered and because they were not sure what to expect or what was expected of them. One student, Leziel, mentioned that, if the students were "*forewarned*" that the PS4A course included a community service-learning component they would have been more prepared to "*carry out their roles*". Monique mentioned that "*more structure was needed in the beginning*", because many of the students were uncertain as to what to do at the site because they were afraid and overwhelmed. Another issue that arose was that the students felt overwhelmed as they were not accustomed to using their own initiative during teaching practice. They were accustomed to getting directions from lecturers and were not encouraged enough to come up with their own innovative teaching techniques. As a result, the students experienced the CSL project as being "*out of their depth*". One student, Kate, noted that their first visit was "*unplanned*" she said this because no one told them what to do with the children so they just "*played with the children*".

Some of the students also felt that the PS4A course lacked structure when they were instructed to link the theory taught in the Professional Studies 3A (PS3A) course to the PS4A course. They were not sure how to design lessons for the CSL project using content taught in both courses. One student, Inez, indicated that this was "*difficult*" because in the PS3A course they were encouraged to conduct HIV/AIDS education with the children. They found it difficult

to teach this to the children at the STDH because *“the children were so young”*. They then expressed their confusion to their lecturers and requested assistance. Most of the students confirmed that the PS4A and PS3A lecturers *“made an effort to explain how to link the two courses”* after they expressed the difficulties they encountered. The students then realized that they had to adjust their teaching techniques to accommodate the needs of the children at the site.

The students also felt that the PS4A course co-ordinator did not consider the health of the children when structuring the hours for visits. This made it appear that the course was not adequately structured. The students expressed this concern because when they arrived to *“serve”* the STDH community, the children were sleeping and had to be woken up to participate in activities with the students. Two students, Abigail and Inez, felt that the children required all the rest they could get, because of the medication they were using and because many of them had TB, were HIV positive or had AIDS. They also commented about *“some of the children not always being healthy enough to engage in activities every week”* when they arrived.

The majority of students indicated that more time should have been allocated to the PS4A–CSL component of the course, because it would *“have added more value to the experiences”* they had. Again, they indicated that this was an indication that the course lacked structure because the time allocated was too short. One student, Abigail, expressed that a longer period of time was needed for this project, so that students could *“do HIV/AIDS education effectively”*. Some students felt that a longer project would have given them more time to develop trusting relationships with the children. Though many of the students felt that the PS4A course lacked structure, there was one student, Monique, who said she gained more from because she had to

become more innovative in her teaching style instead of just following conventional teaching methods or methods prescribed by lecturers.

8.2.2.2 Communication and language barrier

When the students arrived at the site the first time, they discovered that the children did not understand English. This language barrier left the students feeling frustrated, because they were confused about how they should implement learning tasks. The majority of students explained that it had never occurred to them that the children would not understand English. One student acknowledged that she was “*naïve to think that all children speak English*”. Though language was a limiting factor, the students did manage to overcome this problem. The CSL project forced them to think of alternate methods of communicating with the children. They discovered that they could communicate by “*showing the children what they wanted them to do*” or they could “*get the teacher at the hospital school and one of the older children to act as interpreters*”. One student, Abigail, explained that learning to communicate without language was more meaningful because she had to spend more time with the children and put in additional effort into her teaching. Most of the students agreed that the CSL experience taught them to anticipate obstacles while preparing lessons in their future as teachers so that they are prepared to alter the lesson if the need arises. Though all the students came up with other methods of communication other than language, they did acknowledge that the CSL experience at the STDH made them realise the importance of learning another official language other than English and Afrikaans, because they would be confronted with similar language barriers in the future. This indicated that the students were more open and willing to learn something different to what they were accustomed. As future teachers the CSL experience taught these

students that being a teacher requires for them to regularly modify their teaching styles to address the needs of those they teach.

Initially some students indicated that they had preferences regarding the age group of children they wanted to communicate with and teach. Students like Candy, Inez and Monique indicated that they initially preferred working with the older children. They explained that the CSL project forced them to revisit their initial perceptions because after they spent time with the children they realized that they could interact with children of all ages.

I mentioned before that the students were not forewarned that they had a service component in the PS4A course at registration. Many of them were dissatisfied, because they felt they had no time available in their daily schedules to fulfil the requirements of the CSL component of the course. Most of the students interviewed had similar responses to Leziel and Annie. They said that they had "*other commitments*", like "*full-time positions*" and "*busy study schedules*" that limited their time to complete their service component effectively. For the majority of students the CSL was "*a time consuming exercise*" and they "*could have been doing some other work in that time instead of play with the children*". Closer to the end of the CSL project, however, the students acknowledged that they understood the value of spending time with the children, but they expressed the view that still needed more time. One student, Amanda, indicated that she "*didn't really get anything out of the CSL experience*", because she was too busy worrying about her time constraints.

