

Optimizing Reciprocity as a Process and a Result of Service-Learning Partnership

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Reciprocity is a very important issue in service-learning. Service-learning involves humans—whether they be provider or recipient of service. Students are taught valuable knowledge, fundamental skills, and essential values to survive the real world; thus, a reflection on how both parties could gain equitably from service-learning should be strongly thought of. This is an issue of human protection, where the interest of all humans involved should be put into main consideration. Service-learning should be designed foremost to bring about positive change in the lives of both the learners and the community. Generation of new knowledge through hands-on community engagement could only be meaningful if there is an assurance that the initiative will bring no harm and that there is a just and equitable sharing of gains and benefits.

This paper is written to expound on the optimization of reciprocity and human protection in service-learning and how the traditional informed consent should be elevated a step higher to informed decision to signify the value for respect and people's self-determination.

CONCEPTION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Service-learning (SL) has been a buzzword in Southern Christian College since it was introduced by its former president, Erlinda N. Senturias, in 2002. Several faculty members tried to utilize the learning pedagogy in their respective courses then, but it was only later that service-learning was institutionalized and popularized in the school by assigning a person who coordinates all initiatives of faculty.

Although there is an acceptance of service-learning as an effective pedagogy for academic instruction, not all courses integrate it in their curriculum. There are only several colleges that have tried and succeeded in adopting it. The College of Arts and Sciences does SL in their natural science department and major courses in English. The College of Extension and Community Development took the challenge in seeing that “thin” difference between pure extension and SL. In the College of Theology, SL is integrated in subjects on evangelism and developing Sunday school materials and made struggling local churches as their partners. The College of Agriculture, with a very strong leadership of their dean, establishes partnership with schools in this particular process of learning in their extension and project development classes. And lastly, the practices of College of Social Work are given more elaboration in succeeding paragraphs.

SERVICE-LEARNING AT THE HEART OF THE SCC VISION-MISSION

The vision statement of Southern Christian College is expressive of its desire to contribute to the transformation of communities. As an academic institution, it recognizes that students are its main vehicle towards achieving this through the provision of a whole-person education that is grounded on faith, character, and service. The commitment of SCC is geared towards a caring and sharing society. Hence, the pedagogy of SL is seen as most appropriate to achieve the integration of “the town and the gown” and the creation of a transformed communities through a transformed education.

The College of Social Work (CSW) draws its objectives from the institution’s vision and mission statements. As SCC emphasizes service as fundamental to the kind of education that it hopes to provide, CSW calls faculty and students to PERForM. This is an acronym of the objectives of the college as presented below which was crafted to set the direction in the provision of a wholistic education to its students.

Respond to Pressing Needs

The needs of communities are not separate from that of students, for they themselves come from these communities— natural and human-made disasters which have indeed become “natural” unpredictably happen; effects

of structural violence manifest various faces which in turn affect people in communities; social ills and problems are explicitly seen everywhere. And so, as an academic institution which exists with and for people in the community, SCC-CSW sees the need to engage and contribute to change by responding, in its own capacity, to pressing issues and concerns.

Provide Excellent Educational Foundation for Graduates

Wholistic education is a need of the time. The competition for scarce job opportunities after graduation is growing. Only those who are equipped with knowledge, values, and skills have the high probability of landing a good job or getting the job they desire. Though social workers are still few in number in the country up to the present compared to other professions, SCC-CSW sees the call to produce professional practitioners who are competent and skilled yet grounded on the commitment to serve emphatically for social work is a helping profession.

Foster Result-Oriented Attitude to Faculty Members and Students

Classroom teaching is very important, but evaluating what students learn and how they apply their learning is equally important as well. The results of teachers' effort to facilitate learning can be best seen when students are placed in an environment where they can apply what they learned. The application of knowledge through demonstration of skills and values are results of a successful teaching-learning process. The four walls of the classroom may be a conducive space to listen and talk but beyond the portals of the institution is a much more ideal place to measure results.

Value Forward-Looking and Proactive Decisions and Plans

Being proactive is looking at the positive side of things. It is foreseeing events before it happens and doing something to minimize negative results. Decisions and plans are best laid during best times when there is no need to cram and panic. Facilitating realization of dreams of a better future should be started within one's reach. Social work students in SCC-CSW are taught to create their own visions and make decisions and plans on how to reach them from where the students are.

