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SPECIAL ISSUE:

Integrating Practice and Teaching: Anthropology in the Field and in the Classroom

Jean N. Scandlyn, Guest Editor

Editor's Notes, Jean N. Scandlyn 151

ARTICLES

**Engaging Undergraduate Students in Collaborative Research:
The Challenge of Combining Teaching with Practice**, Kreg T. Ettenger 152

Decolonizing Higher Education: The Hard Work of Genuine Collaboration,
Benjamin Jewell, Bethany Mizushima, Kathleen Pickering, Jane Ridgway, and Walter Little Moon . . . 163

**Where the Rhetoric Meets the Road: Collaborative Teaching and Learning
in a Participatory, Sustainable Mountain Development Initiative in Northern Mexico**,
Emilia González-Clements 176

**From Direct to Deferred Reciprocity: Service- versus Community-Based Learning in
International Anthropology Training**, Sarah Hautzinger 192

**Practicing Fieldwork: The Transformational Value of a Collaborative Ethnographic
Field School in Ecuador**, Jean N. