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# Using Sport to Build Community: Service-Learning with Iraqi Refugees

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Ashleigh Morgan Huffman entitled "Using Sport to Build Community: Service-Learning with Iraqi Refugees." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Kinesiology and Sport Studies.

Joy T. DeSensi, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Allison D. Anders, Lars Dzikus, Dulcie Peccolo

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Joy T. DeSensi , Major Professor

We have read this dissertation  
and recommend its acceptance:

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Allison Anders

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Lars Dzikus

---

Dulcie Peccolo

Accepted for the Council

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Carolyn R. Hodges  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Using Sport to Build Community: Service-Learning with Iraqi Refugees

A Dissertation Presented  
for the  
Doctor of Philosophy Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ashleigh Morgan Huffman  
August 2011

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) class. It was my hope that this research would produce a usable model, a framework for other scholars and practitioners interested in developing community-university partnerships. I wanted this project to not only answer the “why” questions for SDP and service-learning, but also the “how” questions – specifically, how to create a reflexive and collaborative partnership that balances the needs of the community and university. I wanted to create something riveting and real, something inspiring and authentic, and something more inclusive than a first-person programmer or instructor account of the experience (Darnell, 2007; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Millington, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009).

Much like the goals of the class, this research was designed to stimulate and encourage others to move toward a more critical and engaged community agenda. To do that, I needed to create a research text that readers could “keep in their minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience” (Ellis, 2004, p. 30). For that reason, I chose narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as the primary method of representation, coupled with performance narratives (Denzin, 2003) and poetics (Glesne, 2006; Ely, 2007).

Based on the data collected from 49 qualitative interviews, 500 pages worth of reflective journals, and 200 pages of electronically recorded field notes, I created a visual

community-university partnership model that illustrates the connections between SDP and service-learning as implemented in the SCD class. In addition to the visual model, I constructed narratives to detail the progression of the SCD experience over time, beginning with the common language of sport and ending in complete investment and reciprocity. As a result of this research, it has become clear that if implemented with intentionality, careful consideration, community collaboration, and reflexivity, that sport-based service-learning initiatives can enhance student learning, improve community welfare, and strengthen ties between the community and the university.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*“You write what you have been attracted to and convinced by. You write what you have read as meaningful; you interpret what you have read as a meaningful pattern. The story you write will be part of the larger story of who you are, where you’ve been, what you’ve read and talked about and argued over, what you believe in and value, what you feel compelled to name as significant.”*

*-H.L. Goodall, 2000, p. 87*

### My Story

I grew up in a small town in southern West Virginia. There were four hundred kids in my high school. Three hundred and ninety-six were white. I lived in a subdivision, in a 1970s two-story, split-entry house with a garage. We were middle class like everyone else I knew. My dad worked in the car manufacturing industry and my mom was a secretary at the local law firm. We went to Rock Branch Independent Church just up the street from our house. My mom made sure my brother and I were there every time the doors were open. Most everyone in the church and in my neighborhood had large extended families living in nearby towns. It was nice because it created a very strong sense of community. Although we didn’t have any relatives nearby, I never met a stranger.

When I talk about where I’m from, I swell with pride. I can’t help it. I have such fond memories of the people and of my time in West Virginia. It’s funny because in my encounters with other West Virginians, it appears that most of us feel this way. It’s a strange loyalty to a state with its reputation. I’ve heard every barefoot, no teeth, dumb, white, poor, Billy Bob joke there is about West Virginia, only some of which are funny.

Maybe it's the feeling of being an underdog that unites us. A feeling of inferiority for being poor or uneducated that ignites that fighting spirit within us to prove our worth through hard work, commitment, loyalty, and authenticity. As the first and only member of my immediate or extended family to graduate from college, I feel a sense of responsibility to remain true to my roots and to use my education to make the world a better place, one with less hate and less condemnation for those who are different. Without a doubt, West Virginia has shaped me; it drives me. And it is in West Virginia that my story begins.

As a toddler, I was obsessed with two things: a blue rubber ball and the *Golden Book* series. I tormented my parents daily with a ball in one hand, a book in the other, and chipmunk cheeks that made it impossible for them to say "no." By the age of eighteen months, my parents were convinced I could read. I'm not talking "convinced" like they told the neighbors, I'm talking "convinced" like they told the pediatrician. Unfortunately, I was no reading prodigy; I had simply memorized all the books in the collection. They still talk about how fascinating it was to hear me "read" at eighteen months and in return, I sarcastically thank them for allowing me to become completely neurotic about learning at such a young age.

As for my second obsession, my parents were a little more resistant. My mother, bless her heart, tried so hard to raise me 'appropriately.' She bought me dolls, she signed me up for piano lessons, and she enrolled me in dance classes, all of which were miserable experiences. I can remember pulling in the parking lot for my first dance recital. I *did not* want to go inside. It was embarrassing enough to wear that ridiculous

pink outfit in the house. There was *no way* I was wearing it in public. So I threw myself under the backseat and kicked and screamed, flailing my body all over the floorboard. My mom says all she remembers is little jelly shoes slamming against the backseat, while I screamed at the top of my lungs from the floor. At the time, I didn't really think about how embarrassing that little fiasco was for my mom as all the other mothers and daughters paraded in with their matching hair bows and make-up. All I could really think about was my own embarrassment in that stupid, pink outfit. Needless to say, it wasn't one of my better performances.

After watching me cram my pink tutu under the mattress and shoot the heads of Barbie dolls through the hoop hanging on our door downstairs, my mom finally gave up and enrolled me in the local soccer league. I can remember walking up on the first day of try-outs. My mom's friend had given me this horrendous perm that made my hair look like a small nuclear explosion. Both of my front teeth were missing. My shorts were pulled just shy of my collarbone. And my socks only covered a quarter of my shinguard, leaving all of the white plastic with the cheap red dot fully exposed. It's no wonder as one of the only girls in the league why I was picked next to last that day.

Eventually, my parents got the dress code memo and allowed me to pull my shorts down around my waist and buy full-length tube socks. Even though I looked the part, I still played with boys who were much more aggressive than me. I was athletic and would score occasionally, but I was never really part of the action. When I was eight, we moved to a new town about an hour away. Unlike the previous town, which only had youth soccer, the new town actually had a youth basketball league. To help with the

transition to a new school, my dad thought it was a good idea to sign me up. Again, I was the only girl in the league. And I had only played with my dad in the driveway, so I wasn't used to the pace of the game or the aggressiveness of competition.

Game after game after game I would stand on the wing, waiting for the boys to pass me the ball. And every game I would leave disappointed because I felt useless and unsatisfied. I can remember crying after one of the games in the backseat of my dad's car. I was so upset that I never got a chance to be a part of the action, a part of the game. I will never forget the words that my dad told me that day. He said, "Ashleigh, if you want to be successful, if you want respect, you can't just be as good as the boys. You have to be better. You have to make your own action." This was the first time in my life I realized there were significant differences between the way boys and girls were treated, especially in sport. I don't know if my dad realized the profound impact of his words that mild February day, but that moment, that feeling, that insight changed my whole life.

From that day forward, I practiced basketball every day. I was far too prideful to be humiliated for another season. After all, in my eight years of life, I had only known success, achievement, and praise. The next year, I made the All-Star team. I was the only female selected. The year after, I made several All-Tournament teams, signifying me as not only the best on my team, but as the best in the tournament-male or female. My dad and I would always celebrate our moral victories by stopping at 7-11 to get a Slurpee on the way home. When I reflect on those moments in the car with my dad, I think about the laughter, the Slurpees, the love, and the shared sense of achievement. We did it. Life was good. Life was "fair." We beat the system. Meritocracy existed.

When I was eleven, I was asked to join the most preeminent girls AAU team in the state. From 1993 to 1999, I spent every summer traveling all over the country to compete in basketball tournaments. Sure, I sacrificed my summer breaks laying by the pool and hanging out with friends, but I didn't care. I was so enamored with basketball and with traveling, that I welcomed the summer and the opportunity to practice all day without school. I was competitive, not with others, but with myself. I wanted to go to college and I knew basketball would be my vehicle, so I willingly spent hours training. In 2001, I accepted a full scholarship to play basketball at Eastern Kentucky University. In many ways, basketball was like a passport that opened the world to me.

In 2005, I graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Physical Education degree from Eastern Kentucky University while serving as co-captain of the women's basketball team. Upon graduation, Dr. Sarah Hillyer, founder of the international sports development organization Sport 4 Peace,<sup>1</sup> asked me to participate in a cultural sports exchange program in Wuhan, China. I was ecstatic about the opportunity to travel abroad. Despite my overwhelming excitement, my parents were less than thrilled when I told them about the trip. In fact, they were adamantly opposed to the idea. My mom had never traveled outside of the United States and my dad and brother had only lived internationally as a part of the military.

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<sup>1</sup> Sport 4 Peace is a non-profit, non-political international sports development organization dedicated to increasing global solidarity and improving sport experiences for girls and women around the world (<http://sport4peace.org/>).



I decided to go, against my parent's wishes. I grappled with the decision for months, wondering if the fear and anxiety it caused my mom and dad would be worth my selfish discoveries. But in my heart, I just knew there was more to life than what I had experienced thus far. I look back on my decision with no regrets. In China, I experienced the power of sport in bringing people together. On the basketball court, age, ethnicity, political views, and religious differences became irrelevant. Basketball transcended language barriers and cultural differences and provided an opportunity for American and Chinese women to share their hopes, their dreams, their fears, and their desires for a better and more peaceful world. After my experiences in China, I knew I would dedicate the rest of my life to what is now recognized as Sport for Development and Peace (SDP).

Since 2005, I have spent countless hours immersed in the work of Sport 4 Peace. During the course of the last six years, Dr. Hillyer and I have completed several large-scale international sports development projects, including:

- The creation of a sports-based peace camp for Israeli and Palestinian girls (2006 Sport for Life Peace Camp)
- Soccer clinics for refugee children living in Rockington (2009, 2010, 2011)
- A partnership with the U.S. Department of State *SportsUnited* to bring an Iraqi girls' basketball team to the US for a sports exchange and participation in Pat Summitt's basketball camps (2009 Iraq to America).

In addition to the implementation of the projects, Dr. Hillyer and I have been busy collecting and transcribing data, writing grants, submitting manuscripts, and presenting at conferences all over the world. My writing, my research, my studies, my time and my

energy will always be devoted to promoting a better and more peaceful world through sport.

## Chapter 2

### The Research Puzzle

*“We have helped make the world in which we find ourselves. We are not merely objective inquirers, people on the high road, who study a world lesser in quality than our moral temperament would have it, people who study a world we did not help create. On the contrary, we are complicit in the world we study. Being in this world, we need to remake ourselves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world.”*

- D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, 2000, p. 61

#### Rationale for the Study

In the year 2000, the United Nations General Assembly established eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the year 2015. The proposed goals included: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and female empowerment; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development (Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2008). In 2003, the United Nations recognized sport as a cost-effective way to achieve many of the MDGs listed above and created an inter-agency task team called the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP IWG, 2008). The SDP IWG was created as a “think-tank” designed to brainstorm ways in which sport could be used to solve some of the global socio-political problems individuals were facing worldwide.

After two years of research, the United Nations proclaimed the year 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, in which sport was deemed a universal language that could bring people together regardless of background, age,

ethnicity, religious beliefs, or economic status (United Nations, 2005). As a result, hundreds of grassroots organizations began pursuing sport as a valid and legitimate way to ameliorate societal issues and improve individual situations and communities.

As the field of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) continues to grow, there is a push for empirical evidence to support the claims that sport programming can address the issues associated with the MDGs. Those who facilitate SDP initiatives are not typically trained academicians, making evaluation of curriculum effectiveness a difficult aspect of the programming to execute. Therefore, there is currently a gap between SDP theory and practice. In order for the field to gain legitimacy, research must be published on the effectiveness of SDP programming. As critics have noted (Darnell, 2007; Millington, 2010), it is imperative that this research become more inclusive, giving emphasis to the “recipients of aid” and other individuals involved in the programming efforts.

In addition to the rise in Sport for Development and Peace programs, there is also a push for increased service-learning opportunities in universities nationwide. Educational reformists are calling for a more active pedagogy in the university, stating that more and more students are graduating with only inert knowledge, knowledge that is memorized but not actually metabolized or understood (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Since the early 1980s there have been a number of books published about the failures of higher education and the mediocrity of its university graduates (Anderson, 1996; Bok, 2006; Bloom, 1987; Butin, 2010; Kimball, 1991; Readings, 1996; Smith, 1990; Shaw, 1989; Wilshire, 1990). As a result, alternative pedagogies and classroom methodologies have

emerged, including an increase in service-learning initiatives (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Unfortunately, much of the literature produced regarding service-learning efforts is largely one-sided, told only from the instructor's perspective, giving little credence to student voices or those of the community (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). In order to better understand the benefits and the challenges associated with service-learning, I believe it is important to hear from all individuals impacted by the service-learning experience, including the students, the community members, the partnering organizations, the administrators, and the instructor.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) class. It was my hope that this research would produce a usable model, a framework for other scholars and practitioners interested in developing community-university partnerships. I wanted this project to not only answer the “why” questions for SDP and service-learning, but also the “how” questions – specifically, how to create a reflexive and collaborative partnership that balances the needs of the community and university. I wanted to create something riveting and real, something inspiring and authentic, and something more inclusive than a first-person programmer or instructor account of the experience (Darnell, 2007; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Millington, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Much like the goals of the class, this research was designed to

stimulate and encourage others to move toward a more critical and engaged community agenda.

### **Sport for Development and Peace and Service-Learning Defined**

In order to comprehend the formation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class, it is important to understand the ways in which Sport for Development and Peace and service-learning were defined and operationalized. When using the term Sport for Development and Peace or SDP, I am referring to the definition of SDP put forth by the most prominent organization promoting SDP initiatives, the United Nations. As noted by the UN (2008),

Sport for Development and Peace refers to the intentional use of sport, physical activity, and play to attain specific development and peace objectives, including, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)...Successful Sport for Development and Peace programs work to realize the rights of all members of society to participate in sport and leisure activities...Strong Sport for Development and Peace Programs combine sport and play with other non-sport components to enhance their effectiveness...Programs seek to empower participants and communities by engaging them in the design and delivery of activities, building local capacity, adhering to generally accepted principles of transparency and accountability, and pursuing sustainability through collaboration, partnerships, and coordinated action” (p. 3).

This definition of SDP emphasizes the intentional use of sport as a cooperative and inclusive activity, designed to empower the community through collaboration. Further explanation of this definition can be found in chapter three.

Also essential to the understanding of the Sport and Community Development class is the concept of service-learning. Unlike SDP, which has one general definition, service-learning has almost 150 competing variations or interpretations (Kendall, 1990). For the purposes of this study, the type of service-learning implemented in the SCD correlates with the definition put forth by the University's Office of the Provost. As noted in the The Center for Learning and Teaching handbook (Schumann, Olsen, Ellenburg, & Stiefle, 2010),

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Service-learning is a structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Service-learning provides college and university students with a "community context" to their education, allowing them to connect their academic coursework to their roles as citizens (p. 8).

This type of service-learning emphasizes the connections between coursework and practical application and also the importance of reflection. More details about the type of service-learning implemented in the SCD class can be found in chapter four.

### **The Creation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development Class**

In the Spring of 2010, the Recreation, Health, and Human Performance (RHHP)<sup>2</sup> Department Head approached Dr. Sarah Hillyer about designing a service-learning course for the department. Sarah had recently graduated from the RHHP department with her Ph.D. in Exercise and Sport Studies after completing her dissertation on the development of women' fast-pitch softball in Iran<sup>3</sup> (Hillyer, 2010). As the Founder of the non-profit organization Sport 4 Peace,<sup>4</sup> Sarah introduced the sport of fast-pitch softball to Iranian women in 2001 and continued to lead them in their development of the program for over ten years.

Upon graduation, Sarah moved home to Kentucky to continue her role as the coordinator of international projects with Sport 4 Peace. While at home, Sarah brainstormed endlessly about the possibilities to positively impact the local community through sport. After several days of deliberation, she readily agreed to commute from Kentucky to develop and teach the first department-wide service-learning course. Because of her three-hour commute each way, she asked the department head, Dr.

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<sup>2</sup> Pseudonyms have been created for the department, college, university, and town in which the SCD class is implemented. This is an additional layer of protection for the identities of those who participated in this research project.

<sup>3</sup> Hillyer, S.J. (2010). "Women's Softball in Iran: An Autoethnographic Journey. " PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Sport 4 Peace is a non-profit, non-political international sports development organization dedicated to increasing global solidarity and improving sport experiences for girls and women around the world (<http://sport4peace.org/>).



Johnson, if I could partner with her and co-teach the course. Sarah thought it would be important to have someone available to meet with students and community agents as necessary to get the service-learning course off the ground. Although I knew very little about service-learning, I had worked with Sarah extensively since 2005 as the Assistant Director of Sport 4 Peace and trusted that our international sport for development and peace experience would aid us in the development of this class.

After accepting the position as co-developer of the service-learning course, I arranged several meetings with campus resources to better understand the pedagogy of service-learning, as it is an uncommon method of classroom instruction in the sport-related disciplines (Miller & Nendel, 2011). Sarah and I met with the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) on campus and reviewed their handbook for service-learning strategies. The CLT also presented us with materials on reflection and assessment (see Appendix B), as those are two of the most important components of a service-learning class, yet two of the most difficult aspects to manage. In addition, we met with other faculty engaged in service-learning on campus and asked for resources, articles, and tips based on their experiences. Several of the faculty members provided us with copies of their syllabi, including course objectives and examples of assignments. Although the faculty members were outside our discipline, it gave us a more thorough understanding of service-learning and it generated new ideas regarding the use of sport, exercise, and recreation to serve the community.

Because of our experiences as international sport practitioners, our desire was to create a sport-based service-learning course driven by the needs of the international

populations living in the local community. Primarily, we were interested in the experiences of those families transitioning to the US from the Middle East. Much of our work with Sport 4 Peace has taken place with girls and women in the Middle East, specifically in the countries of Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. Outside of our international experiences, our local work has consisted of the co-development of the Knox Kicks soccer camp for Burundian refugees.<sup>5</sup> Although these are two vastly different populations, it is our work with the Burundian refugees that revealed to us the influx of Iraqi refugees in our local community.

Since the war between the United States and Iraq began in 2003, 4.7 million Iraqis have been displaced (Sassoon, 2009). Iraqis are the “largest displaced group worldwide and the third largest refugee population in the world (after Afghans and Palestinians)” (Sassoon, 2009, p. 1). Because of the war and the subsequent collapse of the government and its institutions like schools and hospitals, nearly one out of every six Iraqis have been forced to move (Sassoon, 2009). As a result, the number of Iraqi families who have sought refuge in the United States is growing exponentially. According to 2009 statistics, the US has granted asylum to 6,000 Iraqi refugees since 2003 (Sassoon, 2009).

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<sup>5</sup> In 2009, Sport 4 Peace teamed with Healing Transitions, a service learning and research initiative working with Burundian refugee families, to develop a one-day soccer event for local Burundian refugees. The event was held at the soccer stadium on campus and included approximately 60 Burundians of all ages. In 2010, the second-annual Knox Kicks camp for Burundian refugees was also a success with over 75 Burundian men, women, and children and over 100 volunteers from the university, the athletics department, and the community.

Approximately 120 Iraqi families now call Rockington home. Unfortunately, the refugee resettlement agency is severely understaffed and underfunded. Based on our conversations with the director of the local resettlement agency, there are only three caseworkers for over 3,000 refugees.<sup>6</sup> And based on multiple conversations with the resettlement caseworkers and other community sponsors, the Iraqis have largely been excluded from most community-based outreach programs because of their religious beliefs or ethnicity.

Because of our extensive work abroad with the Iraqi population in the BYSI sports project,<sup>7</sup> our partnership with the US Department of State SportsUnited to host a girl's basketball team from Iraq in 2009,<sup>8</sup> and our work with the local refugee

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<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the resettlement agency only commits to the first 90 days of transition. There is no long-term support for the 3,000+ people living in Rockington and the surrounding areas. Often times, refugees enter the country with nothing more than a suitcase, painful memories, and emotional wounds. Essentially, they have 90 days to learn the language, navigate the transportation system, enroll their children in school, and find a job.

<sup>7</sup> On behalf of Sport 4 Peace, Sarah has traveled to Iraq five times to conduct basketball camps for Iraqi and Kurdish girls. In addition, she has partnered with the US Embassy as part of the BYSI (Baghdad Youth Sports Initiative) project to encourage sport participation among girls and women, disabled youth, and physical education teachers.

<sup>8</sup> "Iraq to America" was an eighteen-day project designed as a cultural and sport exchange in which ten girls and three coaches were selected by the Iraqi Basketball Federation to participate. During the first week, we toured Washington D.C. and participated in several sports and recreation events. Upon arrival in Rockington, the team attended two of Pat Summitt's basketball camps and visited the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

community, Sarah and I believed our experiences and knowledge would be best utilized in assisting the Iraqi refugee population in Rockington. After speaking with the resettlement organization and understanding more of the isolation in which the Iraqi refugees lived and the injustices that they faced in our own community, we knew creating a service-learning class using sport and exercise would not only help the Iraqis transition to the area, but would also challenge our students to confront possible ignorance or negative stereotypes (Stonebanks, 2008).

For six weeks during the summer of 2010, Sarah lived in Baghdad, conducting sports clinics for Iraqi girls, coaches, physical educators, and disabled youth. While Sarah was experiencing first-hand the conditions of Iraq, I was busy reading about and continuing to meet with service-learning experts and other community agents. In early summer, I had my second meeting with the resettlement and sponsorship agency to obtain the names and addresses of the local refugees. Of course they could not give me such information, as it would violate the confidentiality of their status. In addition, the resettlement agency mentioned that there had been several incidences of violence and “hate crimes” against the Iraqis, which made their personal information even more difficult to obtain. At this point, we were growing more and more concerned about designing an entire course around a group of people in which we didn’t have a single phone number, address, or relationship.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Despite the resettlement agency’s inability to provide us with contact information, we did maintain a formal partnership. Both semesters, the resettlement agency trained the SCD students as cultural orientation leaders and allowed them to conduct seminars with newly arriving refugees. Although this did not help us

However, as God would have it, a woman that read an article about the “Iraq to America” project in 2009 contacted me several weeks later. She had saved our website and emailed us to see what projects we were involved in for the summer of 2010. After meeting with this woman, Janet, it became clear that she was very connected to the local Iraqi refugee population and had a passion for integrating Arab women into the Rockington community. Janet then introduced us to Salem and Debbie, who also were involved in refugee resettlement and community building. Salem, a Palestinian refugee, met his wife Debbie after fleeing Palestine in the late 1980s and subsequently enrolling in the local university to study engineering. Because of Salem’s past, issues of resettlement were also personally very important to both him and his wife. In addition, Janet also introduced us to a local ESL (English as a Second Language) institute in Rockington who worked predominately with native Arabic speakers and offered their school as a place for us to do educational seminars and low-impact aerobic activities with the women on a monthly basis.

When Sarah returned in August, we called Salem, Debbie, and Janet to set up meetings for introductions. For two weeks, Sarah and I visited numerous apartment complexes with Salem as our translator. We went into the homes, we drank tea, we ate baklava and klaychah and halawat men sama, and we spoke with the Iraqi families about our class and our areas of expertise. And we asked them about the challenges that they faced in transitioning to the community and how our class could be of assistance to them.

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with initial introductions, it was a great experience for our students and was mutually beneficial for the agency’s partnership requirement with outside organizations.

The Iraqis spoke passionately about the need for more social interaction, as many of them are isolated from each other (living in numerous apartment complexes all over town) and from the greater Rockington community (because of language, transportation, and the lack of employment). The women also expressed a strong desire for physical activity opportunities in a culturally appropriate space and educational sessions on healthy living in the US (e.g. recipes, nutrition facts, cooking, etc.) And lastly, the families spoke intensely about the lives of their children and their ability to have a safe space for their children to play, free of bullying and other dangers (drugs, gangs, etc.) they associated with their living conditions in low-income housing units.

After two weeks of interviewing the families in their homes, we then reported to our students the needs that had been expressed. Sarah and I believe service-learning should be based on the self-identified needs and desires of the community, not based upon our own values or what we would prescribe as “solutions.”<sup>10</sup> It was really important that we communicated this message of collaboration, reciprocity, and reflexivity to the students (Freire, 1999). Yes, the initial ideas for each project would be generated by the students in response to the needs that were identified by the community. But ultimately, the students would then present those ideas to the community and ask for feedback and assistance during the brainstorming, implementation, and execution phases of those ideas.

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<sup>10</sup> This commitment is a reflection of the extensive work Sarah and I have completed as practitioners of SDP projects around the world. Over the course of seventeen years, Sport 4 Peace has demonstrated a commitment to putting the needs of the community first as opposed to imposing our own ideas/projects. Validation for this model can be found in Freire ‘s work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1999).

As instructors of the service-learning course, we were not interested in running an intervention or a charity (Darnell, 2007; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Freire, 1999; Fourre, 2003; Millington, 2010); we were interested in hearing the needs of the Iraqi refugee community, investing in their lives, developing cross-cultural friendships, and collaborating with them to create sport, recreation, and education programs that would be of benefit to them.

After several weeks of classroom brainstorming sessions, the students designed the rest of the course calendar. In order to meet the social inclusion needs of the Iraqi families, they decided that three large-scale social gatherings<sup>11</sup> per semester would be a good way to get to know the families and help them feel more included in the Rockington community. Because sport and recreation are such an integral part of the cultural life on campus at SPLU, the three social gatherings per semester were centered on sporting events or recreational activities, such as going on a hike or attending a soccer game together. To address the women's desire for culturally appropriate physical activity, the female Kinesiology students devised a weekly, low-impact aerobics class with a fifteen-minute educational seminar on nutrition and/or healthy living. Because childcare was

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<sup>11</sup> The social gathering for Fall 2010 included: A welcome party at the University followed by tickets to a soccer game on campus; a picnic in the park with food and games (bean bag toss, sand volleyball, pumpkin decorating, soccer); and the last event was a Thanksgiving Day celebration with music, food, a shopping bazaar of donated items, and activities for the children. The social gatherings for Spring 2011 included: A welcome party at the University followed by tickets to a women's basketball game on campus; a hike in the mountains with food and games; and the last event, the World Cup, which was a multicultural soccer tournament celebrating the diversity of Rockington (see Chapter 10).

mentioned as a rather large obstacle to exercise participation, the Sport Management females<sup>12</sup> agreed to structure after-school playtime activities for the children. This was also a way to meet the families' requests for safe spaces for their children to play. After the initial presentation of these ideas to the Iraqis, Sarah and I continued to ask for feedback throughout the semester to ensure that we were meeting their needs. More specific examples of course activities and the ways in which the Iraqis and the students experienced these activities are presented as narratives in chapters seven through ten.

### **Organization of the Study**

In the following chapters, I explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) course. I begin in chapter three by defining Sport for Development and Peace and the significant articles of legislation that have helped shape the SDP movement. I share the strengths of SDP as well as the shortcomings and conclude with suggestions to redress the critiques currently associated with the field. In chapter four, I contextualize service-learning, beginning with competing definitions and typologies, moving into a working definition of service-learning used by the SCD class. I also discuss the pedagogical benefits as well as the challenges associated with service-learning in the university. And I conclude chapter four with the philosophical correlations between

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<sup>12</sup> As you will learn in subsequent chapters, the class was divided based on gender in order to promote cultural respect. The structure of the class and how it changed over the course of the academic year can be found in the analysis section of chapter eight.



service-learning and SDP and how the two can be combined to produce much needed research for community-based programs using applied theory.

In chapter five, I detail the use of participant-observation field notes, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) used to capture the voices of the students, administrators, community partners, and the Iraqi refugees involved in the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development course. I provide a rationale as to why narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), performance ethnography (Denzin, 2003), and ethnopoetics (Glesne, 2006) were used in this particular study and why those are the most appropriate choices for understanding the lived experience of both the Iraqis and the students. Chapter six represents a list of composite characters (Ellis, 2004) involved in the narrative representations.

The data collected in forty-nine qualitative interviews, over one hundred five page reflective journals, and over one hundred pages of electronically recorded participant-observation field notes was used to create narrative representations of the SCD experience in chapters seven through ten. The students are presented as composite characters (Ellis, 2004), which is helpful in a “long, personal text where you want to compress time and don’t want to introduce all of the participants” (p. 175).<sup>13</sup> To protect the Iraqis represented in the final chapters, I have altered identifying information<sup>14</sup> and created pseudonyms. In order to create each narrative, I pieced together quotes from

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<sup>13</sup> More explanations regarding the use of composite characters can be found in chapter five.

<sup>14</sup> Greater explanation about the details that were altered can be found in chapter five. An example would be the number of children in a family, or the ages of children, or the occupation of the mother, etc.

journal entries, formal interviews, informal conversations, and participant-observation field notes. Although the stories were not always expressed in one setting, they are reflective of the stories that were told and in many cases, copied verbatim from the written transcripts or journal entries. And lastly, in chapter ten, I conclude with my thoughts regarding the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development course and propose a reflexive, collaborative, and reciprocal model that other community agencies and universities could implement in their own engagement agendas.

## Interlude

### Peanut Butter and Jelly

#### Excerpt from Derek's Second Reflective Journal<sup>15</sup>

*In my opinion, sports are one of the most fascinating phenomena on the planet because of the remarkable power sports possess to connect people of different ethnicities, religions, or cultures. I have experienced this over and over again in my own life as an athlete and now through this class. One of the greatest things I have realized through this class is how sport can make the uncomfortable comfortable. It can make stress evaporate. It can make you forget the details of work and life and just allow you to feel like a kid again. Even if you are just a spectator, you live vicariously through the players from moment to moment. And when your team scores, the person next to you becomes an instant best friend. It's fascinating to see this happen time and time again as I observe the world of sports.*

*As we made the leap of faith to meet thirty or so Iraqi refugees for the first time, I could not help but think of this as we watched the soccer game together. We were using sport to connect, to fill the silence, to make the uncomfortable – initial meetings with strangers – feel comfortable. Soccer is important culturally to the Iraqi people so I think that was a great first way to connect. And even though there was a language barrier, we were able to communicate by cheering together. Sport helped us tear down barriers and*

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<sup>15</sup> Each interlude represents a direct quote from a student journal or a formal interview with a community partner. The italics are a stylistic move to separate the chapter text from the interludes.

*gain one another's trust. It bridged the gap. Really, sport was like the peanut butter on a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. It provided a foundation for the good stuff (the jelly), by spreading the initial layer of trust (the peanut butter) that we needed to bring both sides together (slices of bread) to make a really delicious sandwich. We're not there yet, but it's a good start and I'm hungry haha...*

*What's really great about this class is that it has opened a whole new world to me. As a sport management major, I never really saw myself doing college or professional athletics. I have always been more passionate about non-profit work and how to combine my talents and interests in sport with my desire to serve. I see that there are a lot more possibilities out there than just my narrow vision of sport management careers. I see now that I can make a difference with my sport management degree and that makes me excited about my future, so thanks!*

## Chapter 3

### Sport for Development and Peace

*“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair.”*

- Nelson Mandela, 2000 Laureus World Sports Awards Acceptance Speech

#### Introduction

Although the idea of using sport to promote social integration, community, cooperation, and peace is not necessarily new in terms of practical application, it is a relatively new field of academic study, tracing its beginnings to the year 2003 (Doll-Tepper, 2008; Meier, 2008; Millington, 2010). The academic emergence of SDP was largely in response to the United Nations development of an Inter-Agency Task Force specifically created to promote the use of sport as a practical solution to solving the Millennium Development Goals established in the year 2000 (United Nations, 2003; 2005; 2008). The culmination of the United Nation’s efforts resulted in the 2005 International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE), in which the UN declared access to and participation in sport a human right (United Nations, 2005). This proclamation by the United Nations inspired a countless number of grassroots sports initiatives all over the world.<sup>16</sup> Five years after the 2005 IYSPE, there is a critical need to

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<sup>16</sup> Several examples of initiatives that began as a result of the IYSPE include: Sport 4 Socialisation - Knocking Down Barriers through Adapted Sport & Leisure; Reclaim Childhood – Summer Leadership sports camps for Iraqi refugee girls living in Jordan; Play31 – Using football for reconciliation in Sierra

examine these projects in terms of program effectiveness (Meier, 2008; NSD, 2009). To meet this need, the scholarly field of Sport for Development and Peace has emerged.

To discuss the literature regarding SDP, I begin with an introduction of terms, providing definitions for the concepts of sport, (community) development, and peace. I then outline the history of SDP, primarily focusing on the policies and legislative documents produced by international bodies such as the UN, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). From there, I explore the philosophies of these international bodies in promoting sport for development and peace, addressing the successes as well as shortcomings. Following this overview, I touch on the use of sport in refugee communities, including the derived benefits and also the obstacles in using sport with this population. Lastly, I conclude with my suggestions for other practitioners and organizations and proposals for future research.

### **Clarifying terms**

For many, even including those who study sport, the term “sport” often refers to competitive, institutionalized, rule-based governed physical activities in which there is a clear winner and loser (Coakley, 2009). However, among non-profit sport practitioners and other grassroots agencies, the term “sport” can be used to describe a variety of activities, ranging from competitive, elite athletics to cooperative unstructured moments of play. In the field of SDP, the use of “sport” generally aligns more closely with the

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Leone (Beyond Sport, 2010). More examples can be found on the Beyond Sport website (<http://www.beyondsport.org/>).

cooperative elements of play than performance (Coakley, 2009) – hence, the phrase sport for development, not development for sport (Houlihan & White, 2002).

*Sport.* As recognized by many sport sociologists, sport can be a double-edged sword. It can be used to unite, but also to divide. It can be used in collaboration, but also in domination. Often times, sport is fair, but in other instances, it pushes the ethical boundaries of acceptance. For the most part, sport is perceived as a healthy activity, unless of course, individuals push to the extremes of destruction and over-use (Eitzen, 2003). The duality of sport should serve as a reminder to practitioners that “sport is not an inherently positive or negative social practice: having potential for both, its value is dependent on context” (Millington, 2010, p. 61). Although most people have some emotional connection or value-driven feelings about sport, sport in and of itself is not a positive or negative entity.

According to Coakley (2009), there are two models of sport – power and performance vs. pleasure and participation. Most people are probably familiar with the power and performance model of sport, as the NBA, the NFL, the MLB, and all other elite-level professional leagues promote this type of competition. As defined by Coakley (2009), the power and performance model emphasizes “hierarchical leadership, exclusive participation, and the use of strength, speed, and power to push human limits and dominate opponents in the quest for competitive success” (p. 675). In the United States, even most youth leagues ascribe to this sport philosophy.

In radical opposition to the power and performance model is Coakley’s (2009) pleasure and participation model. This model emphasizes, “democratic leadership,

inclusive participation, and the use of cooperation and competition *with* others to develop and test skills in a healthy and enjoyable context” (p. 674). Inclusivity, accommodating for differences, and shared decision-making are all core tenets in sport for pleasure and participation. Unlike the power and performance model, which is designed to eliminate and conquer, this model is designed to include, embrace, and enhance connections between people.

I contend that within the pleasure and participation model falls the United Nations’ definition of sport. According to the UN (2008), “[sport] includes all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport; and indigenous sports or games” (p. 5). Sport is used as an umbrella term, designed to encompass all physical activity used to promote peace and development goals. The UN’s definition is broad and inclusive, encouraging sport for all ages and abilities, placing specific emphasis on the positive attributes attained through sport participation (United Nations, 2008). In the SCD class, sport represents a range of physical activities as promoted by the United Nations (2008), including dance, exercise, recreation, play, organized competitions, and indigenous games. The way sport is applied is through the democratic, inclusive, empowering, and cooperative ideals of the pleasure and participation model put forth by Coakley (2009).



***Development.*** Understanding the concept of “sport” is important, however, it is only one element of the SDP philosophy.<sup>17</sup> The second piece of SDP is the term “development.” Development, even more so than sport, has a wide theoretical base, with many interdisciplinary ideas contributing to the broader notion of the word. For the purposes of this paper, we will narrow the term “development” down to its most simple definition, “to solve the issues of society” (Crawford, 2010, p. 9). Specifically, in regards to the Sport and Community Development (SCD) class, sport is used as a vehicle for social inclusion within the local Rockington community. As discovered through interviews with the Iraqis and the refugee resettlement agency, one of the issues affecting the Rockington community is an influx of Iraqi refugees that have very few opportunities for social interaction. Because the SCD class is driven by the needs of the community, one of the goals of the class is to create social interaction opportunities using sporting events and other recreation-based activities (e.g. picnics) to promote social inclusion.

As defined by Donnelly and Coakley (2002), social inclusion is more than just the removal of obstacles or barriers to [sport] participation. It is an understanding and appreciation of diverse thoughts; it is a humanistic and proactive approach to fostering community and validating the lived experiences of various groups. It goes beyond

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<sup>17</sup> Prior to the formation of the SDP International Working Group in 2003, the SDP field was academically undisciplined as it lacked a name and supporting literature. The UN’s creation of the SDP IWG and the subsequent 2005 declaration of the IYSPE is what gave the SDP field its name and operational philosophy. Because SDP is in its academic infancy, the field appears to be very unified in its mission and implementation.