Exercise Mindfulness in Knowing Students' Needs and in Recognizing Capacities

Not all learners have the same capacity for learning and understanding. Some students are visual, who learn better when they see illustrations. Some others are auditory, who simply want to listen all the time to what the teacher says. However, many of the younger generations are tactile-kinaesthetic learners who can learn best by doing it themselves what has been taught to them.

Looking at how the aforementioned objectives could be addressed, it is recognized that there is a strong need to teach students inside the classroom, discover their potentials by giving them the chance to exercise their learning, inculcate necessary values and practical skills to help them survive the real world of practitioners, and evaluate actual experiences to pave way for new learning.

INTEGRATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN SOCIAL WORK COURSES

The integration of SL in social work courses started in 2011 when students gave positive responses and feedback from their community exposure and extension activities during debriefing sessions. This was seen as an opportunity to adopt SL as a teaching methodology because students seemed to appreciate it more when they went beyond the classroom to serve.

As stipulated in the book "Social Work and Service Learning: Partnerships for Social Justice" (Nadel, Majewski, & Cosetti, 2007), social work education is a relative "latecomer" to SL methodology. One of the speculated reasons (George 1982, as cited in Knee, 2002) is that social work education relied heavily on its field practicum as the SL component.

Despite "coming in late" in the adoption of the SL pedagogy, social work education readily yields to easier planning for the integration and choosing courses to pilot service-learning since social work is actually a helping profession that normally deals with individuals, groups, and/or communities. Two courses in the junior year were chosen by faculty members: *Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management* on the first semester, and *Social Work Community Education and Training* on the second semester.

There had been some important points that were considered in the selection of subjects for SL. The first consideration is the **sufficiency of knowledge** that students have to engage in the community. The freshmen and sophomore years in college are composed of general education subjects with minimal social work major courses. Students are still on the process of adjusting from less taxing high school life to a more complicated and totally different college education. Thus, community engagement is deemed inappropriate, for it may result to a more stressful situation on the part of students and frustration on the teacher's end. Hence, SL integration is done during the students' junior year when adjustments have already been made, and enough knowledge has already been gained.

Secondly, do students have **enough time to spare** outside of their school hours? The amount of time that is required is also closely examined. For effective learning, time should be properly managed. The teacher has to divide the time for both classroom sessions and community service without sacrificing one.

The third consideration revolves around the **matter of finances**. This asks the following question: What will it entail the students to engage in service-learning? How about the faculty teaching the subject? It is already a given fact that going to the community is much more expensive than just staying inside the classroom. Students have to spend for transportation, food allowance, logistics, needed materials, and sometimes even for food for community members. This is not to mention the outputs that they have to submit to monitor and evaluate the application of learning as well as new knowledge gained.

Fourth, the needs of the community are matched with students' capacities and skills as well as the **scope and scale** of what they can do. There is a usual misconception that academic institutions are "rich" and that they can provide the needs of the community if they want to. However, SL is totally different from extension. No large funding is available at hand and most of the time it is entirely the students' efforts and resources that cover for all expenses for the duration of the engagement.

Lastly, an **opportunity for partnership** has to be considered. SL should be a two-way give-and-take process between students and the community. The latter should not only be willing to take in SL and accept the services extended, but more so, they should also be willing to provide

an opportunity for partnership that will benefit both parties, thereby paving the way for a more meaningful academe-community integration.

GAINS AND BENEFITS OF STUDENTS FROM SERVICE-LEARNING

To reiterate, SCC is still very young in the practice of SL, especially the College of Social Work, which is still striving to improve and if possible to perfect the process. It recognizes that learning, even for faculty, is a continuous process of evaluation and making modifications towards the betterment of the program. On the SL journey of the college, there are things which students commonly say they gain from community engagements.

Discovery of once unknown capacities. In SL, students are given the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned from lectures and classroom activities outside the portals of the institution. And most often, situations require service-learners to perform tasks aside from what they have learned. Instead of taking this as a drawback, students take this as a challenge to measure what they know and what else they can do. Under normal circumstances, their potentials would have been latent, but because of SL, they discover capacities beyond their awareness.

Inculcation and clarification of values. Students' values differ because of their different backgrounds including family, social environment, economic status, and religious and ethnic orientation. For social workers, there are values that must be placed in primacy— human rights, social justice, and people's participation. These values could not be easily inculcated if purely said, but students realize that in the process of extending service, due respect for one's rights should be given, social justice should be shown rather than uttered, and meaningful participation should be solicited for all these values are key to successful community engagement.