8.2.2.3 CSL experience emotionally draining for students

In addition to the limiting factors mentioned above, the students discovered that some of the children at the STDH had TB and others were HIV positive or had AIDS. This left the students feeling fearful and emotionally drained. Many were afraid of contracting TB or HIV. Though this was a concern highlighted in the interviews, the students indicated that the nurses at the hospital explained the potential health risks of HIV/AIDS and the precautionary measures the students should take to avoid becoming infected. One of the students, Leziel, mentioned that the nurses assured them that they would not be infected by the TB virus because "*the children were on medication*". She explained that those who came into contact with TB patients taking the necessary medication to treat the virus were not at risk of contracting the disease. This left most of the students feeling less vulnerable to the disease. Though the students were aware that the children were given medication for specific diseases they were still disheartened because the "*children were so ill*" and they "*could do nothing for them*". One student, Abigail, said that she felt that she was "*failing the children*", because she "*could not make them better*". The majority of students indicated that they came out of this CSL experience with a deeper understanding of those infected with TB, HIV and AIDS. Their CSL experience forced them into facing the reality that they will be teaching children infected with similar diseases and it will not always be possible for them to cure everyone. The students indicated that they might not be in a position to help medically but they can offer emotional support to children, family and friends infected with TB, HIV, AIDS or other diseases.

The last visit proved to be a day of pleasure tinged with sadness: pleasurable, because the students had a party for the children and

sad, because it was the last time the majority of them would see and work with the children. Butle said that, she “*felt a sense of loss because after a fun filled party*” they had to “*leave the children behind*”. Many of the older children knew that Monday afternoons were reserved for the RAU students and this became a routine for them. When the students were leaving the hospital on the last day, a few of the children said, “*see you next week.*” One of the students, Clareese, said she felt sad, because she would be “*disappointing the children by not returning the next week*”. She felt it was “*too difficult*” to tell the children that she was not returning the following week.

The students also mentioned the bus trip back to RAU after the last visit to the STDH. For many this journey was the longest one they ever made because many of them were so emotional. One student, Monique, explained that she kept to herself, because it was very hard for her “*to walk away from the children and get on the bus*”. She was one of the last three students to leave the children and it was an emotional time for her. She said she “*wasn't glad that it was over*” but “*emotional that it was coming to an end*”. Most of the students admitted that when they started this project they didn't think that they would feel so disappointed to leave the children on the last day. The CSL project presented students with an opportunity to care for these children and it surprised the students that they could develop an “*ethic of care*” for these children.

The students complained about the size of the student group visiting the STDH. They felt that they did not have enough time to complete activities they had planned for the children because other students had planned activities with the children at the same time. To prevent friction between themselves and other students they opted to visit the STDH after the CSL project was over. Many of them mentioned that

the children were less focused, because they had too many students around them at one time. Two students, Abigail and Inez, particularly remarked that they “*went to the site on two occasions without the other students*” and the children were more “*willing to learn.*” They found that they were able to complete “*the tasks*” they did with the children. Both Abigail and Inez advised that “*smaller groups should be sent to the STDH*” in the future.

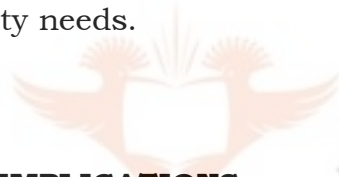
8.3 Summary

In this section, I discussed the findings that emerged from the data analysis process. I focused on the following two categories and their sub-categories: Overwhelmingly positive experiences of the CSL project and the numerous factors limiting optimal benefits for the CSL experience. In this process I tried, as far as possible, to draw on the prevailing and applicable literature to substantiate my findings. In each category, I used, the voices of the participants in the form of quotations, I extracted relevant information from the recorded field notes and photographs. This I did to lend authenticity to the report on the findings.

9. CONCLUSION

As indicated at the outset of the study, I commenced this study with the aim of investigating and analyzing the experiences of a sample of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning project so as to report on it in the form of a thick, rich description. In addition to this, I also aimed at contributing to the body of research of CSL in teacher education and in the general South African higher education sphere.

The findings of this research essay illustrate that teacher education students participating in CSL activities have overwhelmingly positive experiences of the CSL project. However, they also heed a few limiting factors. I am of the view that these require the attention of policy makers, the teacher education faculty and teacher education course co-ordinators if we are to promote and sustain CSL at the RAU (now part of the University of Johannesburg). As the findings clearly indicate, the inclusion of CSL into the teacher education curriculum has potential benefits for the academic-intellectual, personal, interpersonal and social development of students. In addition it is my contention that CSL offers pre-service teacher education students the opportunity to learn experientially in diverse settings and the necessary skills to work collaboratively to address human and community needs.



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10. IMPLICATIONS

The experiences of participants in the piloted CSL-based module in pre-service teacher education programme have been documented in the findings of this report. There are however a number of implications inherent in these findings which in my view warrant the attention of policy makers, the teacher education faculty and teacher education course co-ordinators.