“bringing the ‘outsiders’ in, or notions of the periphery versus the centre. It is about closing physical, social, and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between us and them” (p. viii-ix). This is one example of how sport can be used for development. As Crawford (2010) suggests, [successful] “community development works to increase and strengthen social connections within a community in order to improve the community’s ability to solve its own problems” (p. 40). The goals of the Sport and Community Development class were to promote development by reducing the physical, economic, and social distances between the students and the Iraqis, creating opportunities for conversation and social interaction, empowering and encouraging the community to solve its own problems, and strengthening the social networks of resources and support offered by the university.

*Peace.* Lastly, the term peace in this context is symbolic of several ideas. Peace represents the concepts of trust, social inclusion, and conflict prevention (United Nations, 2005). Peace is not merely the absence of war, but a shift in thinking, a shift in the way “others” are perceived. Peace is the bridge built between two groups in conflict, it is the stability provided by resolution and conflict prevention, and it is the inclusion of marginalized populations, including girls, women, and persons with disabilities (United Nations, 2005; Right to Play, 2010). In this way, peace and development share many of the same ideals.

The United Nations and other organizations using sport to promote peace-building efforts advocate that sport has inherent properties that can contribute to a more peaceful society (Beutler, 2008; United Nations, 2005). These organizations believe that sport is a

universal language that can bridge racial, ethnic, gender, and religious divides and allow for similarities to be revealed (Beutler, 2008; United Nations, 2008). They also believe that sport participation can be used to teach important life lessons, such as honesty, respect, cooperation, communication, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution (United Nations, 2005). In addition, team sports can encourage trust through group achievement and reliance on one another as teammates. Lastly, sport can be used as a common ground, a neutral site for open and safe dialogue about issues outside of sport, such as racial discrimination or religious persecution (Huffman, 2009; United Nations, 2005). Ultimately, it is the goal of the United Nations and other SDP organizations to use sport to promote inclusivity, human rights, trust, and respect, all of which are used in the peace-building process. In the same way, the SCD class is using sport, exercise, recreation, and dance to promote teamwork, group achievement, intimacy, trust, empathy, and cross-cultural exchange, with the hope of encouraging student and Iraqi advocates for peace.

*Sport for Development and Peace.* Providing individual definitions for the terms sport, development, and peace is important, but it doesn't necessarily explain the connections between the three terms or how academicians in the SDP field have come to understand the practical applications. Therefore, we will rely again on the most prominent organization promoting SDP initiatives, the United Nations, and their exposition of SDP in regards to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which will be discussed later in this paper. As noted by the UN (2008),

Sport for Development and Peace refers to the intentional use of sport, physical activity, and play to attain specific development and peace objectives, including, most notably, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)...Successful Sport for Development and Peace programs work to realize the rights of all members of society to participate in sport and leisure activities...and combine sport and play with other non-sport components to enhance their effectiveness...Programs seek to empower participants and communities by engaging them in the design and delivery of activities, building local capacity, adhering to generally accepted principles of transparency and accountability, and pursuing sustainability through collaboration, partnerships, and coordinated action. (p. 3)

In this way, sport is used as a vehicle to combat societal issues and promote social change. As noted in this definition, the United Nations is committed to using sport to improve the lives of individuals around the world. As stated by Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, “Sport builds bridges between individuals and across communities, providing a fertile ground for sowing seeds of development and peace” (United Nations, 2008, p. 2). Other organizations have also latched onto this value-laden rhetoric, creating a majority of published literature that uses positive, anecdotal assumptions about sport to give credence to the SDP initiatives that are taking place all over the world (Darnell, 2007; Millington, 2010). With the growth of the SDP field, there is now a heavy push to produce empirical evidence of success, not only by SDP scholars in the field, but also by sponsors and governing bodies (Meier, 2008; NSD, 2009). As a result, sport practitioners are delving

into exploratory ways to measure program effectiveness. Through the remainder of this research, I will discuss the historical development of the SDP field and the current obstacles in evaluation.

### **Historical Summary of the SDP Movement**

Although the use of sport for development and peace can arguably be traced back to antiquity and the Olympic Truce, the formal recognition of SDP scholarship is much more recent (United Nations, 2008). Most historical timelines of SDP policy begin in 1978 with the UNESCO International Charter on Physical Education and Sport, which states, “access to physical education and sport should be assured and guaranteed for all human beings” (SDP IWG, 2008, p. 7). However, I believe the history of SDP begins thirty years earlier, in 1948, with the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In that declaration, the UN asserted that “rest and leisure, a standard of living adequate to their health and well-being and that of their family, free and compulsory primary education, and participation in the cultural life of the community” (SDP IWG, 2008, p. 7). I wanted to include the 1948 UN Declaration because it denotes that participation in the cultural life of the community is a human right. This gives credence to the community-building program the SCD class created with the Iraqi refugees. Because I believe sport and recreation to be a significant part of cultural life in Rockington, the 1948 declaration provides ample support for the SCD class in using sport to promote community cohesion.

After the 1948 and 1978 pieces of legislation, the policies promoting sport for development and peace were produced much more rapidly. In 1979, the right of women

and girls to participate in sport was affirmed (SDP IWG, 2008). Building on UNESCO's 1978 Charter, which guaranteed access to physical education and sport to all human beings, the 1989 UN Declaration determined that "the right to play" should be granted to all children (SDP IWG, 2008). In 1993, the UN General Assembly and the IOC partnered to revive the ideals espoused by the Olympic Truce. The Olympic resolution "calls for the cessation of hostilities to provide athletes safe passage to the games and acknowledges the power of sport and the Olympic ideal as instruments to foster dialogue in global solidarity" (UNICEF, 2004, p. 3). This collaboration in 1993 marks the real beginning of the IOC's push toward sport for development and peace as defined by this study.

In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration, which pledged to "spare no effort to free our fellow, men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty" (United Nations, 2008, p. 3). The Declaration proposed eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by the international community by 2015. These goals included: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and female empowerment; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development (SDP IWG, 2008, p. 10). Shortly after developing the MDGs, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Adolf Ogi as the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP IWG, 2008). In 2003, an Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace was officially established,

confirming the use of sport as a cost-effective way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (SDP IWG, 2008).

The year 2003 marks the first international conference dedicated to sport for development and peace, held in Magglingen Switzerland. Primarily, this conference was devoted to federations, governments, UN agencies, the media, and high-profile athletes (Sportanddev.org, 2010). Later that year, the Next Step Conference was organized in Amsterdam; this conference targeted practitioners, mostly at the grassroots level, to share experiences and discuss “best practices” in the field of SDP (sportanddev.org, 2010). Also in 2003, was the adoption of the UN resolution 58/5, stating that “sport is a means to promote education, health, development, and peace” (United Nations, 2003, p. 1). In 2004, the International Working Group on Sport for Development and Peace was established (SDP IWG) and the European Commission launched the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES) (SDP IWG, 2008). In addition, the year 2004 marked another collaborative effort by the UN and the IOC, as the Athens Olympics was used a site to connect political leaders and experts in development to discuss the use of sport in achieving the MDGs (sportanddev.org, 2010).

All of these efforts can be summed up in the crowning year for SDP, the year 2005. As deemed by the United Nations, the year 2005 was proclaimed the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (IYSPE) (United Nations, 2005). Conferences were held all over the world, encouraging the use of sport to solve serious socio-political issues. In this moment, sport was elevated as savior, as the one thing that could address

all eight MDGs and potentially solve many of the world's problems. As proposed by the SDP International Working Group,

Sport holds a significant role in promoting social integration and economic development, and promotes the ideals of peace, fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance, and justice. Moreover, sport is seen as a tool to strengthen social ties in post-conflict situations, and to promote health and wellness in the face of extreme poverty, and pandemic illness including HIV/AIDS. (SDP IWG, 2008, p. 12)

Although I agree that sport has the potential to ameliorate societal issues and improve individuals and communities, I believe that sport must be implemented with intentionality to produce positive outcomes and that there are specific methods that must be used to maximize the potential of sport as a vehicle for social change.

Five years since the IYSPE, there have been numerous organizations that have emerged using sport for development and peace. Nearly every continent has formally recognized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or grassroots agencies promoting sport as the solution for a variety of socio-political problems, including those endorsed by the MDGs. With the influx of SDP practitioner-based initiatives, more organizations are searching for sponsorship and funding. For some sponsors of non-profit sports programs, anecdotal evidence is enough to continue program funding. However, as more corporations become donors to SDP initiatives as part of corporate philanthropy and social responsibility, empirical evidence and accountability regarding program effectiveness are becoming standard requests. It is no longer enough to simply provide



anecdotal first-person accounts of the success of the program, leaving SDP practitioners in a scramble to quantitatively or qualitatively discover evaluation techniques. In the following section, I will discuss the success and shortcomings of SDP, placing emphasis on the new trends for measurement and evaluation.

### **Success and Shortcomings**

*Success.* To begin, I will address the literature devoted to the success of sport in achieving multiple socio-political goals, including the MDGs. According to the United Nations,

Sport is increasingly being used to promote health and prevent disease, strengthen child and youth development and education, foster social inclusion, prevent conflict and build peace, foster gender equity, enhance the inclusion of persons with disabilities and promote employment and economic development. (SDP IWG, 2008, p. 6)

As recognized by the United Nations, sport has inherent properties and universal qualities that are important to a variety of populations. According to Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, “Sport is a universal language that can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status” (United Nations, 2005, p. 1). In this way, sport has become a cost-effective tool to address global issues and to build community.

In addition to facilitating societal development, sport has also been referred to as the “best school for life” (United Nations, 2005, p. 8). The United Nations Special Advisor, Adolph Ogi contends that sport functions as an educator on life by teaching

concepts such as leadership, trust, honesty, self-respect, sharing, communication, and the management of victory and defeat (United Nations, 2005). Most would agree that the skills and values associated with sport should be encouraged, and if learned at an early age, may carry on throughout the adolescent and adult years (United Nations, 2005). However, it is obvious that many of the values listed above are intrinsically Western ideals, which speaks to the larger issue of the predominately Western development of the field of SDP (Millington, 2010). I will touch on this issue in the shortcomings section.

And lastly, the most logical and well-documented use of sport is in the area of individual development and overall health. Numerous researchers have confirmed the specific physical, psychological, and sociological benefits of sport participation. It is easy to see how the foundations of SDP are built upon the physical, psychological, and sociological proposed benefits gained through participation in sport. Although countless researchers have published on the benefits of sport, I will restrict myself to the list provided by the Refugee Council of Australia (RCA), as the benefits provided by RCA are those most important to SDP initiatives with refugee populations.

Briefly, the physical benefits of sport include: improved fitness, a decrease in chronic disease (e.g. cardiovascular), decrease in hypertension, decrease in obesity rates, decrease in osteoporosis, and it has even been linked to a decrease in some cancers (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). The psychological benefits include: increased self-esteem, mental alertness, and self-confidence; decreased tension, stress, anxiety, depression; and improved energy, mood, efficiency, and well-being (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). And lastly, the sociological benefits include: increased cohesion,

tolerance, respect, and cooperation; decrease in isolation, anti-social behavior, and crime (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). With those documented benefits, it is easy to understand why the United Nations chose sport to help achieve the MDGs. As noted in the next section, however, it is very difficult to measure many of the benefits listed above. Evaluating multi-layered concepts like tolerance or respect is complicated, especially with adult populations. To me, this is one of the greatest challenges facing those responsible for SDP measurement and evaluation.

*Shortcomings.* The most common criticisms of Sport for Development and Peace are the lack of evidence of sports' effectiveness in the development or peace building process (measurement/evaluation), the imposition of Western ideals in non-westernized countries or peoples (neo-colonialism), fragmented welfare agendas offered by multiple agencies, and the absent voice of aid "recipients" in the published scholarship (Collins, 2010; Crawford, 2010; Darnell, 2007; Millington, 2010; Meier, 2008). I will tackle each of these issues independently in the following section.

Beginning with the lack of empirical evidence supporting program effectiveness, I would like to use Millington's (2010) quote to summarize the limited SDP evaluative research: "Despite claims about the potential for sport as a means to personal and national development, there is little tangible evidence to support these claims, while examples of the divisive and detrimental character of sport are abundant" (p. 3). The issue I have with Millington's argument is the production of tangible evidence and his charge that sport is predominately characterized as divisive and detrimental. As noted in the opening section of this chapter, sport as applied in SDP initiatives is more closely aligned with Coakley's

(2009) pleasure and participation model, emphasizing cooperative, semi-structured play over elite-level competition; therefore, Millington's critique needs to be specific in terms of what model of sport he is characterizing as divisive and detrimental. I believe that the way sport is implemented in the SCD class removes much of sports' destructive potential by encouraging a healthier and inclusive "sport for all" model (Coakley, 2009; United Nations, 2008).

In regard to tangible evidence, I think quantitative methods are ill equipped to measure the depths of human experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Sports activities do not happen in isolation or in a controlled vacuum—there are many factors that contribute to a person's behavior. Often times there are familial pressures, peer group influences, or societal obstacles that enter the "measurement equation" as variables that cannot be controlled (NSD, 2009). This makes it really difficult to provide statistical evidence for abstract and layered concepts such as trust, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding. In order to more fully appreciate how people are making sense of the experience, I believe qualitative research is the only way to capture the layers of emotions and the depths of understanding associated with cross-cultural interactions.

The second most common critique of SDP comes in the form of neo-colonialism, meaning to colonize or indoctrinate the Global South with the ideas and values of the Global North (or the Western world) through sport participation (Darnell, 2007; Millington, 2010). Such criticisms include the portrayal of the Global South as people who live in squalor and filth and who need the benevolence of the Global North to advance (Millington, 2010). Others suggest that "SDP programs can contribute to

othering and paternalism by holding ‘western’ sport as universal and inclusive and experts from the Global North as the holders of knowledge to be bestowed upon the passive, acceptant, and appreciative Global South” (Millington, 2010, p. 44).

The SDP International Working Group (2008) discourages this type of intervention by the Global North and asks instead that SDP projects become a site of community collaboration. They suggest that organizations can empower communities by, Engaging them in the design and delivery of activities, building local capacity, adhering to generally accepted principles of transparency and accountability, and pursuing sustainability through collaboration, partnership, and coordinated action. (p. 3)

It was so important for the Sport and Community Development Class to adhere to a model of reciprocity. We never wanted to be viewed as the oppressive, all-knowing tyrants described by Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010). The SCD class was committed to promoting a model of collaboration, not a model of prescribed solutions or interventions. We weren’t interested in running a charity; we were interested in investing in the lives of the Iraqis in a way that supported them as they navigated society and reached for their own goals. As noted in the final four chapters of narrative and the visual model produced in chapter ten, the SCD class was committed to collaboration, reflexivity, reciprocity, and shared spaces of power (Freire, 1999). Iraqis were consistently engaged in the design and the delivery of activities and all activities were created to meet the community needs as defined by the Iraqis themselves.

The third most common critique is a lack of cohesion between professional bodies with converging welfare agendas and the lack of a “best practices” model for SDP operations (Collins, 2010). It is true that there is little communication between SDP organizations. The development of the field is so recent (2005), that there have been very few opportunities to convene as a “group,” to make connections, to develop networks, or to share ideas. Without an official governing body such as NASSS (North American Society of for the Sociology of Sport) to define the field, provide conference opportunities, and to encourage scholarship and networking among practitioners and academicians, there are very few opportunities for actual face-to-face collaboration.

Most projects are specific to a certain region or people/group and are a result of a need in the community. Individual needs vary from place to place, making each SDP community-driven and specific. Essentially, SDP practitioners are autonomous groups working to create change in a very particular way, which also makes the creation of a “best practices” model really difficult to create. However, with the emergence of international organizations like Beyond Sport<sup>18</sup> and other groups devoted to SDP networking and collaboration, the field is becoming more clearly defined with operational suggestions and “best practices” improvements. And with the backing of such

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<sup>18</sup> Beyond Sport is a “global organization that promotes, develops, and funds the use of sport to create positive social change across the world” (Beyond Sport, 2010, p. 2). Founded by Nick Keller, long-time sports enthusiast and 2003 Entrepreneurial Media Boss of the Year, Beyond Sport serves as an umbrella organization in which other SDP practitioners can unite and collaborate. For more information on Beyond Sport, please visit their website: <http://www.beyondsport.org> (Beyond Sport, 2010).

organizations such as the UNHCR, more practitioner-based academicians are becoming increasingly connected and a growing number of SDP student groups and professional networks are being established.

Lastly, the fourth and in my opinion, the most detrimental critique is the absence of the participants or “recipients” voice in SDP publications. Most SDP literature is written from the perspective of the individual or organization responsible for the SDP program, making the literature exclusive and one-sided (Darnell, 2007). Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010) contend that SDP organizations should not “speak for, and presume to understand the experiences of the recipients of aid,” (Darnell, 2007, p. 566) and SDP organizations do this, they remove “the voice, identity, and history of these people” (Millington, 2010, p. 123).

I whole-heartedly agree with Darnell and Millington; unfortunately the recipients of aid will never truly speak for themselves in the literature unless they are the author or co-author of the written product. Regardless of the quantitative or qualitative strategies employed, “recipient’s” stories will always be told through the eyes of the researcher (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Goodall, 2000; Noblit, Flores, Murillo, 2004; Richardson, 2000). What questions were asked, what information was included, what information was excluded, ways in which the data was interpreted, these are all decisions made by the author of the final text, not the recipients. Greater explanation of the methods for this study and how the methods were used to combat the critiques found in the SDP and service-learning literature are presented in chapter five.

## **Sport for Refugees**

*Benefits.* Like the larger body of SDP scholarship, the idea of sport for development and peace within the refugee community is also relatively unexplored. Based on the few resources that I have discovered (The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2007; Refugee Council of Australia, 2010; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2010; United Nations SDP IWG, 2008), sport has many proposed benefits specific to the refugee population, but seemingly also more potential barriers to participation than other SDP projects. In the following paragraphs, I will address the proposed benefits as well as the potential barriers of sport use with refugee populations.

The United Nations and its sister agency the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) has encouraged the specific use of sport to assist in the transition of persons with refugee status for reasons of health, education, trauma and healing, understanding of values, and social inclusion (United Nations, 2005). The SDP Inter-Agency Task Force has also given credence to the role of sport in aiding with the transition of refugees as sport can,

Provide a sense of normalcy, structure, and a means to channel energies away from self-destruction. This, they claim, is particularly beneficial for refugees and internally displaced persons by providing positive and productive activity and psychosocial benefits that can address the trauma of flight and displacement.

(Millington, 2010, p. 59).



Refugees have often been victims of very traumatic experiences, including death, loss, or disability. In my estimation, refugees may be one of the most emotionally vulnerable populations in the world.

The Refugee Council of Australia (RCA, 2010) recently published a thorough and informative document titled, “A bridge to a new culture: promoting the participation of refugees in sporting activities.” The document illuminates the plight of refugees and how sport can serve as an aid in transition and resettlement. On page five, the RCA (2010) discusses the benefits<sup>19</sup> of sport for the refugee population in the following way:

The benefits of sport are particularly important for refugee communities. The refugee experience is by definition traumatic and is characterized by persecution, displacement, loss, grief, and forced separation from family, home, and belongings. For this reason, refugees and humanitarian entrants may face additional barriers to successfully resettling into their new communities, compared to other migrants. Thus, opportunities to promote physical and mental wellbeing and community integration are particularly important for refugees. (p. 5).

The RCA (2010) goes on to say that sport can provide refugees a sense of purpose, a new direction, an opportunity for social interaction, and a forum for practicing English. They also encourage sport use as a way to build trust, to break down ethnic and racial barriers,

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<sup>19</sup> The following benefits are based on surveys and focus group interviews conducted by the Centre for Multicultural Youth Studies of Australia. Community organizers, sport associations, local council members, and adolescent refugees participated in this research project.

and to become a member of the larger community. And lastly, sport can be used to combat weight gain from dietary changes and stress, thereby improving overall mental and physical health (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010).

As noted above, refugees are often victims of persecution and violence. Unlike migrants who choose to leave a country for economic advantages or opportunities, refugees are forced to flee their country to find safety (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). Many times, refugees risk their lives to cross national borders and seek asylum in a country of refuge. Unfortunately, refugees are often viewed as a burden to the host country and a “threat to their sovereignty and security” (UNHCR, 2010). As Doheny (1997) describes,

Refugees suffer the deepest form of poverty – the poverty of insecurity, not knowing where or when they will get the next bite to eat, or how they will cope with the families. Their past is gone, their future is in jeopardy, so they live in the present, from day to day, from hand to mouth, totally dependent on others for survival. Even those ‘others’ are difficult to find for the most part. Refugees are unwanted and unloved. (p. 635)

It is the host community’s resentment associated with refugee resettlement that must be addressed, whether in the United States or abroad. Although sport cannot “cure” all the ills endured by refugees, it does have the potential to provide a reason for interaction and ultimately social connection between refugees and the host community.

**Barriers.** There are several barriers<sup>20</sup> that limit sport participation for the refugee community. Most notably, the lack of access to sporting opportunities is a result of transportation and financial constraints (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). There are additional concerns such as the inability to communicate (language barriers) and the absence of culturally appropriate facilities that also play a role in the limited participation of refugees in sport (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). I will touch on all of these aspects and the ways in which the SCD class has approached these issues.

Based on our experiences working with the Iraqi refugees in Rockington, transportation is the single biggest obstacle to participation. Very few of the Iraqi families have a vehicle. And of the families that do possess a car, the man of the home is typically the only one that uses the vehicle. Because the Iraqis work as many shifts as possible, the car is often with the man at work, leaving the women and children at home. Some of the refugees rely on public transportation, which is inconsistent and inconvenient in a small city like Rockington. Several of them walk two miles or more to get to the bus station, and then they ride the bus for almost an hour to get to work. Because there are very few green spaces, parks, or sporting facilities within walking distance of the apartment complexes, every event requires our class to provide transportation. Because institutional funds are limited, our class has brainstormed many ways to be self-sufficient and cover

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<sup>20</sup> Similar to the benefits listed above, the barriers to refugee sport participation are based on surveys and focus group interviews conducted by the Centre for Multicultural Youth Studies of Australia. Community organizers, sport associations, local council members, and adolescent refugees participated in this research project.

the cost of passenger vans through fundraising, sponsorship solicitation, and grant writing. We also have tapped into local networks, like churches and civic agencies, and have asked them to partner with our class by providing transportation to various events. This is a great opportunity for students to apply their sport management skills, specifically fundraising through sponsorship solicitation and “donor” giving.

In addition to transportation issues, financial constraints are also a sizeable barrier. The RCA (2010) has found that “Refugees usually arrive in Australia with very few or no possessions or financial assets. As such, the costs of participating in sport are often prohibitive for refugees” (p. 8). The same can be said about refugees arriving in Rockington. Many of the refugees were forced to spend their money on survival while living “illegally” in other countries. Most of the Iraqis in Rockington lived in Syria, Lebanon, or Jordan prior to gaining refugee status in the US. During that time, they were not citizens of the country in which they were living, which meant they could not legally obtain a job (Martin, 2008; Sassoon, 2009).

Unlike other refugee groups that have been forced to live in extreme poverty and tent camps for years before entering the United States, the war in Iraq has displaced very well educated, upper middle class Iraqi men and women. Many of the displaced Iraqis hold degrees in engineering, computer science, architecture, and law but are now working as manual laborers, cafeteria workers, housekeepers, or on janitorial/sanitation crews. As a result, the money to participate in interscholastic or club sport is simply not available. To fill the void, the SCD class has provided opportunities at no-cost to the families, including picnics in the park, exercise classes for the women, and weekly children’s

activities. Based on the responses from the students and the Iraqis, this partnership has been mutually gratifying and beneficial.

In addition to transportation, the Iraqis have expressed the need for culturally appropriate sport and exercise facilities, meaning facilities that can be segregated by gender. To accommodate the Iraqi women, the SCD class secured an indoor location at a local Family Life Center. This location allowed the Iraqi women to exercise in a culturally appropriate space, behind locked doors, without the presence of men. While the women exercised, other students in the class played sports with the children, encouraging both unstructured and structured physical activities. All of the Iraqi women expressed an interest in fitness and stated childcare and appropriate facilities as the primary reasons for not participating. By creating an all-female space and providing childcare, the SCD class successfully eliminated very legitimate obstacles to sport and fitness opportunities for this particular population. In summary, as a class, we attempted to reduce or eliminate all barriers to participation by providing transportation to cost-free, gender appropriate events designed to be physical, mental, and social outlets for parents and children. More information on the specific ways in which the SCD class approached programming can be found in chapters seven through ten.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout chapter three, I have addressed several key pieces of literature that have helped shape the newly emergent field of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). Using the literature, I individually defined the terms sport, development, and peace, giving boundaries and context to the SDP field; I provided a historical summary of

United Nations and International Olympic Committee legislative policies influential to SDP initiatives; I identified the successes as well as the shortcomings of SDP scholarship and application; and I accounted for the specific use of sport with refugee populations, including proposed benefits and potential barriers. Also woven into the literature of chapter three were personal examples and ways in which the SCD class addressed multiple issues such as the charges of Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010) and the barriers associated with refugee participation (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). More information about how the literature correlates with the findings of this study can be found in chapters seven through ten and also in the final conclusion chapter of this research project.

## Interlude

### To Teach It is to Know It

*If you tell me something, I hear you; if you show me something, I see it; but if you let me experience something, I know it.*

- Chinese Proverb

#### Excerpt from Steph's Fourth Reflective Journal

*I love how the service-learning class is structured and how much interaction we get to have with the Iraqi families in the community. It is a lot different from any other class I have taken at the university and I think that there should be **many more** service-learning classes offered in the university. In a regular classroom, you get to hear about how things are from the teacher's perspective and how they felt while doing it. But in this class you get to experience everything yourself in a hands-on setting and you really get to dig deeper and truly make sense of things from your own perspective. When you do this, you are able to relate more to the topic and really feel an attachment to it.*

*I have done practicum and internships where you are able to observe and watch, but this class offers so much more than that. With this class we get the opportunity to run the show in a sense; we get to decide what to teach during the exercise classes with the women and we get to tell them everything we've learned about physical activity and nutrition. We really get to know these women and families and it allows us to better understand the barriers to starting an exercise program or diet and how we as a class can address those issues and help meet their needs.*

*We are able to use what we have learned from lecture classes and apply it to real-life situations in the community. But even better, we get to take what we know and*

*problem-solve ways to make it work for a population that has certain limitations such as transportation and the need for a culturally appropriate space. I have learned so much about how to implement what I know regarding exercise and nutrition into the lives of these women. Not only that, but how to make it fun for them and how to create it in such a way that they want to engage in physical activity, even when that may not be the most natural thing for them. I love the challenges that exercise class has thrown our way; it has allowed me to experience my degree from my own perspective, not from someone else's.*

*The bonus to service learning is that you really get to know the people you are working with and you develop relationships that change your thinking and broaden your worldview. In my opinion, service-learning offers you so much more than a regular classroom, internship, practicum, etc. because it allows you to learn from an amazing group of people, to learn more about yourself and your own goals, all while applying what you have learned in practical situations that can make a difference in the lives of others. I wish there was some way before the end of the semester to get all of the department heads and deans together in a room and tell them how much I believe in service-learning. I love this university and want it to be the best. I think more service-learning classes would really take SPLU to the next level.*



## Chapter 4

### Service-Learning in the Sport-Related Disciplines

*“Service-learning aims to connect the personal and intellectual, to help students acquire knowledge that is useful in understanding the world, building critical thinking capacities, and perhaps leading to fundamental questions about learning and society and to a commitment to improve both. Service-learning aims to prepare students who are lifelong learners and participants in the world.”*

- J. Eyler & D.E. Giles, 1999, p. 14

#### Introduction

Service-learning as a pedagogical tool has various historical roots. Some scholars trace its beginnings to the moral reasoning of Aristotle and Plato, while others begin at the turn of the twentieth century with the service-based educational philosophies of John Dewey (Miller & Nendel, 2011; Learn and Serve Clearinghouse, 2010). Others give credence to faith-based movements of the 1700s (Miller & Nendel, 2011); while still others associate the rise in service-learning with the Civil Rights Era, student revolutions of the 1960s, and John F. Kennedy’s establishment of the Peace Corps (McKeachie, 2002; Seifer & Connors, 2010).

From antiquity through the 1970s, service to the community was predominately driven by an internal sense of duty and a desire for societal improvement. However, in the materialistic, consumer culture of the 1980s, service-learning became less about changing communities and more about changing students (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Scholars today critique the style of service-learning that began in the 1980s, questioning the beneficiary of such initiatives. Currently, there is a push in the service-learning literature to engage in a more critical and reflexive community agenda, one that

encourages the liberation and empowerment of the community (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011). As demonstrated over the course of hundreds of years, service-learning has been employed in many different ways by a variety of scholars, all whom were charged with the responsibility of delicately balancing the needs of the students with the needs of the community.

Regardless of the various historical underpinnings on which service-learning may be based, the idea of coupling service with learning has been around for at least several decades. Despite its long and storied history, only recently has service-learning been adopted by the fields of sport, exercise, and physical activity (Miller & Nendel, 2011). As a result, there are very few publications regarding the use of service-learning in the movement disciplines.<sup>21</sup> There is much to be gained from research in this area, not only on implementation but also on effectiveness. It is my desire that the narratives presented in chapters seven through ten will contribute to the discussion of service-learning effectiveness and that the model presented at the end of chapter ten will provide a framework for other universities interested in the implementation of service-learning courses.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basic understanding of service-learning and how it is applied in the movement disciplines. I begin by offering various definitions

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<sup>21</sup> For the purpose of this study, I will use the term movement disciplines and sport-related disciplines interchangeably. Both of these phrases are designed to encompass sport, physical education, recreation, kinesiology, and any other academic discipline typically associated with these fields (e.g. human performance).

of the term service-learning, elaborating specifically on the working definition used by the SCD class. I discuss both the benefits as well as the challenges that service-learning presents. And I conclude with my thoughts on the potential for service-learning to enrich the student learning experience as well as enhance the overall scholarship for the field of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP).

### **Clarifying terms**

As operationalized in the SCD class, service-learning is a reciprocal and balanced relationship between service and learning (Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005). Sigmon (1996) divides service-learning into four typologies that comprise the Service Learning Typology Matrix. Those typologies include: service-LEARNING, SERVICE-learning, service learning, and service-learning. Each typology represents a different emphasis in service-learning application. The first typology (service-LEARNING) places the most value on learning, meaning the students and faculty needs are primary and the community needs are secondary. This imbalance often leads to feelings of exploitation, where the community serves as a “lab” for student and faculty academic gain (Butin, 2010). The second typology, SERVICE-learning, places the needs of the community before the learning goals of the students. This imbalance often leads to criticism from other faculty members that the service-learning pedagogy lacks academic rigor, that it is just a bunch of “touchy-feely” stuff (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

The third typology, service learning with no hyphen, indicates separate service and learning goals. Often times, this type of service-learning looks more like charity or volunteerism than actual service related to course content and learning. The literature has

shown this to be the least beneficial to students, as the connections between the service and learning are not explicit (Eyler & Giles, 1999). And lastly, the fourth typology and the one promoted by the SCD class, is SERVICE-LEARNING. In this model, the service and learning goals are of equal weight and the two activities supplement and enhance each other. And the seemingly insignificant hyphen that ties the two terms together represents the reflection that occurs after service that promotes learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Miller & Nendel, 2011). Therefore, the SCD class promotes the use of the hyphenated term service-learning to define our class.

Understanding the hyphen and its symbolic importance is important to understanding what service-learning is and what it is not. In order to more fully expand on this idea, I will use the works of educational philosopher, John Dewey, to supply the foundational knowledge used to build the SCD class. John Dewey, an educational reform activist in the early to mid-1900s, sought to revolutionize the educational system by trading traditional models of learning – teacher as expert, student as passive recipient – for more active and experiential engagement (Dewey, 1938; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Dewey asserted that real learning stems from experience and is motivated by personal connections to social problems (Dewey, 1938; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Because service-learning is thinking and doing, it connects the cognitive and affective domains, linking the head to the heart (Eyler & Giles, 1999). As stated in Eyler & Giles (1999),

Service-learning aims to connect the personal and intellectual, to help students acquire knowledge that is useful in understanding the world, build critical thinking capacities, and perhaps lead to fundamental questions about learning and

about society and to a commitment to improve both. Service-learning aims to prepare students who are lifelong learners and participants in the world (p. 14). Using acquired knowledge to solve real-world problems encourages deeper understanding and analysis, making this style of learning very suitable for traditional college-age students.

Unfortunately, service-learning in the sport-related disciplines is often confused with cooperative education or community service, of which it is neither. Most certainly cooperative education and community service are beneficial in their own regard, however, they more accurately represent opposite ends of the experiential learning continuum. Cooperative education, meaning internships and practica, are designed to “provide work experience for the student” (Prentice & Garcia, 2000, p. 20). The vast majority of time cooperative education assignments are completed with for-profit industries and occasionally, students are paid for their work. Cooperative education is a form of occupational training, where the emphasis is not justice, but profit (Prentice & Garcia, 2000). In this type of experiential education, vocational learning is at the forefront and the idea of service is minimal.

On the opposite side of the continuum is community service, meaning volunteerism or charity work. When implemented as a part of higher education, community service opportunities (or volunteerism) are often associated with the mere logging of hours at a non-profit agency. In volunteerism, “the focus is entirely on providing for the agency and can include any activity an agency needs done, including cleaning a bathroom or stocking kitchen shelves” (Prentice & Garcia, 2000). There is

little to no reflection associated with acts of charity; it is not tied to course content and students are not involved in decision-making. Students must simply show up, complete the assigned task, and leave. As stated by Stewart (2008),

Works of charity becomes works of justice when students go beyond simply volunteering and begin to question why. Works of justice involve more acts of engaging works for changing social structures or assisting with solutions for change. Service-learning is the process of engagement, going beyond works of charity to develop a reflection and analysis component to the program” (p. 22).

In fact, Fourre (2003) provided an example of a 5-step continuum that moves students from acts of charity to acts of justice. As stated by Fourre (2003), this continuum begins with collection of donated goods, moves to direct services or volunteerism, progresses to services for community empowerment, followed by critical problem-solving and analysis, and ending with advocacy. It is this type of learning, learning for justice and the inherent rights of human beings, that the SCD class embraces.<sup>22</sup>

Service-learning in the SCD class incorporates the positive elements from both cooperative education and community service in an attempt to empower the community

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<sup>22</sup> As illustrated by this statement, the philosophy of the SCD class is most closely aligned with the tenets of critical service-learning as defined in chapter four (Porfilio & Hickman, 2011). There is still much debate about the differences between critical service-learning and service-learning, all of which are outside of the scope of this research. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have demonstrated a commitment to the critical service-learning philosophy, but have called it service-learning because that is the term used in the movement-related disciplines.

and move toward increased advocacy. As stated previously, it is not simply logging volunteer hours, nor is it vocational training for students. Service-learning in the SCD class is a reciprocal relationship between the university and the community (meaning the Iraqi refugees and our partner agencies). As detailed in Chapter Two, the SCD class is designed to meet the requested needs of the local refugee resettlement networks and the Iraqi community. The SCD class is a joint collaboration in which students have the opportunity to provide resources and knowledge to a population that have identified social inclusion, healthy physical activities, and safe spaces for children to play as primary concerns. In this way, the relationship is mutually beneficial. We are “doing with” rather than “doing for;” this “encourages an empowering form of service and promotes advocacy over charity” (Mumford & Kane, 2006, p. 2). To move closer to advocacy, reflection and challenging internal dialogue is necessary.

Reflection is the most essential piece of service-learning and it is what ties the service to the learning. Reflection is the intentional consideration given to an experience in which a person consciously compares and contrasts their experience with previous knowledge. Reflection is a way to understand our own positionality and how our position in the world impacts both the way we perceive things and the way we are perceived. Writing is a way to achieve a deeper understanding of self. As French philosopher, Michel Foucault (2000) noted, “I’m an experimenter in the sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before” (p. 240). Students in the SCD class were required to keep formal, written journals. Each journal entry began with a structured series of questions, followed by a section for free flow analysis. It was

my hope that like Foucault, the students would be challenged by the reflection and through writing, would discover new ways of knowing and new ways of understanding themselves in relation to the world around them (Richardson, 2003).

### **Benefits of Service-Learning**

Benefits of service-learning are numerous and well-established (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005; Prentice & Garcia, 2000). However, the seemingly natural connection between the sport-related disciplines and service-learning has only recently been solidified (Miller & Nendel, 2011). Sport is based on kinesthetic movement: seeing, touching, feeling, and doing. But the study of sport is predominately based on teaching methodologies that are traditional and static (e.g. lecture, memorization). Service-learning, however, is a hands-on method of learning, “which makes it an ideal teaching strategy for physical education and sport” (Mumford, Inungu, & Smith, 2007, p. 11). This section will elaborate on the advantages of applying service-learning to the sport-related disciplines, detailing both the cognitive and affective benefits and the proposed benefits to the community.

As stated in preceding paragraphs, service-learning is an experiential based form of learning that blends classroom instruction with community engagement and reflection (Mumford, Inungu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010). This style of teaching stands in radical opposition to traditional classroom models where students are often asked to read, discuss, and write about “doing,” rather than actually “doing” (Mumford, Inungu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010). In traditional classrooms, theory and knowledge are ingested and then regurgitated without the uncertainty of real-world variables; in this way,



knowledge exists in a vacuum. Studies have shown that knowledge consumed or created in this way can almost never be applied when the problem exists outside of the classroom (Eyler & Giles, 1999). This is referred to as inert knowledge; meaning knowledge that is consumed but not actually metabolized or understood (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Inert knowledge is the difference between “knowing what” vs. “knowing how” (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Students in a service-learning class have the opportunity to learn in a variety of ways – physically, visually, and audibly – which allows individuals to maximize their learning style for optimal retention (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005; Prentice & Garcia, 2000). Unlike the traditional “banking” model of education (Freire, 1999) where the expert professor dumps knowledge into passive students, service-learning is an active pedagogy where power between student and professor is shared and learning is found in the process and the product (Freire, 1999; Butin, 2010; Miller & Nendel, 2011).