Learning skills in human relations. Involvement of all stakeholders is very important in carrying out SL initiatives. SL requires faculty and students to interact with the community's political structure in following normal protocols. There is also the need to speak with informal leaders and target partners to explain the objectives of the S-L comprehensively. Only through successful interactions can partnership be fostered. And so, in all interactions, students relayed in their journals and write-ups that they had

to relate with people with genuineness, empathy, and warmth to be able to convey their desire to establish meaningful partnership. All in all, what students learn from this particular process is the skill in building human relationships.

Increase in self-confidence and esteem. This benefit derives from engaging with the community through SL is very common among service-learners. This is the sense of capability of doing something to develop the community when all the while service-learners thought that they could not do anything to create change. In a journal of one service-learner, student wrote, *“I didn’t realize that I have the confidence to speak with the mayor and the municipal officials as well until such time that I was already in front of them together with other stakeholders, explaining the rationale and objectives of our service-learning project. Everything just sank in when I heard their agreements and expression of support followed by the clapping of hands.”*

Better understanding of academic lessons. It would be worthy of noting that many students are tactile-kinesthetic in their style of learning as revealed in the learning style test given to them at the start of the class. This means that most of them can only fully comprehend the lesson once they do it themselves. In the topic on making and implementing a social welfare project, students were able to come up with their own project proposal. However, after the SL experience, they expressed in their group reflection session documentation: *“not only can we write, but more so, we now know what to write.”* Through SL, students were able to see the reality which makes them rooted, hence totally understanding the theories and concepts that they had learned from the class through actual application.

The research conducted by Hurd (2006) revealed several evidence that SL enhanced academic learning. Some of what he posited fits in with the results manifested by social work students i.e., growth in writing and critical thinking skills, gains in basic thinking processes, enhancement of creativity, and positive impact on cognitive moral development.

Development of cooperation rather than competition. It was observed that after every SL engagement, students became more cohesive and cooperative. They learned how to be team-players, complementing each other’s work. Many students also opened up new friendships and established close ties with both their fellow students and the community people as well.

With all the gains and benefits derived by students from SL, not to mention professional growth and exercise of civic responsibility of teachers, it is most appropriate to re-examine and recheck the praxis to look for opportunities and ways to further develop a core of more conscientious advocates and practitioners of SL.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SERVICE-LEARNING

In the preceding points, SL proves to be a very effective teaching-learning pedagogy. However, it is not free of ethical issues and human protection concerns such as the following.

1. How beneficial is SL to students vis-à-vis the additional expenses they incur in the process?
2. How does the school, particularly the faculty, ensure that “no harm” is brought to the community?
3. What gains will the community generate from SL?
4. What protocols are followed prior to SL activities? What is more appropriate – informed consent or informed decision?
5. How can the implementing faculty optimize reciprocity in the process as well as in the results of SL?

To dissect further the questions raised, the following topics are substantiated with vignettes from actual hands-on experiences supported by citations from the writer’s readings.

Expenses vs. Gains

Vignette 1:

The BS Social Work junior students enrolled in SW 11n (Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management), after discussing with the group, decided that the project they want to implement for their service-learning is “Improving the Social Skills of Day Care Children in Sitio Taguan, San Mateo, Aleosan, Cotabato”. This community is part of the neighboring town of Midsayap where SCC is located. Because the identified partners are day care children,

and because the group wanted to show a good result, they really had to prepare for logistics and food for the feeding activities.

The group is composed of five (5) students. According to the budget that they prepared in their proposal each one has to contribute three thousand pesos (PhP3, 000.00) to finish the project. The amount covered their transportation every Friday for one and a half months, food for the feeding activity of around 25 children (and their mothers who are with them in the center), logistics and materials for the activity, tarpaulin printing, culmination activity and S-L outputs.

It should be noted that though SCC is a private school, it caters mainly the low to middle income families of farmers and professionals, hence the P3, 000.00 contribution is taking a big chunk from the budget of the student's family.