- There must be a commitment by management structures to institutionalise and support CSL on campus or it can lose momentum and then becomes the individual endeavour of a few committed faculty members. One solution would be the establishment of a service-learning resource center at the

university for students and staff. This resource center could serve as a support base for students requiring additional assistance with placement at community organizations or curricular issues. It could also be utilized for staff training in the field of CSL.

- The theory of CSL should be systematically integrated into the teacher education curriculum. Teacher education students should encounter the philosophy and pedagogy early on in their training so that they have a clearer understanding of what it entails when they reach their final year of study.
- Timetables should be revised to accommodate and include time for service particularly for part time students. This would give students additional time to spend at their selected community organizations without being concerned that they are missing a class
- Additional language courses aimed at equipping teacher education students with language proficiency in Zulu, Xhosa, Sepedi, Tswana, Venda, etc. should be integrated into the teacher education course for a longer period than one semester.

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ADDENDUM A

P. O. Box 30569
Wibsey
Johannesburg
1717
20 August 2003

Professor D Van Der Merwe
Vice Rector: Academic
Rand Afrikaans University
P.O. Box 524
Auckland Park
2006

Dear Prof. Van der Merwe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH A SELECT GROUP OF
TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS AT RAU FOR RESEARCH
PURPOSES

I, the undersigned, Gadija Mia Petker (200072110) am a registered student in the Faculty of Education and Nursing and presently enrolled in a master's degree in Adult and Community Education under the guidance of Mrs. Nadine Petersen. I have chosen to focus on research, which investigates the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning project.

As you may be aware community service-learning is a growing area of research both internationally and in South Africa and I feel that a study of this nature may in a small way contribute towards the growing body of knowledge on community service-learning as a component of higher education in the South African context.

The study I aim to undertake in the coming months will be from an interpretative paradigm in which the experiences of teacher education students involved in a community service-learning project will be explored. This will be done by means of interview-based research with a selected number of teacher education students. I would therefore like to obtain your permission for his study to be conducted with a group of teacher education students at the Rand Afrikaans University. I will also ensure that the results are made available to the University.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours Faithfully

Gadija Petker
200072110



ADDENDUM B

Hard copy available on request

ADDENDUM C

P .O. Box 30569
Wibsey
Johannesburg
1717
15 September 2003

The Ethical Committee
Faculty of Education and Nursing
Rand Afrikaans University
P. O. Box 524
Auckland Park
2006



Dear Members' of the Ethical Committee

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH/INTERVIEWS WITH A SELECT GROUP OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

I, the undersigned, Gadija Mia Petker (200072110) am a registered student in the Faculty of Education and Nursing and presently enrolled in a master's degree in Adult and Community Education under the guidance of Mrs. Nadine Petersen. I have chosen to focus on research, which investigates the experiences of education students involved in a community service-learning project.

As you may be aware community service-learning is a growing field of research both internationally and in the South African context and I feel that a study of this nature may in a small way contribute towards research in the South African context. The study I am to conduct in the coming months will be from an interpretative paradigm in which the experiences of education students involved in a community service-learning project will be explored. This will be done by means of interview-based research with a select number of teacher education students.

Please find attached my proposal detailing the research I will be involved in for which permission has been sought from the Vice-Rector (Academic). Part of the conditions for approval to conduct the research is to present my proposal to the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education and Nursing with a clear indication of the ethical measures I will apply in my research.

As a result of the sensitivity of the research and the fact that the responses of the participants may reveal confidential information, I am aware of the implications inherent in their disclosure of this information to me as well as the impact it could have on their personal and/or professional lives. I am aware that their openness and honesty thus carries a degree of risk. Stake (in Merriam, 1998:214) refers to qualitative researchers as “guests in the private spaces of the world...[whose]...manners should be good and their code of ethics strict”. On this basis I consciously choose a personal code of ethics based on the list of provisions provided by Patton (1990:356) for use during the research process, particularly the interviews. The important ethical considerations include taking note of the following: Promises and reciprocity, risk assessment, confidentiality and informed consent. On the basis hereof I believe I have taken the necessary steps to ensure an ethical study. In addition to my research proposal please find attached my proposed letter of consent to the participants and consent for your perusal, which I believe addresses these issues.

I trust that the above measures meet with the approval of the committee. I would appreciate any feedback so that I may continue with this research in as sensitive a manner as possible as befitting the nature of this particular research project.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours Faithfully

Gadija Petker
(200072110)

ADDENDUM D

Hard copy available on request

ADDENDUM E

Dear Participant

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I, the undersigned, am presently a registered student in the Faculty of Education and Nursing. I am currently enrolled in a master's degree in Adult and Community Education under the guidance of Mrs. Nadine Petersen. In partial fulfillment of this degree, I have to complete a research essay in which I wish to focus on service-learning. In my study I would like to shed some light on the learning experiences of education students involved in a specific community service-learning project. The study I aim to undertake in the following months will focus on **gaining an understanding of the experiences of education students involved in a community service-learning project**, *through the medium of interviews.*

Resultantly I would like to invite you to form part of this study by consenting to be observed and photographed while at the site, to be interviewed and have this interview tape-recorded for data analysis. These data sets (observation notes and tape-recorded interviews) will be coded (using pseudonyms) and stored in a locked facility.