In addition to cognitive advantages, service-learning has also been linked to benefits in the affective domain, which includes learning in the form of values, motivation, attitudes, stereotypes, and feelings (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1973). Such benefits include increased self-efficacy, a desire for a more equitable society, a reduction of negative stereotypes, improved cultural awareness, a heightened understanding of personal and social responsibility, and a commitment to leadership and civic duty (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Learn and Serve Clearinghouse, 2010). The goal of service-learning is not just to learn about social problems, but to address them (Eyler & Giles,

1999). Addressing social issues means moving beyond the walls of the “Ivory Tower” into a space where people no longer “look like me.” It is in this space of difference that experiences, assumptions, and prejudices may often be exposed. But also in this space of difference is the opportunity to grow (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Stonebanks, 2008).

After conducting over one-hundred intensive qualitative interviews with students from thirteen different colleges and universities, Eyler & Giles (1999) found that “one of the most consistent outcomes of service-learning is in the reduction of negative stereotypes and the increase in tolerance for diversity” (p. 29). The willingness to create a more equitable society stems from a personal understanding of others and the courage to make a difference. As the world becomes increasingly globalized, it is important for students in higher education to embrace social responsibility and cultural competence and to have the knowledge and the courage to promote equality.

And lastly, the benefits of service-learning should extend beyond the classroom and into the community. In today’s times of economic hardship, rising healthcare costs, and increasing rates of obesity and chronic diseases, students in the sport-related disciplines have much to offer in the forms of knowledge and service. Specifically, the SCD students’ expertise in the areas of healthy living, community development, and youth activities were of particular benefit to the refugee population living in Rockington.

As noted in chapter three, the refugee experience is defined by trauma and “opportunities to promote physical and mental wellbeing and community integration are particularly important for refugees” (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010, p. 5).

Caseworkers in an underfunded and understaffed resettlement agency can only provide

limited assistance, making the role of the SCD class very important in the lives of the Iraqis. Students were able to fill a void in community programming and encourage healthy living and social integration of the Iraqi population. In this way, the relationship created between the university and the community was mutually beneficial. Iraqis were presented with multiple outlets for personal health and social activities and the students were given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and resources in a practical setting.

### **Challenges of Service-Learning**

As numerous as the benefits are to service-learning, so too are the challenges (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). The most commonly cited challenges of service-learning are logistical; for example, the limitations set forth by the academic term and the availability of time that can be spent by instructors and students outside of class (Butin, 2010). In addition to logistical concerns, thoughtful and well-designed service-learning projects can also be very taxing on faculty. Under the current evaluation system for tenure and promotion, these challenges may not always be worth the time it takes to develop a successful service-learning course. And lastly but most importantly, is that ill-designed service-learning plans can be viewed as community exploitation, causing backlash from community partners. Institutional arrogance in terminology, agenda, or a lack of instructor support certainly can do more harm than good and can make future partnerships with the community difficult to negotiate (Butin, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009).

Service-learning courses are often based on relationship building, whether it occurs in the form of mentoring, tutoring, sport skill development, or exercise instruction.

Empathy is what moves service-learning from mere volunteering or the collection of donated goods to a more justice-based advocacy (Fourre, 2003). Depending on the number of interactions between the student and community members, the one-semester time frame can serve as a structural constraint in achieving meaningful relationships (Butin, 2010). In addition, service-learning blends theoretical or classroom instruction with practical application, meaning there must be ample time for both in the semester. In order to achieve this balance, service is most often performed outside of class. Students and instructors alike are limited by the number of hours they can devote to service after class or on the weekends. Without striking a fair and consistent balance, students can feel overwhelmed and instructors can feel burnt-out (Butin, 2010).

Some of the most difficult challenges of service-learning fall on the instructors, as they are responsible for creating and maintaining the service-learning partnership. The development of a service-learning course can be extremely time-consuming. It takes time to understand the needs of the local community, to find the gaps in social programming, to build relationships with community agencies and target populations, to find grants to support the work, and to develop learning goals and strategies to maximize the experience for the students and the community (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010).

When instructors are successful in their service-learning attempts, their efforts are often showcased by department heads and deans as centerpieces for departmental and college brochures (Butin, 2010). Despite the adulation service-learning instructors receive for their efforts, most still find service-learning to be a difficult pursuit (Campus Compact, 2010). A 2006 survey by Campus Compact revealed that faculty consider the

main obstacles to sustaining service-learning are: a lack of time, lack of funding, lack of common understanding among colleagues, and a hierarchal tenure promotion system that does not acknowledge service as a form of scholarship (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010).

Butin (2010) acknowledged the inability of the current evaluation system to properly assess “scholarship” in the modern era, stating that the current system only rewards the top-down model of traditional classroom teaching. Even though it is well documented that banking models of education are largely ineffective for the vast majority of learners, the majority of the professoriate still operate under this model of teaching and learning. Without a reward system in place for professors to excel in both sound teaching methodologies and service that is meaningful to the community, there is very little incentive for professors to change. But as Butin (2010) argued, change requires critical self-reflection and an acknowledgement of students as active learners, not just passive recipients of lecture and textbook knowledge. The traditional lecture-based model of teaching he argued,

Suppresses fundamental questions of higher education pedagogy: How is knowledge created and by whom? What is the ‘usefulness,’ if any, of disciplinary knowledge? What is the role of higher education in a liberal democracy? What is the role, moreover, of students, faculty, and institutions in their local and global communities? (p. 20)

Butin's arguments challenge the tenets of higher education and push for a more engaged institution. But, without careful thought and consideration, a more involved institution does not always equate to a mutually beneficial community partnership.

Lastly, the greatest challenge associated with service-learning is striking a balance between academic goals and community needs so that both parties – the institution and the community – are satisfied. Unfortunately, there are many instances in which the goals of the academy are placed ahead of the needs of the community, creating a feeling of exploitation. I like to refer to this as the “white-knight” model, in which the academy is depicted as the powerful and benevolent knight atop the metaphorical white horse, who has come to save the world from poverty, racism, sexism, and social exclusion. In this model, the institution has its own agenda, its own superior terminology, and a “my way or the highway” approach that often negates the intelligence of the community agency leaders. The community simply becomes a playground of experimentation in which students and faculty are able to test their theories and ideas with very little accountability to the community. Faculty and students gain academic notoriety, while the real needs of the community may go unmet. But because of the perceived superiority in knowledge and resources, communities very rarely sever the partnership, even if they feel exploited (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). This type of institutional arrogance does very little to strengthen the ties between community and institution.

A recent book by Stoecker & Tryon (2009) titled “The Unheard Voices: Community Organizations and Service Learning” elaborates on the unequal partnerships between institution and community, finally giving voice to the community agencies who

are partners in service-learning agendas. Service-learning, as defined by Stoecker & Tryon (2009) is “any student performing any service for credit” (pg. 12). Although not fair to true service-learning practitioners, this broad definition of service-learning includes practicum and internships in addition to any other form of “academic” service. Much of the frustration expressed by the community partner stemmed from institutional arrogance, either in the form of suppressing community voices or in the form of total reliance on the community agent to serve as the “instructor” for the students (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009).

Unfortunately, many of the sport-related fields are guilty of the latter. Faculty members develop partnerships with community agents and then send students into the community to perform service for the partnering organization. Students are often subjected to trivial and meaningless tasks that have little to no relevance in enhancing their knowledge of the field. Community agents are often asked to come up with “assignments” for the students with no understanding of the course or a copy of the course syllabus and many of them are also responsible for evaluating student efforts (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Instructors are rarely on-site during the service endeavors and only communicate with the community agent around midterms and the end of the semester (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). This type of “service-learning” of which I would argue is not service-learning at all, can easily fall short of meeting the intended objectives for the student and the community. Unfortunately, however, it is the most common type of learning employed by the sport-related disciplines.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a brief overview of service-learning and how it was applied in the SCD experience. I outlined the benefits of service-learning as well as the challenges. The benefits of service-learning for the student include greater retention of the material, coverage of multiple learning styles, application of knowledge, connection of the cognitive and affective domains, reduction of negative stereotypes, desires for a more equitable society, improvement in cultural awareness, and a heightened understanding of personal and social responsibility (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005; Miller & Nendel, 2011; Mumford, Inumgu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010; Prentice & Garcia, 2000). As found in the literature, the challenges of service-learning include logistical limitations such as a one-semester duration, availability of time outside of class, a non-conducive tenure and promotion system for engaged scholarship, and balancing the needs of the community with the learning objectives of the university (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Ways in which the SCD class confirmed, refuted, or added to the literature regarding the benefits and challenges of service-learning can be found in chapters seven through ten and also in the conclusion.



## Interlude

### Science and Art

*“Science is one lens; creative arts another. We see more deeply using two lenses. I want to look through both lenses to see a ‘social science art form.’”*

*- Laurel Richardson, 2005, p. 964*

#### **Excerpt from My Reflective Journal (April 2010)**

*Some of the greatest lessons in my life I learned through sport. In moments of victory, I tasted success. In moments of defeat, I learned humility. When the ball went through the net, I appreciated my sacrifices, dedication, and commitment. During hours of physical rehabilitation, I understood the true definition of perseverance. And as the screen was set at the top of the key and the game-winning shot was made, I felt the power of preparation and teamwork.*

*Often times I wonder, was I drawn to sport because of my personality or was my personality molded by sport participation? Arguably, I think it was a little of both. To me, sport was something that could be perfected. With enough practice, it was scientifically possible to do everything right, or so I thought. I spent hours on technique – elbow in, feet square to the goal, eyes on the target, and ball on the fingertips. Over and over and over again in the driveway I would practice, refusing to count the basket if my form was incorrect. I didn’t like to practice with anyone else around. It was a time for concentration, for me to challenge myself, to make myself the best. As my coach used to say, “Practice doesn’t make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect.” My methodically wired mind seized this idea and prepared as if coaches and scouts were watching every shot.*

*Once the ball was tipped and the game began, the preparation stage was over and it was time to shine. The game was no longer science and technique; it was art. The court was my palette and the ball my brush. No-look passes and deep-range three-point field goals were my specialty. And any time I could get away with a spin-move reverse lay-up to make the crowd cheer, I did it. I was a perfectionist and an artist. Each game was a broad stroke on the canvas, working to create a seasonal masterpiece and potential championship.*

*Understanding the way I approached sport gives tremendous insight into the way I approach life and also the way I approach research. In my mind, research, like basketball, should be a coupling of science and art. Specifically, I am drawn to the ideas of narrative inquiry and the union of “scientific investigation” with artistic elements of prose (Ellis, 2004). As a researcher, I find myself lingering in Ellis’ (2004) words, “to blend the practices and emphases of social science with the aesthetic sensibility and expressive forms of art...the goal [for me] is to practice an artful, poetic, and empathetic social science in which readers can keep in their minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience” (p. 30). Because I view my own lived experience in storied form, I am complicit with the ideas of narrative inquiry and seek to present the data I collected in a compelling, empathetic, and artistic way.*

## Chapter 5

### Understanding Lived Experience

*“Is it possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always a text?”*

*- Norman Denzin & Yvonne Lincoln, 2000, p. 17*

The fundamental purpose of this research project was to produce a usable model, a framework for other scholars and practitioners interested in developing community-university partnerships. I wanted this project to not only answer the “why” questions for SDP and service-learning, but also the “how” questions – specifically, how to create a reflexive and collaborative partnership that balances the needs of both the community and university. I wanted to create something riveting and real, something inspiring and authentic, and something more inclusive than a first-person programmer or instructor account of the experience (Darnell, 2007; Eyer & Giles, 1999; Millington, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Much like the goals of the class, this research was designed to stimulate and encourage others to move toward a more critical and engaged community agenda. To do that, I needed to create a research text that readers could “keep in their minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience” (Ellis, 2004, p. 30). For that reason, I have chosen narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as the primary method of representation, coupled with performance narratives (Denzin, 2003) and poetics (Glesne, 2006; Ely, 2007).

#### **My Turn Toward Narrative**

In the spring of 2009, I enrolled in my final research class, “Ethnographic Methods in Education.” Honestly, at the time I didn’t even know what the title of the

class really meant. In previous research classes, we didn't talk about ethnographic methods. We talked about qualitative research using quantitative terminology. We used words like reliability, validity, triangulation, and objectivity to describe a qualitative process that does not lend itself to those words at all. Essentially, I was taught how to systematically cram a qualitative piece of work into a quantitative paradigm. There was no room for complex, lived experiences, or "outliers". There was only room for those voices that could support the researcher's theoretical claims. I was dissatisfied with the idea of coding and thematizing and concealing participant quotes in a blanket of my own third-person academic jargon.

And then I had the Ethnographic Methods class and it was like a breath of fresh air after a long, stuffy flight. We read books by Clandinin & Connelly (2000) and Goodall (2000) and Noblit, Flores, and Murillo (2004). And we read articles and chapters by Ellis (2004) and Bochner (2001) and Richardson (2000). I can remember specifically reading Ellis' (1999) piece "Heartful Autoethnography" and thinking to myself that I had found the Holy Grail of qualitative methods. Page after page, I listened to Carolyn mentor a student through the research process. I felt as though my questions were being spoken aloud and she was answering. It was as if Carolyn and I were having a conversation and in a way, we were. What about validity? What about reliability? What about objectivity? What about generalizability? All of the questions that haunted and confused me for three years were being answered in a way that finally made sense to me. The answers she gave resonated with my mind and my heart. It took thirty minutes with Carolyn's article to realize that I had found my research home.

Even though I was initially very overwhelmed by the ambiguity and lack of structure associated with “alternative” methodologies such as narrative, I was thankful for my experiences in the Ethnographic Methods class. This class challenged the dominant positivist discourse and revealed many different ways of knowing and telling. Without my final classroom experience, I would be trapped...trapped trying to uncover the depths of human life using a teaspoon in place of a shovel. I would be writing a dissertation that disagrees with my epistemic values, placing greater concern on the product than the process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As I seek to understand life and human experience, I have come to realize that “the old ways of researching and strategies for research seem inadequate to the task of understanding humans and human interaction” (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 8). Narrative inquiry, as the “study of lived experience” seems to be the best methodological tool to handle the intimacies, complexities, and nuances associated with human life.

Essentially, narrative inquiry is the study of the personal and the social as it relates to time and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry is the examination of human experience. In order to understand experience, narrative inquirers must understand stories as lived and told. “People by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Stories are how people make sense of the world and their positioning in it. Stories are personal but they are also reflective of social forces. Understanding personal stories is the first step to interpreting how people frame their experiences (e.g. victim, hero). As a result,

The texts produced under the rubric of what I call narrative inquiry would be stories that create the effect of reality, showing characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments of struggle, resisting the intrusions of chaos, disconnection, fragmentation, marginalization, and incoherence, trying to preserve or restore the continuity and coherence of life's unity in the face of unexpected blows of fate that call one's meaning and values into question. (Bochner & Ellis, 2003, p. 509).

The fluidity of narrative inquiry allows for counternarratives to emerge, for different vantage points to be expressed, for social discourse to be challenged or confirmed, for multiple voices to be heard, and for personal agency and social forces to exist simultaneously (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this way, narrative inquiry is intended to generate "a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic" as opposed to producing theoretical claims that "incrementally add to knowledge in the field" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 42).

Narrative inquiry is more than a methodology, it is a worldview; within narrative inquiry, individuals are no longer viewed as sources of information or exemplars of form, but as the "embodiment of lived stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 43). In this sense, narrative becomes the theory and the method; it is an epistemological conviction.

Doing narrative inquiry is a form of living. Living, in its most general sense, is unbounded. The structures, seen and unseen, that do not constrain our lives when noticed can always be imagined to be otherwise, to be more open, to have alternative possibilities. This very notion is embedded in the idea of retelling

stories and reliving lives. Our narrative inquiry intention is to capture as much as possible this openness of experience. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 89).

Considering the world narratively allows narrative inquirers to recognize more clearly the continuity and temporality of situations and crossroads between the researcher and the researched. “Their lives do not begin the day we [researchers] arrive nor do they end as we leave. Their lives continue” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63). In this way, narrative inquiry represents life in motion.

As a narrative inquirer, I am located somewhere in the midst of Geertz’s metaphorical parade (Geertz, 1988). This research text marks the temporal intersection between my story, as the instructor of the service-learning class, and the lives of the students, the Iraqis, the administrators, and the community partners involved in the SCD experience. My status as the instructor of the course has allowed me to live and breathe the SCD class alongside the participants. I contend that my insider status has allowed me to understand the sub-text of conversations and to relate to the material in a more holistic way. Unlike a researcher who observes from the outside looking in, I was somewhere in the midst looking out (Geertz, 1988).

I have been asked if my position in the field is problematic; if the power dynamics associated with my position may in some way “influence” or “taint” the research. But I contend that this notion of “tainting” is problematic for two reasons: (1) I am not searching for uncontested truth or a factual account of a situation, but rather the way experiences are perceived and (2) living and working in the field is integral to the narrative inquiry methodology. As stated by Clandinin & Connelly (2000),

This too is one of the things that narrative inquirers do in the field: they settle in, live and work alongside participants, and come to experience not only what can be seen and talked about directly but also the things not said and not done that shape the narrative structure of their observations and their talking (p. 67-68).

And with any research project, there is subjectivity; it's inevitable (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Goodall, 2000; Nobilt, Flores, Murillo, 2004; Richardson, 2000). But as Goodall (2000) suggests, it is better to be transparent about subjectivity and to acknowledge that research is always a partial representation than it is to present research as objective facts discovered by an omnipotent and neutral observer with no personal biases or experiences. Therefore, in the next section, I would like to discuss my role as researcher and instructor and how the duality of my relationships and my personal filters of experience impacted the final research text.

### **Dual Roles: Instructor and Researcher**

As the instructor for the Sport and Community Development class, I was deeply invested in the success of the class, in terms of the student and community experience. Sarah and I worked really hard to get the class off the ground and make it something unforgettable for both sides. For over a year, the class completely consumed my being. I thought about it all the time because I wanted it to be perfect and I wanted to fix everything as it was happening. I wasn't realistic in my expectations; I didn't acknowledge that a class like this needs time to develop, time to mature, and time to grow. There were kinks in the class, there were things I had to figure out, natural lessons that needed to be learned, but I didn't want those lessons to impinge upon the experience.



I didn't realize that the lessons learned in the class could be shared lessons, lessons that the students would benefit from as well. So I shielded them from the consequences of not having enough funds to complete a project or not having enough transportation to carry out an event. I shouldered the burden of responsibility for the class because I refused to let the community down.

In all honesty, I privileged the community's experience over my own health and well being at times. I couldn't bear for them to be disappointed. I wanted students to share that same commitment. And when they didn't, it violated my expectations as an instructor. I simply could not understand how students familiar with the stories and the faces of the Iraqis could shrug off responsibilities and put forth little to no effort in the class. As an instructor, this made me furious. The avoidance, the resistance, the excuses were all so selfish to me. I tried to understand, to make sense of it, but I couldn't. As a result, the feelings I held as an instructor at times overshadowed my "objectivity" or detachment as a researcher. Had I completed this project as a distant observer with no investment in the success of the class, my understanding of students like this may have been less involved, less emotional. Maybe the story told in chapter nine would be more sympathetic to Kyle's resistance. Or maybe it would be a story of absence, the absence of service-learning in the department and how that impacted student expectations for the course. But this is what narrative inquiry is - a duality of roles. "The narrative researcher's experience is always a dual one, always the inquirer experiencing the experience and also being a part of the experience itself" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.

81). And just as I balanced multiple roles and presentations of myself in the SCD space, so too did the students.

Students were performing for me as the instructor, for me as the researcher, for their peers, and also for the Iraqis (Goffman, 1959). The way they presented themselves in their journals, in class discussion, and in the exit interview, was most certainly impacted by my role as the person responsible for their grade. “Participants’ perspectives on who we are have effects on their choices about how to construct themselves for our knowing” (Ropers-Huilman, 1999, p. 26). Undoubtedly, my commitment to the community as well as my perceived position of authority influenced the information the students chose to share. In chapter seven, Emmit acknowledges his struggles to engage with the Iraqi population and admits that he performed in an “acceptable” way to seem less racist among his peers. This is why I chose narrative inquiry for this study. It allows for complexity, for lived experiences to be understood as life in transition, moments in time, not as hard facts or ultimate Truths (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis, 2004).

### **Data Collection**

Throughout the course of the last year, I have been extensively involved in the development and teaching of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class. During that time, I have instructed 35 undergraduate students in the Recreation, Health, and Human Performance department and have worked with over 100 Iraqi refugees in the community. As a class, we have also partnered with two community agencies – the local resettlement organization and the ESL institute for Arabic speakers. And most notably, this class has been implemented with the full support of the

department head and the dean of the college. All of these entities and individuals comprise the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development experience. In order to produce a more holistic account of the SCD experience and to combat the critiques in the SDP and service-learning literature (Darnell, 2007; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Millington, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009), I felt it was important to include voices from each of the groups represented.

As part of the course, I conducted one-hour exit interviews with each of the 35 students. The exit interview was not assigned any point value and the students were not graded on their performances in the interview space. During that interview they were asked to be reflective and honest about their experiences and what they thought went well and what could be improved upon for future semesters. In addition to the one-hour interviews, the students signed a consent form allowing me to use their reflective journals from the semester as part of my data collection (Please see Appendix C for all consent forms). Both the consent form and the interviews were conducted after the final grades for the course had been determined to lessen the power dynamics in play.

As a supplement to the reflective journals and the interviews, I also electronically recorded field notes. Field notes are simply a record of what happened, including attitudes, comments, and feelings, designed to “freeze specific moments in the narrative inquiry space” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 83). Field notes were used to add detail, to add layers, to add richness and complexity to the narratives and the performances. As the instructor and the researcher, field notes allowed me to slip in and out of the research space, moving from full involvement as the instructor to a more distanced researcher. I

recorded field notes before every class as I prepped for the discussion. During our class discussions, I also took notes and had someone from the class write our ideas on the dry erase board. After every class, I took pictures of the dry-erase board with our notes for the day and would use those photos to construct my field notes that evening. As part of the first semester, Sarah and I debriefed after every class. We would talk about ways we handled situations in the classroom and really critique ourselves as instructors. I loved these discussions because it was an intentional and specified time for self-reflection.

In addition to the field notes recorded during my prep and after class, I also recorded field notes after all community interactions (e.g. social events, exercise class). Typically, these notes were first recorded as voice memos on the drive home and then typed later in an electronic file. These notes included interesting comments, powerful interactions between the students and the Iraqis, and also my own inner dialogue and reflections on the experience. In addition, I saved every email correspondence, every student assignment, and every document used to promote our events (e.g. Translated flyers for the picnic, exercise survey for the women, employment packets for cultural orientation). All of this information was used to formulate the narratives represented in chapters seven through ten.

I also formally interviewed eight of the Iraqi women individually in their homes. Through purposeful sampling (Glesne, 2006), these eight women were chosen because of their extensive involvement with our class since its inception in the fall of 2010. All of the women had attended at least four social gatherings and all but one were regular attendees of our weekly exercise classes. In addition to the formal interviews, I spent over

one hundred hours in their homes just talking about life and learning about one another. We shared many meals together and talked passionately about our similarities and differences. In these informal settings, I gained tremendous insight into the history, the culture, the politics, the religion, and the divisions of Iraq. I also learned extensively about the struggles of resettlement and the barriers that many of the Iraqi refugees face as they attempt to start over in a new place. Outside of the formal interviews and the informal conversations with the women, two of the Iraqi males, Rashad and Hakeem came to the service-learning class and shared stories about life in Iraq and their transition to the United States. Chapter ten details the narratives they shared during that class period.

In order to better understand the way the SCD partnership was perceived by the community, I also formally interviewed the director of the resettlement agency, the director of the ESL institute, and the three community members, Janet, Salem, and Debbie, who initially introduced us to all of the Iraqi families. In addition to the formal interviews, Janet, Salem, and Debbie also attended all of the social gatherings promoted by the class, including the very first soccer game, the picnic in the park, the Thanksgiving Day celebration, the women's basketball game, the hike in the Smoky Mountains, and the World Cup. They were instrumental in helping to organize and spread the word among the families for each event and also in providing transportation on some occasions. This informal relationship and physical support provided much insight into the ways they viewed and experienced the class. Partial stories of Janet, Salem, and Debbie can be found in chapter eight and also in the interlude Burning Buildings.

Although representatives from the community agencies never actually attended any of our social gatherings, the ESL institute did allow us to conduct monthly exercise classes with the women as part of their healthy living seminar. And the resettlement agency trained the SCD students as cultural orientation leaders and allowed the students to lead seminars on government-mandated topics of health care and employment for newly arriving refugees (mostly Iraqi). These opportunities demonstrate the formal relationships that were established with community partners that also contributed to my field notes and interview data.

And lastly, I interviewed the department head and the dean of our college for further insight into the challenges they have faced in trying to implement a brand-new service-learning course into the curriculum. The details of their interviews are woven throughout many of the narratives as systemic issues like “lack of transportation and financial support are universal challenges faced by a number of institutions during this economic decline.” Much of the information that they provided was used to help me better understand the administrative snares in creating a service-learning course and proved valuable for the conclusion of this dissertation.

To recap, I conducted 49 qualitative interviews, I read over 100 5-page reflective journals, and I fully immersed myself in the lives of the Iraqi families in order to produce a more holistic narrative of the SCD experience. Even still, I’m not sure the complexity of the issues and the emotions that I felt throughout this experience can be fully captured through the narratives in chapters seven through ten. However, I do hope that this information at least opens conversation among practitioners, academicians, and others

interested in SDP, student learning, cross-cultural understanding, and community engagement to explore the connections and possibilities for increased community-university partnerships using sport-based service-learning.

### **The Interviews**

Specifically, the formal, semi-structured audio-recorded interviews I conducted with the students, the Iraqis, the community partners, and the administrators were based on the purpose statement of this study and the six objectives listed on the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development syllabus. During the interviews, I took handwritten notes and jotted down new questions that emerged during the conversation. I captured the audio with a digital, handheld recording device. The interviews were conducted in places most familiar to the interviewees. I interviewed the students individually in the classroom, the Iraqis in their homes, and the community agents and administrators in their respective offices.

Each of the interviews lasted about one hour. Although the interviews were semi-structured, I really encouraged participant-directed development and disclosure. Much of the rich information that I received from the students and the Iraqis during the interview process was gained during these moments of self-disclosure, these vulnerable moments in which they relived their experiences and revealed intimate emotions about one another.

The interviews with the students were completed at the end of each semester as an exit interview. Students were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences and honestly reflect on the strengths and the weaknesses of the class. The interview questions were based on the six course objectives and SDP and service-learning literature. Interviews

with the administrators and the community partners were completed early in spring semester. Interviews with the Iraqis were completed in the middle of March. And the second round of exit interviews were completed in the beginning of May. Shortly after each interview (preferably the same day), I transcribed the data.

### **Analysis**

After transcribing the interviews, I assembled all of the reflective journals and created a spreadsheet with individual tabs for each group (e.g. Students, Iraqis, Community Partners, Administrators). The header for each worksheet included “Name, Event, Journal/Interview, Topic.” I then created a separate workbook and organized the information based on the six course objectives. I grouped objectives one and two together to create the tab “SDP & Unity”. I combined objectives three and four to create the tab “Service & Praxis”. And lastly I grouped objectives five and six to create the tab “Reflection & Perspectives”.

I then read through all of the transcripts and reflective journals, to get a sense of the data set as a whole (Hatch, 2002). I then separated the data into sets –students, Iraqis, community partners, administrators. Then I read the data again within the set to try to understand the SCD experience from multiple perspectives. I then organized the data into the tabs on the spreadsheets in order to reference information faster. After organizing the information, I started asking questions of my data – What stories were the participants telling? What patterns were emerging? What relationships were forming? What explanations were being given? How can I make sense of all of this information in a



logical and coherent way? Whose voices will I privilege in the final chapters of the text? Why are their stories the most important to tell? (Hatch, 2002).

Because the goal of this research project was to create a more holistic account of the SCD experience, the most important criterion was “the contribution of each voice’s story to reveal different perspectives on the topic of study” (Hatch, 2002, p. 204). Each story was carefully constructed based on multiple readings of the data. The purpose was not to produce definitive facts or an uncontested, external truth, but to open up conversation among practitioners and scholars while exploring multiple truths. The data I collected was so rich and so layered, that any other methodological representation would not have done this project justice. “People are never only (nor even a close approximation to) any particular set of isolated theoretical notions, categories, or terms. They are people in all their complexity. They are people living storied lives on storied landscapes” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 145). For that reason, I have chosen not to use sociologically constructed codes, but to present narratives that create a sense of the whole.

I contend that in order for the reader to understand the magnitude or impact of certain statements, the reader must first understand the experiences of the person who made them. If the information was presented as disconnected quotes, sporadically interwoven within a blanket of academic jargon, then the reader may never fully appreciate the emotions attached to this type of cross-cultural learning experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2006). The reader might struggle to

embody the fears or anxieties associated with meeting the “Other”<sup>23</sup> or the “enemy” for the first time and as a result may not be able to wholly understand the significance of the friendships achieved between Iraqis and students at the end of the semester. And without the narratives as told by the Iraqis, the reader may never truly comprehend the emotional baggage, the personal sense of loss, or the vulnerability of this population and why their willingness to trust the students in the SCD class was so meaningful. Therefore, I have presented the stories of the Iraqis and students as narratives, so that the reader may better understand the significance of SDP and its role in community building and the significance of service-learning and its role in student development and enhanced cross-cultural relations.

### **Representation**

All of the narratives in chapters seven through ten were constructed using direct excerpts from reflective journal entries, interviews, class discussions, and informal conversations. In some instances, the stories were not expressed fully in one interview or one journal, but rather a series of journals or a series of informal conversations followed by a formal interview. For example, in chapter nine, the story of Mateenah was constructed based on the formal interview and field notes over several car rides home from exercise class. The information was pieced together to form a single unified narrative of experience (Ely, 2007). All of the Iraqis stories were constructed this way.

To protect their identities, some of the details of the narratives were altered and their real names were replaced with pseudonyms. Certain demographic characteristics

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<sup>23</sup> “Other” and “enemy” were words used by the students to describe Iraqis on the first day of class.

such as age, gender, number of children, or hometown may be different than the actual information provided by the participant. I also removed any other information that may compromise the identity of the participants, such as names of apartment complexes or specific location of events. The stories were then presented to the Iraqis to allow for corrections, additions, or deletions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hatch, 2002). All of them felt that the initial representations were accurate and no one opted to delete any of the information. They only offered more detail. This was an important step in the research project. It gave participants greater control over the final product (Hatch, 2002), answering the call by Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010) to include the “recipient’s voices.

Also presented in chapters seven through ten are the stories of the students. Over two semesters, I instructed thirty-five students, each of which could not be introduced fully in this text. Therefore, the students’ narratives are based on composite characters (Ellis, 2004) and narrative truths (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis, 2004). The stories were constructed as representations of varying student experiences. I coupled the data from student reflective journals, class discussions, email correspondence, and the formal exit interviews to create composite characters. Predominately, the experience of each composite is based on one student – their words, their actions, and their written reflections. Some of the details however have been changed, informed, or combined with other students to protect anonymity. The stories told are universal stories, stories experienced by multiple students and expressed throughout the semester in very similar ways.

For example, in chapter seven, I introduce the character of Emmit. Emmit is a white, southern male who grew up in a post-9/11 America complete with anti-Muslim, anti-Iraq rhetoric. Throughout the semester, Emmit often had difficult conversations with members of his pro-military family that could not understand the purpose of our class. This same situation represents at least six out of thirty-five students enrolled over two semesters in the SCD class. In some ways, Emmit's story represents all of these students – their fears, their anxieties, their uncertainties, and their personal biases. The importance of the story is the significance of the events and the statements made by this “type” of student. The statements are real; they are lifted directly from the data sources. But the ways in which the statements are combined to form the narrative are based on my inclusion or exclusion of material. Ultimately Emmit is one student whose story is representative of many students. The same goes for Abbi, Kyle, and Trey.

Within each chapter, there are two stories, the story of a student and the story of an Iraqi. The stories in each chapter are related, the characters juxtaposed on purpose. They represent contrasting or complimentary ideas and ultimately, those ideas intersect throughout the chapter in performance-based narratives (Denzin, 2003). A performance is an “interpretive event involving actors, purposes, scripts, stories, stages, and interactions” (Denzin, 2003, p. 8). The stories of the students and the Iraqis are fleshed-out as narratives using the literary strategies of characterization, metaphors, imagery, subtexts, flash-forwards, and interior monologues (Richardson, 2000). After the characters have been introduced to the reader, then they are positioned within a performance, in which their lives intersect in a meaningful way. The performances are based on real interactions

between students and Iraqis as relived in their journals, class discussions, informal conversations, and interviews. The words used in the narratives and the scripts are as verbatim as possible, lifted directly from transcripts, written field notes, or journal entries.

In the writing of this text, I was committed to presenting the stories of the students and the Iraqis “in ways that cleaved as closely as possible to the essence of what and how they shared” (Ely, 2007, p. 569). Therefore, I created narratives that mimicked the way I heard the information presented, which was a first-person account using the personal pronoun “I” (Atkinson, 2007; Denzin, 2003; Ellis, 2004; Ely, 2007; Kiesinger, 1998). I also tried to write the narrative using the voice, cadence, and candor of the participants as I heard them and as it was recorded (Ely, 2007). In addition to narratives and performances, I also used poetry in chapter nine to describe Mateenah’s experience. By presenting the text this way, I hoped that the reader would more readily feel the emotions and the horror she experienced.

### **Judgment**

All of the narrative strategies I employed were designed to move the reader, to stimulate social action, and to encourage other practitioners and scholars to become involved in a critical and reflexive community engagement agenda (Ellis, 2004). I wanted to create a text that invited the reader to become a part of the story (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). My intention was to better understand the storied lives of the Iraqis and the students and to produce narratives that encouraged readers to think, to feel, to act, and to empathize with the stories told (Ellis, 2004). My goal was “to open up conversations

about how people live, rather than close down with definitive description and analysis statements about the world as it ‘truly’ exists” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 435).

I will be basing the value of my work on the criteria Ellis (2004) has suggested for evaluating alternative methods of ethnography. Those criteria are summarized in the following list:

1. The reader is emotionally aroused and cognitively engaged
2. The reader learns something from the story
3. The story has the potential to stimulate social action
4. The story has the potential to increase self-understanding
5. The story has a plot, dramatic tension, coherence, and verisimilitude

In essence, the narratives should be aesthetically pleasing, self-reflexive, and impact the reader in a real yet profound way. Richardson (2000) and Goodall (2000) have also used similar versions of this rubric to evaluate creative practices in the new ethnography. I will use this list as a gauge for my own writing as I attempt to blend science with art and make a unique contribution to the field of Sport Sociology.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Cast of Characters**

**ABBI:** composite character, female university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, Christian, her self-described sheltered life made her curious to meet the “beautiful and mysterious” Iraqi women

EMMIT: composite character, male university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, Christian, his cousin Rick was a special operative in the US Armed Forces and was killed in Iraq

HADEEQA: female Iraqi refugee, mid thirties, Arab, Muslim, mother of Waseem and Ayoob, wife of Daniyel the translator for the American Army who watched his best friend die in a roadside bombing

HAKEEM: male Iraqi refugee, mid twenties, Arab, Christian, kidnapped and tortured for four months before finding his family in the US

KYLE: composite character, male university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, not interested at all in service or in meeting the Iraqis

MARIANA: female Iraqi refugee, early twenties, Arab, Muslim, part of the lost generation of Iraq who has known only war since birth

MATEENAH: pseudonym, female Iraqi refugee, early thirties, Arab, Muslim, mother of two children Majeed and Armaan, husband was a police officer in Iraq and was killed by terrorists, 2 year old baby Deena was also shot and killed by terrorists

RASHAD: pseudonym, male Iraqi refugee, mid twenties, Arab, Muslim, almost killed on his way home from the university

TREY: composite character, male student, early twenties, Black, Christian, Trey always wanted to create a less racist and more peaceful world because of the gang violence he experienced during childhood

#### **Other notable characters:**

COURTNAY: female university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, Black, Christian

DEREK: male university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, Christian

HANAAN: female Iraqi refugee, late forties, Arab, Muslim

JAFAR: male Iraqi refugee, early teens, Arab, Muslim

STEPH: female university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, Christian

WES: male university student at a predominately white institution, early twenties, White, Christian



## Chapter 7

### A Bullet-proof Vest Just in Case

#### Introduction

In chapter seven, there are two stories being told. The first is the story of Hadeeqa, a young woman from Baghdad, Iraq who recently moved to the United States. Her husband, Daniyel, was a translator for the American army. While riding in a military convoy, Daniyel witnessed his best friend's Humvee explode in front of him as part of a roadside attack. Unfortunately, Hadeeqa and Daniyel's story is one of familiarity, as I have heard similar versions of this story told by several of the other Iraqi families. Because of their employment with the American military or other American owned companies (e.g. water inspection agencies, electric companies, etc.), many were labeled traitors by extremist groups and quickly became targets for violence, assaults, rape, kidnappings, and even executions.

Hadeeqa's narrative was constructed from our formal interview session and a follow-up informal conversation in her home. Her story illustrates the trauma, personal loss, and the insecurities she felt as an Iraqi Muslim woman living in the United States post September 11, 2001. It also represents the dangers of siding with American troops and how that affiliation almost cost her family their lives. Understanding the emotional baggage Hadeeqa carries, including the fears, anxieties, and general mistrust of American perceptions, typifies what many of the Iraqis expressed as their initial feelings toward Americans prior to the first event with our class.

Also in chapter seven is Emmitt's story. Emmitt is a white, male undergraduate student enrolled in the service-learning class. Emmitt's favorite cousin Rick was part of the American Military Special Forces and during his third tour in Iraq he was shot and killed. Emmitt was raised in a very conservative, pro-military family, and was indoctrinated with the post-9/11 mantra that all Muslims were terrorists. The details of Emmitt's narrative were taken from several of his reflective journals and also his formal exit interview. Although none of the other students expressed personal bias quite to the extent of Emmitt, his narrative is representative of the ignorance and stereotypes most of the service-learning students expressed during the word association activity and free flow responses collected during the first class period of the semester.

When given one minute increments to write down as many thoughts as possible regarding Iraq, its people, its culture, its education, and its religion, a sampling of student responses from the first day of class included: "terrorists, IEDs, 9/11, uneducated, poor, illiterate, towel-heads, camel riders, Saddam Hussein, religious extremists, enemies, war, suicide bombers, tents, oil, male dominance, strict rules, unfriendly, and no rights for women." Unfortunately, these comments were repeated over and over again on different students worksheets. Understanding what students from the post-9/11 generation have internalized as truths about Iraqis is equally as important in appreciating the first meeting between the two groups.

Throughout chapter seven, I have also included several performances (Denzin, 2003), which detail the first ever meeting between the Iraqis and the students. The setting for the performance is a welcome party and a university soccer game on campus.

Students were responsible for arranging the details of the first event, which included setting up the decorations, food, nametags, and children's activities prior to the party. While the students were setting up, Sarah and I were busy driving university vans to the various apartment complexes to pick up the Iraqi families. The opening scene is told through my eyes as the driver of the van. The second and third scenes are reconstructions based on Emmitt's journals and also my own observations. Ultimately, this chapter reveals the fears and anxieties of both sides and how sport was used as a non-threatening medium to encourage trust, bridge divides, and stimulate cross-cultural conversations.

### **Hadeeqa's story**

I was born and raised in Baghdad. My father worked construction in the green zone, building storage units for the American military. My mother stayed home. I have nine brothers and sisters. I attended Baghdad University and graduated with a degree in English. My husband and I have been married for eight years. We have two small children, Waseem and Ayoob, ages three and five.

In 2001, my husband Daniyel moved to Syria to find work. We were not married at the time, but I knew of him because he is related to my uncle's family. In Syria, Daniyel found a job with the one of the largest distributing companies in the Middle East. In 2003, after the US invasion, Daniyel moved back. Saddam was no longer in power and even though there was fighting, the future for Iraq looked bright. At my cousin's birthday party in 2003, Daniyel asked my father for my hand in marriage. I was finishing college in six months, so I said yes. Later that year, Daniyel got a job with the American army working as a translator. At the time, there were very few opportunities to make money

unless you worked for the Americans. We knew it was dangerous. But we also believed that Iraq deserved freedom.

After the elections in 2005, things became much more violent. Sunnis were fighting against Shia for power and control. It is funny because before the war, I didn't even know if I was Sunni or Shia. After the war, everyone knew what side they were on, even though no one seemed to know the difference between the two.

In 2007, I saw my first dead body on the side of the road. I wept silently as I walked by, clinging to Daniyel. As the year progressed, I saw more than my fair share of dead bodies in the street. Later in 2007, Daniyel was on assignment with American troops when his convoy ran over a roadside bomb. The Humvee in front of Daniyel's was completely destroyed. Daniyel saw his best friend Ayham die in the attack. When Daniyel came home, I knew something was terribly wrong. He told me to start packing our things. We said goodbye to our families and we left for Syria.

We filed for asylum to the United States. Moving so far away from my family and friends made me very nervous, but what could I say? Daniyel had lost his best friend. We had been threatened many times because of our affiliation with the American military. Surely, the US would look favorably on Daniyel's service and provide us with a job in America.

***Flash-forward: Strangers in a Foreign Land***

In 2010, we were assigned refuge in Rockington, Tennessee. It had been a very difficult transition from Iraq to Syria to the US. I had become pregnant while in Syria and

had my second son, Ayoob. We wanted to make sure that Ayoob was healthy before leaving for the US. I was scared to move. Ayoob was a good excuse to prolong it.

I have lived here for almost six months now. When I think about Iraq, I am homesick. Everything here is different. Everything. The people, the trees, the buildings, the way of life. Everything . The food. The weather. The language. I don't go out much because I am afraid. I feel strange because I wear the scarf. A lot of times, I feel like people don't like me or they watch me or they whisper about me to each other. I'm different than people here. Maybe it's not true, maybe it's just my feelings, but that's what I feel when I go out.

I didn't want to come here because I was afraid that people would not accept us. Even though Daniyel helped Americans, people see the scarf and they judge us based on 9-11. Even though there is religious freedom here, I still feel like people may look at me and think I am a terrorist. I heard before I came to the US that Iraqi and Muslim people were treated in a bad way here. And we heard Americans controlled the whole world and that America is a great country. America, America, America. We heard it so much.

I was also scared because our people, our traditions are different. And we have fought with Americans two or three times. And the American army doesn't trust us or like us. Iraqis consider the Americans to be invaders and that's why I was afraid to come here. But even if we are not accepted in the US, I know we are safe. My country is in a bad situation. Here, we can go to the park, we can have entertainment. In my country, no. You must be inside before 4pm because the checkpoints are very dangerous after four. And the education here is better. American education is a great education for all

countries. And for my sons, that makes me happy for their future. I want my sons to learn English. I want my sons to have a bright future. But I don't want Waseem and Ayoob to forget our traditions. I'm afraid that when they are older, they will forget about Iraq, about their family, about our customs, and most importantly, about our religion. For this, I am also fearful.

### **ACT I: Scene 1**

*(Hadeeqa and Daniyel are in their apartment. They are getting ready for the Welcome party and the soccer event with the Service-Learning class).*

Hadeeqa: Daniyel! Hurry up! I see the van outside.

Daniyel: Okay, okay woman! I just got home from work. Ayoob needs to put on a shirt.

Hadeeqa: I have to get my scarf! Yella, yella Ayoob! Come to the bedroom and get your shirt.

*(I knock on the door.)*

*(Waseem opens the curtain to the big window beside the door, smiles and waves. He runs down the hall to get his Baba.)*

Daniyel: Hello, Ashleigh. How are you?

Ashleigh: Hello Daniyel. Very good, thank you. How are you?

Daniyel: Good. Let me get Hadeeqa. Have a seat.

*I sit lightly on the edge of the couch waiting for Hadeeqa to come from her bedroom. I can smell the spices coming from the kitchen. Smells like shawarma. It's uncomfortably hot in the house, maybe like 78. Wet laundry lines the windowsill behind the couch. A white bed sheet is draped over the only other chair. There's a brass floor lamp next to the chair, but the shade is missing. There are no pictures on the wall, no pictures anywhere in the living room or dining room. There is a 15 inch black and white television with rabbit ears tucked in the giant opening of the old armoire. The armoire is decorated with*

*a few trinkets and porcelain knick-knacks. And resting high above the rest of the room on top of the armoire is the Koran.*

*Everything about this room is depressing to me. I have always wondered who lives in places like this. What I am doing here? Am I really so naive that I think a soccer game can fix **this**?*

*Hadeeqa enters the room while hurriedly fixing her scarf. I stand quickly to greet her.*

Hadeeqa: Hallo Ashleigh. How are you?

Ashleigh: Salaam Alaikum, Hadeeqa. I am well.

*(We hug and exchange "air" kisses to each side.)*

Ashleigh: Are you and your family ready for tonight?

Hadeeqa: Yes, we are very excited. You know, we love soccer and the boys and I are ready to leave the house, so this is very good!

Ashleigh: I am so glad you are coming! Is there anything I can do to help you get the boys ready?

Hadeeqa: No, no. Please have a seat. Would you like some tea or cola?

Ashleigh: Oh, no thank you. We have several more people to pick up before the party, so we must go soon.

Hadeeqa: Ok. Let me get my family.

*(Yella, yella Waseem, Ayoob. Let's go. Put your shoes on habibi. It's time to go. Daniyel? Are you ready?)*

*(Daniyel comes from the bedroom with Waseem.)*

Daniyel: Yes, Hadeeqa. I am ready.

Ashleigh: Ok. Let's get in the vans.

*Hadeeqa picks up Waseem, I pick up Ayoob, and we descend the stairs to the van.*

*On the way to the next stop, we make small talk about the weather, about the radio, and about tonight's event.*

- Ashleigh: Are you excited for tonight? Do you like soccer?
- Hadeeqa: Very much. I have never been inside a...*(speaking in Arabic to Daniyel)*...yes, a stadium before.
- Daniyel: You know Ashleigh, everybody in our family likes soccer. We are comfortable with this, so we are excited.
- Ashleigh: *(Smiling)* Very good. That makes me really happy. So were you fans of the team in Iraq? The Olympic team?
- Daniyel: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. I can remember in Iraq in 2007, when the Iraq team win the Asian Cup...everybody was living in a terrible situation. But everybody over there, they stopped everything and just watched the game. And at last, when we win, everybody go to the streets, **everybody!**
- Hadeeqa: *(Excited)* Everybody celebrated, really! *(Smiling)* Daniyel and I, we just celebrate like in a simple way. I remember we went to Daniyel's family's house in our car. And we were taking pictures of everybody celebrating in the street, throwing water. *(Laughing)* And then we got wet because we couldn't move. The street was so full of traffic.
- Daniyel: And everybody just go outside to be there with the people. And everybody have something to throw on others. And all the people just laugh and be happy. It was so wonderful. I will never forget this moment.
- Hadeeqa: Yeah, and even the killers, they left their job and they celebrate. It didn't matter the difference between people. Even the killers took the night off! So we have this big experience that sport brings peace for anybody, for everybody. Really, so wonderful.
- Ashleigh: *(Stunned)* Wow. That is a really cool story. It is something that Sarah and I have been very interested in for a long time, this idea of sport and peace.
- (My mind is reeling trying to process everything they just shared! It's the whole foundation for the class, this idea of sport and exercise bridging the gap between Iraqis and Americans)*
- It's so cool that sport was able to make even the "killers" forget about the differences between people, even if it was only for one night. It's amazing how sport has that potential.
- (Smiling)* If only we could all just play soccer together, then the world would be a better place, right?



Daniyel: Sometimes I think so.

Ashleigh: Well, I know our students are really excited to meet you and welcome you to Rockington. And of course, watch a soccer game with you. *(Laughing)* They said as long as they don't have to play soccer against you and be humiliated for their lack of skill, they are happy.

Hadeeqa: *(Laughing)* Ok, no soccer game tonight. We are happy to meet them too. Thank you Ashleigh.

Ashleigh: You're "marhaba" *(which means 'welcome' in Arabic.)*

*Everyone laughs at the wrong use of the word marhaba and continues to chat as we make our way towards the stadium.*

### **Emmit's Story**

I was born and raised in the South. Everything about me says southern boy. I'm a white male with blonde hair and blue eyes. I was raised in the church, baptized when I was eleven. I've lived in the same town my whole life. I always thought when I turned eighteen, I would go west for college, get out of this town, experience something new, but when it came time to make the decision, I played it safe. I don't regret staying here, but I'll certainly admit that my life has been very sheltered. I've never had to call anywhere else home.

When it comes to my family, everybody looks just like me. I can count on one hand the number of people I know in my circle that are "different." I truly love America and I think it is the best country in the world. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. My family is very devoted to protecting the freedoms we enjoy here in the U.S. They support the war in Iraq and the war on Terror because it was members of the Muslim religion that unjustly killed so many Americans. The images that I saw on television of Muslims

celebrating on the streets after 9-11 only confirmed what I knew to be true. Muslims and people from the Middle East were our enemies. It's a simple strategy: kill or be killed.

After September 11, it was impossible for me to think anything good about people associated with Islam. I can remember thinking to myself, "why don't we just nuke them all and be done with it." In my mind, it was like they didn't deserve human rights anymore after what they did to our country. After 9-11, I remember asking my favorite cousin Rick, "How many of them did you kill while you were there?" He calmly responded, "Shot at six, killed four." I remember thinking, "Why didn't you kill more of 'em? Stupid towel heads." Looking back, I can honestly say I had no idea about politics or war. It all seemed so simple, but then again, I was just an ignorant kid.

For the last seven years, I knew the war in Iraq was wreaking havoc, but it never really bothered me. I didn't really know how to decipher between the good Muslims and the bad ones, thus I had unsettling feelings toward them all. I still get really nervous when I see Muslims in the airport and pray that they do not get on my flight.

As far as this class goes, I'm not sure I want to stay in it. I don't know how I feel about becoming friends with Muslims. How am I supposed to trust them? How am I supposed to erase all of the feelings and things I have been made to believe about these people? I feel like I should wear a bullet-proof vest or something when we meet, just in case. I have a lot of anxiety about our first event. I've never met someone from the Middle East, and honestly, I'm not really sure I want to.

***Flash-forward: Soccer Balls and Suicide Bombers***

Today's a really difficult day for me. Everyone in the class is so excited about the event tonight. All the girls are giddy about speaking Arabic and not making eye contact with the men and all the guys keep talking about the infamous man "kiss" that is so popular in Arab countries. For the record, there's no way I'm kissing another man, even if it is an "air" kiss. And really, how can we be excited about tonight? I just feel like my classmates are being really naïve. They've never lost someone in the war. They don't know what it feels like, they can't understand. And besides, we've never met these people. We don't know who they are or what they did when they were in Baghdad. They could've been responsible for my cousin's death. I'm gonna go tonight against my better judgment because I don't want my classmates to think I'm racist. And I'm sure as hell not gonna fail this class based on a bunch of Iraqis. I guess the good news is that at least we'll have soccer to distract us.

So here I am, surrounded by happy people eager to meet the Iraqis. My head is pounding. It has been all day. I have so much anxiety that I am dealing with right now. I just don't know what it's going to look like. What will they be wearing? How many of them will show up? Why are they coming? Will there be kids or just adults? What am I supposed to do if a woman talks to me? What I am supposed to do if anybody talks to me? Are they gonna speak English? How am I gonna communicate with them? Are we just gonna look at each other? This is so awkward. What happens when we're in the stadium? Are my friends gonna see me with them? I don't know, maybe no one will be here tonight. I hope not.

I guess I can try to set-up the food table to take my mind off of it for a while. I hope they like pizza. Looks like we have a lot of it, minus the good stuff of course – pepperoni and sausage. Anti-pork eaters. Just another reason for us not to get along. I’m really hoping it takes a while for Sarah and Ashleigh to get here with the vans. The longer it takes for them to bring the Iraqis to the party, the less time we have eating together and making small talk. I’m not interested in asking any questions. I’m just interested in getting through it and getting to the game. I’ll just sit in the stands with some of the other guys from class and hopefully just blend in.

Oh great, they’re here. “Hey Abbi, Trey...they’re here. You might want to grab your nametags.” I don’t want to seem like a jerk, but I really don’t know what to say to them. Wow, there are at least 30! And the head of our department is here and professors I’ve had for other classes. I’m gonna have to fake interest. These are people I need to write letters of recommendation later. Maybe I can stall. I can go to the bathroom, then maybe get something to eat, then if I have to, I can try to talk to the kids. They’re not responsible for things that have happened. They’re just kids.

## **ACT I: Scene 2**

*This scene begins at the Welcome Party before the soccer game. Emmitt and an eleven-year old Iraqi boy named Jafar make eye contact at the food table while filling their plates. Both appear somewhat shy and nervous to be there.*

Emmitt:        Hey.

Jafar:         Hey.

Emmitt:        My name’s Emmitt.

Jafar: *Eye contact, but no response.*

Emmit: Do you speak English?

Jafar: *Nods his head yes.*

Emmit: Cool.

*(Long pause while Emmit waits for Jafar to say something.)*

Emmit: You like pizza?

Jafar: Yeah.

Emmit: Me too.

*(Jafar finds an empty chair and sits down.)*

*(Emmit looks around at everyone else having conversation and decides to sit down next to Jafar.)*

Emmit: You like it here?

Jafar: Not really.

Emmit: *(Surprised)* You don't? Really? Why?

Jafar: *(Looks away)* I don't know.

Emmit: It's gotta be better than Iraq, right?

Jafar: No, not really.

*(Jafar looks at the cast on his arm. His arm was broken 3 weeks ago by bullies on the playground. Emmit acknowledges his broken arm, but doesn't ask any questions.)*

*(Jafar throws his empty plate away and picks up the soccer ball from under the table.)*

Emmit: You like soccer?

Jafar: Yeah. I like it.

Emmit: So did you play in Iraq?

Jafar: Yeah, we used to play all the time in the street in front of my house. Ya know, before it was dangerous.

*Emmit pauses a long time before answering, as if processing the visual images of life in Baghdad from Jafar's perspective. Images of children in the street, playing an innocent game of soccer while American troops in Humvees roll through the town.*

Emmit: You wanna play now?

Jafar: Yeah sure. But you're the goalie.

*Emmit and Jafar begin playing soccer against the fence. Several other Iraqi children join Jafar in taking shots on Emmit.*

*After the adults finish eating, everyone walks toward the soccer stadium for the game.*

### **ACT I: Scene 3**

*From his seat on the last bleacher, Emmitt looks around at the Iraqis and students sitting together enjoying the soccer game. It's hard for Emmitt to reconcile what he has seen on television, what he has heard from his cousins, and what he is witnessing right in front of him. Although he still questions the sincerity of these efforts, he lowers his guard just a bit to enjoy the game.*

Jafar: Hey, did you see me get my picture with the mascot?

Emmit: *(Laughing)* Yeah, I saw you.

Jafar: That's pretty cool, right?

Emmit: Yeah, it's cool man.

Jafar: So who are you cheering for?

Emmit: We're the team in white. Some of my friends play on the team, like number 21 and number 42.

Jafar: You know them?!?!?

Emmit: *(Laughs at his astonishment)* Yeah, we have class together.

Jafar: Man, that's so cool.

- Emmit: If you want, they would probably be willing to sign your poster after the game.
- Jafar: Really?!
- Emmit: *(Laughing)* Yeah, really.
- Jafar: So you'll take me down there?
- Emmit: Well, let me check with Ashleigh and Sarah and see if we are allowed. But yeah, if they say it is okay, then we'll go down there.

*Daniyel turns around and enters the conversation between Emmit and Jafar.*

- Daniyel: Can you also take my boys, Waseem and Ayoob? I want them to feel the grass. To be on a real football field, like the one I played on in Baghdad.
- Emmit: *(Surprised)* Um, sure. Yeah. Let me check with Sarah and Ashleigh. *(Pulls out his phone)*
- Daniyel: I love football. I played for ten years before my knee. Now I only swim. I want my sons to feel passion for football...to be reminded of our country.
- Do you play?
- Emmit: Uh, yeah. Well I used to. I played in high school, but I don't really play anymore.
- Jafar: *(Shocked)* Why not?! It is the greatest game!
- Emmit: Well, I don't really know. When we went to college, we all just sorta stopped playing.
- Jafar: I will play! I mean, if you want to play, I will play with you.
- Emmit: *(Loosening up)* Alright, man. If I get the urge to play, I'll call you.

*(They both laugh)*

*The action on the field continues and the home team is making a push to score. All of the Iraqis begin stomping their feet and clapping. Although the students are surprised at first by the Iraqis passion for the game, they laugh and quickly join in. Even Emmit watches intently as the home team has a chance to win the game in the closing minutes.*

*The noise becomes deafening as the Iraqis and students clap and stomp in unison.*

*The right midfielder crosses the ball to the left striker. She shoots....and misses. The crowd collectively sighs. Fortunately, the defender was the last to touch the ball. The home team sets up for a corner kick.*

*As the defense builds their wall around the goal, Jafar stomps wildly on the bleachers next to Emmitt. You can feel the intensity as the crowd chants for the home team.*

*The kick is up. The home team charges the goal. Flying over the wall, the center midfielder heads the ball into the back part of the net!! The home team wins! The home team wins!*

*Totally lost in the moment, Emmitt and Jafar hi-five in celebration. Other Iraqis and students shout in jubilation as they embrace one another.*

*After the final buzzer sounds, the students and the Iraqis head down to the field for an autograph session with the winning team. The children clamor around the players with their posters and souvenirs.*

*Emmitt stands behind Jafar with his hands on Jafar's shoulders. Emmitt then introduces Jafar to his friends on the team.*

Emmitt:           *(Nervously)* Hey Emily. This is my friend Jafar. He's from Iraq.

### **My Analysis**

The stories told in Chapter 7 ultimately represent the fear, anxieties, and uncertainties of the students and the Iraqis prior to their first meeting at the soccer game. Within those stories are recurring ideas that emerged during classroom discussions, reflective journals, informal conversations, and formal interviews. In the next section, I want to unpack some of those ideas and tie the stories of Hadeeqa and Emmitt to the larger body of SDP and service-learning literature. The ideas I would like to explore include: the "War on Terror," the post 9/11 psyche, the struggle to critically self-reflect, and the power of sport to unite. Ultimately, this chapter is a narrative about the fears and



anxieties of both sides and how sport was used as a common language to make the uncomfortable first meeting more comfortable.

### ***Freedom and Democracy for All***

In the opening paragraph of Hadeeqa's story, she introduces us to her husband, Daniyel, who served as a translator for the American Army. Daniyel risked his life and his family's life in pursuit of freedom and democracy. As one former Iraqi translator stated in the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate Hearing, "When a translator decides to work for the U.S. Army to help support democracy and freedom in Iraq, then the translator puts his life on the line" (U.S. Government, 2007, p. 23). He went on to say,

The connection between the coalition forces and the Iraqi civilians, the Iraqi community, is the translators who try to bridge the gap, try to communicate between both sides...[This connection] promotes the ideals of freedom and democracy, but these people [radicals, militants] want tyranny and oppression to stay in the country and the darkness. So these people, they pay money and they hire people to kill us, to hunt for translators. They have all the details and information about every single one of us. (U.S. Government, 2007, p. 24)

Like Hadeeqa and Daniyel, most of the Iraqis living in Rockington are here as a result of their affiliation with the American army or other American companies. They have been threatened, assaulted, raped, shot at, and even killed for their "traitorous" acts and allegiance to the United States. Working with the U.S. military induced so much fear that many of the Iraqis hid their employment status from their closest friends and even

their families. In conversation with Hadeeqa, she told me that for six months, Daniyel refused to tell his own mother or father about his job as a translator with the military. And when he couldn't take the questioning anymore, he told his father and it resulted in a horrific argument that fractured the family. Daniyel has not spoken to his father to this day.

Between 2003 and 2007, more than 250 Iraqi translators working for the U.S. were killed (U.S. Government, 2008). Immediately after Daniyel's experience, he asked for assistance from the U.S. Military in the asylum process. Unfortunately, when Daniyel filed for asylum, the special immigrant visa supplied by the U.S. military to Iraqi and Afghan translators had a 6-year waiting list (U.S. Government, 2007). Only in 2008 with the passing of the Defense Authorization Act were more translators granted admittance on the special immigrant visa (U.S. Government, 2008). Daniyel and Hadeeqa waited in Syria, working in the "informal economy" as illegal residents for almost three years before arriving in the United States.

As the instructor of the class, I learned this information slowly, bit by bit during conversations in the homes and on the way to and from events. I was amazed at the number of Iraqis that sided with Americans troops or worked for American companies during the war. And I was fascinated to hear the ways they shielded this information from their families and friends. Several of the men talked about the strategies they used in conversations with other Iraqis and how they would go along with family members or friends who criticized Americans as invaders, all while earning a paycheck from the

American military for their services. They said they felt forced to agree with popular opinion because of the terror factions and militias that were rampant in the country.

Fear caused a tremendous amount of deception and deep-seated mistrust among the Iraqi people, issues that I have become increasingly aware of as I continue to work in the community. From that perspective, it was really important for students like Emmit to know the stories of Iraqis like Daniyel. Daniyel's story adds dimension to the war, making it less black and white, less "good" versus "the Axis of Evil" (Bush, 2002). Daniyel's story gave the war a face, a name, and revealed its complexity. As the semester progressed, Emmit's understanding of the war became less simplistic and more involved. He wrote poignantly in his journal about difficult conversations he had with his parents and other family members because of the SCD class. It was powerful to hear Emmit say, "this class challenges you to grow in your thinking and find out why you believe the things you do. By interacting with the Iraqis at the events, I have a new respect for these people and their strength to start over." This coincides with what Eyler & Giles (1999) found to be one of the most consistent outcomes of service-learning – "the reduction of negative stereotypes and the increase in tolerance for diversity" (p. 29).

### ***The Axis of Evil: Life After 9/11***

On September 11, 2001, the world changed forever. Images of a plane crashing into a building, bodies falling from the sky, mass hysteria in the streets, and lifeless figures trapped in concrete rubble shocked the very soul of an unsuspecting nation. President Bush later deemed Iraq part of the Axis of Evil (Bush, 2002) and on March 20, 2003, the U.S. Military invaded Iraq as part of the American mission to rid the world of

terrorism. Most of the students in the Sport and Community Development class were only in sixth grade when this happened. For their entire adult existence, the students in the SCD class have only known Iraq as the Axis of Evil and America as the Defender of Freedom. Media outlets have encouraged this rhetoric and as a result, Arabs and Muslims living in America after 9/11 were increasingly targets of violence.

According to Disha, Cavendish, & King (2011), “After 9/11, Arabs and Muslims were largely depicted as a unified, coherent, and threatening group consisting of ‘foreigners,’ ‘extremists,’ and ‘terrorists’” (p. 27). And the incidence of crime experienced by Arabs and Muslims increased 1600% after the events of September 11, 2001 (Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011). In 2000, the FBI reported 28 hate crimes against the Arab/Muslim population; in 2001, it reported 481 incidents, which included 117 in New York City alone (Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011).

It is easy to understand why Hadeeqa and many of the other Iraqis feared coming to the United States. It is also easy to understand how the forces of Emmitt’s socialization experience coupled with the personal loss of his cousin Rick contributed to his animosity and angst toward the Iraqi population. Many of the students expressed this idea of a subconscious racism toward Arabs and Muslims that they weren’t even aware of until this class. Like one student noted in her journal,

I never thought that I was the type of person to jump to conclusions. But when you asked us to write down our thoughts about Iraq, I realized how much I had negatively assumed. Now after meeting these families, I realize how skewed my

assumptions were about the Middle East. I really feel like this is a result of the media and how they portrayed the events of September 11.

Many of the students surprised themselves with their word associations about Iraq. Although they admitted feeling ignorant about the situation in Iraq, they still choose very strong words like terrorists and towel-heads to describe the Iraqi people.

It was amazing the way those words and ideas changed after a semester of interaction. The students soon realized that the words “poor,” “illiterate,” “uneducated,” and “religious extremists” really did not describe the Iraqi refugees at all. Many of the students were surprised to learn that the Iraqis were highly educated, most of them in the fields of medicine, computers, and engineering and that they lived upper-middle class, progressive lifestyles (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008). As one student stated in his reflective journal,

I had a really surprising conversation at the picnic with an Iraqi man. We began talking about our families and work and he told me that he was an engineer. It's crazy because my dad is an engineer too. So we were talking about the different aspects of like civil engineering and I was shocked to know that he hadn't found a job here. I'm no expert, but he knew so much about the field. I think its sad how different his life must be now, going from an upper middle class lifestyle similar to my own to not having a job and accepting donations. One thirty-minute conversation with this man could change any opinions people have about Iraqi's living in America.

It was also fascinating to watch Emmitt's understanding of Iraqis as the "enemy" change when he learned of stories like Daniyel and other Iraqi translators who aided the American military in their mission. It was hard for Emmitt to reconcile what he knew to be "true" about the Iraqi people with what he was experiencing during conversations and classroom discussions. The reflective journal provided a space for Emmitt to privately unpack all of those ideas throughout the course. Reflections what tied to the service to the learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Miller & Nendel, 2011) and allowed Emmitt to connect his head to his heart (Dewey, 1938). This experience not only enhanced his cognitive knowledge but allowed for growth in the affective domain as well (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

### ***Critical Self-Reflection***

Over the course of a semester, the students in the SCD class were asked to keep a journal of reflections on SDP, service-learning, and cross-cultural connections. They were encouraged to write about conversations or classroom discussions that challenged their thinking and/or moments of interaction that changed the way they viewed themselves, the Iraqis, or society in general. In addition to encouraging informal journaling, five structured journals were also assigned and collected from each student.

The first journal asked the students to critically reflect on their own experiences and socialization process. Regardless of race, most college students are raised in a homogenous neighborhood with very limited exposure to other classes, ethnicities, or ways of life (Marullo, 1999). Like Emmitt, many of the students in the service-learning class could "count on one hand the number of people [in their] circle that were 'different.'" During class discussion, one of the students hesitantly admitted that

Courtney was her first “black” friend and that she had never truly had a conversation with an African-American until her junior year of college. Many of the students in the SCD class identified with her experience and admitted that they had never had a conversation with someone of Arab descent or from the Middle East.

Granted this is not the experience of all college students, but it is important to realize that most college students are still trying to find themselves and develop their own sense of values (Bok, 2006). According to a 2006 survey, over two-thirds of college freshmen considered it “very important” or “essential” for experiences in college to help shape their personal value system (Bok, 2006). The majority of undergraduate students are looking for ways to make sense of their identities and to understand how those identities connect them to the world (Bok, 2006). College can become a site of confrontation between past assumptions and present experiences and it is important for students to be able to work through those ideas in a nurtured and supported way (Marullo, 1999).

Reflection allowed students to wrestle with these assumptions. As Emmit wrote in his journal, “I’m a very quiet person. Reflection was my way of letting you know that I am with you. I am involved. My eyes had been opened and I was discovering new things and trying to make sense of it all.” As Richardson (2005) suggests, writing is a mode of inquiry, it is a “method of knowing” (p. 973). And as Foucault (2000) asserts, “I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before” (p. 240). In the story of Emmit, writing allowed him to discover new things about himself and to question deeply held values and assumptions (Stonebanks, 2008).

The reflective journals in the SCD class were not designed to be a regurgitation of events, but rather an outlet for discovery. As one student commented,

Reflection is different from regular writing. It takes some adjusting. You have to go beneath the surface. This is really the first time in college that anyone asked me to write about how I feel. Most of the time I am just asked to regurgitate what Dr. so and so already said about it. But this really allowed me to make connections with what was going on or why things were happening. Writing about it helps me remember, it helps me appreciate. It helps me to see what I've learned and how I've changed.

Reflection was a way for Emmit and the other students to make sense of their experiences and served as one of several modes of assessment. (More details on assessment can be found in Appendix B.)

### ***Even the Killers Took the Night Off***

Before the war began in 2003, Iraq was considered a highly secular society with very little religious tension between Sunnis and Shi'ites (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008). Most Sunnis and Shi'ites lived in mixed neighborhoods, worked together, and even married across religious divides (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008). When the U.S. invaded in 2003, the American military removed all Sunnis from power, including intelligence officers, government officials, and army personnel, as they represented the old regime of Saddam (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008). As both sides fought for power, the result was widespread ethnic cleansing and violent terror campaigns against one another and against U.S. forces (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008).



By 2006, the violence in Iraq had escalated to an all-out civil war between Sunni and Shi'ite militias (Sassoon, 2009), which ultimately resulted in the bombing of the historic Shi'ite mosque, the Imam al-'Askari Shrine (Ghareeb, Ranard, & Tutunji, 2008). This event triggered the largest mass exodus in the Middle East since the displacement of the Palestinians in 1948 (Sassoon, 2009). The entire society unraveled as waves of doctors and engineers and well-educated people poured out of the country looking for refuge in places like Syria and Jordan. And the inability of humanitarian agencies to provide services for all of the displaced persons left the vulnerable and the poor looking for resources elsewhere (Sassoon, 2009). As a result, many of them pledged allegiance to terrorist factions in order to survive; thereby creating deep fissures within Iraqi society and a tremendous amount of distrust among its people (Sassoon, 2009).

All of this helps frame and give context to the story told by Hadeeqa and Daniyel in the van on the way to the soccer game. With great enthusiasm and promise they recalled the events of 2007 when the Iraqi national team won the Asian Cup soccer final. Sport provided a collective identity for the Iraqi people that night. As told by Daniyel, the soccer team, made of Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Kurds, served as a symbol of national unity and a model for the entire country. As reported by the Seattle Times, "At a time when sectarian tensions between Shiites and Sunnis have worsened in the Iraqi government and on the streets, the soccer team has been credited with helping unite Iraqis" (2007, p. 1).

This goes back to the ideas promoted by the United Nations that sport is a universal language and has the power to bring people of opposition together (United Nations, 2008). For a moment in time, an Iraqi population that had been bitterly divided

by war celebrated together as one nation, one people, under one flag. And as Hadeeqa bluntly stated, “Even the killers took the night off.” Did one soccer game solve the problems of Iraq? No. But did that soccer game provide hope that the problems of Iraq could be solved? According to many of the Iraqis, yes.

Soccer united Iraq on two different occasions, 2004 and 2007. And in 2010, soccer was also used to unite American students and Iraqi refugees. In his journal, Emmitt talked about this initial experience and his accidental hi-five with Jafar when the home team scored. Much like the night of the Asian Cup, jubilation found in a sports victory made Emmitt forget about his deeply-held biases against Iraqi Muslims. I don’t want to overstate, but based on Emmitt’s introduction of Jafar as his friend, I think sport united Emmitt and Jafar in a way that at least initial layers of commonality were discovered.

## Interlude

### Burning Building

#### Excerpt from an interview with Janet, Community Partner and Sponsor

*My dad is Spanish, so I have lived overseas most of my life. Shortly after I moved to Rockington in 1981, I met a Cambodian family of refugees that our church was helping. It was after the Khmer Rouge and anyway, long story short, I got involved with the family because the dad spoke French and so do I. We did a lot for them trying to integrate them into society. Fast forward to 2007 when I moved back to Rockington after living overseas. I ran into the son of the Cambodian family that I had worked with twenty plus years ago. Of course, I invited them over for the afternoon. After several hours of conversation, it was obvious that they had eked out an existence, but they certainly weren't thriving.*

*One of the family members had spent a lot of time in jail. The dad died. The mom was still living in the same trailer I saw her in years ago. And the son, who was raised here, is working a very menial job. And you know they weren't complaining, saying 'oh what an awful life we have,' but just as an outsider, I knew this wasn't right. I kept thinking to myself, "how could this have gone differently for this precious family?" Something has got to change in the way Rockington and I personally work with refugees. There's got to be a way to integrate them into our lives and make them a part of our community. And I guess for me, growing up in Spain, it was such a natural thing to reach out to people. So I have been involved in community organization with refugees on and off since my initial experience with that dear Cambodian family in the 80s.*

*When I heard about your class and your desire to use sport with the Iraqis, I thought what a wonderful, healthy way to integrate people, especially young people, into life in the community. Life here isn't easy. This is a little southern city that is not international or cosmopolitan in any sense. And even though there are over 3,000 refugees in our community, their needs are so different that they can't really relate. You know there are Burundians and Burmese who have lived in refugee camps and never flushed a toilet or used a microwave. And then there are the well-educated Iraqis who have worked for American companies and speak proficient English. And some have very serious needs, like post traumatic stress disorder...and others have physical and emotional wounds that really could use special attention. I put little band-aids on here and there through social gatherings and visits, but it is not enough.*

*And the resettlement agency is so understaffed; there's no way for them to adequately meet the needs of all the refugees. Unfortunately, I have talked to too many families who have sat in their apartments for weeks because the resettlement agency did not have enough caseworkers to really give them the attention they needed. I have often felt like the refugees are coming at a rate that is too fast for us to really help them. They are like people jumping out of a burning building. They are in crisis mode leaving their countries, and they jump out of the window, except we are not always ready for the landing. And some of them we catch and some of them we don't. We have not done well in creating a community, a real network to support them and welcome them.*

*This is why I think your service-learning class is so important. First of all, it provides a link between the refugees and the university. And that connection to the*

*university can really give dignity to these people, just the friendships that have been established with the students and faculty are important to this particular culture. In addition, the exercise class has built a bridge. I know the women love it! They look forward to it so much. For the fun, for the laughter...the laughter is like medicine for these women. And just the attention you give to them. It's very empowering. I think it builds community because you have this little group that goes to exercise class regularly and they have really gotten to know each other. And they have a better self-image. They have learned that they can look good and feel good, and that there is more to their life than just cooking and cleaning the home.*

*And I think sport is also essential because it has shown me the power of being on a team. It's a great way to get to know other people and I think it could be especially valuable for the kids and their integration into American society. It was so fun watching the children play all the different games at the park. You had so many activities to choose from, horseshoes, volleyball, soccer, corn hole...there was something for everyone and I think the variety of choices was important. Because you know, I don't think the Iraqis really have much of a voice here to make decisions for themselves. Everything is just "well this is it, this is America, we'll tell you what to do." But at the park, their personalities could come out and they could laugh and they could be with people of different ages. Your class reminds me of the movie "Invictus." It's such an interesting concept sport and peace building. It makes so much sense, but I had never really thought of it until watching it happen with the Iraqis and the students.*

*It's just so unique and inspiring the way the students have reached out beyond their comfort zones to make a special effort to think of things that are fun for the Iraqis to do. You know fun has not been a part of their lives for such a long time. So I think this deliberate consideration has built a community of trust, letting them know that Americans care about them and that they really want to do things they like. Maybe their only impression of America was you know, a bunch of shoot 'em up cowboys or something, but your class has shown them that we genuinely care about them, about their health, but also about their families, their children, their well-being.*

*Honestly, I think now the Iraqis would be willing to do anything that was proposed by your group. They've had so much fun and were so enriched by all the different things that your class has done. There's been a real bonding that has taken place and your class has made an imprint on their lives and mine. And it's a unique relationship because you have shown them that you value them. And it's really been encouraging for me because now I feel like I'm part of something bigger, a bigger team, more than just me and a few friends. It's very liberating, very encouraging, and it makes me want to support you all in whatever way I can.*

## Chapter 8

### I Can No Longer Stay Silent

#### Introduction

Chapter eight begins with the story of Abbi, a white, female student in her early twenties whose self-described privileged life limited her interactions with people of different races, ethnicities, and religious beliefs. Abbi's naïveté, but overall excitement to meet the Iraqis describes most of the female students in both semesters of the service-learning class. In addition, the majority of the female students also expressed a desire to serve others based on their Christian faith. Abbi's story is one of curiosity and fascination regarding the experiences of Muslim women. As Abbi reveals in her narrative, the service-learning class was like a study abroad opportunity, where she became immersed in a culture very different from her own while having the opportunity to apply her degree. Abbi's narrative was constructed from a series of reflective journals and the final exit interview. Her story illustrates the benefits of service-learning, including the practical application of discipline-specific skills, the cross-cultural experience, and her own personal growth.

Also in chapter eight is Mariana's story. Mariana is a female Iraqi refugee in her early twenties. Unlike Abbi's experiences of a near "perfect" life, Mariana is part of what Iraqis call the "lost generation." During Mariana's twenty-one years, Iraq had only known war and violence. There was never a time during Mariana's childhood that Iraq was not at war or suffering the effects of war-induced sanctions. Throughout chapter eight, Marianna and several of the other women describe their experiences in Iraq,

including life under Saddam, and the history, politics, and divisions that occurred as a result of the American invasion of their country. Marianna's story is based on a series of informal conversations and also the formal interview. Marianna's experiences profoundly impacted the students in the class, as expressed in their reactions and also in their reflective journals. Mariana's story demonstrates the shared power in the SCD community-university partnership and the cross-cultural education that takes place in this relationship.

The setting for the performances in chapter eight is the recreation building where the weekly exercises classes were held. Every week, the female students in the class used the knowledge from their Kinesiology coursework to create low-impact aerobic routines and educational seminars for the Iraqi women. Before creating the exercise program, the students practiced their "lab" skills by taking the Iraqis' blood pressure, height, and weight. The students also bought journals for the Iraqis and had them set goals based on their introductory fitness examination and baseline measurements. In addition, the students took the Iraqi women to the grocery store to show them how to select healthy and nutritious foods for their families. Because of this consistent and sincere interaction and the "safe bridge" that the exercise class provided, the Iraqi women and the female students developed a relationship and connection with one another that surpassed what I thought possible in a semester.

Partly, I think this connection can be attributed to the way the exercise class was structured. Just like the shared space I attempted to create in the SCD classroom, I also intentionally tried to replicate that same sense of ownership in the exercise class. The



students were always prepared to lead a variety of activities, but were also conditioned to accept unplanned, unstructured moments led by the Iraqis. The activities selected by the students were based on the needs identified by the Iraqi women and their suggestions for various competitions or games. Examples of how the students responded to the suggestions of the Iraqis included: incorporating more relays into the aerobic routines, researching and teaching Zumba, and teaming with the volleyball student-athletes to do a sport-skill session. In turn, the Iraqis continued to suggest things and often times would take the lead teaching dance to the SCD students.

As discussed more elaborately in the analysis section of this chapter, the dance sessions were important for three reasons: (1) dance (and exercise) created a physical intimacy and vulnerability between the students and Iraqis, (2) it inverted the perceived power dynamics – the university as the all-knowing and powerful “white-knight” and the community as the poor, needy recipients with nothing to offer, and (3) it promoted conversations about culture and encouraged cross-cultural exchange. As illustrated in the final scene, the connections between the Iraqis and the students ultimately led to this idea of “ambassadorship,” of which I will elaborate on further in the analysis section of this chapter.

### **Abbi’s Story**

Hi! My name is Abbi! Abbi with an “I” not an “ey”! I just celebrated my twenty-first birthday this week and it was Ah-maaazing! My parents bought me a new SUV! It’s so hot. And my boyfriend of two years totally proposed to me last week and I am super excited about planning our wedding! We’re both applying to grad school in Nashville.

That's where we grew up. I mean, we went to high school together, but we never really like dated. I had this one boyfriend on the football team and like whatever, we were together, and then we went to college and it just like all fell apart. But Brent's such a great guy, so I'm actually really happy it worked out the way it did.

And my family, they're not really into politics. My dad's a surgeon and my mom stays at home. She's a *total* PTA mom! Like always chaperoning and working concessions and taking my brother and I to practices. My brother is in college but totally still lives at home. He doesn't know how to cook or do his laundry. It's *really* funny. I guess you could say we both kind of lived a sheltered life.

Okay, I will admit it. I am a really blessed person. I have gone through very little hardship and I have never had anyone that I know die. My life has been pretty easy. I mean I'm white, I went to a private school, we always had money, and I've always had someone there for me when I've needed them. In my school, it was so weird, there weren't like any other kinds of people, like blacks or Asians or anything. Although some people might think that would make me racist, in reality, it just made me curious!

I can remember the first black guy that came to our school. It was my junior year and I really wanted to hang out with him. And my mom, she was like sort of okay with it, but my dad, he grew up in the south, and in the south, you don't mix races. I totally didn't have any intention of dating him, but I just couldn't believe that because of his skin color, I would be forbidden. Like we were living in slaves times or something. Hello, it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Because my parents were so “anti” other races, I really try not to exclude people from anything. I am super fascinated by other cultures and I’m pretty excited to learn about the Iraqis. I really don’t know much about them, but they seem pretty mysterious under all that fabric. I don’t know if they’ll even be able to speak English, so that might be awkward, but regardless, I’m a pretty outgoing person, so I’m sure it will be totally fine! Yay for class!

***Flash-forward: Genies and Magic Carpets***

When I signed up for the service-learning class, I like had no idea about refugees or the Middle East. Like I had seen the movie Aladdin, but it had been a while. And honestly, I thought Jasmine was soooo beautiful, so I was pretty excited about taking the class. In school, I don’t ever remember talking about Iraq or the war. Like we never talked about 9-11, not really. I just remember some kid saying he was gonna bring a gun to school to defend himself from Muslims or something, but he totally got suspended so that was like the end of that.

I’m sure it’s not easy for the Iraqis, especially living in the South. I heard about the bullies who attacked Jafar and broke his arm and it totally reminded me of that boy, that stupid boy in my sixth grade class. I think about how much I based my opinions of them on the movie Aladdin. It’s like there was something magical about them, this like hidden and exotic culture of genies and magic carpets. I know that sounds stupid, but like you see the women, they have all the fabric wrapped around their head and on their bodies, and it seems so like secret. But through this class, I totally got to know them and they’re so nice! And they’re so much like us! My parents would never let me go

somewhere like the Middle East for a study abroad. But through this class, I totally got to experience the people and their culture. It was like a free study abroad without needing my parent's permission or money!

Before this class, I never really thought about what it would be like to fit in here. Or what it must be like to wear the fabric on your head. Or what it must feel like when people look at you like a terrorist. It had never crossed my mind that foreign people could be trained doctors or lawyers in their countries. I can't believe that the Iraqis, that they have PhD's in engineering and math and they're like making pizzas and mopping the floors in our cafeteria. That like really makes me think about my situation and how hard I have worked to get into PT school. I have only finished four years of college, but I can't imagine starting over. Especially knowing what they went through to get to school everyday, knowing that they passed dead bodies on the side of the road, and that they couldn't come home later than 4 o'clock. It's totally not fair. Every time I see the women and the smiles they have on their faces, I am just so inspired by their strength.

## **ACT II: Scene 1**

*The stairwell is buzzing with excitement as the Iraqi ladies and the female students enter the exercise space for the final exercise class of the semester.*

*All of the women hug and embrace like old friends and exchange the infamous "air kisses" with one another. After the children leave the space for the playground and the door is closed and locked, the Iraqi women begin to unveil. First, they remove their abayas or jackets and then they take off their scarves. The students watch in reverence as the women remove the layers of clothing to exercise.*

*While the women mingle and socialize, Abbi cues the music and begins the warm-up routine.*

*All of the women gather around in a circle and begin mimicking Abbi's warm-up, starting with jumping jacks.*

*They giggle and laugh like schoolgirls, joking with each other and with the students while warming up. Exercise class is always as much about socializing as it is the actual exercising.*

Abbi: Ladies, let's get this party started!!

*The Iraqis and students laugh and cheer.*

Abbi: Today we are going to do a circuit routine! Does anybody know what a circuit routine is?

*All of the Iraqis look at each other and laugh, shaking their heads no.*

Abbi: Well, a circuit routine is when you perform a series of exercises without stopping. How does that sound?

Hadeeqa: Tiring!

*Everyone laughs.*

Abbi: To help make the circuit a little bit more fun, we are going to divide into two teams and race each other.

*Hadeeqa translates to Arabic. All of the Iraqi women smile and cheer. They are so competitive!*

Abbi: Ok, great! I need this side of the circle from Mateenah to Mariana to go to the left hand corner of the room. And I need this side of the circle from Hadeeqa to Courtney to go to the right hand side of the room.

*Everyone laughs and taunts the other team as they make their way to their respective corners.*

Abbi: Steph, can I have you come up and help me demonstrate?

Ok, at the first station, we are going to do body weight squats. *(Steph and Abbi demonstrate body weight squats, emphasizing correct form with the knee behind the toe.)*

After you finish 30 squats, then you will move to the next station. When you move to the next station, then the person in line behind you may begin.

At the second station, you will complete 30 tricep dips. (*Again Steph and Abbi demonstrate proper technique.*)

At the third station, you will complete 15 push-ups. (*Abbi and Steph demonstrate both versions of push-ups, with the legs extended and from the kneeling position.*)

And lastly, you will complete the circuit by doing 30 crunches. Once you have finished with crunches, you must then run back to your line and sit down. Does anybody have any questions?

Steph: Just remember, you must count your own exercises. And if you cheat, you are only cheating yourself!

*All the ladies laugh because Steph knows how competitive they are and how badly they want to win.*

Abbi: Okay, well if there are no questions, let's get started!!

Ladies, on your mark....get set....GO!!

*Mateenah and Hadeeqa take off! Their faces grimace as they push through the squats. Hadeeqa finishes first and taunts Mateenah as she moves on to tricep dips. Everyone laughs.*

*All of the women push through in a relatively tight race.*

*As the final two square off, Mariana waits for Marwa to finish so she can begin. Across from Mariana is Hanaan. She has already started on the squats and is nearly finished when Mariana begins. Mariana flies through the squats and by the push-up station, she is neck and neck with Hanaan. All of the students and the Iraqis are cheering them on. They both run to the mats for crunches. The Iraqis are yelling in Arabic. The students are clapping. Everyone is watching the action on the mats! Hanaan gets up first, then Mariana. It is a sprint to the finish! Mariana slides across the finish line just before Hanaan to secure the victory. Mariana's teammates hug as a team and laugh, calling themselves children. Hanaan's teammates also hug her in encouragement and tell her they will surely win the next one.*

*It is really rewarding to see the women so happy. Smiling, laughing, hugging each other, flexing their biceps and showing them off to their friends. Their perseverance and joy truly inspires me.*

## **ACT II: Scene 2**

*After getting a drink and wiping off with a towel, the Iraqis and the students make their way to the middle of the room for the next activity.*

*While we are waiting for Abbi and Steph to coordinate the next round of activities, one of Mateenah's favorite Arabic songs comes on. Immediately, she begins dancing! She twists her wrists and starts shimmying her shoulders...then she moves in a circle and alternates lifting her hips with her stomach muscles. All of the other women form a circle around her and begin clapping.*

*I look at the students and laugh because they are hypnotized by her moves. It is so exotic and so different from any of the movements we are accustomed to in the US.*

*Several of the other women move in and out of the circle, all demonstrating slight variations of this same hypnotic movement.*

Courtney: Mateenah, you gotta teach me this! I mean I know how to dance, but never like this! Show me, teach me!

Ali: I wanna learn too! Hadeeqa, show me your moves! Teach me!

*The Iraqi women laugh and pair up with a student.*

Mateenah: *(Laughing as she works with Courtney)* You must loosen up! Your shoulders, your hips, they are too stiff!

*Mateenah puts her hands on Courtney's hips and moves them in a circular pattern to help her feel the rhythm.*

Ashleigh: *(Laughing)* Yeah and apparently you have to do some seductive thing with your eyes, like you're staring right into the soul of the person. Like this right? *(I tilt my head down and stare passionately at Mateenah with my eyes as I mimic her moves with my hands and hips)*

*All the students and Iraqis laugh and imitate Mateenah's stare as they dance.*

Hadeeqa: Okay, okay. We will teach another dance. This is the most famous in Iraq *(Says something in Arabic to the other ladies)*

*All of the Iraqi women circle up, with Hadeeqa at the head of the line.*

*Hadeeqa rolls her tongue very loudly, like an Iraqi war cry. And then the line moves in unison together in this rhythmic circle. Every eight beats, Hadeeqa bends down into a squat, waving her scarf high above her head.*

Steph: That's awesome! Hadeeqa, you got moves!

*Eagerly, the students jump in line, mixing in between the Iraqi women. Everyone holds hands as they say the movement together. Right, left, right, left, down and slide. Right, left, right, left, down, and slide.*

*After the song ends, the students hug the Iraqi women and thank them for sharing their dance moves. They joke about using the moves the next time they are out with their friends.*

Mateenah: *(Laughing)* Oh no, you must not use these moves around men. They are so powerful. Really, truly we only do this in front of women.

Steph: Like where?

Hadeeqa: Like weddings or parties, when the men are in one room and the women in another.

Abbi: Regardless, it's so cool! I'm really jealous! We don't have anything like this in America, do we? Like nothing that everyone would know, right?

Kate: *(Laughing)* There's always the electric slide.

Steph: Or the Macarena!

Courtney: *(Laughing)* Yeah, I don't think we can claim that one. Maybe the cupid shuffle?

Abbi: CHA-CHA!! Ash, do you have that on your computer?

Ashleigh: Really, Abbi, do I have that on my computer? Puhlease. *(Laughing)* That's a staple item!

Courtney: Fire it up Ash!

Abbi: *(To the group)* This is perfect because the instructions are in the song! So just listen for the cues.



*I crank up the Cha-Cha Slide on my computer and jump in the back next to Haneen.*

Hanaan: *(Laughing)* This is good because we practice our English.

*All the Iraqis laugh.*

Hanaan: *(To me)* You know this class is so fun. Really my favorite memories in America are exercise and dancing. It's so funny Ashleigh. I don't even like sport. But your class, it is so comfortable. When we don't know how to do a movement, the students, they stand right beside us and just help us learn. And the most important, we laugh a lot here. Everybody laughs. Really it passes the time so quickly. I feel less stress.

Ashleigh: Haneen, that makes me so happy to hear that. We also love the dancing! It is so much fun to watch you all, to learn from you. And to really see your personalities. To see you so carefree. *(Big smile)* When I am with you, I have so much joy.

Hanaan: *(Smiling)* Me too. So much joy. And really it's important for us to know all the students. I thought, when I come to America, no one will accept me, no one will speak with me. I had this dark idea about American people because of movies. I was afraid and scared. But the students, they are not like this. They are so kind, so friendly, so gentle, and they help us from the first day that we came. Until now, they keep helping us.

Ashleigh: Well, we love you. That's why we help. You deserve it. You deserve more than what we can give. I hope it showed you a different side of American people.

Hanaan: Yes, Ashleigh. This class has changed my ideas. Not all Americans have strange idea or bad idea about Iraqis, but I find a lot of them *like* Arab people, especially Iraqi people. Even I wear the hijab and they respect me and say nice things to me. That makes me feel more comfortable and more confidence to live in this country. Like I am part of this country, this community. I love my new friends. I wish that we stay together forever. They are my family, my sisters.

### **Mariana's story**

Hello. My name is Mariana. I am 21 years old. I am from Baghdad, Iraq. I was born April 19, 1990. I am part of the 90s generation, the generation that never had peace. It started in 1991, when we fought the Americans for Kuwait, then 1996, 1998, 2003,

2006, and even now...no one is safe. There are dead bodies on the road. Bombs exploding everyday. People killing people in the street. People starving. People without medicine. Everyone hated Iraq because of Saddam. But the people were suffering. We were dying.

I cry. I cry all the time. Because when I think about my life in Iraq, I can't think of one happy memory. I can't think of one time in my childhood where I felt safe. I try so hard to remember the good things and hold on to them, but I can't. All I can think about is moving from place to place because of the situation in my country. Because of Saddam. Because of the wars.

In my life, I have seen many people die. I see people go to the car and take people from the street and kidnap them. I see people put bombs in the cars. They don't know the family. They don't know where they come from or who they are. But they kill them. Sometimes, we would see the planes overhead and just laugh to ourselves because we didn't care anymore if we died. We just say, today is our day. I went to so many funerals that I wasn't even sad anymore. I couldn't cry for them. It was very difficult. I am tired Ashleigh. We are all tired.

### **ACT II: Scene 3**

*(All of the Iraqis and students circle up the chairs in the exercise space to begin the short seminar on nutrition. Today's lesson is on shopping for alternative, low-fat, low-calorie foods at the grocery store.)*

Abbi:           Okay everyone, let's take a look at the sheet that Catherine and I put together. It includes examples of nutritious foods for each meal, including foods that you already eat. However, what is important is the amount of

food that you eat at each setting and how often you eat. So, how many times a day do you all typically eat?

Mateenah: Once a day, sometimes twice a day. I eat breakfast at 10 am and dinner at 8pm. Most of the time though, I don't eat breakfast.

Hadeeqa: Yes, me too. I eat one meal a day, after dark when Daniyel comes home from work. *(Smiling)* But sometimes I eat sweets during the day, like Klaychah. It is so, so good.

*(All of the Iraqis smile and nod in agreement. And the students laugh because they know sugar and sweets are such a part of the Iraqi culture.)*

Steph: *(Talking to Hanaan)* Hey, are those the cookies we had when I came over for tea? They were delicious!

Hanaan: *(Brimms with pride)* Yes. That is my special and most favorite dessert. I make it for you.

Steph: Oh, they were so good! And tea with the cardamom...it was the best tea ever.

Hanaan: *(Grins sheepishly)*. You are always welcome to my home. All of you, always, you are welcome.

Ashleigh: *(Smiling)* Great! How does 6pm sound?

*(Everyone laughs at the self-imposed dinner invitation.)*

Ashleigh: Before we have Klaychah, we have to try my most favvvorite Iraqi dish. Mariana's mom makes it and it is soooo wonderful. Mariana, do you know what I am talking about?

Mariana: Ashleigh of course! You always speak of it when I am with you *(laughing at my obsession with her mom's cooking.)*

It's her Kooba!

*(All of the Iraqi women laugh in agreement and talk amongst themselves in Arabic about how difficult it is to make.)*

Ashleigh: Yes! I love it! Actually, I think I might be obsessed with it.

Abbi: So what is Koo – pah?

Ashleigh: Well, there are several kinds of Kooba, but my favorite kind is the one with beef and parsley covered in an outer shell of rice and then fried on the stove. And I really love it served with tabouleh, the salad....ohhhh, and the bread! It is the most amazing bread in the history of bread. It's like Naan, ya know, flat bread. Super duper amazingly good. *(Laughing)* My mouth is watering!

Mariana: Well, mom loves to cook for you. You know that, so anytime you want to come over, you know she would be so happy.

Talking about this food really makes me miss my home. Even though it is such a bad situation, I can't help but miss it.

Mateenah: Mariana, we all miss it. Of course, it is our home. We are Iraqis. I am Iraqi. I feel sad about my country because it's a good country.

*The Iraqis and the students grow silent. The students look at one another uncertain of what to do. Then they look at me to determine whether they should continue talking about food or allow this conversation to emerge.*

*I feel torn. I never want to push the Iraqis for information, but I think their stories are so valuable. I want them to elaborate; I want the students to know the stories I know, the incredible stories of perseverance that they have shared with me in their homes. But these aren't my stories to tell.*

*As I try to make a decision on how to steer the conversation, my thoughts are interrupted.*

Mateenah: Ashleigh, its okay. You see Mariana. She is still so young. We are all still young. But when you hear her speak about her memories of Iraq, they are bad. She didn't get to enjoy her life or take chances. Many, many days we suffered. We are tired. We are so tired. But we are here now. And even on my worst day here, I look at my children and I know they have a future. I can sleep without fear and I can close the door and feel peace. I can go anywhere and I am safe. My children they play in the streets, in the parks, and I don't worry. This, Ashleigh, is why I am here, for them, for their future.

*I had questions, so many questions that I wanted to ask in that moment. I looked around the room. It seemed that others were waiting for me to respond, but I didn't know what to say. Nothing in my life compares to the pain they have felt. How can I even begin to empathize?*

*As an American, I feel guilty when I hear their stories. I feel partly responsible for the pain they have endured. And I have to wonder, is that how the Iraqis feel? I had to know.*

Ashleigh: *(Hesitantly)* Can I ask you a question?

Mateenah: Of course, habibi, my darling.

Ashleigh: I want you to be honest. How do Iraqis feel about Americans? Ya know, how do they feel about the war? Do they hate us?

Mariana: Well, it depends on the people. Some people think it is good, some people think it is bad, and some people think it is half and half.

*That's such a diplomatic answer. I wonder where she falls within it.*

Ashleigh: So was it better under Saddam?

Mariana: No! When Saddam was ruling, there was no freedom. Innocent people were killed all the time and forced to leave their homes. If they did not obey his ruling, he would kill them. I know innocent merchants who were killed for no reason! One of them was my mom's relative, her aunt.

Hanaan: Yes, that is why America did a good job in Iraq. Even though some of the Iraqis, I mean, some of the groups, don't understand that. But I think they did a good job. My husband worked at an American company, a water treatment project in Iraq. Most of the Iraqis don't understand that America and some of the Iraqis did try to benefit the Iraqi people. Some of them, I wouldn't say all of them, but some of them, don't understand that.

Mateenah: Iraqis want to blame everyone else for our problems. There are bad people in Iraq. Every country has good and bad people. And those bad people, they offer the poor people money and of course, the poor people, they accept it. They are the lowest level and they need the money for food. And then the poor people, they turn into bad people. And they make divisions in Iraq. Sunni vs. Shia. Muslim vs. Christian. Arab vs. Kurds. Everyone is divided.

Mariana: Yeah because Iraq is like a piece of chocolate cake with icing. It is rich with everything, especially oil. And everybody wants a piece of the cake. They want to cut from Iraq. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, America. Then there is no cake left for the Iraqis. And we have to move to Jordan, to Lebanon, to Syria. And the situations there are not good. We are not citizens when we live in these countries. We have no home. We have no rights. We cannot be employed. So we try to come here. Or Sweden. Or

Australia. Here in America, we have freedom. Real freedom. Freedom to work, to go to school, to worship. Even though we are foreign, we are not second-class like in other countries.

Hadeeqa: But you see, this is the problem with Iraq. Iraq was not ready for freedom. We are Iraqi. We lived under Saddam for so long. He was a strong president. Everyone was afraid of him. He made us close-minded. He made us not trust. He was devilish because he knows the Iraqi people. He is Iraqi, so of course, he knew how to control his own people. He tortured us mentally. We can't go from close-minded and no freedom to democracy. We needed a transition. We needed strong leadership to tell us what to do every step until we could appreciate freedom. We can't go from one extreme to the other.

Hanaan: The Americans, when they came in, they fired all of Saddam's army. There was no force to hold anything together. And after Saddam, the Iraqis, they wanted power, they wanted control. They were tired of corrupt leaders driving fancy cars while their own people died in the street. But they were just as corrupt! That's why democracy did not work. Democracy is not good for us because we don't understand real democracy, where everything is free and open. We had a chance at democracy, but we didn't know what to do with it.

Mariana: And that's why everybody had to leave Iraq. We felt helpless. All of my life I have felt helpless. Right before I left in 2007, I had to stop going to school because it wasn't safe anymore, even in the daytime. Girls were being kidnapped in the street. I can remember one day, I was coming back from school and there was a girl in the car in front of me. It was like 2 o'clock in the afternoon. I was in a car full of girls with our driver, but he was an old man. When we got to the checkpoint, we noticed that the men were yelling at the girl in the car in front of us. Then he ripped open the car door and yanked the girl out of the car. He smacked her across the face. Then he drug her from her car to another car. She was screaming. I can remember feeling so helpless. I wanted to help her! I wanted to tell him he was crazy! I wanted to hit him in the face! But I couldn't. I was paralyzed. I couldn't do anything. I knew if I tried to stop him, he would kidnap me or maybe even kill me. Our driver, he was scared. While the guards were distracted, we made our way through the checkpoint. I don't know. I have never been so scared. I have never felt so helpless. You know it is wrong, but you can't do anything. You can't do anything.

*Many of the students look shocked. A few have tears on their cheeks. Because of Mariana's age, I think the students can really feel the power of her words. They can*

*imagine themselves in a car with their girlfriends coming home from school and watching something really terrible like this happen.*

*The circle moves closer. The students look for people to touch, to be near.*

Hadeeqa: And Ashleigh, they kill teachers. They kill every teacher that gives lecture to the students. Teaching people, educating people, that is bad. They think people should be low. People should not be educated. That's why students are kidnapped. Because they don't want people to go to school. Because if you gain knowledge, your mind will be opened and you will want freedom. They want us to be close-minded. They want us to just sit at home and hate everyone else.

Mariana: And honestly, a lot of people did that because they were scared. Seeing dead bodies on the side of the road, yeah, that became a really normal view. Bodies, people killed on the street. That's normal. At first, it was rare, like in 2003. But when I left in 2006, it was really normal.

Mateenah: *(With resolution)* And that is why I left, to save my children from seeing these images. I don't want my children to grow up saying I am Sunni, I am Shiite. I don't want them to know this, to study this. No I don't want my children to speak like this. I want my children to speak as humans. They will not treat other humans differently. We are all human. We are one people, God's people. I feel that here in America. I want that for my family. I will never move.

*Everyone looks at one another. It's so much to process.*

*Abbi wipes the tears from her eyes and gets up to hug Mariana. All of the other students follow suit, hugging the Iraqi woman seated next to them.*

*All the while, I ask myself, "How can this be real life?" How strong and how determined do you have to be to make it in a world like that? And as women, how helpless do you feel? For yourself? For your husband? For your children? It's just not fair.*

Ashleigh: Wow. *(Hanging my head in amazement)* Just wow. You are all such strong and amazing women. You have taught us the true definition of perseverance. I can't even begin to process all that you just shared with us. It absolutely breaks my heart that you have endured such pain in your lives.

*(Turning to Mariana)* I think about my own life and how safe and how easy it has been. And I think about all the happy moments from my childhood and I am just sick that I can't give them all to you Mariana. I

can't imagine what any of that feels like or the burdens that you carry. But I hope you know that we are here for you, to talk, to listen, to just be a friend. And I hope that the memories we make together in the future will replace all the bad ones that have consumed your past.

*Mariana reaches across the circle and we lock hands. My eyes fill with tears.*

Hadeeqa: Ashleigh, may I say something?

Ashleigh: Of course.

Hadeeqa: This class makes me feel so comfortable. It encourages me. I feel strong. I feel healthy. It makes me feel good about myself. And now I have friends, American friends. And we talk and we laugh. You talk about American life and we talk about Iraqi life. We share those ideas and we create a good community. And exercise is like a bridge between us. It's not a scary bridge; it's a safe bridge. It is a bridge to peace. We are good people, not bad people. And we love peace. And we love Americans. And even though our religion is different, we still have the same feelings. And your religion and our religion are about love and peace. Really, I love all of you. You are lovely. And one day, maybe, we will have peace in our country, like all the other countries...and then, we can go there together, as sisters.

*At this point, everyone is holding or touching someone else in the circle.*

Abbi: *(Crying)* I can't really express how much you have impacted my life. It has been such a blessing to take this class. You are an amazing group of people. I think about how stupid I was before I met you. I didn't know anything about your culture. When Ashleigh asked us to write down our thoughts about the Middle East, I wrote down like Aladdin and 9/11. I feel so embarrassed to even admit that. But now when I hear people make stupid or racist comments about Iraq or Muslims, I can no longer stay silent. I have to tell them about you, about my sisters. To me, this class is promoting what America is supposed to be about – diversity, tolerance, and peace. I learned more in this class by knowing you than I would've ever learned from a textbook. You have changed me and I really like the person I have become. I will miss you all so much.

*Everyone hugs one another as the final exercise class for the semester comes to a close.*



### **My Analysis**

The stories told in Chapter 8 represent the friendships that developed between the female students and the Iraqi women through weekly interactions in the exercise class. Within those stories are recurring ideas that emerged during classroom discussions, reflective journals, informal conversations, and formal interviews. In the next section, I want to unpack some of those ideas and tie the stories of Abbi and Marianna to the larger body of SDP and service-learning literature. The ideas I would like to explore include: the vulnerability and intimacy achieved through exercise, the exchange of cultures through dance, and how all of these connections contributed to this idea of ambassadorship. Ultimately, these narratives demonstrate the progression of the SCD community-university partnership over time and illustrate various outcomes of a reflexive and collaborative community engagement model.

### ***Shared Spaces***

One of the primary objectives of the Sport and Community Development class was to encourage cross-cultural dialogue between the Iraqis and the students and to challenge previously held assumptions about the other. Sarah and I hoped that the cross-cultural interaction would at least create mutual understanding between the two groups with the potential for a sincere appreciation of one another (United Nations, 2008). We didn't know if the goal of appreciation would actually be achieved in just one semester of interaction, but we hoped that the exercise classes would help establish consistency in the relationship and a common bond that allowed both parties to feel connected. If we were to reach this goal, we knew the exercise class needed to be a shared space (Freire, 1999),

one in which both groups felt empowered (United Nations, 2008). From our own experiences as athletes, we knew that empowerment was driven by self-confidence, self-worth, mastery over the material, a voice in the space, and a collective trust in the team. Therefore, the exercise class was driven by requests from the Iraqis, including more competition, Arabic music, and strength training for the core to name a few. And in that shared space of ownership, we really encouraged the students and the Iraqis to exchange different ideas about physical activity.

For several of the female students, relinquishing control in the space was really difficult. They had very strong feelings about how an exercise class should be conducted. Many of them were former athletes working as personal trainers or strength coaches. Their ideas about exercise were extremely narrow; it was supposed to be structured, methodical, efficient, not organic and spontaneous. For those students, the first few weeks were a painful adjustment because we allowed the women to socialize during activity and tried to create a fun and stress free environment. As one student noted,

It took me a few weeks to realize that sometimes the social interaction at class is just as important as the actual work-out. That's when the little girl comes out in all of us, standing around giggling and catching up on our week. This class has opened up doors for all of us to let go and have fun together. It's a chance for us to let our hair down (literally!). In class, we get to see a side of the women that maybe isn't appropriate in public or mixed spaces. I think without the class, it may have taken a lot longer for us to connect with them on that level.

So many of the students talked about the role of sport and exercise and how it made the initial introductions to one another much more comfortable. As one student noted,

Getting to know people through exercise allows for conversations to happen naturally and not be forced. It gives us a point of reference. And it eliminates a lot of awkward moments. It brings people closer together by looking weird together while doing the exercise. And it allows all of us to work as a team without necessarily speaking the same language. Since exercise can be demonstrated with the body, there is no need to vocally instruct. You can follow each other's examples.

This statement is important because it demonstrates that the students and the Iraqis felt comfortable enough with each other "to look weird together." They trusted each other enough to "let their hair down," to be vulnerable, and to look silly. I believe sharing the space, balancing the power, and encouraging exchange between the two groups laid the foundation for the trust established between the Iraqis and the students.

### ***Touch to Trust***

In addition to encouraging a collaborative and shared space, I believe that the inherent physical nature of exercise also promoted trust. When Iraqis or students could not understand the verbal cues being given, then physical cues were used. Students would assist the Iraqis in stretching and exercise and would physically guide them through the movements. In return, the Iraqis would also move the students' bodies into position as demonstrated in Mateenah's willingness to move Courtney's hips during the dance

instruction. As one student noted in her journal, this physicality is unique to exercise and dance and through human touch, the Iraqis and the students felt increasingly connected.

Outside of exercise class, it may be inappropriate to touch or talk about the body in a certain way, but inside of class it is necessary to ensure proper movement.

Trust is built through human touch. Our space allows for cultural exchange to occur because it is designed to make the Iraqi women feel safe and comfortable enough to make honest and sincere exchanges with us and with each other.

Exercising together encouraged another layer of intimacy not only between the Iraqis and the students, but also among the Iraqis. For a culture that strongly values pride and honor, this willingness to be vulnerable in front of one another is rare. As noted throughout the dissertation, Iraqis are not a homogenous group and neither are the Iraqi refugees that live in our community. It is a very fragmented population dealing with deep issues of mistrust and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), making this vulnerability and willingness to trust one another in the exercise class very important to rebuilding the social and mental health of this community.

### ***Dance, Dance, Revolution***

In addition to the physical, mental, and social benefits that the students and Iraqis experienced, the exercise class also became a site for cultural exchange. As one student noted in her journal, “Our exercise class has become a bridge to another culture. Even though I am a terrible dancer, I love it when the ladies lead the class.” What was unexpected but so great about the exercise class was the reciprocity and cross-cultural education that took place in that space. Dance became such an important element to the

structure of the class. It was a way for the roles to be reversed in a sense. The Iraqis became the “experts” and the students the “pupils.” This role reversal was not only enjoyable for both parties, but it was also informative. As one student noted in her journal,

As students, we have our own ways of dancing that we were taught to be acceptable in our culture. But the women in class have a very different style of dancing that is unique to their culture. The women in the class are eager to learn our method of dancing and ask us to show them, while we are equally fascinated by their dancing style. And when we dance in class, each person brings their own style to the dance floor, i.e. the exchange of cultures.

What was great about the dance class is that it extended beyond just dance moves. It inspired questions about cultural norms. The students would ask, “When do you dance? What do weddings look like? Who teaches you to dance? What are your holidays like? What kind of music do you play? What kind of food do you eat during the holidays? What kind of clothing do you wear to parties?” As an instructor and a researcher, it was fascinating to watch this exchange. Students were really intrigued and had so many great questions. It was fascinating to watch how something as simple as dance could lead to the exchange of really personal and important cultural information.

### ***My Friends, My Sisters***

From this experience, many of the students and Iraqis not only developed an appreciation and affinity for one another, but they became advocates for the other. The Iraqis and the students both used the words “my family” or “my sisters” to express their

relationship. As a result, they felt it was important to stand up for their sisters and correct false assumptions. In the final scenes of the exercise class, Abbi delivers a very heartfelt speech in which she says, “But now when I hear people make stupid or racist comments about Iraq or Muslims, I can no longer stay silent. I have to tell them about you, about my sisters.” This willingness to speak on behalf of another group is a term I have dubbed “ambassadorship.” This is certainly what Sarah and I had hoped for and what has always been the ethos of Sport 4 Peace, but not something we thought would actually be achieved in one semester. As written by Sherry (2010), “Meaningful social change comes about, not as a result of grand sweeping revolutions, but rather through small, ongoing changes that manifest in the course of people’s daily lives” (p. 67). In a sense, it is one student’s conversation with his fraternity brother, it is one Iraqi’s conversation with her mother, it is one individual decision that has the power to impact larger networks for social change. I think this has great potential for future research exploration.

## Interlude

### To Know More, To Learn More

#### Excerpt from Natalie's Final Journal

*According to servicelearning.org, "Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." However, I don't think service-learning is something that can fully be put into words. Service-learning is so much more than a definition. It is reaching out to those in need. It is recognizing your personal gifts and talents and understanding how those can be used to help others. Service-learning is an agent for change. It is setting an example to empower others to follow in your footsteps. It is making a difference in someone's life even when, and especially if, you don't know them. Service-learning is igniting a fire in your heart to know more, to learn more. Sometimes it is just communicating with another person through a smile, a hug, or simply just being there.*

*For the students at this university, service-learning is an opportunity to put into action what we have learned in the classroom and to make a difference while doing it. It is reaching out to the Iraqi refugee community and attempting to make their transition and their new life in America a bit easier. It is playing with a giant parachute, or a soccer ball, or bubbles before watching a sporting event together on campus. It is a group of students who take to heart the true purpose of the class. It is meeting at the resettlement agency to talk to new friends about where they can find a job or how to enroll in school. It is establishing a relationship with people solely because they need a*

*friend and you can be that for them. It is learning about Iraq and the trials, tribulations, and hardships these refugees have faced and are continuing to face. It is learning of stories of families reuniting after kidnappings and torture, only to arrive here in a new land with all its unfamiliarities.*

*Service-learning is so much more than words can describe. It is so much more than putting a grade on a paper or testing students on their ability to memorize material. It is action that comes from the heart. It is outside the classroom. It is nervousness and anxiety because of language or cultural differences, only to realize that we are all humans. The Iraqis aren't from a different planet, they're from a different country. They aren't criminals, they are heroes. They are people just like us, people in need of love and friendship. One of the most beautiful things about our class has not only been establishing relationships between the Iraqis and the students, but also allowing them to spend time together and establish relationships among themselves.*

*I can't imagine what it must be like to flee to a country that has bombed your home and killed your friends and family. Politically, America thinks we did the right thing. Something had to be done about the evil men running their country, right? But what about morally, ethically, and personally? Person to person, American to Iraqi, what did we do? We destroyed their homes, pillaged what little they had, created mass chaos on the streets, and wiped out their fathers and brothers. Was this part of the plan? At first, I thought we were right, but now, I'm just not so sure.*



## Chapter 9

### Joyful Thanks and Lame Excuses

#### Introduction

Chapter nine begins with the story of Kyle, a white, male sport management student enrolled in the service-learning class. Kyle signed up for the service-learning class because it was the only class offered at a time that fit his schedule. After enrolling in the course, Kyle told me on numerous occasions that service-learning was not going to help him become a sports agent and that he was only taking the class to graduate on time. He couldn't make any correlations between service-learning and his future career. But he also couldn't graduate on time if he dropped the class.

Kyle's story represents the challenges of dealing with a resistant student in a community-based course. Unlike more traditional lecture classes where apathetic behavior only impacts the student's individual grade, the SCD class was very much a team effort. Kyle's irresponsibility often forced his classmates to pick up the slack. Although Kyle's narrative only represents three or four students out of thirty-five, it's important to include because it's an honest reflection on a particularly challenging aspect of teaching a service-learning course.

Following Kyle's story in chapter nine is the story of Mateenah. Mateenah is a young, Iraqi woman in her early thirties with two small children, Majeed and Armaan. Mateenah's husband was a police officer in Iraq and was killed during a sting operation with the American army. Mateenah is now living in the United States with her children,

trying to rebuild her life as a single woman raising two kids with very limited English language skills.

Mateenah's narrative was constructed based on several informal conversations on the way to and from exercise class. Like Mateenah, many of the Iraqi women have expressed feelings of depression, loneliness, isolation, and frustration from staying home alone every day with the children, just cooking and cleaning. This way of life is completely different from their experiences in Iraq where family and friends lived in the same neighborhood and the women continually visited one another during the day. For parts of Mateenah's story, I used poetics to intensify the reading experience (Ely, 2007). Mateenah's narrative illustrates the importance of the service-learning experience, not only for the students, but also for the Iraqi women who longed for friendship and social support.

The two narratives of Kyle and Mateenah are connected by the performance of the Thanksgiving event. The students in the SCD class organized a household goods and clothing drive with various groups in the community (e.g. churches, student organizations). Then they created a "bazaar" with all of the collected items and allowed the Iraqis to "shop" for free clothing and house wares to take home. With the help of Janet, Salem, Debbie, and a few other members of the community, the students also organized a Thanksgiving Day dinner. Over 200 people were in attendance. It was a great day for the students and the Iraqis to give thanks together for the blessings of another year. This story is based on the field notes I constructed after the event and camera footage used during the closing remarks.

Although Mateenah's comments at the end of the Thanksgiving celebration demonstrate the social integration and community building that took place during the first semester of the SCD class, this chapter ultimately represents unresolved issues. As the instructor for the class, there are two areas that make me feel like a failure - students who don't buy in and a community that has more needs than our class can meet. After two semesters, I still don't have a solution for dealing with students like Kyle. And despite the success of the SCD class, exercise and sport are limited in the ways they can improve Mateenah's life. So in this chapter, the story of Kyle and the story of Mateenah ultimately illustrate the ways the SCD experience falls short.

### **Kyle's story**

Yeah, my name's Kyle. I'm a senior in Recreation and Sport Management. For real, I signed up for this class because it was the only one that fit my schedule. I work at the Rec on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, so on those days I'm a little booked. I needed another Tuesday/Thursday class in order to graduate this semester. Yeah, this class has nothing to do with being a sports agent, but whatever...I don't really care...I'm just here to get that piece of paper and start making money, ya feel me?

To be honest dude, I'm just trying to graduate. I don't know anything about Iraq or about refugees and I've never heard of service-learning. But I do know I've had both of these teachers before in different classes, so I'm not really worried about it. I know they'll pass me. Regardless, the class sounds super easy...all we gotta do is hang out with some refugees, write a couple of papers about it, and raise some money for the last event. No tests, no quizzes, and no class on Thursdays. This is cake.

Wait...hold up...We got events on Saturdays?! For real? I'm not trying to do all that. Saturday's my day to chill. Nobody goes to school on Saturdays. Oh and I got news for them, I'm not going to our event if there's a home football game. Nah bro. Not on the weekends. That's me time. They'll have to figure something else out if they want me there.

And for real, sponsorships and event planning are worth 250 points? That's lame. Why are the girls not graded on that? I don't want to be out there asking for money...The girls don't gotta do it, so I don't see why I have to. I don't care if they are Kinesiology majors. This class is sexist for real. Straight up, I'm not doing it. I don't need to know how to do fundraising or sponsorships or logistics or event planning. I'm gonna be an agent man, not working at the Boys and Girls club. C'mon, let's be real.

***Flash-forward: Thanksgiving is a Day for Giving***

I really can't believe I gotta spend my time on a Saturday with a bunch of people I don't know when I could be at home relaxing. And I'm sure as hell not picking anybody up....Iraqis in my car?? Forget that...

I'm not going tomorrow. Period.

Let me think....

Yeah, maybe I could tell 'em I gotta work....

I don't know...they might try to call and find out...

Maybe I could tell 'em my parents surprised me and came into town.

Yeah but knowing them, they'll probably just tell me to bring 'em along.

Yeah, alright, that's not gonna work.

What they said in the beginning of the semester...we could only miss for a birth or a death... well I'm grieving then because I think I just had a death in the family....

*Dear Sarah and Ashleigh,*

*This is Kyle from your 380 class. I am really sorry, but I am going to have to miss the Thanksgiving Day event tomorrow. We recently had a death in the family.*

*Thank you for understanding.*

*Sincerely,*

*Kyle*

Perfect. Home free bro. You think they'll ask for proof? Nah, they won't ask for proof. I can't wait to sleep in tomorrow. It's gonna feel so good. Then I'm gonna watch a little football on TV. Order a pizza. Hell yeah. I deserve it. I'm busy all the time.

*(Kyle's phone vibrates on the table with an email from Sarah).*

*Dear Kyle,*

*We are so sorry to hear about the death in your family. We can talk more about the details of how we will handle your second absence when you return.*

*In order to provide the documentation we need for your absence, please bring a copy of the funeral/visitation booklet or program. We also need to know the relationship of the person to you who passed away.*

*Again, we are sorry for your loss – please give our regards to your family.*

*Sarah &  
Ashleigh*

For real? What am I gonna say? Think dude, think. I could tell them it's an uncle that lives out of state and we were real close growing up. And that I was so upset at the funeral I forgot to grab one of those books. But then they might ask for the newspaper clip...Hmmm, I wonder if my mom would be willing to email them and back me up? I don't know. Then I'll have to explain to my mom why I'm not going. Then she'll be in my face because she's paying the bills. Nah, not worth it. Maaann, this sucks. Killing my Saturday...

*Dear Sarah,*

*I decided to go. It was actually our family dog. We took care of it and I'm heading back to Rockington. Seemed like a bigger deal at the time. I'll see you all around 10:30 after I pick up the family.*

*Thanks,*

*Kyle*

Good enough. Whatever. I'll see what they say. I gotta get in the shower...I got plans tonight...

### **ACT III: Scene 1**

*It's 11:30. All of the students were supposed to be here at 10:30 to help set up the donations for the Iraqis. Everyone is here except Kyle.*

Ashleigh: Hey Abbi, have you seen Kyle?

Abbi: No, actually I haven't. We were supposed to ride together, but he never answered when I called, so I left.

Ashleigh: Hmm, that's strange. What time did you call?

Abbi: I sent him a text around 9 and then I called at 9:30 and 10:00. I know he went out last night, so maybe he slept through his alarm.

*I can feel my blood start to boil. This event has been on the schedule for two months. And he knows he's supposed to pick people up.*

Ashleigh: Yeah, so what about the family he was supposed to pick up? They're just standing in front of their house with all their stuff waiting on Kyle?

*The thoughts of the Iraqis standing on the curb with their casserole dishes and children waiting to be picked up for over an hour when we specifically reminded him last night of his responsibilities makes me furious. After all that they have been through, how can he be so selfish?*

Abbi: Uh, I think Wes gave them a ride. Let me ask him.

*Abbi yells at Wes across the room. "Did you pick up Jameela and her family?"*

*Kyle better hope and pray that Wes bailed him out because if that family is still standing there waiting for a ride, it's gonna be a bad day for Kyle.*

Abbi: Yeah, Wes picked up Jameela and Ali. They're downstairs.

Ashleigh: Hmm. Good. Thanks.

*I just really can't believe that Kyle wouldn't show up today after having that conversation via email last night. That's some serious audacity, especially when he left the first event forty-five minutes early for his intramural flag football game. How do I get through to him??*

*I leave the food preparation area to check on the other group of students organizing the donations. It's almost time to eat, so I want to make sure our "store" of items – men's, women's, and children's clothing, houseware, bedding, toys, books, games, and accent furniture – are all in place before the meal begins.*

Ashleigh: *(Forced smile)* Hey Courtnay, how's it coming?

Courtney: It's great! I can't believe how many people donated! Look at all the clothes! And the toys! The kids are gonna be in Heaven!

Ashleigh: You're right. I'm so glad we're doing this.

Courtney: Yeah, the Iraqis are gonna love it. *(Laughing)* And look at our class, we're like one big family.

*We both look up from folding shirts. All the students in the class are working together to organize the other areas for display. It's kind of amazing to see all the different combinations of students working together, students that would normally never speak to one another. And they're laughing. And working with purpose.*

I never bonded like this with people in my other classes.

Ashleigh: *(Surprised)* Really? You feel that way?

Courtney: Yeah, I do. Because we're a team. And you take pride in your team. You feel ownership over the events. We can't let the Iraqis down, which means we can't let each other down. It feels good. It pushes you to be a better you.

*I look around the room, but still no Kyle.*

Ashleigh: Yeah, I wish everyone got it like you did...

**Mateenah's story**

My name is Mateenah. I am 32 years old. I am from Baghdad, Iraq. I have two children, Majeed and Armaan. They are 2 and 4 years old. I came to the US three months ago. I have no husband. He was killed in Baghdad. He was a police officer helping the American army.

One day, the army asked my husband to help them find a secret meeting place. They said there were terrorists who met there. My husband knows all of Baghdad. He led them to the location. When they arrived, the men in the home were waiting for them. They had guns. They killed my husband. They killed all of them.

Then they came for my family. I heard them shooting their guns in the air on the street. I told the boys to hide. I grabbed Deena, my baby, and ran into the bedroom. They fired bullets through the front door. Deena was crying. I was trying to comfort her when I heard his boot kick down the door.

***Allah! Hear my cry! Save my family!***

I heard them smash my husband's piano. It scared Deena. She started screaming. They kicked down the door and drug me into the living room.

***Then the man, he took out his knife.***

He put it against my throat.

I could feel his breath on my neck.

In one motion,

he pulled the knife back



looked me in the eye

*and stabbed the picture behind me on the wall.*

Then he *slashed* everything in sight.

The pillows.

The table.

All of the paintings my husband had created.

The other men,

They were laughing at us.

Mocking us.

*Where are the Americans?*

*Why aren't they here to help you?*

Deena was screaming.

I tried to calm her.

But the man, he couldn't take it anymore.

He *ripped* her out of my arms

*And put his gun in her mouth.*

*I was screaming. No!! Please, no!!*

Then he turned the gun on me and put Deena on the floor.

He looked at me and laughed.

Then he pointed the gun at Deena

*and pulled the trigger.*

***Flash-Forward: Living in Isolation***

When we first came here, you know, we were alone. Nobody really helped us. We were just alone. There was no internet, no communication, no connection with anyone. No family. No husband. No transportation. Everything was so far away. I walked on the road with my two children to Food City almost every day to buy groceries. I go every day because I can't carry enough for the week. This was really hard. My children are so small, only 2 and 4. But the hardest thing is finding a job. I have been here four months with no work.

Before the war, I worked as the Secretary for the Iraqi Health Ministry. I always liked to take care of my body and my fitness. I like sport so much. Since I was a little girl at school, I loved the subject of sport. It is really a unique subject because everyone uses it. It's special because everybody likes it. There is no difference in sport. There is no language in sport. This is why I studied it. But then after the war, everything changed, the people changed, there was a lot of parties that came to Iraq. Nobody cared anymore. Your body was not important. It was nothing. Everything was just messed up. There were no rules. Here everything has rules. There is no similarity between our countries.

I came here and everything is different. The education is different. The medical services are very different. The talking is different. Getting a job is different. I feel that I can't understand all the rules here. It was hard to apply for a job because there is more than one kind of job here, like temporary, part-time, full-time. In Iraq, no. You graduate from college and you start a job and you keep that job until you retire. You are not paid

according to the hours. You are paid a certain salary whether you are sick or absent. And everybody can go to the hospital. You don't need insurance. And the education is also free. We don't pay for college. Even the classes, the books, the library, everything is free.

Before the war, life in Iraq was so simple. We go to work in the morning. Before work, we go the market, the small market and bring whatever we can find home to for lunch and dinner. Then we go together to our work and come back. So it's easy. And the families, we would be together every Friday because that is our holiday. Every Friday, we would just be together. And I would fix the most popular lunch and we would laugh and show each other what we have been up to and share our news. I knew everything about my family, they knew everything about me. They help me when I get sick, I help them when they need me. When we go to my neighbor's home, I feel like it is my home. So simple, so easy, so interesting. I find this big difference and I miss it.

Life is not like that here. Everybody lives alone. You are far away from your family. There's no relationship between neighbors. In Iraq, everybody knows everybody. But here, even my next door neighbor, she doesn't know anything about me. I don't know anything about her. From time to time she say hello to me and I say hello to her, but that's it. We don't have this over there. We have strong relationships between others, especially neighbors, that's in our religion.

So everyday, it is the same. I am in my home, I clean, and I cook. I feel bored. I know nothing about what's going on with Americans or how they live or how they think. I'm not in touch. I just sit at home, talking with no one, just with my children in Arabic. I go to school two mornings, Monday and Wednesday. I was expecting a lot of change. But

I am just sitting at home without work, without anything. And the time is passing and I am doing nothing. I am not moving forward. I am just in the same place I was when I first got here almost 5 months ago. If there is a good job, I would do it. Any job. I need a job.

### **ACT III: Scene 2**

*All of the Iraqis, students, faculty, and friends are gathered in the dining room. We have just finished eating and the Thanksgiving program is about to begin.*

Janet: Hello and good afternoon. Thank you all for being here. We would like to take this time to welcome you to our Thanksgiving Day celebration.

*Everyone applauds.*

Janet: At this time, we would like to welcome our musical guests, 6 String Harmonic, to the front where they will perform an old hymn called "Peace in the Valley." This song talks of the difficulties on this earth, many of which you have experienced. The feelings of being tired and weary and looking for rest. But it also talks of the peace that we will all experience one day soon and it reminds us that there is hope in tomorrow.

*6 String Harmonic makes their way to the front.*

*The man plays a note on the harmonica and all three hum in unison. The banjo strums and the woman closes her eyes and begins to softly sing.*

*As the music plays, I look around the room. There must be 200 people here today. It's amazing to think that just three short months ago, Sarah and I didn't know a single Iraqi family living in Rockington. I look at Janet, Salem, and Debbi, all of our friends in the community that first introduced us to the different families. And Dr. Johnson, the Department Head, and Dr. Ricci, my advisor, and my dear friend Yaakov, all of who have offered unwavering support to Sarah and I since we began our academic journey. And then I look at the faces of the forty Iraqi families here today and the twenty students and I can't help but think this is something bigger than all of us. Our lives have crossed in a meaningful and powerful way, in a way that is not easily forgotten. And as the music fades, I find myself teary-eyed as I admire the bridges that have been built between "enemies" through sport and service.*

*The music ends and everyone applauds.*

Janet: Thank you to the 6 String Harmonic for their wonderful rendition of “Peace in the Valley.” It is a beautiful reminder of the peace we all long for.

*Salem repeats this message in Arabic.*

Janet: At this time, we would like for Sarah and Ashleigh to come up and share with you their thoughts from the semester and what they are most thankful for today. Sarah. Ashleigh.

*Salem repeats this message in Arabic.*

*The group claps as we move to the front.*

Sarah: Wes and Abbi, can you please come and join us as well?

*The group claps again as the two students make their way to the front of the room.*

Ashleigh: I am so very thankful you have allowed us to be a part of your lives. And that you have joined us today on this special day of Thanksgiving. I never knew that when I accepted this teaching position a year ago, that my life would become so enriched. I look around the room at all of your faces and I think about how lucky I am to be surrounded by such good people, such wonderful friends. At the end of the day, no matter what our governments or politicians tell us to believe, we are people, people who share the same hopes, the same dreams, and the same desires for a better future, a future of peace. At the risk of crying, I will just say, on this day of Thanksgiving, thank you for the gift of you.

*The group claps again. One woman hands me a tissue from her purse. I blot my eyes as I pass the mic to Abbi.*

Abbi: Thank you all so much for being here today. Before taking this class, I never knew anything about Iraq or the Middle East. You have taught me so much, more than I could ever learn from a book. I look at the relationships that we have now and it makes me really sad that this class is ending. But it also makes me really excited about where this class is going. I admire every single one of you. Your smiles make me smile. Thank you for your courage and your strength and for letting us be a part of your life. And just remember, I’ll always be Jackie Chan and you’ll always be Bruce Lee!

*Salem translates into Arabic and everyone laughs at Abbi's final comment. It was an inside joke between Abbi and all the women who participated in the kickboxing exercise class. None of the men understood the joke, but they thought the Jackie Chan/Bruce Lee reference was funny, so they laughed too. Of course, Abbi also laughed hysterically at herself before passing the mic to Wes.*

Wes: Honestly, when I first signed up for this class, I was very nervous. I am a really shy individual and I thought the differences in language would really keep us from knowing one another. I soon realized that language is only a barrier if you let it be. We have found a way to communicate despite our languages. This class has opened a whole new world to me. It has shown me that life exists outside of my bubble on campus and that I can make a difference in the world with my sport management degree. It has been a pleasure spending time with you, seeing your faces, working together. It has been pleasure to help you guys in any small way that I have. I hope what our class has done has allowed you to see who Americans really are. We love you. Stay strong. Peace (*gestures the peace sign with his hand.*)

*The crowd applauds again and Wes hands the mic back to Janet.*

*As the mic is being passed, a woman in the back of the room stands up. It is Mateenah.*

Mateenah: Excuse me, excuse me. Can I say something?

Janet: Of course, Mateenah. Please, please take the mic.

*Janet passes the mic through the crowd to Mateenah.*

Mateenah: Hello. My name is Mateenah. I am from Baghdad, Iraq. Hello Sarah, Hello Ashleigh. My darlings (*she says as she bows her head and puts her hand over her heart to signify affection.*)

*(In very broken English)* I moved here four months ago. My husband was killed in Baghdad. I live here with my two boys, Majeed and Armaan. My friend, Hadeeqa, she told me one month ago, call Sarah and Ashleigh. She said they do exercise and sports. And they are really nice and they will help you. I called them and they picked me up and take me to exercise. And this class, this class really helps me a lot. All the time, I feel sad because I go to home alone and there is no people around me. When I am with the class, the time goes by quickly. And when I come home, there is nobody. I feel alone. That is my reality. But this class, they encourage me. Because we practice my English together. And they do nice things, like today, the dinner and the store. We shop. We pick out things for the house,

clothes for me and for my boys. This is good for Iraqis, this activity today. We are used to gathering more than once a week, and especially during the holidays. So this makes us feel like this is something that we used to do. Because of that, it is very important for us. It makes us feel normal.

Without this class, my life would be boring. And my English, I practice my English with you. (*Laughing*) I always say to Ashleigh, how do you say this, how do you say that. It's good for me to improve. And it is good for us to learn about Americans, how they live, how they think. We met a lot of good and nice people in this class. They teach us stuff they know. They try to teach us their cultures and their traditions...it makes us feel like a part of the community. Our life, we would very little about American life without this class.

I think this class is really important for Iraqi women because everyone needs to exercise, especially Iraqi women. I enjoy every time I go to exercise class because I see my friends and I like to see Ashleigh and Sarah and I like to see the students. That is true. And I think most of the Iraqi people need this class to feel that they are a part of the community. And it is important to make exercise for us because we don't go out of our homes a lot, but this is a good opportunity for us to go outside and make exercise and have fun.

I had this good idea about Americans before that they are good, and they are nice. And when I came here, it was true. They are good and they are nice. Thank you my darlings. Thank you class (*bows in affection*).

### **My Analysis**

The stories told in Chapter 9 represent the unresolved issues I feel as the instructor of the SCD class. The story of Kyle touches on the challenges of service-learning and my inability as an instructor to reach him in a way that made him want to engage. Honestly, I wish I was writing a different story about Kyle, but unfortunately, Kyle's story did not have a Hollywood ending. In the analysis, I will elaborate on the ways Kyle's behavior impacted the other students in the class and the community. Also in chapter nine is the story of Mateenah. The purpose of Mateenah's narrative is two-fold: it highlights the success of the SCD class in social integration and community

building, but it also exposes all of Mateenah's other needs that simply can't be met through sport and exercise. For me, this chapter is a disheartening, yet accurate account of unresolved issues and an honest reflection on the SCD experience.

### ***You Can't Save Them All***

As a young instructor that is extremely passionate about student learning, it was a difficult semester dealing with three students like Kyle that never really bought into the course. From an instructor's perspective, this was problematic for several reasons: it changed the mood of the class, it made evaluation and grading difficult, and it caused the incomplete tasks to fall on myself or the other students.

The Sport and Community Development class was designed around the concept of team. Everyone in the class was involved in all aspects of the course, from planning events, to organizing exercise and educational seminars, to raisings funds. Small and large group discussion were a part of every class. All of the students acknowledged that teamwork was necessary for this class to be successful, even the "Kyles." The upside to a class based on teamwork is the bonding that takes place. As one student noted,

In this class, I feel like I'm actually building relationships with my classmates, teachers, and the refugees I meet. If I'm not in class, I know that the class will notice. And if something important happens in my life, I feel like my teachers and classmates are genuinely interested. It's like we're a family.

Almost all of the students wrote or spoke about this idea of teamwork and bonding, which can allow the class to accomplish things beyond any one individual contribution. However, the downside is everyone in the class has to be a contributing member for the



“team” to reach its potential. Many students acknowledged Kyle’s behavior and often times, picked up his slack so that the relationships with the Iraqis would not be damaged. One student addressed the importance of this in her journal,

This class is a failure if everyone does not take ownership. Some of the disadvantages that come with this class can come with any team. In a team setting everyone must have the same goal and be putting in 100% all the time. If that does not happen and something falls through the cracks it can really put a damper on the whole class. Since this class takes into account people lives and feelings, everyone must work together all the time. If we agree to do something with the Iraqis, we cannot bail or go back on our word. If we were to lose the trust of the community then the class would become non-existent, and that would be a shame.

This is the danger of service-learning – a few apathetic students can ruin relationships, especially when working with a such fragile population like Iraqi refugees.

In an attempt to rectify Kyle’s behavior, I had several one-on-one conversations with him and the others about their motivations for staying in the class. Of course, many of them had plans of graduating and needed to stay in the course in order to graduate on time. They had no interest in the material. It was merely a class that fit a particular time block that counted toward their degree. This was frustrating for me because their negativity was not meeting the standard of excellence required for the course.

Unlike other classes where students like Kyle can hide in the lecture and only negatively impact their own grade, the SCD class was much more active and required

everyone to be involved in order for the class to be successful. Unfortunately, I didn't have any points allotted to in-class participation, so there was no real way for me to initially demonstrate to them how their negative attitude was impacting their grade. They were convinced that showing up or simply turning in the assignments regardless of quality was enough because this was just an "effort" class.

After the first community engagement experience when they argued with me about their evaluations, I began exploring ways to reduce subjectivity for the assignments that appeared to only be related to "effort." As a result, Sarah and I created an assessment matrix that can be found in Appendix B. We used a flag system to keep students accountable for their progress throughout the course. And we made the expectations for the journal grades, the exercise class, the sponsorship material, and the social events much more explicit. Examples of that criterion can also be found in Appendix D. Unfortunately Kyle never bought in, even with specific and consistent feedback after every class and event. Only after the final grades were posted and Kyle realized he would not graduate on time, did he contact me about his improving his grade.

Because of the nature of a service-learning class, assessment can be difficult. Although I could not find assessment listed as a challenge in the service-learning literature, it definitely presented itself as one in the SCD class. What I learned from this experience is that it is important to find ways to evaluate student performance with clearly delineated expectations and to have those expectations in writing, preferably on the syllabus. It's also important to provide consistent feedback. Because students are working in real-time, they need feedback about their reflections, their leadership in the

exercise classes, and their engagement at events immediately after those things occur to adjust for the next assignment. Implementing those ideas does not guarantee that service-learning will be challenge-free as in the case of Kyle, but it may reduce ambiguity and make the experience smoother overall.

### ***Capital is More Than Money***

Like Kyle's story, Mateenah's story is also one of unresolved issues, obviously in a much different way. Mateenah's story, filled with tragedy and frustration, is unfortunately very common among the refugee community. Most of the refugees living in Rockington speak about the extreme isolation they feel during the resettlement process. Even those that have been living in the community for almost two years still have difficulties with transportation, social integration, and employment. A small southern city with limited public transit, few job opportunities, little to no diversity, and a sprawling land mass makes life for an Iraqi refugee complicated. Refugees not only struggle financially, but they also suffer with loneliness, frustration, and depression from a lack of social support (RCA, 2010). One of the key concepts that we tried to address in the Sport and Community Development course was increased social inclusion (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002) and the potential for sport and exercise to promote social capital (Sammut, 2011).

As defined by Donnelly and Coakley (2002), social inclusion is more than just the removal of obstacles or barriers to [sport] participation. It is an understanding and appreciation of diverse thoughts; it is a humanistic and proactive approach to fostering community and validating the lived experiences of various groups. It goes beyond

“bringing the ‘outsiders’ in, or notions of the periphery versus the centre. It is about closing physical, social, and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between us and them” (p. viii-ix). Closely related to the idea of social inclusion is that of civic solidarity. As defined by Sammut (2011), civic solidarity creates “bonds that tie people together in shared interests based on group belonging and the negotiation of identity” (p. 4.1). In the SCD class, sport and exercise became the shared interest or the common bond used to promote solidarity and social inclusion.

It was not only important for the SCD class to help the Iraqis feel more socially included, but also it was important to foster social capital. Social capital can be thought of as networks of support that may “provide community members with resources they can utilize in various circumstances” (Sammut, 2011, p. 4.9). Yes, the SCD focused on sport and exercise, but individual students also took it upon themselves to help the Iraqis fill out job applications, meet them for interviews, conduct conversational English sessions, instruct them on university enrollment, interpret financial aid paperwork, and help them navigate local job fairs. In a sense, the SCD class functioned as a support network dedicated to providing the Iraqis with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate American society. The willingness of the SCD students to offer this support stemmed from the genuine bonding that took place in the exercise classes and the social events. I believe this idea of using sport for social inclusion and ultimately advanced social capital could certainly be explored further in future research.

## Interlude

### An Alternative to Ummah

#### Excerpt from an interview with Nicole, our ESL Community Partner

*I think our primary role in the resettlement process is sort of a support, a network. I don't know how familiar most places are with this concept, but I think it's a genuine concept for most non-Western cultures, and that's the concept of "ummah." Ummah is the Arabic word for "nation" or "community." It's not about patriotism necessarily; it's more about brotherhood. You have a network, but it's not specific to the country of Iraq; it's not nationalism. It's specific to a tribe or a community or a region within Iraq. Ummah is a very, very important cultural concept to Iraqi refugees and Arab refugees in general. Unfortunately, we don't really do ummah here in America because we're such an independent and individualistic society.*

*I tend to think that most refugees coming from non-Western countries would have similar experiences and that a network is very important to them. That's how they find jobs; that's how they get a car; that's how they get married. You know, you don't choose who you marry; your family finds someone for you. Because you have all of these families coming in with tremendous needs outside of just difficulties with the language and they don't have networks. They don't know how to get a driver's license or a prescription filled, much less, you know, most of them don't speak enough English or know enough about the culture to even know the right questions to ask at the pharmacy. So yes, the primary goal at the school is to teach English. But we also teach civics and values and we have computer classes. All of that is sort of the front door to our relationship with the*

*refugees. And from that stems all of the other relational needs we try to meet. And so on the surface, we look like an ESL center, but the deeper reality is that we do all sorts of things to provide an alternative to ummah and meet those networking needs.*

*For many of the refugees there really is a sense of powerlessness in being a refugee, particularly if you're coming from a place where you were a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer. I mean they knew their stuff. And not only did they know stuff in their field, but they also knew how to do things, they knew how to navigate society. So when they come in, they are completely at a loss for how to do even the simplest of things like mailing a letter. What we emphasize in the school and what has been so cool about your class is the consistent interaction, the commitment to build relationships and to seeing the Iraqis not just as refugees, but as individual lives that have value. To me, that brings back a sense of empowerment.*

*In line with empowerment, I also think the idea of using sport and exercise as a way to help the Iraqis transition is a fantastic idea. Not only does it allow them to do something fun, but it also renews their mind and helps them physiologically deal with the trauma of PTSD. We don't diagnose PTSD here at the school, but we do familiarize ourselves with the symptoms and with different treatment ideas so that we are prepared to engage in deep and meaningful ways. And obviously one of the best ways to handle stress and to rehabilitate your mind is to make your body healthy. Specifically this is really important for the women and children, who can often sink into deeper bouts of depression from being at home all day. So this class just gives me so much hope and so*

*much encouragement and I think the families will benefit physically and mentally and that it will really help the children adjust and integrate into the American culture.*

## Chapter 10

### United We Stand

#### Introduction

As the final chapter of the narrative representations, chapter ten contains three stories – the story of Trey, the story of Rashad, and the story of Hakeem. The chapter begins with the story of Trey, a male undergraduate student enrolled in the SCD class. Trey's childhood and motivations for enrolling in the service-learning class were unique. He grew up in a single-parent home without a father. He was often confronted by racially inspired gang violence for most of his adolescence. As a young black man, Trey chose church over the streets and has been determined since high school to make a difference in the world. Trey, like the majority of students in the SCD class, wanted to use the skills acquired in his degree program in a practical and meaningful way.

Trey's narrative was constructed based on a series of reflective journals over the course of the semester. His story highlights many of the proposed benefits of service-learning expressed by the SCD students during class discussion, exit interviews, and reflective journals. Some of the benefits included: increased creativity, opportunities to speak freely, greater retention of the material, inclusive of all learning styles, improved social connections, and increased educational satisfaction.

In addition to Trey's story, I have also included the story of Rashad and Hakeem. Rashad and Hakeem are young, male Iraqi refugees in their early to mid twenties. Rashad is enrolled in the local community college, studying computer engineering. Hakeem is recovering from reconstructive knee surgery, so he is currently not working or enrolled in



school. Both have attended all of the events hosted by the SCD class and have also participated in the exercise classes conducted by the male SCD students. Hakeem is pretty limited during the exercise class, but Trey uses that time to apply his athletic training knowledge and help Hakeem with his knee rehabilitation.

Because of the relationships established through the exercise class and also the social gatherings, many of the male students have befriended Rashad and Hakeem. In addition, Rashad and Hakeem poignantly shared their life stories with the students as guest speakers in the SCD class. Their narratives were constructed from the field notes I created after that classroom visit. Their stories represent personal anguish, frustration, and loss, but also resilience and strength of spirit.

Throughout chapter ten, I have also included several performances focused on the creation and implementation of the final event of the spring semester, the World Cup. The opening scene details the first brainstorming sessions in which the students came up with the idea for a multicultural soccer tournament. The second scene flashes forward to the day of the World Cup, approximately three hours before the event was scheduled to begin. Each performance illustrates the involvement of the students in the creation of ideas and like chapter eight, the application of their discipline-specific knowledge. As demonstrated in both performances, students in the course were responsible for fundraising, planning and marketing the event, securing the facility, obtaining food donations, ordering t-shirts, organizing registration, enlisting volunteers, finding participants, and all game-day operations.

Ultimately, the narratives and the performances in chapter ten highlight the shared sense of power between the Iraqis, the students, and myself throughout the SCD experience. The stories also demonstrate student and community empowerment and ownership achieved through a democratic and reflexive teaching style. Most importantly chapter ten exemplifies the ultimate purpose of the SCD course – collaboration and reciprocity – as demonstrated by Rashad and Hakeem’s willingness to volunteer alongside the SCD students at the final World Cup event.

### **Trey’s Story**

I, Trey Williams, was born in Birmingham, Alabama on May 11, 1989. I don’t remember much about living there, only stories my mom shares with me when I ask her what it was like. When I was three, my mom scooped me up along with my younger sister and we moved to Rockington. I can remember so vividly pulling off in my mom’s big blue station wagon, waving goodbye to my older sister and grandmother and wondering if I would ever see them again. When we got to Rockington, we moved in with my dad and his relatives. This was a terrible idea because I learned how to be bad real fast.

At the age of four, my older cousins had taught me how to swear and even how to fight. It seems crazy, but it’s true. For two years we lived in that house and everyday it got worse. I witnessed all kinds of stuff like drugs, alcohol, stabbings, yelling and screaming all the time. My mom saw the negative effect this was having on me, and in 1995, she moved my sister and I into a low-income housing project across town. Unfortunately, the move was no better for us because we were surrounded by gangs and

more violence. At least at the new place the screaming and shouting wasn't in the house and honestly, it was all my mom could afford raising two children on her own.

In school, my grades were mediocre. I didn't really try and I was a pretty mischievous kid, especially after I met my best friend D'Andre. It was weird to be friends with D'Andre because his neighborhood was full of Bloods and my neighborhood was full of Crips. Then we got to middle school. I made the mistake of doing well on my placement exams, which put me in higher reading and math classes than D'Andre. Being in those upper division classes with all the white people made me feel really uncomfortable, like an outsider. I knew I had two choices, to give up or to prove myself. I don't know why, but I decided to study harder and adjust my attitude. As the years passed, I saw my old friends like D'Andre turn to the streets, slipping further and further away from school.

In 2000, I met this pastor, Dr. Dallas Blackwell. Although I didn't want to admit it, I liked this guy. At the time, he was really one of the only positive male figures in my life. But you know, he was a pastor...and I didn't really wanna go to church, so I just conveniently fell out of touch. In the meantime, I was playing football and studying, hoping that someday it would all pay off. Then one night, I had a dream about Dallas and a really strong urge to know what he was doing. This is where it gets crazy. The next day after my dream, Dallas showed up on my doorstep! For real. He invited me over to his house for a bonfire. I was skeptical. I mean I hadn't seen him in so long and I really didn't want him to invite me to church. Long story short, I went to his house and I went

to his church. I gave my life to Jesus Christ and me and God have been together ever since.

After that experience, I always knew that I wanted to make a difference in the world, like Dallas made a difference in me. I've seen so much in such a short amount of time and I know that my experiences can help other people. Honestly, that's why I signed up for the Kinesiology major and for the athletic training program. And that's also why I signed up for this class. I want to help people...I want my life to matter. Eventually, I plan on practicing medicine on the mission field. I hope this class gives me a chance to apply my degree with another culture and be more prepared for my future.

***Flash-Forward: Life After the Storm***

So this semester has been really rough for me. I been working two jobs plus studying for the MCAT, which is stressing me out. My girlfriend and I broke up last month. And my car got plastered with hail in the recent storms. I had over 50 hits to my windshield. For real, it looked like a spider web, cracks sprawling all over the glass. I started asking around about prices and I found out it was gonna be like \$700 to get it fixed. There was no way I could afford that. Yeah, you're right, it wasn't safe to drive, but how I was supposed to pay for my windshield if I didn't go to work? Catch 22.

This whole experience had me feeling overwhelmed and stressed. It made me feel like a little fish in a big ocean. I mean my mom's in Pittsburgh and I'm here. I didn't know what to do. I mean I'm a dude, but I got no clue about cars, like where to go, who to call...I'm not trying to get ripped off. I don't even know if \$700 is a good price for a windshield.

I was telling Hakeem about it the other day when I was over at his house doing his knee therapy. Rashad was there. He knows a lot about cars. He went out and looked at it. He told me I shouldn't be driving it. I told him I didn't have a choice really, that I didn't have \$700 to spend on a windshield. He said, no way, don't pay that much. I told him, yeah, but that's the only thing I can find that's not over a three-hour drive or a two-month wait. He asked me if I had looked at any junkyards. Of course, I hadn't. He told me I should try a junkyard first because I could probably find a better deal. I mean I appreciated the advice, but I didn't even know where to find a junkyard.

I didn't really think much more about it. The next day I was on the phone with my sister bumming about the situation when I got a text from Rashad. He said he just finished looking at 3 junkyards for a windshield and that he found one for \$400 if I wanted to come look at it. Honestly, I couldn't believe it. I mean I've only known Rashad for a semester. And for him to take time out of his day to go look for a windshield for me, it stunned me. He helped me without me even asking. As time consuming as this class is, I feel so blessed to have been a part of it and to have Rashad and Hakeem in my life.

#### **ACT IV: Scene 1**

*Flash back to February, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the Spring Semester, shortly after the Iraqis attended the women's basketball game with the new students enrolled in the class.*

*The students filter into the room, as it is almost time for class to begin. They are buzzing about school and class and their first meeting with the Iraqis.*

*After everyone makes their way into the room, class announcements begin.*

Ashleigh:     *(Excited)* Hey, how you guys doing?

*A few respond with smiles.*

Ashleigh: How was your weekend? Anybody do anything exciting?

Courtney: *(Laughing)* Weelll, we met the Iraqis! Not sure it gets anymore exciting than that Ash.

*Everybody laughs.*

Ashleigh: *(Laughing)* Good point. So did everybody get my email?

*Some nod yes, while others look for it on their computers.*

Ashleigh: Well, what do all you think?

Abbi: Honestly, I was surprised when the women said they didn't want to participate in a 5K. I thought that was a great idea and I was really looking forward to it.

Courtney: Yeah, I was kinda disappointed too because I thought it would give us something to train for together. It would give us a long-term goal, which would make the exercise classes more physically meaningful.

Kyle: To be real, I think it's for the best. They didn't wanna do it and I don't really think we were gonna get the money. I mean \$2500? Brah, that's a lot of cash. And, I mean, you know, I'm not like trying to ask people for money like that.

Emmit: Yeah, I think that it might be tough to raise the money. People have their own ideas about Iraqi people and like Muslims in general, so I don't really feel like they would give based on that.

Steph: Honestly, I don't think that's the case. I know lots of people at my church that would give money to pay for the Iraqi entry fees and team t-shirts. It's a good cause and with a little explaining, I think people would be really excited to help the Iraqis. And besides, we live in a college town where everybody loves the university and helping its students. I think there are a lot of different people and ways to approach funding.

Ashleigh: Okay, great points and I know there is some disappointment about not training for the 5K, but I think there is real potential to come up with something just as meaningful...so let's brainstorm some ideas. Do any of you ladies remember why the Iraqi women didn't want to do the 5K?

Courtney: *(Laughing)* Yeah, wasn't it because it was at 8 in the morning? Seriously, who can blame them?

*Everyone laughs.*

Ashleigh: *(Laughing)* That was part of it. Does anybody know culturally why many of them don't get up that early?

Steph: Yeah, didn't you say it was because they eat really late? Like they eat dinner in Iraq after the sun goes down, right?

Ashleigh: Yeah, often times, they don't eat dinner until very late, like 9pm or 10pm...sometimes even later. They are used to that routine, so even here, they sometimes don't eat until after dark.

But what else did the women say?

Abbi: Wasn't it something about the race being men and women? And that is was so public? Like they said they would consider it if it was in the park or if it was just women, but they didn't want to do the race in the street with men.

Ashleigh: *(Nods in agreement)* Yes, so based on those cultural considerations, let's come up with another idea using sport or recreation to more fully integrate the Iraqis into the community.

Kyle: *(Looks up from his computer)* Soooo we still gotta ask people for money?

Ashleigh: *(Irritated)* Well, we don't really have any money Kyle and fundraising *is* part of the sport management objectives for the class, so yes, we will do some sort of sponsorship or fundraising for this event.

Wes: *(Timidly)* What if we do something with soccer?

They had a great time at the soccer game and soccer is such an important part of their culture, that I think a soccer event would be culturally considerate and really fun.

Steph: Boom! Wes, I think that's a great idea! Maybe they can teach us how to play soccer! And then they can show us all their cool moves!

*Everyone laughs.*

- Dylan: Hey! We should just create our own world cup tournament! And then we can invite other people to play! That way the Iraqis will not only get to play soccer, but they will get to know other peeps in the community and maybe make a few friends!
- Wes: We can invite people from the International House and make it like a total world cup experience!
- Steph: Yeah, but instead of making it one country or group verse another, we could just have everybody be on different teams...like just divide them by height or something. Then they can get to know other people, instead of just the same people.
- The energy is building in the room as people continue to toss out ideas. Courtnay grabs a dry erase marker and starts writing all the ideas on the board:*
- Courtnay: How many participants do we want?
- Derek: I don't know, like maybe 100? 200?
- Trey: Let's shoot for 200-250.
- Courtnay: Wow, Trey. Alright. Where we gonna find that many people?
- Abbi: Like Wes said, I think we should start at the I-House on campus. Then maybe ask around at local soccer leagues or something.
- Kate: *(Excited)* Can we make cool t-shirts?!
- Courtnay: Duhhh, it's not an event if we don't have a t-shirt...but how we gonna pay for these?
- Trey: I can work on getting t-shirts. I got a buddy who does T's. I got that one.
- Courtnay: *(Mockingly)* Alright, but what are we gonna put on these cool t-shirts?
- Dylan: I got a graphic design program, put me down for creating a little something.
- Ashleigh: Okay, shirts for everybody? Cause 200-250 people, that's A LOT of money and a lot of people. Can we realistically handle that?
- Steph: My church will definitely have people who would want to volunteer.



Abbi: Yeah, mine too.

*Several other students nod in agreement.*

Ashleigh: Ok, well there is another professor we have worked with the past two years who I think would be interested. She also works with refugees in Rockington and we've teamed with her two years in a row to do a soccer clinic for the Burundians. Courtney make a note for me to contact her as well.

Courtney: Got it. So where are we gonna get sponsors?

Josh: Dick's Sporting Goods?

Tyler: Athletic Department.

Natalie: Fitness clubs?

Steven: I can go to the restaurants on the strip.

*Courtney frantically scribbles down the ideas as other students jot reminders in their notebooks.*

Courtney: Ok, so where we gonna host this?

Ashleigh: I can probably get the women's soccer stadium again. It's where we've held the past two soccer events for the Burundian families.

Corey: You think women's soccer has balls they will let us use? Or you think we need get extra ones? And will the kids have shoes and shin guards?

Ashleigh: Um, yes we will need extra soccer balls and no, the kids probably won't have shoes and shinguards...

Alyssa: We can totally do an equipment drive. I bet we could get a lot of stuff donated.

Ashleigh: Alright, that's your idea, so you're in charge. Anybody want to volunteer to help her?

*A few students raise their hands. Courtney jots their names on the board.*

Natalie: Hey Ash, in my sport law class, we talked about camps and liability stuff...so do we need to buy some insurance or something to cover our butts in case somebody gets hurt?

Ashleigh: *(Laughing)* Great point! Natalie, can you check with Dr. T about getting coverage through the department? Find out the cost and we'll add that to the money to our fundraising total.

Courtney: Anything else?

*The students shake their heads "no" as they frantically scribble down ideas in their notebooks.*

Ashleigh: Sweet! Well, times up for class today. You guys rocked it! I think a soccer world cup is a **great** idea! It's a perfect opportunity to celebrate diversity, to be active, and to make new friends! Honestly, I think this is better than the 5K. Playing on a team together has the potential for much deeper connections...more than just walking in a race alongside one another. It's everything we talk about in this class...how sport can be used to break down barriers between people...

Courtney: *(Interrupts)* Yeah because everyone speaks soccer! No matter where you are, soccer is the same...a ball and a goal!

Steph: Yeah, and as teammates, you learn to trust each other. And you learn to communicate...and you have to respect each other if you are gonna accomplish anything....

Trey: And let's be honest, there's nothing sweeter than scoring! That just unites you, for real.

Abbi: But what about the women? Do you think they'll actually play soccer if there are men present? I mean the whole point of the 5K was that everyone could walk it together, right? We can't exclude the women.

Ashleigh: Abbi, that's a great point. Honestly, I'm not really sure what their response will be. I know the stadium is sectioned off and that there are two separate fields, but I don't know if the divider fence is enough to make them feel safe or not.

Steph: Well, couldn't we just do a dance class or an exercise lesson inside the stadium? That way the women could still come and participate?

Ashleigh: Yeah, we could do that...but before we make any definitive decisions, let's take these ideas back to the ladies in the exercise group and ask them if they think a soccer tournament sounds like a good idea, k?

Kyle: *(Looks up from his phone)* So now what? How much money you think this is gonna cost?

Courtney: *(Snaps)* For real dude?! How many times are you gonna ask about the money? We're not even at that point yet! Didn't you hear her say that we are going to talk to the Iraqi ladies and ask them if it's a good idea? Or were you too busy playing on your phone? C'mon man. It's kinda ridiculous.

*Everyone in the class smiles and looks down at the table. It seems like Courtney just said what most others have wanted to say, including myself, for a long time.*

Ashleigh: *(Relieved)* Okay...so I will start crunching some numbers. Trey, you said you have a t-shirt contact, right? And Dylan, you are going to create a couple of logos for the class to choose, yeah? Everyone be on the lookout for an email from me this weekend...we should know something from the ladies after class on Thursday and then I can send you an email to let you know if we are moving forward. Sound like a plan?

*Everyone nods in agreement and begins to pack up.*

Ashleigh: Oh, I almost forgot. Kyle, Dylan, Wes, Trey – Can you guys talk to Rashad and Hakeem when you work out this week and ask them what they think about the world cup idea?

Wes: Yep! I will ask them.

Ashleigh: Thanks!

Have a good week everybody! See you at exercise class on Thursday!

### **Rashad's Story**

Hello, my name is Rashad. I am 25 years old. I grew up in Baghdad, Iraq. I have lived in the USA for almost two years. Right now, I go to Southern Public Land-grant University and study engineering. When I was in Iraq, I was also in the university, the University of Technology in Baghdad. I studied computer engineering for four years. One

month before my graduation, I had to leave Baghdad. It was not such a good place....fighting...and wars....and Sunni vs. Shia. You couldn't trust anyone.

One day, I was walking home from school. I could hear a group of guys behind me. They were laughing. Then they shouted at me...asking me for my name. I kept walking. They shouted again...asking again for my name. Then they started insulting me...throwing rocks at me. I walked faster. Then I heard it. It was the click of a gun. And I ran. I turned left down the alley between the buildings. They ran after me, firing the gun. I hopped the fence behind the store. A bullet hit the wall next to my arm. I threw off my backpack and ran through the store. They chased me with their guns, laughing and taunting me. I just kept running. I ran through the streets and through the alleys until I could no longer hear them. I was out of breath, but I just kept running.

When I returned home late with blood on my arm and no backpack, my parents made me tell them what happened. That night, we collected our things and our money and we said good-bye to our families. Then we left for Syria. I begged my family to stay in Baghdad. I only had one more month to graduate. But Baba said, "Rashad, your life is more important than graduation. How will you graduate if you are dead on the street? What will your mother do?" After that, I had nothing to say.

In Syria, I tried to find a job to help my family. I worked at a warehouse, unloading boxes for a few hours a day. It was not very much money. So I enrolled in school again to try and finish from Syria. They did not accept many of my credits, so I had to take the same classes over again. After two semesters, my family received notification from the government that we could move to the United States. Again, I did

not want to leave. I wanted to finish my school. But I didn't want to live by myself, without any family or friends. So I left.

Now I am here. I am taking classes again. The same classes I have taken in Baghdad *and* in Syria. I am bored at school and I am bored at home. There is nothing to do. I am a young man with lots of energy, but I don't have many friends my age. Before I met the students in the [service-learning] class, I was very depressed. I see how much they try to help Iraqis and it makes me want to help them too.

### **Hakeem's Story**

I am Hakeem. I am 22 years old. I live in Rockington, Tennessee but I am from Baghdad, Iraq. I live here only ten months. My mother, father, and sister, we live together in the apartment. My mother and my sister, they take care of me. My leg, it is broken. I had surgery eight months ago on my knee. Everyday, I thank God for my family. I didn't know if I would ever see them again.

In Iraq, life was very difficult. I didn't like school. I didn't want to go to college. And I didn't want to go to the army. I like to draw. I am an artist. But in Iraq, nobody had money to spend on drawings. So I cut hair. I am really good at cutting hair, like in different styles, European styles. I was cutting everyone's hair in the neighborhood. My mother was proud because I had saved enough money to open my own shop.

One day, when I left work, there was a note on the door. The note said, "Men don't cut hair. This is against Allah. Close your store or we will close it for you." Everyday, they leave a note on my door. And I say to myself, I will not close my store. How will I make money? And I am Christian, not Muslim. I do not follow their rules.

And then, after many weeks of this, they came to my home. They go inside and they threaten mama! When I came home, she was crying so, so hard. She said, “Hakeem, you must close the store or they will kill you!” I tried to tell her that we cannot listen to them. But she said, “You must! You must close it!”

The next day, I finished with my last customer. I put the money in the drawer and turned around to grab the broom. When I turned my face, a man beat me in the head with a pole. That is all I remember. I woke up in a basement. My head was bleeding. There were two other guys in the room with me. No windows, just a metal cage door. There were men talking and laughing in the hallway. I crawled closer to the door to hear them.

When they heard me, they threw the cage open. They yelled at me to get up. I stood. The man hit me in the face. Then he pushed me against the wall. And hit me again. Then he took a heavy stick and he beat my knee. He laughed at me. He said he would break my legs so I could not escape. And every day, for four months, it was the same. They drink. They beat us. They drink some more. They fall asleep.

I knew if we didn't escape, we were going to die. So we made a plan. When they fall asleep, we run away. If they catch us, they will kill us. But if we stay, we will die. So we wait...and after the beatings, after they fall asleep, we open the door...And then...we run! We ran in all different directions. My knee, it is broken! But I just keep running. If I don't run, I will die. I must see my family. I must tell them I'm alive.

When I get to my home, it is almost morning. I pound on the door. I am yelling, “Mama, Baba! It is me, Hakeem. I am alive!” But when the door opens, it is not my mama or baba. It is a man. I don't know him. He tell me my family move two months

ago. I ask him for a phone number or address, but he didn't know. I wanted to cry, but I didn't have time. I knew, the men, they would come for me. I ran to my friend's house. It was like he saw a ghost. He couldn't believe I was alive! He didn't know about my parents, but he said to stay and rest and he would help me find them.

After two months, I finally got an address for them in Jordan. Immediately, I left to look for them. When I got to Jordan, I went to the address. No one was home. But those were not my family's shoes in front of the door. I went to the government many days in a row to ask them, "Where is my family? I must see my family." Finally, they tell me that my family moved to the United States.

After almost one year, I am with my family again. I thank God everyday for his mercy on my life. I thank God for my family and for being here in the United States. I thank God for Rashad, my best friend. And I thank God for Trey. For coming to my home and teaching me exercises for my knee. I don't have insurance so I don't have therapy. I just have Trey. And I thank God for him.

#### **ACT IV: Scene 2**

*It is three hours before the first ever Knox Kicks World Cup event. All of the students are gathered at the entrance of the stadium anxiously awaiting their instructions. The donation and registration tables look great. There must be at least one hundred pairs of cleats and lots of soccer shorts, socks, and shinguards.*

Ashleigh:      Alright Steph and Wes, we're ready for our assignments! Take it away.

Steph:            Ok, I have printed two small cards for you to put in your pocket. The first one is a phone tree with everyone's number in case you need it. The second is a logistics sheet with the team rotations. For the coaches, it will be important for you to refer to that sheet and help your teams move from field to field. It is will also be important to listen to Wes's friend on the PA system in case we have to make any changes based on number of participants today. With this being a free event with a free t-shirt, donated

soccer items, and free food, it's hard to tell how many people we might have show up! So just be listening for updates as we go.

Wes: Guys, you're with me today. We will finish setting up the goals and the tables on the field. Then we need to fill up the coolers and stake down the tents. Steven, I need you to set up the carnival games on the far field. The rest of us will split into teams. Derek, Emmit, Corey, and Trey, you are all responsible for managing a team of older guys, 15 and up. Tyler and Josh, you are both responsible for the 10-14 age group. Jake, you are with the little ones, 9 and under. Kyle, you are responsible for making sure the water coolers are full and emptying the trash.

Steph: And ladies, you are with me today. Kate and Jess, you are holding down registration. Abbi and Natalie, you two are manning the t-shirt station. Alyssa and Kylee, you are coordinating the volunteers and placing them in different areas of need. And Catherine and Courtney, you will be helping the little ones find cleats, socks, and shorts that fit.

After the initial rush, Abbi, Kate, and Jess, you three are with the little ones, ages 9 and under...playing soccer and then probably making bracelets and hula hooping. *(Laughing)* I'm so jealous! Natalie and Alyssa, you two are with the middle school girls, ages 10-14. And Courtney and Cat, you two are helping me with exercise or dance activities for the ladies.

Does everyone feel good about the assignments?

*(Everyone nods in agreement.)*

Ashleigh: Steph and Wes, I think you did an amazing job organizing the details of the event. I'm gonna go get the van and start picking up the Iraqis!! This is gonna be such a great day! Team on three. *(Everyone laughs and then huddles up)*. One, two, three, TEAM!

*All of the students smile, as we break apart for our respective assignments.*

*As I walk into the parking lot to get the van, I see Rashad and Hakeem walking toward the entrance of the stadium.*

Ashleigh: Hey! What are you guys doing here so early?

Rashad: *(Beaming with the biggest smile)* Hey Ashleigh! We are here to help. We want to volunteer with your class.



- Ashleigh: *(Smiling)* Really?! You are here to help with the set-up?
- Hakeem: *(Laughing)* Yes, really! We want to help. *(Proudly showing me his soccer ball)* We brought some soccer balls if you need them.
- Ashleigh: You guys are awesome! Thank you. Yeah we can definitely use your help.
- Rashad: We wanted to be here to prepare the place for this big event. We can't believe it is happening. Ask us anything, we will do it.
- Hakeem: Really, Ashleigh. Your class do so much for us. The parties, the exercise, the sports, the therapy. *(Smiling)* You are like our mother. Always looking out for us, for everybody. You make sure we have a good life here. It makes us feel good to help you too.
- Ashleigh: *(Smiling)* Thanks, that really means a lot. Let's find Wes and see what he can use some help with...

*As we walk back to the stadium together, I am so energized and moved by Rashad and Hakeem's desire to volunteer. What started out as a "service" **for** the Iraqis, to make them feel more included in the community, has now become a "service" **with** the Iraqis, where they also feel a sense of ownership and investment, not only in the generation of ideas, but also in the execution and success. I am amazed at the thoughtfulness of Rashad and Hakeem and I am so excited about the possibilities for the future of this class. Now I know we're getting somewhere...*

### **My Analysis**

Chapter ten represents several interrelated key concepts that are important tenets of the SCD philosophy. These concepts include democracy, reciprocity, reflexivity, and collaboration. As illustrated by the performance-based narrative in the classroom and also the last scene with Rashad and Hakeem at the stadium, students and Iraqis were involved throughout the entire SCD process, from brainstorming, to execution, to evaluation. To understand the way that service-learning and Sport for Development were implemented in the SCD community-university partnership, I have created a visual model at the end of

this chapter. This model demonstrates how the concepts of reciprocity, reflexivity, democracy, and collaboration can be used to inform a sport-based service-learning class.

***I Thought We Were Just Gonna Learn “About” Them***

The Sport and Community Development class was technically the first service-learning class in our Recreation, Health, and Human Performance (RHHP) department. One or two other classes in our department were involved in community outreach, but not necessarily immersed in service-learning, especially as espoused in my review of literature and the ways it was applied in our SCD class. As evidenced by the literature (Miller & Nendel, 2011), this is typical of most RHHP departments nationwide. Very few articles have been published regarding service-learning in the sport-related disciplines and unfortunately, most of those articles focus more on a one-time community service project as opposed to an integrated service-learning model (Mumford, Inumgu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010).

Many students who enrolled in the SCD class were surprised when Sarah and I told them that they would be working *with* the Iraqi refugee community to establish the agenda and assignments for the course. As noted in Abbi’s journal,

I was a little bit confused by the syllabus because I didn’t know that we would actually be working *with* the refugees. I just thought we were going to learn *about* them and then maybe like do activities to raise money for them or something.

Almost all of the students both semesters expressed initial confusion over their role in the class. They were also surprised by the amount of “say” they had in establishing the course and the ways they were encouraged to speak freely with suggestions and ideas.

Students suggested that this type of learning helped them to feel empowered and creative. As one student noted in his journal,

I actually really enjoy when our class meets. Most of the classes in sport management are the exact same – same message in the same lecture format. I have gotten very little out of those classes. But this class is so different. I like how we can have an open discussion about a topic and then form a plan to complete the task while still having fun. It makes me think creatively. That is a major reason why I enjoy this class.

Other students also wrote about how engaged they felt in the classroom and how it encouraged them to think outside the box and speak freely about our ideas. As one student commented,

With every other sport management class, teachers are pulling teeth trying to get students to talk and it's just boring and awful. This class gives students a chance to put their two cents in without feeling like everyone is going to think they're dumb for saying something.

According to Lena (1999), this type of engagement is driven by a personal connection to the material, or a “bridging of distances between concepts and lived experience” (p. 110). Or as Dewey (1938) asserted, engagement motivated by a connection between the head and the heart.

Although there is no overarching or unified mission used to guide higher education, I tend to agree with Bok (2006), that higher education institutions advocate most extensively for “helping their students communicate with greater precision and

style, thinking more clearly, analyzing more rigorously, becoming more ethically discerning, and being more knowledgeable and active in civic affairs” (p. 4).

Unfortunately, the strategy most often used to attain these results is the traditional “banking model” of education (Freire, 1999).

In the banking model outlined in chapter four, the professor is portrayed as an all-knowing expert and the students as blank slates. Through a one-hour lecture, the expert professor “pours out” his or her knowledge into a room of docile students or “empty vessels” trained to absorb every word. In essence, the traditional model employed by universities asks students to be active learners in a passive environment; they are taught *about* critical thinking, but are not actually engaged in it themselves. This is really summarized by Abbi’s initial expectations for the class. Even after reading the syllabus and attending the first lecture, Abbi still wrote in her journal, “I was a little bit confused...I thought we were just gonna learn *about* refugees, not work *with* them.”

This method of pedagogy, however, is increasingly recognized as ineffective in reaching today’s students (Bok, 2006; Butin, 2010; Freire, 1999; Lena, 1999). First of all, it dismisses the notion that students have anything valuable to add to the learning environment, which is wholly inaccurate and flawed. Second of all, studies show that the ability of students to recall the factual content of a typical lecture lasts about fifteen minutes after the class (Bok, 2006). In contrast, when students’ interests, values, and cognitive skills are challenged through activity and the exercising of their own mental efforts, they are much more likely to retain the material covered (Bok, 2006; Eyer & Giles, 1999). As one student noted in his journal,

Most of the classes I have taken in college have been lecture style for auditory learners. But lots of people, me in particular, don't learn this way. So I think the hands-on approach and actually getting to see and do things for myself really helps me a lot and is way better than the "memorize and regurgitate" method. I am much more likely to remember the conversations, the smiling faces, the adventures, and the results of this class than any of the paragraphs or lectures that I've sat through for the last four years. In my opinion, this is the best way to learn. At some point in the fall and spring semesters, all thirty-five students communicated that service-learning was the most effective teaching method for learning about service, the Iraqi culture, refugees, and the use of sport in as a tool for social inclusion and community development because it encompassed all learning styles – visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

As noted in chapter four, critics of service-learning often question the validity of this educational model, citing that it is too "touchy-feely" and not rigorous enough to meet the academy's standards (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999). However, as evidenced by this Honor student's reflective journal, this class has been the most challenging of his career. As noted,

I respect the curriculum that I have had so far at UT, but I truly believe that this class has challenged me far more than any other class I have had here. With the different classes that I have taken in the Honors Program curriculum (Honors Statistics and Honors Economics to name a couple), this is saying a lot. While other classes have only challenged my mind in terms of remembering things, this

class has challenged me in many other ways. This class has challenged the way I think about other people and about the world. This is something I will take with me always.

I think all of this speaks to the larger idea of “what is learning and how do we define it?” (Butin, 2010). Is learning what Bok (2006) defines as the foundations of higher education – the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, analyze rigorously, make decisions ethically, and be active in civic affairs? Or is it what Dewey (1938) asserted in his proposal for educational reform, that real learning is using knowledge to solve real problems? Or are these two ideas one in the same? As one student noted in his final interview, learning is a cycle of research and application and is enhanced when they take place at the same time, in conjunction with one another.

I cannot wait to help the Iraqis with the things I have been learning! It makes me want to research the stuff they need and to do my absolute best in class! I already had somewhat of a love for learning, but when I am doing it to benefit someone else, and have the opportunity to see that right away, it intensifies my hunger for knowledge.

Many students expressed this same sentiment, that their desire to learn was reinforced by having the opportunity to apply what they were learning right away and by using their degree to impact someone else’s life.

Today’s learners, the students of Generation Y, are more socially connected and more concerned with other’s lives and personal relationships than previous generations (Owen, 2005). As a result, the majority of the students in the SCD class listed building

relationships and making a difference as two of the most integral parts of the service-learning experience. What was surprising to me was the number of students that labeled their educational experience a selfish pursuit. They spoke about a degree as an expensive piece of paper, something that only benefited their future. They viewed their time in class as “wasting away in a lecture hall only bettering myself.” Many of them alluded to the disconnect they felt to the outside world, referring to their undergraduate experiences as living inside the “campus bubble.” As noted in one student’s journal,

My whole college career I have taken classes that will benefit my future. This class will not only benefit my future, but the present as well. Education is not just about statistics and standardized tests anymore. You need a more well-rounded education in order to be successful in an ever-changing world. Cultural connections and understanding are important aspects in being successful today. The world requires at least a basic knowledge and understanding of how other countries and groups of people view certain things. It’s a good reminder to a bunch of ego-driven college students that “Hey, other people are out there besides you and your cultural bubble.” People can learn a lot from each other if they take the time to care.

Many of the students said that the service-learning class helped them to “shift their focus to something other than themselves.” And with a focus shift from self to community, service-learning students admitted to working harder in the service-learning class than many of the other classes. As expressed by this student,

With any other class, no matter how difficult, if we slack off for one day it only affects us and we will get over it. But, here in this class, if we slack off or do something only half-way, we are not only cheating ourselves, but also a group of people who have already been through more than we can imagine. We must do our best in this class all the time because it counts for something so much bigger than a grade.

This engagement helped them to see learning not just as knowledge to be applied in the future, but as knowledge to be applied now. And according to the students, this made them feel more connected to the community, more connected to one another, and more apt to give 100% effort in the class.

Most would agree that an intensified hunger for learning and a commitment to excellence in the classroom are important pieces in undergraduate education, regardless of institution. Specifically, Southern Public Land-grant University considers its mission to “promote the values and institutions of democracy that prepare students to lead lives of personal integrity and civic responsibility in a global society” (p. 1). I have found that a democratic classroom in which students, the community, and the instructor share power, is an effective way to model democracy, as opposed to just lecturing *about* it (Butin, 2010). I believe a service-learning classroom more readily offers students an opportunity to fulfill the university’s mission and engage in the skills of critical thinking, effective communication, ethical decision-making, and civic action that most universities deem to be vital to the undergraduate experience (Bok , 2006).



### *A Circle Has No End*

Just as the service-learning class was built upon principles of democracy and collaboration, so too were the SCD community-university partnerships. As noted throughout the dissertation, Sarah and I placed a heavy emphasis on a collaborative approach in which community members were instrumental in the creation, design, and delivery of the events. It was really important to Sarah and I that this experience was not framed as charity or an intervention, but as a “reciprocal process with benefits for students, the academic institution, and the community” (Lena, 1999, p. 109).

Furthermore, I have elaborated on the theories that underpin the actions for both the SDP portion of the course and the service-learning experience. As written in chapters two, three, and four, Sarah and I were not interested in running an intervention program or a charitable service in which privileged students from the university could teach “poor, uneducated” Iraqis how to exercise. Although this type of charity may bandage some of the more immediate wounds, it “denies the possibility of social change by implying that the poor or oppressed are less competent and less able than those who have more social, cultural, and economic capital” (Artz, 2001, p. 240). This type of service to the community may actually reinforce the social practices that cause inequality and lead to a “social psychology of incompetence in the disadvantaged” (Artz, 2001, p. 240). As we talked about in class, giving the Iraqis “fish” as opposed to teaching them “how to fish” was disempowering and diminished the process of becoming self-sufficient or liberated.

Rather, what Sarah and I were interested in was creating a model of reciprocity, with increased community collaboration and reflexivity. As a result of our experiences, I have created a visual representation of the SCD philosophy that can be viewed in the figure below.

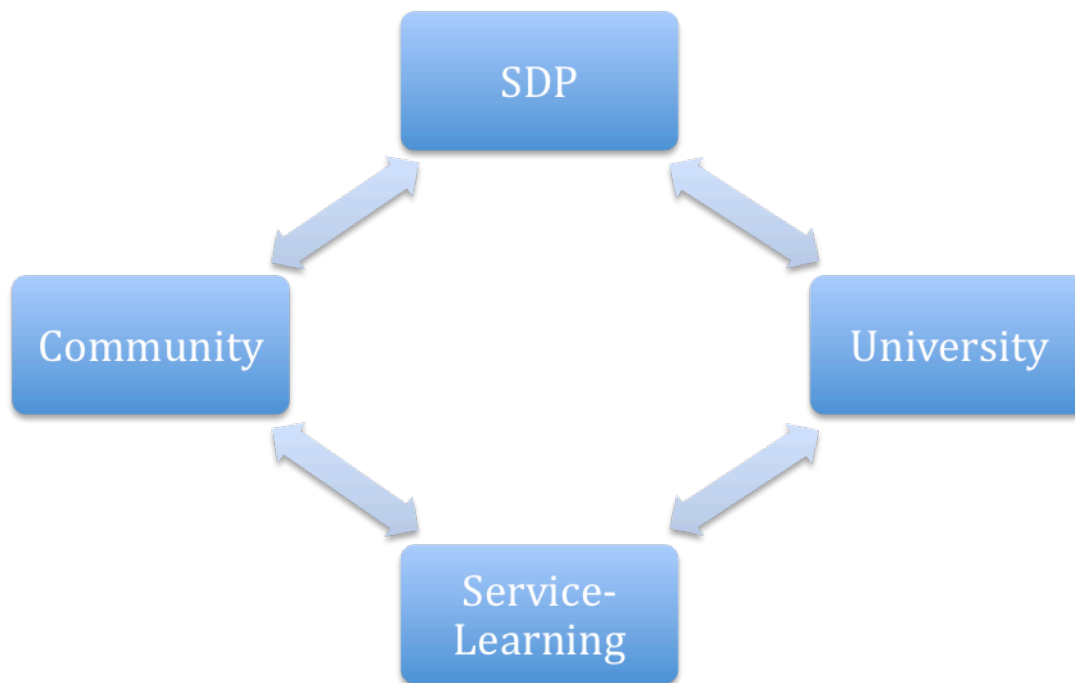


Figure 1.1 The SCD Community-University Partnership Model

In this model, the community and the university represent the two entities in partnership. SDP and service-learning represent the two methodologies that bind the community and university together. And the double-headed arrows between the community and university illustrate the reciprocity between the two. In order for the model to be effective, SDP and service-learning must be collaborative in nature and informed by the needs of both the university and the community. The execution of the SDP programming must be carried out with intentionality and consideration and the service-learning experience must be implemented with consistency and reflexivity. It is

our hope that this model moves us one step closer to what Freire (1999) calls an empowering praxis or as Artz (2001) describes, a model in which “researchers, teachers, caregivers, and the people served...collectively reflect on the conditions of inequality and construct a program of action, conceived, organized, and led by the oppressed themselves” (p. 243). Ultimately, I hope to expand on this model of reciprocity as I continue my research on community-university partnerships.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) class. It was my hope that this research would produce a usable model, a framework for other scholars and practitioners interested in developing community-university partnerships. I wanted this project to not only answer the “why” questions for SDP and service-learning, but also the “how” questions – specifically, how to create a reflexive and collaborative partnership that balances the needs of the community and university. I wanted to create something riveting and real, something inspiring and authentic, and something more inclusive than a first-person programmer or instructor account of the experience (Darnell, 2007; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Millington, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Much like the goals of the class, this research was designed to stimulate and encourage others to move toward a more critical and engaged community agenda.

### “Why” Questions Answered

*SDP.* Based on my assessment of the current literature, there were several ideas regarding Sport for Development and Peace, service-learning, and community-university partnerships that were confirmed through this research project. Beginning with the SDP literature, the United Nations assert that sport has the ability to “promote health and prevent disease, strengthen child and youth development and education, foster social inclusion, prevent conflict and build peace, and foster gender equity” (SDP IWG, 2008,

p. 6). As recognized by the United Nations, sport has inherent properties and universal qualities that serve as a common language that “can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status” (United Nations, 2005, p. 1). And in peace building efforts, Adolf Ogi, the Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, identified sport as the “best school for life” (United Nations, 2005, p. 8). Sport can be used to teach important universal values and life lessons, such as honesty, respect, cooperation, communication, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution (United Nations, 2005). In addition, team sports can encourage trust through group achievement and reliance on one another as teammates. Lastly, sport can be used as a common ground, a neutral site for open and safe dialogue about issues outside of sport, such as racial discrimination or religious persecution (Huffman, 2009; United Nations, 2005).

Based on the data from the reflective journals, classroom discussions, informal conversations, exit interviews, and participant-observations, most all of these ideas regarding SDP emerged. According to the Iraqi women, sport successfully made them feel healthier, less stressed, more empowered, and more included in the community. It was a positive and productive activity that encouraged a new direction and sense of purpose. As noted by the students, sport made the “uncomfortable comfortable,” “it filled the silence,” “it bridged the gap.” It united people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds and allowed the students and the Iraqis to experience the humanity of one another. And lastly, as observed in the exercise class, sport encouraged intimacy, trust,

empathy, respect, and cultural exchange. It was a site for open and safe dialogue in which the women shared personal stories of tragedy and loss.

Also detailed in chapter three were the shortcomings of Sport for Development and Peace initiatives. The four most common criticisms of SDP found in the literature included: (1) a lack of evidence of sports' effectiveness in the development or peace building process (measurement/evaluation), (2) the imposition of Western values on non-westernized countries or peoples (neo-colonialism), (3) fragmented welfare agendas offered by multiple agencies, and (4) the absent voice of aid "recipients" in the literature (Collins, 2010; Crawford, 2010; Darnell, 2007; Millington, 2010; Meier, 2008). When researching and writing this dissertation, all of these criticisms were taken into consideration and specific emphasis was given to the charges of neocolonialism and the absent voices of the recipients.

As described throughout this research, it was so important for the Sport and Community Development Class to adhere to a model of reciprocity, reflexivity, and collaboration. We never wanted to be viewed as the oppressive, all-knowing Global North described by Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010). The SCD class was committed to promoting a model of collaboration, not a model of prescribed solutions or interventions. We weren't interested in running a charity; we were interested in investing in the lives of the Iraqis in a way that supported them as they navigated society and reached for their own goals.

As demonstrated in the final four chapters of this research, the SCD class was committed to collaboration and shared spaces of power (Freire, 1999). Iraqis were

consistently engaged in the design and the delivery of activities and all activities were created to meet community needs as defined by the Iraqis themselves. From this experience, I have learned that if implemented with intentionality, careful consideration, and reflexivity, that SDP projects can become sites of empowerment, empathy, cross-cultural exchange, and appreciation, all which stand in direct opposition to the charges presented by Darnell (2007) and Millington (2010).

***Service-learning.*** As stated in chapter four, service-learning is an experiential based form of learning that blends classroom instruction with community engagement and reflection (Mumford, Inumgu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010). Unlike the traditional “banking” model of education (Freire, 1999) in which an expert professor dumps knowledge into passive, empty vessels, service-learning is an active pedagogy where power between student and professor is shared and learning is found in the process and the product (Freire, 1999; Butin, 2010; Miller & Nendel, 2011).

This style of teaching stands in radical opposition to traditional classrooms where students are often asked to read, discuss, and write about “doing,” rather than actually “doing” (Mumford, Inumgu, Johnson, & Smith, 2010). Studies have shown that knowledge consumed or created in this way can almost never be applied when the problem exists outside of the classroom (Eyler & Giles, 1999). In addition to greater retention and application of the material, there are many other espoused service-learning benefits found in the literature. Some of these benefits include: increased self-efficacy, a desire for a more equitable society, a reduction of negative stereotypes, improved cultural awareness, a heightened understanding of personal and social responsibility, and a

commitment to leadership and civic duty (Butin, 2010; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Lee, Bush, & Smith, 2005; Prentice & Garcia, 2000).

Despite the seemingly natural relationship between the kinesthetic sport-related disciplines and the hands-on philosophy of service-learning, the connections between the two have only recently been solidified (Miller & Nendel, 2011). As confirmed in the data for this project, however, service-learning proved to be “an ideal teaching strategy for physical education and sport” (Mumford, Inungu, & Smith, 2007, p. 11). Students in the sport-related disciplines identified service-learning as an active pedagogy that allowed them to experience situations in a tangible and meaningful way. In addition, they reported increased ownership over the material, greater personal responsibility for learning, enhanced creativity, sharpened leadership abilities, and improved relational skills.

Unfortunately, however, not all service-learning endeavors are good experiences for the student, the community, or the instructor. One of the greatest challenges of service-learning is striking a balance between the academic goals of the university and the self-identified needs of the community so that both parties – the university and the community – are satisfied. Pressure falls on the faculty to understand the needs of the local community, to find gaps in social programming, to build relationships with community agencies and target populations, to find grants to support the work, and to develop learning goals and strategies to maximize the experience for the students and the community (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010). It is a very time-consuming pursuit that does not translate well in the current evaluation system for tenure and promotion (Butin, 2010; Campus Compact, 2010).