In the teacher's intention to provide the best experience to students in relation to lessons in the classroom, there is this strong urge to adopt and integrate S-L in the syllabus or the course outline. In the vignette presented, the depicted issue on SL was on the financial aspect which was a serious concern for the service-learners. Going outside of the classroom entails additional expenses on the part of the students as well as the teacher to cover the transportation in going to the community, food allowances for the students and the community participants, and logistical requirements needed in planned activities, not to mention incidental expenses.

The question that has to be answered now is "Are the expenses incurred by the students commensurate with the learning and experiences they gained from the SL activity? Did they learn helpful values and skills which make them more prepared for actual practice? Will exposure to SL help them land a better job or if not hired, will they be able to create their own jobs compared to those without service-learning?"

"Do No Harm"

There is an unspoken ethical obligation among service-learners (both faculty and students) to avoid doing harm to lives, community, or environment. Means of avoiding harm may include avoiding direct and immediate

harm. Avoiding harm may imply an obligation to weigh very carefully the consequences and results of the intervention in the future. The vignette that follows exemplifies the issue of considering this principle in the practice of SL.

Vignette 2:

The service-learning partner identified by a group of social work students for their service-learning activity is the street children of Midsayap. These children are specifically called as “children in the streets” which means that these children have families but they spend most of their time hanging in the streets to beg for food or money as well as to play.

The more or less 20 children were Moro kids from Poblacions 3 and 7, Midsayap and some from Moro-dominated barangays who have relatives in the poblacion area. The project was dubbed as “Creating a Psychosocial Niche for Street Children of Midsayap”. Students met the kids either in the plaza, in the municipal hall or in the multi-purpose hall of Poblacion 3, which officials of the said barangay were very supportive of the program.

Within two months, the students were able to establish rapport with the street children by doing things together - tell stories, listen to the children’s stories, play games, practice dances and songs for the culmination and eat what the students had prepared. Because of the relationship, the closing program held at the rooftop of the municipal hall was filled with mixed emotions of enjoyment and sadness due to impending separation.

“Primum non nocere” or “first, do no harm” is the first thing that has to be considered even in the earliest stage of planning in SL. From the aforementioned vignette, it can be gleaned that being on the street, being resented by people who consider them nuisance, and exposing themselves to risks and dangers from the environments were “normal situations” for the students. They were used to being independent— that is, no one was taking care of them and that others did not really mind them. However,

in the field of social work, the street children phenomenon is of primary concern, and therefore, the problem has to be addressed. Given the existing problem, would it have been better if students did not do anything or just did nothing rather and just merely observed the street children get hurt and feel neglected in the end?

In this principle, the institution, the faculty, and the service-learners should make sure that their presence in the community would bring no adverse effects. So now, considering this ethical issue, if the one engaged in SL is not sure of the results, would it be better not to do anything at all?

The primary obligation of “doing no harm” may supersede the goal of seeking hands-on knowledge and experiences which may lead to the decision not to undergo SL at all. Avoiding “harm” is of primal significance, but doing so or being able to determine harm may be more complex than what one can imagine.

Too Much Expectations or Mismatched Expectations?

The “Messianic Syndrome” is a term coined to describe a person’s behavior of showing that he/she knows everything and can “provide anything,” and therefore has the power to change and solve problems of the community. Since students’ identities when getting into the community are attached to the name of the institution where they study, the common impression (or misconception) of people is that they have money and they have come to help them with their needs or problems.

Vignette 3:

Another group of service-learners adopted a newly-established high school as partner in their “Creative Children’s Rights Education”. This project was decided by the group because one of the members was a sponsored child of an NGO and she was trained very well on the topic of children’s rights.

Anonang High School had started operating only two years ago. They lack basic facilities such as classrooms, computers, chairs and tables, and school signage to mention some. The teacher-in-charge had a very welcoming attitude towards the service-learners with

recognition of their limitations. The series of training on the topic, with input on leadership skills and teambuilding, were conducted every Saturday for five weeks.

When the project was almost at its end, there were concerns raised from students of the partner school that maybe SCC can donate something for the improvement of their school. There was also a query from a barangay official during the culmination activity of how can the Barangay be a partner of the school and be given assistance in its needs.

SCC's reputation in communities is that of being a service-provider that extends capacity-building and training, engages in enterprise development, gives livelihood, initiates food or cash for work, and distributes goods to evacuees, to mention a few. Hence, when students go into communities for SL, there is the usual perception that SCC is "rich" because it has funding.