Please note that even if you agree to be part of this study you are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty or pressure from myself to provide reasons. I will also undertake to take all possible means to ensure that participants are not caused any detriment by partaking in this study and I will accordingly allocate a pseudonym to all participants (both in transcripts and on original tapes) to protect their identity and guarantee that any information revealed, either personal or professional, will be regarded as absolutely confidential. Accordingly, if you consent to be part of this study, find attached a consent form to be completed and signed indicating your consent

to be interviewed for the above purpose. To facilitate confidentiality, I will be collecting these slips myself when I conduct the interview.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Gadija Mia Petker

Student #[200072110]



ADDENDUM F

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Questionnaire/Permission for participants being interviewed about their experiences of being involved in a community service-learning project at the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name and Surname: _____

Course currently registered in: _____

Completed Degree (if applicable): _____

Home Language: _____

Occupation (if applicable): _____

Permission granted/Signed Consent

I, the undersigned, Mr./Ms/Mrs. _____

(Please print full name) do hereby indicate that I have read and understood the conditions for participation in the above-mentioned research as contained in the attached letter. I hereby grant consent to Gadija Mia Petker (200072110), a student in the Department of Educational Sciences (Faculty of Education and Nursing) to conduct observations of me while I am at the site, to photograph the observations and to conduct an interview with me for her research in partial fulfillment of her master's degree. This consent I grant on the proviso that my personal details are kept confidential and that my permission is procured before revealing any information, which may relate to my studies at RAU.

Signature of participant

Date

ADDENDUM G

An extract from the field notes recorded at the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital

Date	Time	Place	What the students did	What I observed
12/5/03	1pm	The Sizwe Hospital School	<p>A group of students conduct a lesson about the session Autumn. They use coloured paper to cut out different coloured leaves. The children are to write their birth dates on the leaves and then paste it onto a drawing of a tree. This activity is meant to alert the children to the birth dates of other children and the colours of autumn leaves.</p>	<p>I notice that the students are very enthusiastic at first to present this lesson. As the lesson progresses it appears as though the students become despondent. It appears as if it is related to the children not understanding what is expected of them. The students then realise that the children except for one child do not understand English. The students change their method of teaching to accommodate for this unexpected limiting factor. They turn to the teacher for assistance. She then explains to the children what they should do. The children are very excited and participate in the activity with enthusiasm. The students appear to be very pleased and show the children they are happy with their progress. This they do by patting the children on their shoulders, hugging them, smiling with them and making positive remarks like: "You have done well!" or "I am proud of you"(refer to Addendum N for an example of this). The teacher translates most of the verbal communication.</p>



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ADDENDUM H



ADDENDUM I



ADDENDUM J



ADDENDUM K



ADDENDUM L



ADDENDUM M



ADDENDUM N



³ The student in this picture gave me permission to include her picture as an addendum for this study without hiding her identity.

ADDENDUM O



ADDENDUM P

Extract of interview with PS4A student (Monique)

M: MONIQUE -participant

G: GADIJA- researcher

G- Tell me about your CSL experience at the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital.

M- I think in the beginning I felt we needed more structure. I felt it would have been more beneficial if we were divided up into groups and group one took a set of children and group two took a separate set of children and then later we could rotate. Each get a chance with different age groups and each get a chance with different cognitive abilities. In the beginning that was my feeling where I felt we needed structure but in the end of I realized I benefited more from having no structure. I learnt things about myself from the experience that I wouldn't possibly have learnt if was structured.

G- What do you mean by that?

M- I've never thought of myself as relating very well to young children it's almost as if I was scared of them and I've never known how to interact with them. Strangely enough I ended up spending the majority of the time with the young children and surprised myself when I found that I could relate with them and interact with them better than I thought I would be able to. I remember in the beginning there was that blind baby and (*name of person left out to protect identity*) said I should hold the baby and I was too scared to hold the baby and I didn't quite know what to do and how to do it. I found that later it became more natural and I felt I needed to do this and I needed to spend time with the kids and sit with them.

G- Is there anything else you would like to talk about related to your experiences?

M- On the whole it was a positive experience and it challenged me a lot as a person on a personal level but also on a professional level thinking about how I was going to apply this one day when I go into the work environment. The insight that it also gave me is not just in terms of working with children who have HIV/AIDS or TB, but rather that you need to make allowances and accommodate children that have had all sorts of experiences that were traumatic or simple things like when I was talking to one girl (*name of person omitted to protect identity*) and I managed to get out of her that she is from (*name of place omitted to protect persons identity*) and she lives in a house, but it's one room. I realized that not all children are going to come from backgrounds where they have a societal norm of a family or a home environment and I realized that I needed to be more sensitive to that and how it can impact on your job.