In addition, an ill-designed service-learning project can do more harm than good and can make future partnerships with the community difficult to negotiate (Butin, 2010; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Much of the frustration expressed by community partners stemmed from institutional arrogance, either in the form of suppressing community voices or in the form of total reliance on the community agent to serve as the “instructor” for the students (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Adding to the feelings of exploitation was the absence of the community partners voice in the evaluation of the experience and subsequent publications. Much of the research that has been published on service-learning is largely one-sided and told from the perspective of the instructor (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). Absent from current service-learning literature are the voices of community partners (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009) as well as the voices of the students (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

To address these issues, I designed a research project that included all of the individuals involved in the SCD experience – students, administrators, Iraqis, and community partners. As explained throughout the dissertation, the SCD class was structured to be a reciprocal, reflexive, and collaborative experience, one in which the community and the university were involved in all phases of the course – brainstorming, execution, and evaluation. Feedback was integrated into the model, meaning we were consistently dialoguing about the experience and discussing ways to make it better and more effective in meeting the goals of the community. I believe that if implemented with intentionality, careful consideration, and reflexivity, that service-learning partnerships can enhance student learning and improve community welfare.

### **“How” Questions Answered**

In addition to answering the “why” questions, such as “why service-learning” or “why sport for development and peace,” I also wanted to produce a research project that answered the “how” questions, such as “how to combine service-learning with SDP” or “how to create a reflexive and collaborative community-university partnership model.” I wanted the narratives of this research to detail the progression of the SCD experience, from the anxieties associated with first event to the reciprocity demonstrated at the final event. In some ways, these stages of progression can be thought of as points on a continuum, representing the SCD experience over time. Based on the research and words participants used to describe these moments, I have labeled the progressive moments of the SCD experience. As such the SCD continuum can be thought of in the following stages: (1) common language of sport, (2) teamwork/achievement, (3) vulnerability/intimacy, (4) cultural exchange, (5) social integration, (6) ambassadorship, and (7) reciprocity.

I would like to elaborate on this progression beginning with chapter seven and the common language of sport. As expounded upon in the narratives of Hadeeqa and Emmit, the Iraqis and the students entered the SCD relationship with preconceived notions of the other that stemmed largely from the events of September 11 and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. The initial assumptions of one another were rooted in personal experience of loss and also media portrayals of the “Other.” As concluded in chapter seven, sport provided a common ground between the two groups and allowed for conversations that otherwise may not have happened.

In chapter eight, the stories of Abbi and Mariana further explored the use of sport in building relationships and in creating a group bond. Through exercise class, two seemingly disparate groups were able to physically connect and establish a “team” mentality replete with vulnerability and trust. The shared sense of ownership in the exercise space led to valuable cultural exchange in the form of dance and subsequent conversations about life and cultural norms. The exercise class provided the women a forum for consistent interaction and the sharing of their lives with one another. The result was sincere friendship, with both the students and the Iraqis using the language of “family” or “sister” to express their bonds with one another. And as family, the Iraqis and students not only appreciated one another, but they considered it their responsibility to stand up for each other. In this sense, chapter eight represents the idea of “ambassadorship,” in which the Iraqis and students not only redressed the false assumptions or ignorant statements made by others, but proactively sought opportunities to spread positive ideas about one another to friends and family members.

In contradiction to the inspirational message of chapter eight, chapter nine represents the unresolved issues of the SCD experience. Kyle’s story represents the challenges of dealing with a resistant student in a community-based course. Unlike more traditional lecture classes where apathetic behavior only impacts the student’s individual grade, the SCD class was very much a team effort. Kyle’s irresponsibility often forced his classmates to pick up the slack. Although Kyle’s narrative only represents three or four students out of thirty-five, it’s important to include because it’s an honest reflection on a particularly challenging aspect of teaching a service-learning course. Coupled with

Kyle's story is the story of Mateenah. Mateenah's story is one of considerable loss and ultimately illustrates the difficulties faced by refugees even after resettlement. As noted in Mateenah's story, the real problems don't end just because the Iraqis are no longer in a war zone; in some ways, the real challenges have just begun. Mateenah's story is disheartening because it exposes the lack of social support in our local community. Ultimately, it is my hope that this chapter encourages more individuals, more community partners, and more departments across the university to become involved in community building and social integration.

And lastly in chapter ten, the stories of Trey, Hakeem, and Rashad illustrate the potential for the SCD class and its move toward increased reciprocity. Chapter ten also details the benefits of service-learning and the results of a more democratic classroom. As the SCD class develops, we will continue to encourage reflexivity, collaboration, reciprocity, and advocacy among all stakeholders, including community partners, administrators, students, and Iraqis. It is our hope that in time, the SCD class will become more self-directed by the Iraqis and that this will move us closer to the empowering praxis promoted by Freire (1999).

### **Future Directions**

In terms of future direction for the class and for my research, I am proposing several new ideas. I would like to expand the service-learning partnership with the Iraqis to include more departments on campus (e.g. nursing, engineering, English, public health, etc.). There are many needs that sport and exercise alone cannot address. By expanding the number of partnerships, the needs of the Iraqis are more likely to be met. As

discussed in chapter nine, a greater network means potentially more resources on which to draw information, thereby increasing social capital and enhancing the social integration process.

I would also like to encourage deeper individual engagement between the students and the Iraqis. If the Iraqis and students agree, I would like to include an interview assignment as part of next semester's course syllabus. The interview would be conversational and both the Iraqis and the students would be responsible for interviewing each other and analyzing the experience either orally or in written form. In addition, I would like to provide more guest speaking opportunities in which the Iraqis can share their knowledge and experiences with the students. It is my hope that this inversion of the relationship helps to empower the Iraqi speakers while simultaneously providing cultural knowledge and information to the students. And lastly, in terms of research, I would like to explore the role of sport in fostering social and cultural capital among refugee or other migrant populations and would also like to expand my understanding of service-learning and sport in encouraging "ambassadorship."

In conclusion, it is my hope that the voices of the students, the Iraqis, the community partners, and the administrators have been heard and that a holistic account of the SCD class has been produced. I also hope that the tenets and underlying philosophies of the class have been thoroughly explained throughout the dissertation and visually demonstrated in the narrative and performance pieces. It was my goal to create something real, something that didn't shy away from the success our class experienced or the challenges we faced. I wanted to offer a useable piece of research, something accessible

that people could feel in their heart and keep in their minds (Ellis, 2004). I hope that this dissertation is helpful to many as they continue to develop their own models of service-learning or Sport for Development and Peace projects. In no way do I think the SCD class has it all figured out, but I hope that the trials, the lessons learned, and the insight of the participants can serve as a guide for other scholars, community members, and sport practitioners interested in community-university partnerships.

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## Appendix A

### Course Syllabus & Course Calendar

#### Course Syllabus

### KNS 380 & RSM 380 Service Learning: Sport & Community Development Spring 2011

**Instructors:** Ashleigh Huffman

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Mobile Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Class Day/Time:** Tue/Thu 3:40-4:55

**Class Location:** HPER 393

**Credit Hours:** 3

#### Course Overview

This is the first pilot Academically Based Community Service or Service-Learning course for the Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport Studies Department. The course is an exceptional opportunity for students to engage Iraqi families with refugee status living in the Rockington area through the use of sports, recreation, and exercise.

The course situates two equally important needs: The Needs of the Learner (You) and Needs of the Iraqi Refugee Community (Rockington). A Service-Learning and Academic Outreach course involves student reflection that includes personal and academic understandings of the importance of service and his or her ability to make a difference in the lives of the community served. Students will couple experiences in service to theoretical and practical readings and activities in the classroom.

As the war in Iraq persists, Iraqis continue to flee their home country. Over 4.7 million Iraqi families have been displaced since 2003. Rockington is home to approximately 80 Iraqi families. Among the current Rockington refugee population, the Iraqis are vastly outnumbered and often overlooked in community programming. Our class will seek to partner with local Iraqis to meet their self-identified needs in regard to sport, exercise, and recreation. This class will allow students in our department to contribute to the Rockington community in a meaningful way through the application of classroom theory and knowledge in a practical setting.

#### Course Objectives

- ❖ To deepen one's understanding of the use of sport, exercise, and recreation in community development
- ❖ To explore the potential use of sport, exercise, and recreation in creating a more unified and inclusive community
- ❖ To develop and nurture an understanding of the importance of service in communities
- ❖ To frame service as an element central to the understanding of praxis and as a public good to those in need

- ❖ To challenge negative assumptions or stereotypes
- ❖ To expand one's ability to critically self reflect

### **Required Texts -**

None - all readings will be posted on Blackboard ([www.online.utk.edu](http://www.online.utk.edu))

### **Class Attendance and Preparation**

"Class attendance throughout the course is essential" and "students should be present for the entire class period." "Certain classes" (such as this one) "are conducted in a manner which requires work outside of class a supplement to class attendance" (Hilltopics, p. 40). Since this course is a Service Learning course, class attendance includes your participation in the service activities and in the classroom. We are working with an extremely fragile population. In order to build relationships with the Iraqi community, we must first build trust. Trust is built through consistent effort, physically, mentally, and emotionally. If you have a conflict with a class session, or if you are observing a religious holiday on a class day, please contact me in advance of your absence.

Your participation in the Service Learning projects are required, and the completion of reading assignments and participation in small group work and class discussions is a minimum expectation. Please arrive to planned outreach early, and prepared to work with the refugee(s) to whom you have been assigned. Please arrive to class on time, with general questions or concerns from your service, the readings, or your reflections.

All materials are posted on Blackboard ([www.online.utk.edu](http://www.online.utk.edu)). If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, please let me know.

### **Community**

Our primary goal in the classroom is to establish a safe and inclusive environment for your learning. We invite questions, and critiques, and want dialogue to be central to our class discussions. Respectfully, we request that you engage in these activities with thoughtful reflection. As we tackle multi-layered issues together, we may find often that there is no one way or right way to generate solutions. There are many theoretical and pragmatic positions from which to work. In this course we will work to understand a variety of positions and practice different forms of analysis. This does not mean that we may not disagree with one another about these differences. Indeed constructive debate can often refine and deepen a particular argument or position. This means simply that we will work on cultivating a space that generates respectful, sensitive, and empathetic understandings. Lastly, if we are teaching and you are not learning, then we are not teaching. We welcome feedback at all times and encourage your participation in a mid-semester evaluation of the course and of your service. What we study is a shared experience, and one aim of this class is to cultivate a community of learners, educators and practitioners. In this community we position ourselves as learners as well as researchers and teachers, and will be participating in the planned sporting activities alongside you.

### **Assignments and Grading -**

In your assignments and presentations, we are looking for evidence of:

- (1) understanding of service and also of sport/recreation/exercise as a tool for community development
- (2) critical and honest self reflection of your service experiences

- (3) the application of the concepts and processes learned and discussed in class and in the readings
- (4) clarity of expression and explicit connections among ideas, with no grammatical and spelling errors.

Cultural Orientation Fact Sheet	50 points
Cultural Orientation Facilitation	50 points
Reflective Journals	250 points
Fitness Classes/Event Planning	250 points
Community Projects	300 points
Final Project (UNHCR toolkit)	100 points
Total	1,000 points

#### Grade Translation:

A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F= 59 and below
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

#### Guidelines for Assignments

##### Cultural Orientation Fact Sheets

Students will be asked to create “fact” sheets for cultural orientation training sessions with newly arrived refugees. Some examples of fact sheets from last semester included: How to fill out a job application, how to conduct a job search, when to use the emergency room vs. urgent care, how to use the bus system, etc.

##### Cultural Orientation Facilitation

Students will be given the opportunity to learn valuable skills related to designing and delivering quality public presentations to newly arrived refugees as part of the government-mandated cultural orientation sessions sponsored by the refugee resettlement agency. Students will use their cultural training certification to prepare for this facilitation. Examples of the cultural orientation sessions we conducted last semester: Navigating US Healthcare and Navigating the American employment process. Students will practice in class and will receive constructive criticism from their peers before attempting the facilitation with the refugees.

##### Reflective Journals

During the course of the semester, we will keep a service-learning journal. The journal will be used to document our service-learning journey together. The journal will be a safe space for us to record our feelings and experiences, which may include preconceived assumptions, judgments, or cultural stereotypes/comparisons. The instructors will provide weekly reflective writing assignments, ideas, activities, and more. The journal is designed to capture our individual and shared experiences as we navigate our way through this new and exciting area of study and community outreach. Lastly, the reflective journal will provide critical information for our class as we collectively create and complete the Final UNHCR Project.

##### Community Projects

This class is driven by the needs of the community, specifically in this instance, the Iraqi refugee families living in Rockington. Based on extensive conversations with a number of the families, they have identified their needs as: more social interaction, health and fitness opportunities, and

a safe space for their children to play. In order to meet those needs, we will host 3 large-scale community gatherings, conduct fitness classes for the men and women, and provide sports and activities for the children. During the community events, it should go without saying that you will be on time, prepared with materials or equipment for the event, and fully engaged with the Iraqis throughout the entire event. Planned icebreaker activities during the event should provide a starting point for conversation.

In order to be culturally sensitive to the issues surrounding gender and fitness with this population, our class activities will be split by gender. It will also be split by degree program or interests, so that all students will have an opportunity to implement ideas from their respective fields of study.

Male and female Kinesiology students will be responsible for brainstorming, implementing, and evaluating the exercise classes for the Iraqi men and women. This includes a health screening, baseline measurements, goal-setting, healthy choices seminars (food intake, sleep patterns, etc.), and post-testing. Ultimately, we will be training to run/walk a local 5K. Although not in the lead, you will also be responsible for fundraising and the planning of events.

Male and female Recreation/Sport Management students will be responsible for brainstorming, implementing, and evaluating the three large-scale social events. This includes securing transportation and facilities, organizing logistical information such as pick-up times and food, and finding donors willing to sponsor the entry fee and t-shirts for our class in the Rockington 5K. During the time of the fitness class, RSM students will be responsible for creating an after school program for the children. You must be prepared with "lesson plans" outlining the hour with activities. Although not in the lead, you will also be responsible for participating in the exercise classes.

*Unless there is a death or a birth in the family, all students must attend the three community social events.* Each event is worth 100 points.

### **Final Project**

The Final Project is an opportunity for students to design and submit a sport-based toolkit to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as part of the Teaming UP for Refugees project created by the UNHCR. Each toolkit will be judged and a select number of participants will be given the opportunity to test their toolkit in a refugee camp. Please see the UNHCR documents listed under Course Materials on Blackboard for a more detailed explanation of this project.

### **Disability Services**

Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact us privately to discuss specific needs. In addition to meeting with us, please contact the Office of Disability Services to coordinate assessment and the implementation of reasonable accommodations.

Disability Services



## Academic Honesty

Each student is responsible for his/her own personal integrity in academic life. While there is no affirmative duty to report the academic dishonesty of another, each student, given the dictates of his/her own conscience, may choose to act on any violation of the Honor Statement. Each student is responsible for knowing the terms and conditions of the Honor Statement and may acknowledge his/her adherence to the Honor Statement by writing "Pledged" and signing each graded class assignment and examination.

Students are also responsible for any acts of plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the intellectual property of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the university. Specific examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source.
- Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge).
- Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge).
- Collaborating on a graded assignment without instructor's approval.
- Submitting work, either in whole or part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).

Faculty members also have responsibilities, which are vital to the success of the Honor Statement and the creation of a climate of academic integrity within the university community. Each faculty member is responsible for defining, in specific terms, guidelines for preserving academic integrity in a course. Included in this definition should be a discussion of the Honor Statement. Faculty members at their discretion may also encourage their students to acknowledge adherence to the Honor Statement by "pledging" all graded class assignments and exams. The form of pledge may include writing the honor statement on the assignment, signing the printed statement, or simply writing "Pledged."

Additionally, it will be the responsibility of each faculty member, graduate teaching assistant, and staff member **to act** on any violation of the Honor Statement. It is also incumbent upon faculty to maintain an atmosphere conducive to academic integrity by insuring that each quiz, test, and exam is adequately proctored.

### *The Statement*

An essential feature of Southern Public Land-grant University, Rockington, is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.

### Course Calendar

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Week One January 13		Intro to Class, Teambuilding activity, Explicit expectations, overview of course calendar/syllabus, Timeline assignment
Week Two January 18, 20	Planning for 1 <sup>st</sup> event! SDP & UNHCR Readings, Intro to UNHCR Toolkit	Event planning Refugees from Iraq Reading Prep questions for resettlement agency
Week Three January 25, 27	Reflective Journal (RJ) #1 due – Assumptions & Timeline Bridge Cultural Orientation	FIRST EVENT!! Pre-game party @ 6:00 Basketball game @ 7:30
Week Four February 1, 3	Mateenah & Hadeeqa – Language lessons Bring questions Discuss fundraising	Begin Exercise Class/After school program Baseline Measurements!
Week Five February 8, 10	Debrief Event RJ #2 Due – BB Game & Party, Culture Gram, & First exercise class experience UNHCR Check-in	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Six February 15, 17	Prep for first seminar at ESL institute Guest speaker from Development to discuss fundraising strategies	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Seven February 22, 24	Sassoon Readings & Small group discussions T-shirt design due!	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Eight March 1, 3	Discuss fundraising UNHCR Check-in Prep for Seminar	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Nine March 8, 10	RJ #3 Due – Sponsorships & Exercise	Exercise Class After School Program



	Class Prep for Hike	
Week Ten March 15, 17	Spring Break!	Spring Break!
Week Eleven March 22, 24	Prep for Hike Sassoon Readings	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Twelve March 29, 31	Sponsorship sheet DUE! Due date for T-shirt Sponsors (\$1,500)	Exercise Class After School Program <b>**Hike Saturday, April 2**</b>
Week Thirteen April 5, 7	Debrief Event Prep for Knox Kicks!	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Fourteen April 12, 14	RJ #4 Due – Readings, Hike, Service-Learning Experience UNHCR Check-in	Exercise Class After School Program
Week Fifteen April 19, 21	Prep for Knox Kicks! Due Date for food & equipment donations	Final Exercise Class After School Program
Week Sixteen April 26, 28	Meet @ Soccer Field – Prep for Knox Kicks Due date for remaining funds (\$1,000)	Meet @ soccer field – Set up for Knox Kicks! <b>**Knox Kicks World Cup**</b> <b>**Saturday, April 30**</b>
Week Seventeen May 3, 5	RJ #5 Due – Knox Kicks, Class Evaluation, Self- Evaluation UNHCR Projects due Cook-out!!	May 4, 5, 6 – Exit interviews – schedule a time with me

## Appendix B

### Assessment Matrix and Reflection Rubric

#### Assessment Matrix

KNS-KRS 380 – Service-Learning: Sport and Community Building  
Evaluation & Assessment Matrix

Student Name

Assessment Date

	Green	Yellow	Orange	Red
Class Attendance				
Class Engagement, Preparation & Participation				
Event Planning & Preparation				
Event Engagement & Participation				
Reflective Journaling				
Fitness Class Planning & Participation				
Sponsorship/ Fundraising				
UNHCR Toolkit				
Overall Flag Color				

**Green** – You are meeting the academic *and* service expectations for excellence, commitment, engagement, integrity, and professionalism. **Keep it up and thank you for your positive contributions and your commitment to positively impact the Iraqi families. Green status demonstrates that you have earned an A at this stage.**

**Yellow** – You are meeting most of the academic *and* service expectations for excellence, commitment, engagement, academic integrity, and professionalism.

If you heed this warning and proactively address the specific feedback I provide, then you should be back on track for **Green-flag status**. Yellow status demonstrates that you have earned a B at this stage of assessment.

**Orange** – You are failing to meet the academic *and* service expectations for excellence, commitment, engagement, academic integrity, and professionalism.

If you heed this stern warning and proactively address the specific feedback I provide, then you have a chance to redeem your status. In fairness, at this stage you are on track to earn a D or C in the class and I would recommend you re-evaluate your ability to commit to the expectations of the class. If you believe that the level of commitment you have demonstrated thus far is the best you can do, then I *highly recommend* you drop the course. On the other hand, if you believe you can *significantly improve* your commitment to the class, then *it is possible* (not guaranteed) that you could still earn a B. If you are interested in this option, you need to contact me immediately for a meeting and we will draw up a contract for the remainder of the semester. If you uphold your part of the contract, you will earn no higher than a B for the semester. If you do not, then your grade will directly reflect your overall performance.

**Red** – You have consistently failed to meet the academic *and* service expectations for excellence, commitment, engagement, academic integrity, and professionalism.

You need to drop the course and inform me of your drop date immediately. At this point, there is no way for you to pass the course.

## Reflection Rubric

### Assigning Reflective Writing

Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center

"How To" Pedagogies #1



#### WHAT IS REFLECTIVE WRITING?

Reflective writing develops critical thinking skills, because RW has a reflective dimension. Critical thinkers make evaluations about our own and others' assumptions and judgments. Students can use reflective writing to think about assumptions underlying belief systems, examine rationales for action, test these rationales from various perspectives, and think about future consequences.

The purpose of reflective writing is to engage students in deep thinking in which they make personal connections to what they are learning and think critically and creatively through these connections in ways that help them transfer knowledge.

The personal element is helpful in engaging students with the academic content, and to enable to them to relate new learning to old patterns of thought.

Students need a clear rationale from you, the teacher, about the value of this writing assignment and about how the assignment will help their learning. They will also need to know how their writing will be assessed.

**A SAMPLE reflection** about a class service project in an elementary school:

*"It is so strange to take the school I went to growing up and compare it to this school. They do so many things differently and it is hard for me to understand why they cannot change and be just like my old school. I really need to consider that there are many reasons that the school's hands are tied against changing.... The overall county, as we saw when we were in [class] makes just \$30,000 a year, my county makes \$80,000. That alone makes a huge difference...."*

#### HOW CAN I ASSIGN REFLECTIVE WRITING?

**Journal:** students write periodic entries throughout a semester. Formal reflection elements (see back page) can be emphasized. Journals are useful for reflecting on course content. You can also have students reflect on a **critical incident** related to their learning.

**Learning Diary:** similar to a journal but can involve group participation and collaborative reflection.

**Log Book:** often used in disciplines such as science where students run labs. The log of activities can include formal reflection elements.

**Reflective Note:** often used in law. A reflective note encourages students to think and write about personal reactions to an issue raised in a course.

**Peer Review:** usually involves students showing their work to their peers for feedback. Peer review and self-assessment can be designed to contain elements of formal reflection.

Contact the **Tenn TLC** for more information, workshops, or consultations at 974-3933 or [tenntlc@utk.edu](mailto:tenntlc@utk.edu). Visit our site: <http://tenntlc.utk.edu>

## Assigning Reflective Writing

Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center

"How To" Pedagogies #1 page 2

### HOW DO I ASSESS REFLECTIVE WRITING?

Provide students with guidelines so that they know what needs to be included in their reflection piece—and be sure to set expectations high. Students should avoid "diary" writing and instead aim for critical reflection. Consider presenting them with four elements:

**Element 1: Description.** Students should describe the learning context (whether this is a completed reading or other assignment, a service experience, or a field experience). Students record what they know already, what they have observed, and what data and information they have gathered.

**Element 2: Analysis and Interpretation.** Students should examine reasons behind the context of the learning situation. How do they interpret the learning situation? They also record their personal reactions, feelings, thoughts, and choices—including their hunches. They analyze potential factors and contextual aspects.

**Element 3: Meaning and Application.** Students think deeply about possible meanings. Why did this seem like a significant event to reflect on? What have they learned and how have they improved? How might future thinking, behaving, and interactions change? What questions remain?

**Element 4: Implications for Action.** Students now make future plans for action. What can happen differently next time and how can different conditions increase the likelihood of more productive learning and interactions? Students can consider implications for their future behavior and implications for their career paths.

#### References

Bean, J. (2001). *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. (1987). *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Doyle, T. (2008). *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

**DESIGN A GRADING RUBRIC AND DISTRIBUTE TO THE STUDENTS.** A rubric is usually designed as a grid, listing grading criteria with descriptions of levels of achievement for each criterion. For example, a criterion for element two of a reflective writing assessment (analysis and interpretation) might look like this:

**Reflective journal criteria 2:** make connections between assigned readings and a week of service, particularly in terms of reasons for choices people make

Level 1	Student makes one connection between a reading and context, without full elaboration.
Level 2	Student makes one or two connections with some elaboration and analysis of a reading and real context.
Level 3	Student makes connections creatively, drawing on specific texts and extrapolating to his or her own experiences.
Level 4	Student makes strong connections in challenging ways, finding relevance in real contexts and explaining complex reasoning through the texts.

The "How To" pedagogies series are quick references pages that define and describe active learning methods to increase student engagement. Each handout provides basic information and references to get you started!

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent and Sample Interview Guides

#### Informed Consent (Students)

#### Using sport to build community: Service-learning with Iraqi refugees

##### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the KNS/RSM 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) course.

##### Information about Participants' Involvement in the Study

I am asking for your participation in one informal, individual audio-recorded interview. The interview should last one hour. If follow-up questions are necessary, I will contact you via phone to set-up a second interview.

The interview is designed to be conversational. Some pre-determined questions will be used to guide the interview, but your informal "free-flow" responses are ultimately encouraged. During the interview I will be asking you about your participation in the RSM/KNS 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class. You will be encouraged to elaborate on your experiences with the service-learning class, your relationships with the Iraqi refugees, and your views on the effectiveness of using sport with the refugee population in this way. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. In addition, I would like to collect and analyze your reflective journals written this semester. The information from your interview and the journals will be used to better understand the success and shortcomings of this class and to create a model for future community-university partnerships using sport-based service-learning.

##### Risks

There are no physical risks involved with participation in this study. You may discontinue participation at any time with no penalty.

##### Benefits

This study gives you an opportunity to voice your feelings regarding service-learning and the use of sport in building community. Your information will be used to better the KNS/RSM 380 class in future semesters and will shape the way service learning is viewed in the RHHP department. In addition, it is our hope that the information you provide will help generate a model that other universities can use in their respective kinesiology and sport departments.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's initials

**Confidentiality**

A pseudonym will be used in all written publications and presentations. All information will be kept anonymous and confidential and will remain password protected on an external hard drive in my possession. Only the faculty advisor and myself will have access to the information from the interviews. After the interview has been recorded and transcribed, it will remain in a password-protected, secure location in my possession.

**Emergency Medical Treatment**

Southern Public Land-grant University does not "automatically" reimburse subjects for medical claims or other compensation. If physical injury is suffered in the course of research, or for more information, please notify the investigator in charge (Ashleigh Huffman, 865.974.3340).

**Contact Information**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,) you may contact the researcher, Ashleigh Huffman, at 1914 Andy Holt Ave., HPER Room 322, Rockington, TN 37921 or call 865.974.3340. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

**Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

**CONSENT**

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study and preserve the confidentiality of other participants I may know.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Informed Consent (Administrators)**

### **Using sport to build community: Service-learning with Iraqi refugees**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the KNS/RSM 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) course.

#### **Information about Participants' Involvement in the Study**

I am asking for your participation in one informal, individual audio-recorded interview. The interview should last one hour. If follow-up questions are necessary, I will contact you via phone to set-up a second interview.

The interview is designed to be conversational. Some pre-determined questions will be used to guide the interview, but your informal "free-flow" responses are ultimately encouraged. During the interview I will be asking you about your role in the RSM/KNS 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class. You will be encouraged to elaborate on your role in the creation and oversight of the service-learning class, any obstacles or challenges you encountered in the promotion of the class, your intended outcomes and learning objectives for the course, your vision for the future in our department/college, and your views on the effectiveness of using sport and exercise with the Iraqi refugee population. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. The information from your interview will be used to better understand the success and shortcomings of this class and to create a model for future community-university partnerships using sport-based service-learning.

#### **Risks**

There are no physical risks involved with participation in this study. You may discontinue participation at any time with no penalty.

#### **Benefits**

This study gives you an opportunity to voice your feelings regarding service-learning and the use of sport and exercise in building community. Your information will be used to better the KNS/RSM 380 class in future semesters and will provide valuable information to other departments who are interested in developing a similar course or program.

#### **Confidentiality**

A pseudonym will be used in all written publications and presentations. All information will be kept anonymous and confidential and will remain password protected on an external hard drive in my possession. Only the faculty advisor and myself will have access to the information from the interviews. After the interview has been recorded and transcribed, it will remain in a password-protected, secure location in my possession.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's initials



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**CONSENT**

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study and preserve the confidentiality of other participants I may know.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Informed Consent (Local Organizations)**

### **Using sport to build community: Service-learning with Iraqi refugees**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the KNS/RSM 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) course.

#### **Information about Participants' Involvement in the Study**

I am asking for your participation in one informal, individual audio-recorded interview. The interview should last one hour. If follow-up questions are necessary, I will contact you via phone to set-up a second interview.

The interview is designed to be conversational. Some pre-determined questions will be used to guide the interview, but your informal "free-flow" responses are ultimately encouraged. During the interview I will be asking you about your interactions with the RSM/KNS 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class. You will be encouraged to elaborate on your role in the refugee resettlement process, your experiences with the RSM/KNS 380 class, your insight on community-university partnerships, and your views on the effectiveness of using sport and exercise with the Iraqi refugee population. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. The information from your interview will be used to better understand the success and shortcomings of this class and to create a model for future community-university partnerships using sport-based service-learning.

#### **Risks**

There are no physical risks involved with participation in this study. You may discontinue participation at any time with no penalty.

#### **Benefits**

This study gives you an opportunity to voice your feelings regarding service-learning and the use of sport and exercise in building community with refugees. Your information will be used to better the KNS/RSM 380 class in future semesters and will provide valuable information to other departments who are interested in developing a similar partnership with a local community organization.

#### **Confidentiality**

A pseudonym will be used in all written publications and presentations. All information will be kept anonymous and confidential and will remain password protected on an external hard drive in my possession. Only the faculty advisor and myself will have access to the information from the interviews. After the interview has been recorded and transcribed, it will remain in a password-protected, secure location in my possession.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's initials

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**CONSENT**

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Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Informed Consent (Iraqis)**

### **Using sport to build community: Service-learning with Iraqi refugees**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to explore the connections between Sport for Development and Peace (SDP), service-learning, and community-university partnerships through the implementation of the KNS/RSM 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development (SCD) course.

#### **Information about Participants' Involvement in the Study**

I am asking for your participation in one informal, individual audio-recorded interview. The interview should last one hour. If follow-up questions are necessary, I will contact you via phone to set-up a second interview.

The interview is designed to be conversational. Some pre-determined questions will be used to guide the interview, but your informal "free-flow" responses are ultimately encouraged. During the interview I will be asking you about your interactions with the RSM/KNS 380 Service-Learning: Sport and Community Development class. You will be encouraged to elaborate on the resettlement process, your transition from Iraq to the United States, your experiences with the RSM/KNS 380 class, and your views on the use of sport and exercise in building relationships between Iraqis and Americans. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. The information from your interview will be used to better understand the success and shortcomings of this class and to create a model for future community-university partnerships using sport-based service-learning.

#### **Risks**

There are no physical risks involved with participation in this study. You may discontinue participation at any time with no penalty.

#### **Benefits**

This study gives you an opportunity to voice your feelings regarding service-learning and the use of sport and exercise in building community between Americans and Iraqis. Your information will be used to better the KNS/RSM 380 class in future semesters and will provide valuable information to other departments who are interested in developing a similar course.

#### **Confidentiality**

A pseudonym will be used in all written publications and presentations. All information will be kept anonymous and confidential and will remain password protected on an external hard drive in my possession. Only the faculty advisor and myself will have access to the information from the interviews. After the interview has been recorded and transcribed, it will remain in a password-protected, secure location in my possession.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's initials

**Emergency Medical Treatment**

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**CONSENT**

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study and preserve the confidentiality of other participants I may know.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Interview Questions

### (Students)

1. What is your understanding of Sport for Development and Peace?
2. How familiar were you with SDP before this class?
3. Describe how sport and exercise were implemented in this class.
4. In what ways were sport and exercise effective in working with refugees?
5. In what ways did sport and exercise fall short?
6. How would you improve on the organization of this class and the way sport and exercise were used?
7. What were some of the barriers or obstacles you faced when implementing your ideas in the community?
8. Describe service-learning and the way it was implemented in this class.
9. What were the advantages of learning this way?
10. What were the disadvantages of learning this way?
11. Describe how the service-learning experience was different from volunteer experiences.
12. Describe how the service-learning experience was different from an internship or practicum.
13. Describe how the service-learning experience was different from other classes you have taken in the major.
14. How did service-learning fit with your learning style (e.g. visual, auditory, etc.)?
15. Describe how this class may impact your future.
16. Describe how this class may impact your career goals.
17. In this class, we do a lot of reflection – in-class discussion, small group sharing, and written journals. Describe how reflection contributed to your learning.
18. Give me some examples of things you learned about yourself during this experience.

19. What were your ideas about Iraqi refugees prior to this class? How did those ideas change or stay the same?
20. Do you feel that this class encouraged you to step out of your comfort zone? How?
21. Name something you will take with you as a result of this class.
22. Do you have any recommendations for future service-learning courses using sport and exercise?

## Sample Interview Questions

### (Administrators)

1. What do you think are some of the greatest challenges we face as institutions of higher education?
2. How do those challenges affect the educators responsible for students' educational experiences?
3. How do you think those challenges can be addressed?
4. How do you think UT compares to other land grant institutions when it comes to offering multi-cultural, international opportunities for our students?
5. How do you think our department compares to other RHHP-type departments when it comes to educational experience. What do we do well? What could we do better?
6. Tell me your role in the creation of the Service-Learning class and why you support it.
7. What did you hope would be achieved by the SCD class? For the community? For the students? For the department/college?
8. Have you encountered any obstacles in promoting the SCD class? Resources? Funding?
9. What is university/college support like in promoting service-learning? Faculty support?
10. Based on first-hand experiences and feedback from the students, what do you think the SCD class did well? Where did the class fall short?
11. If other departments were interested in starting a service-learning course, what advice would you give them?
12. In what ways do you think sport and exercise are effective in working with refugees?
13. What is your vision for the future of service-learning in the our discipline?



## Sample Interview Questions

### (Community Partners)

1. Describe your role in the resettlement process.
2. Describe the structure of the resettlement agency. Funding? Resources? Responsibilities? Number of case workers vs. Number of refugees?
3. Why did you get involved in the refugee resettlement process?
4. What are some of the challenges you face in the resettlement process?
5. What are some of the specific challenges you face in resettling Iraqis?
6. Describe the request for asylum process.
7. Describe how cities are chosen for relocation.
8. Describe your relationship with other partnering organizations (e.g. NGOs, churches, individuals, volunteers).
9. How do individuals and organizations in the community impact your daily operations?
10. What do you see as the greatest needs of refugees in the resettlement process?
11. What needs most often go unmet?
12. What are your impressions of this class and its objectives?
13. Do you think sport and exercise are effective tools to assisting refugee populations in their transition to the United States? Why or why not?
14. How has this class impacted your organization?
15. What could this class do better to assist your mission?
16. What do you see as the value in combining student education with non-profit work?
17. If other departments were interested in working with your organization, how would you advise them to start that process?
18. What qualification are you looking for when choosing community partners?
19. If we were to create a model of community-university partnerships, what do you feel are the necessary ingredients to ensure success?

## Sample Interview Questions

### (Iraqis)

1. What were your ideas of Americans before coming to the United States?
2. Where did those ideas come from?
3. Describe some of your fears and worries about coming to the United States.
4. How does life in Iraq compare to the life in the US?
5. What are some of the challenges or obstacles you face living in Rockington?
6. What are some of the benefits of living in Rockington?
7. Do you experience stress? If so, what kind of stress?
8. What are some of your greatest concerns for yourself and your family?
9. Describe the role of the resettlement agency in your transition to the US?
10. What are some of the challenges or obstacles your children face living in Rockington?
11. Do your children have access to sports in Rockington? Do they have safe spaces to play?
12. Describe your experiences with this class.
13. Did this class change or confirm your ideas of Americans?
14. Has this class been helpful in your transition to the US? If yes, in what ways?
15. Describe your understanding of sport and exercise and how it was used in this class.
16. Are sport and exercise opportunities important to you? If yes, why?
17. What are some obstacles to participating in sport and exercise in this community?
18. What are some things the SCD class did well?
19. How can the SCD class improve for next semester?
20. Based on your experiences, do you think sport and exercise were an effective way to build friendships between Iraqis and Americans?
21. Do you feel that this class encouraged you to step out of your comfort zone? How?
22. Name something you will take with you as a result of our interactions.
23. Do you have any recommendations for future service-learning courses using sport and exercise?

### **Translator's Pledge of Confidentiality**

As the translator for this project, I understand that I will be involved in the translation of confidential interviews. I understand that the research participants involved in this project agreed to participate on good faith that their information would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information that is revealed to me with anyone except the primary researcher of this project, his/her doctoral chair, or other members of this research team. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

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Translator

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Date

## **Vita**

Ashleigh M. Huffman was born in Wheeling, West Virginia on May 3, 1983 to Sam and Sally Huffman. Ashleigh attended Eastern Kentucky University on a full athletic scholarship where she graduated summa cum laude in May of 2005 with a degree in Physical Education. In May of 2007, Ashleigh received her master's in Sport Studies with a specialization in Sport Management from Southern Public Land-grant University, Rockington. In the summer of 2011, she completed her PhD in Kinesiology and Sport Studies with a specialization in Sport Sociology at Southern Public Land-grant University, Rockington. In addition to her graduate studies, Ashleigh has also served as the Assistant Director of Sport 4 Peace, a non-profit international sports development organization devoted to increasing global solidarity and improving sport experiences for girls and women around the world.