Looking deeply into this concern, one can also see that this is an issue of protection of service-learners vis-à-vis dealing with community expectations that is beyond the scope and scale of their capacity. In understanding this, there is a need to consider the question of how to respond to community "requests" without disappointing them. On the other hand, there is also a need to protect community people from having too much expectations from the students so as not to raise false hopes. In brief, the question is on how to do the levelling off and the expectation check to ensure that needs of the host community and capacities of service-learners are properly matched?

Going Out and Beyond the Plan

To reiterate, SL is integrated in the course Social Welfare Project/Program Development and Management. Students are guided from the process of community assessment, planning, and conception of the project proposal to the implementation of the approved project and monitoring and evaluation. In the following vignette, the dilemma revolves around the question of whether or not to distort the plan to cater to the expressed needs of the community people.

Vignette 4:

The community of Barangay Milaya is home to Christian migrants and indigenous peoples who live harmoniously with each other. The main source of families is farming so there is an abundant supply of agricultural products. “Nito” which is woven into baskets, plates, fruit trays and other crafts by the IPs, are also abundant in forest areas. Most of the women are only staying at their homes growing vegetables in the backyard and accompanying their small children to day cares.

During the area visitation of social work students from SCC, they were able to talk to a woman who engages herself to handicraft production using “nito” and who also expressed her willingness to teach the skill to others who are interested if there is a chance. This gave them the idea of pursuing a project which they dubbed as “Karagdagang Kita Para sa Pamilya”.

Eventually, the service-learners opened up this opportunity to senior social work students who are assigned in the place for their field practice who in turn helped them to talk to the women. They right away embraced the idea saying that “if possible, we also want to organize a cooperative and have it registered”. They also asked if the service-learners can also teach them food processing and preservation using the agricultural products which they produce so that they can maximize their income from it.

The students’ approved project proposal only allowed them to facilitate skills transfer of “nito” handicraft to interested members of the community, but their capacity can actually accommodate the request. In this case, would going beyond what had been planned be allowed if both parties agreed? If yes, what would be the possible implications to students’ resources? What are the implications on students’ grades given that they will be doing more? How can the enthusiasm of the community be responded with a “no”?

The SL project of the junior social work students was implemented by tapping the field work students, the college student council, the social work

students' organization, the barangay council, and the Department of Trade and Industry. Particularly, the DTI was requested by the group to check the quality of the handicraft to increase its marketability.

Going Beyond Usual Protocols

The context of North Cotabato, like most parts of Mindanao, is a little different from that of Luzon and the Visayas. Most places are inhabited by tri-people – the migrants and descendants, the Moro people, and the indigenous peoples (IPs) or the Lumads. Both the Moros and the IPs have their own system of governance apart from that of the mainstream barangay structure.

In following courtesy calls and usual protocols prior to SL, it is but normal to go through the process of asking permission and seeking approval from the barangay council and solicit acceptance of informal community leaders. But in communities where there are Moros and IPs, going beyond usual protocols is very important. Before entering an IP community and engaging with indigenous peoples, there is a need for a free prior and informed consent (FPIC) as stipulated in RA 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act. Rituals are done to seek the guidance of the ancestral spirits and the gods of specific creation in their decision-making whether or not to accept the intervention.

In one of the community exposures of my students in History 39 (Mindanao and Sulu Culture and Heritage), the students were brought to a Matigsalug community in Bukidnon to document the specific traditional cultural practices of the tribe which they were still practicing. Courtesy calls were done with the municipal officials through the mayor. But more so, prior approval of the visit was sought from the council of elders of the tribe. During the first night, a ritual was held by butchering three chickens. That ritual repulsed some students who were not used to the sight of how the act was performed.

This is protocol for the Matigsalug which is almost the same with other indigenous tribes. Now, should SL be mindful of going through these processes of paying courtesy to show respect to communities even if students feel uncomfortable in a sense? Or should consensus have been gathered first, prior to making a decision on where to conduct the exposure?

Informed Consent or Informed Decision

This issue has been an emerging one among indigenous peoples or indigenous cultural communities in relation to interventions introduced by external agencies and organizations. SCC is dealing with ICCs in many of its endeavours including SL, but there is also a need to reconsider the use of the term “informed consent” and change it to “informed decision.”

Informed consent is usually taken by service-providers as “we have informed you of everything that you need to know so give us your consent.” If this is the case in SL, then one could not say that reciprocity is started rightly. Informed decision on the other hand, means “we have told you everything that you have to know about us and we are willing to respect your decision whether it is a ‘yes’ or a ‘no.’”