G- How did it make you feel when she told you about the one room and where she comes from?

M- I think I felt a bit silly for assuming otherwise.

G- What was your assumption?

M- Probably a home with two bedrooms, a lounge combined with a dining room and a kitchen. Although I have been exposed to these things before I have seen it. It's not something you think about on an everyday practical basis because you've got this reference frame of the kind of neighborhood you live in and the family you have. I think you so often take that for granted. I probably felt a bit silly or naïve for thinking otherwise. What I felt was quite special was that she was comfortable sharing her norm with me. She wasn't affected by, this is what it should be and this is what it is, she was comfortable saying this is what it is. She wasn't pretending that it was anything else. The naivety of children and the trust that children have is amazing.

G- I find it funny that you have chosen to pursue a career in teaching when you are afraid of working with children as you said earlier on. Tell me more about that.

M- I am actually a social worker and I've worked with children but in terms of adolescence so my focus has always been to be teaching in a high school not a primary school.

G- Has this changed since your involvement in the Sizwe Project?

M- Yes, I have actually thought to myself, I've worked with adolescence in the social work environment and that inspired me to go into teaching adolescence in the high school. My involvement with the children at the hospital has surprised me that I could form a bond with them and that I overcame my fears and this is my boundary and don't come near it and that is something that comes naturally. You just have to allow it to happen instead of fearing it.

G- About the bonding. How do you feel that you are not going back there again? Would you go back again?

M- My intention is to go back because I had an activity planned with beads that I didn't get to do with the kids so I would definitely go back in the holidays. I wasn't glad that it was over; I was upset that it was coming to an end and the very last visit I was very emotional. It was very hard to walk away and get on the bus; I was one of the last three students to leave the kids.

G- Why was it so hard for you?

M- Probably because of the emotions that I had developed that it wasn't just a practical, that I wasn't just going to get tasks accomplished for my PS4A course. It became a very emotional bond that I developed with the kids.

G- Coming back on the bus the last day. Compare your experience that day to your experience coming back on the bus after your first visit.

M- The first day I was pleasantly surprised almost expected something that would be a lot worse. I knew it wasn't going to be rosy in view of other experiences I have had but it wasn't as bad as I expected it to be. You know the kids were ill but it wasn't as though they were lying there doing nothing. Physically you couldn't see there was a sick child. The last day on the bus I kept to myself, I think I just listened to what the other people were talking about. A lot of the students felt glad that they could get on with their portfolio work now and that it's over now. There was a few of us that related to it more on an emotional level. It was interesting to see people's experiences. There was definitely a marked difference. The first day I felt relieved because it wasn't as bad as what I thought it was but on the last day I realized how much this experience had challenged me and it forced me to look at myself as an individual. I have learnt so much from this experience.

G- Talk about what you learnt.

M- The personal lessons. That I overstepped my boundaries that was quite challenging for me. The professional lessons: What would I take with me to the teaching environment- that would be how each child is capable of doing something but maybe not in your time and the way you want them to do it, but that they are capable of doing things in their own time and their own way. I think by giving a child space that they do accomplish something of value. I have learnt how dangerous favoritism is. You know the cute ones or funny ones got more attention than the quieter kids and the quieter ones also needed the attention as much.

G- Did you try to address the problem of favoritism or did you just stick to the same children all the time?

M- In the group we were in, with the babies, we did try to include everyone, even the blind baby that would lie on (*name of person omitted to protect identity*) lap all the time.

Every child was on the blanket with us doing something to be part of the group. We didn't leave anyone out.

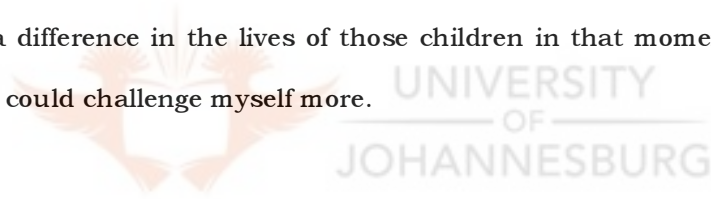
G- What sort of activities did you do with these babies?

M- The first activity was using play dough and cutters. I just thought it would be something fun for them to do, something creative and stimulates motor co-ordination. I think the touching is nice. I remember sitting with the kids and realising it wasn't working. They didn't do anything with the dough at first. But later they started touching it in their own time. One girl just sat there observing us and she had a big ball of play dough in her hand. She didn't try to copy us and she felt a bit exasperated by it and we left her. Then we had this puzzle box that was empty and she just started rolling little sausages from the dough. She was quite precise, she had obviously meticulously pulled pieces from the dough and rolled these sausages then placed them into the empty puzzle box. At the end of it she had this whole mound of little sausages so she found something for herself and stimulated herself. I think it was a calming experience for her. She was very methodical, and that is something I learnt about her and in her own way she created something. I learnt that what you envisage doesn't necessarily work but that each child does things in their own time. Other activities- we had brought beads that we were going to use to make necklaces for the children but we didn't have a chance to do that activity. Maybe another time as I said earlier. I think the children were happy having us there to give them attention and just being with them. I don't think it was necessarily about constructive activities and that was a big shift for me because in the beginning it was about getting a job done and handing in this portfolio for assessment. It became a more emotional shift for me.

G- Are you glad you had this exposure to this site?

M- I think on many levels I wouldn't have challenged my belief that I can't relate to younger kids. I might have missed out on vital opportunities. For all I know I might end

up at a primary school next year and here I was given the opportunity to find my place in life. I think also in terms of peers I found comfort in the bonds that I formed with my peers and the way we encouraged one another. We probably would have not gone on to that level if we didn't have this experience. I think professionally yes, it has benefited me but I think personally the benefit is much bigger than anything else. I think it is very difficult to describe it or put it across. As a social worker I felt I have used so many years of draining myself and this was my year out and I wasn't going to give of myself emotionally more than what I have to stay friends or family and this kind of view that I hold kept me in perspective. I have realized now that as a person I don't think I can get away from helping others and giving up myself for others. So I think on that level it challenged me and I definitely grew from this experience and even though it was sad leaving them behind, that's a reality and it's something that we will encounter in our lives. Making a difference in the lives of those children in that moment made it worth my while and I could challenge myself more.



G- If you have to put into a word or two to describe your emotions or feelings throughout this process what would it be and why?

M- In a way it is so hard to describe because the feeling is bigger than any word I can put on it but maybe- spiritual because it wasn't just professional development, it wasn't just how this was going to help me as a teacher one day, it's something that moved me as a person in ways hard to put into words.

G- Which moment stood out while at Sizwe that would benefit your career as a teacher or social worker in the future?

M- That would be the first time we were playing with the kids and we were sitting on the blanket I was just sitting there with a group of kids and there was this one child that kept to herself. Then one day she just walked across the room and she just fell on my lap, perhaps she just wanted that physical contact to relate on an emotional level with

someone. I think that was something I learnt that no one likes to be put down I learnt how important it is to acknowledge and validate other people. In everything there is good to found from that. These kids might not have all the material things but it does not make them any different to other children. To sum it up- validates people and believes in who they are.

G- Tell me about a low moment for you and a high moment for you in this whole experience at the hospital.

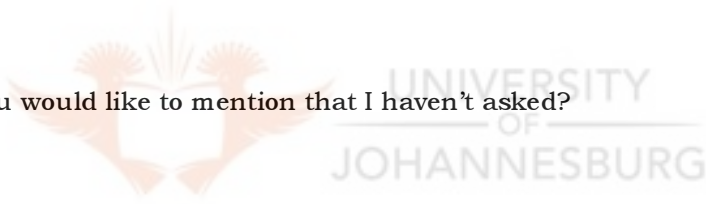
M- The high moment was when that child came to lay on my lap the low moment was walking out on the last day but at the same time that low was high. It was a low because I had all this emotion and a high possibly because it made me a better person because it made me challenge my boundaries.

G- Anything you would like to mention that I haven't asked?

M- No

G- Thank You for participating in this research project.

M- It was a pleasure. Thank You.



ADDENDUM Q

Extract of the interview with a PS4A student (Butle)

B: BUTLE- participant

G: GADIJA- researcher

G- Tell me about your experience of the community service learning project at Sizwe.

B- I think it was a positive experience and it was nice to make a positive impact on others. I think I felt quite enlightened by it, seeing the children and their situation. So on the whole it was a positive experience. In terms of the community service I don't think it was problematic working there. It was draining emotionally to go there play with the kid's then leave them there.

G- Why was it so emotionally draining for you?

B- I think when you go there, when I went there I gave a lot of myself I gave a lot of myself to the children and interacted with them. Not just be distant, walk around and do nothing. It felt like I had a therapy session every time I went there because I put something out.

G- How long did it take you to overcome this feeling of emotional draining?

B- After a couple of hours later the evening after leaving the hospital I felt slightly better. It didn't like affect me in a huge way.

G- In all of your activities done at the site what your emotions were like. Perhaps high or low moments.

B- I think the low moment was probably the last day when we left and we had the party. We saw how the children were so happy and eating cake and playing. That was so normal, so natural and we can relate to it. That was lots of fun and leaving them after

that was like feeling this sense of loss because they had this nice day with us and then we had to leave them. A pretty pleasant time tinged with this remorse or feeling sorry for them. There were lots of high moments. Cuddling the babies, playing with the babies and little kids. They need that affection you know there aren't many people there on a daily basis cuddling them and need that. Those were some positive things.

G- Were there any activities that you done that stand out in your mind and why do you remember it so well?

B- I think it was the last day when we has the party there was this little girl, I think it was *(name of person omitted to protect identity)*. She was a very emotionless child, she never really smiled. I put her on the swing and I wasn't sure if she liked it or if she had been on a swing before. She didn't want to get off the swing though and I just pushed her for about 45 minutes and every time I put out my arms for her to come to me she wouldn't. I think she really enjoyed that swing perhaps the freedom or the rocking motion. That feeling did me a lot of good and it did that for her as well.

G- What do mean by it did you both a lot of good?

B- I think that she finally wanted to do something and that she was not just a puppet she knows that she wanted to go on the swing and then afterwards I was putting her down and then she would come and put her back to me so that I would come and put her back on the slide so it was like we built up a trust. Now that I think about it that's why I feel so satisfied. She trusted me to do that for her. I felt happy because she trusted me considering she didn't really respond to anyone. There was this little boy *(name of person omitted to protect identity)* and he use to just run around like a maniac, he would pass from one person to the next because he interacted so well with everyone. This little girl, *(name of person omitted to protect identity)* was different because no one played with her because she was so quiet. I felt rewarded.

G- How did it make you feel, leaving her behind?

B- I think it is difficult to leave. You always have the feeling that you can do more and that you could see the children. I thought about going back on my own because I felt regretful that I had to leave, but I thought that if I go on my own it would be twenty kids and I would never manage to give them all the attention they need. Because I bonded with (*name of person omitted to protect identity*) I would want to work with her and I would feel remorseful or guilty if I left the others out. The good thing for me was that the children were well taken care of though the place looked quite stark they had everything they needed. I think it wasn't all that bad. I felt sad to leave the last day, but it was on an emotional level not because I was leaving them to the jaws of death. It was like I felt we made a difference.

G- Has this experience then changed you in any way?

B- I think you can't step away from something that is so real and not be touched in a way. At the beginning before I did this project there was a programme on Focus on TV about children with TB in a Cape Town Hospital. It was very well documented and very interesting. You got a picture of what the kids were going through. The frailty of the children, so I had that picture in my mind when we went but TV doesn't affect you the way real lives do it's quite easy to relate to these children with affection. The project has changed me in a way- You know you can never come to a point in your life and think that TB will be cured, I have a changed perception of reality because I can relate to it to them know. You see more about reality. That has changed me to be more sympathetic towards children in the class I will have one day.

G- So you feel this experience will make you a better teacher?

B- I think it will make me a better teacher and in South Africa make me aware that children coughing is not just the flu it can be TB and if it is TB then something needs to be done about it. I think my knowledge of it has helped to make me think of consequences of this disease.

G- Which section of the hospital were you involved in. The school or the babies?

B- I wasn't at the school I was with the babies. I found the older ones less gentle compared to the babies. I found the older ones a bit more difficult to relate to also because of language. They didn't really understand us well. So I think it was much more rewarding to work with the babies.

G- What do mean by more rewarding?

B- I think it was easier it didn't give me much conflict. I didn't have to force anyone or convince them to do like colour in a picture or draw. It was much easier to work with the little ones. Working with a group of children always puts you at risk of not giving individual attention, so I feel it was better and more rewarding working with the little one individually.

G- Was there one specific child that you went to all the time?

B- No, I played with a variety of kids. In the beginning I played with a little boy with a big belly and then the next week was as tiny baby that wasn't walking yet and then the last week was *(name of person omitted to protect identity)*. I would have gone back to the baby from the week before but its Mom was there so I didn't want to interfere. I think the tendency would have been, if I had known I would have formed a bond with one child. But... it was best that I got a chance with lots of children.

G- Is there anything you would like to mention about your experiences that you haven't mentioned?

B- No I think it was a very rewarding experience.

G- When you say rewarding what do you mean?

B- Like I haven't just come here and done a course. I have developed something about myself and I have new knowledge about teaching and life. It's an added dimension to my life. I learnt to have more patience. I think if you just come and do a course you don't really get a chance to interact with the community. I studied in (*name of place omitted to protect identity*) before and we didn't do any community service projects whereas now I have come here and I have done this community project. I have seen how much reward there is in doing community service. There is much more depth to it. Involvement in community service has changed me as a person.

G- How has it changed you as a person?

B- I don't think these things have manifested themselves in any concrete now I think it will come to the fore when I start teaching. Now I guess it's like you think about it you know children are not just a statistic they are real children and they are coping with difficult things. I find it very difficult to be separated from my mother and I have learnt that I have that support system and I can go to someone when I need them. Now I have this picture to be kinder and more polite to others take time for smaller things.

G- Do you think you have learnt a life long lesson?

B- Yes. I think the learning comes not only from what you do but from the reflection. We have reflection exercises to do and I think in terms of that it would give me more insight when I do the reflection exercises for my portfolio. Sometimes when you in the academic process you have just you and your work you don't reflect more on what's going on whereas now I will appreciate that reflection time to realize more what a difference it has made. I feel the interview I had with Nadine and the one with you helps to clarify things so that you verbalize things and see what I can do with it. It has opened up quite a lot of possibility.

G- So if you never had this opportunity?

B- I don't know that I would have done something. I probably would have done something for myself like horse riding if I had the time. But, now, I have had that time and I have channeled it into something else. It gives you an idea of what you can do with your time. I think I would have found other things quite difficult to do. As much as I love working with nature (Environmental Education) I would have loved working there but I am happier doing the course I done. I also felt that the course for HIV/AIDS/ in PS3A was well linked to the PS4A course. It made it more real for me. You can still create the situation of trust for the children as I learnt.

G- If there is one word that springs to mind about your experiences at Sizwe what would it be and why?

B- It would be hopeful because these children are quite young they still have futures ahead of them they have been for treatment for TB and hopefully they will be alright. One day they will help other children in a similar situation as they had when they were little. Children are able to make one hopeful for the future. Hopeful because their care and their facilities were not awful. You know you have this impression of a government institution; it will be dirty and not well taken care of. At Sizwe the children had everything they needed, they were in clean beds and they had toys but all neatly packed away, they were fed properly and they go there medication on time. The children also have a routine and a sleep everyday, also the library that they have there is amazing- someone donated that to them so you realize that the kids are not forgotten they are remembered. They have something ahead of them. I am also hopeful because people in my class have learnt something from this. We have some kind of picture of real life. My perception of things around me has definitely changed. Nothing is as simple as it seems. If you not aware of people like those at Sizwe then you are still seeing life in your terms now we have seen things form another dimension.

G- Have you had a deep emotional experience?

B- Yes. I think I am always open to these kinds of experiences. In terms of emotion and children I am very open to those experiences. Yes, it was very deep. I don't think anyone can go away for such an experience untouched I think for everyone it should be lasting with some sort of effect. I should be deep for everybody.

G- Would you want to talk about your experiences to someone close to you in future or is it just something you feel the group you were with will understand?

B- I find it easy to talk about it to everyone. People say shame those unfortunate people and there is no hope for them. To go against those views and tell them about the rewarding work I have done with children with TB would be great for me. Not all people want to see things for what they are.

G- Tell me about your most frustrating moment in this project?

B- My most frustrating moment was the car ride back and hearing people moan about being teachers and what they were to do when they have to teach HIV/AIDS to the children one day. Also when they moaned to the lecturer in the PS3A course about it being a waste of time. I felt frustrated with them because they didn't see that the project could be useful for them one day. They were more concerned that they needed a mark for the course and they didn't see the value of the course. People are not open to these new ways of learning. They feel that the clever person will be brought down by the less clever person in the group. So I think that is their perception of things and I see things as changing and we should embrace the change rather than reject it. Doing community service is something that is fluid it is not something that is perfect it changes and you have to find something from it that you can use to benefit you. No one is going to tell you that this is what you must use and this is what is important to use to pass. You need to work things out for yourself.

G- When they said they felt the project was a waist of time what did you do?

B- I felt my heart break. I felt bull shit you are getting something out of this but I just sat and listened to them. I knew that they were measuring things in a different way to the others. In some ways it's ok to try and change peoples views but it's not easy to do in a group situation. Perhaps on a one on one situation you could do that. They all had their own criteria and you cannot change them. They are missing out because there is so much too gain. I don't know how they would have learnt to create a caring and supportive environment if they felt that way. What would they perceive as better than what we were doing. Eventually life teaches people lessons. I was angry with them. But you cannot change their ways of thinking. This project has taught us so much but yet some of them haven't got the picture.

G- Has your perception changed of others?

B- Yes. I am not naïve about South Africa and the project also confirmed what my parents taught me about people and their different lives. It re-in forced what I knew.

G- If you have to compare your first visit to the last visit what would you say? Also talk about your experiences and emotions on both occasions.

B- I think the first visit was like a bomb exploding all of us had come there with so much to do. It was competitive we all wanted to do our own things. The last visit was more settled and there wasn't a need to compete. The chaos of the first visit was in steep contrast to the organized carious in the last visit. People sat with the children and it wasn't a case of let's do this and let's do this. We were all more relaxed. In the first visit I was a bit nervous and insecure about what I had to do, also who I should pay attention to, whom should I love? The last time I was much calmer and relaxed. The bus trip on the first day I was quite judgmental, I think you put things into boxes maybe I had seen things but I didn't make a change. Some people were being so superficial, the bus trip was a way to let go of those feelings. The last trip back I

thought about what had gone on. The bus trips were for me a time to think about what had gone on. I didn't feel like talking I wanted to be more to myself. I wish it was quieter on the bus but people were just talking all the time.

G- Do you wish to add anything else that would benefit my study that you haven't mentioned?

B- No I have mentioned everything I wanted to mention.

G- Thank You for agreeing to participate in this research project.

B- It was a pleasure. Thanks