The emphasis of informed decision in civic engagements particularly in SL is giving importance to respect to self-determined decisions. This is also parallel to the social work principles stated in the book of Hancock (1997) entitled, *Principles of Social Work Practice: A Generic Practice Approach*. These principles include respect for human worth and dignity, acceptance, self-determination, and involvement in the helping process and empowerment.

Optimizing Reciprocity

As suggested by the title of this paper, “Optimizing Reciprocity and Informed Decision in Service-Learning Partnership”, the writer would like to highlight from the context of the experience the means to get the optimum reciprocal or mutual gains from established partnerships.

Social work is known as a profession that gives ultimate importance to relationships—the kind of engagement that is established based on mutual consent with due recognition that every human being has inherent worth and dignity and that individuals, families, groups and/or communities have the capacity to change their social realities if helped.

SL, even if done by social work students, is still in a way an intrusion into the normal lives of people. Before the quality of learning provided to the students is considered, there is also an equally important need to be relatively certain that the SL intervention will leave people better off in development terms than before, no matter how small that change is.

But how can reciprocity be optimized in SL? I would like to highlight four points: 1) “keeping the cup half full”; 2) reconsidering empathy rather than sympathy; 3) establishing sustainable relationships; and 4) utilizing linkages.

Keeping one’s cup half full means leaving some space for something new. Teachers involved in SL should not consider themselves as experts but rather as life-long learners who constantly and continuously seek for new knowledge and innovations in the process of knowledge transfer. Speaking from the context of students, it should always be emphasized that there is a wide variety of experiences that await them in the real world. Classroom learning could not “fill their cups”; therefore, students have to go out and match their classroom with community experience through service. This keeps the students’ hunger for new learning continuously ablaze. From such perspective, service-learners will not see themselves as experts or as people who know everything when they go to the community. Rather, their mindset is that they are learners, and the community provides a wide array of resources to learn new things as well as to validate theories they learned from the classroom.

The second way to optimize reciprocity is to inculcate the feeling of empathy rather than sympathy. Simply said, sympathy is “feeling with”; it can also be feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune. Empathy on the other hand has a deeper meaning grounded on respect and genuineness. As defined in the Meriam-Webster’s Dictionary, empathy means “feeling into” or the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Service grounded on empathy is service that is grounded on the needs of the people. Dewey (1938, as cited in Ver Beek, 2006) wrote, “Genuine learning only occurs when human beings focus their attention, energies and abilities in solving genuine dilemmas and perplexities.”

The next point—establishing sustainable relationships—goes beyond formal partnerships that are signified by Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement. Even after SL, the relationship between the community and the teacher, students, and the institution should be continued. The praxis should bring about relationship more than just mere result, emphasize people instead of the project, and focus on building social infrastructure rather than physical infrastructure.

In the absence or shortcoming of resources, capacities or scope and scale of responsibilities of service-learners, the utilization of linkages comes

in. Recognizing limitations in service-learning is not a sin. It is, on the other hand, paving way for an opportunity to extend inclusive service that mobilizes existing resources from both government and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

Relative freedom is enjoyed by many SL practitioners especially those who have already established prior connections. SL practitioners are even viewed sometimes as part of the community's "normal life" and work. Service-learners are a welcome interference amidst community people's usual and routine activities. This may not only be true to community people but also to teachers who have made SL as a regular teaching strategy in courses they handle.

Because of this, ethical concerns that come into the surface are just taken for granted. Mutual gain and benefit is already considered as achieved when the community agreed to take in service-learners thinking that "they have benefited from it anyway." To optimize the results of reciprocity then, we need to "start from where the people are."

Despite ethical issues and concerns, practitioners of SL have no reason to be discouraged. Service has to be done to foster dynamic process of learning. Definitely, the goal is to create positive change—both in the lives of our students and in the lives of the community. As written by Paulo Coelho (2014), "*El mundo cambia con tu ejemplo; no con tu opinion*" ("The world will change by your example and not by your opinion").

Lastly, why then do ethical issues and concerns have to be discussed? We need to discuss it because in facilitating learning through the rendering of service, human beings are involved. Therefore, where humans are involved, no harm should be done, and service-learners are urged to "do it right the first time, and all the time".

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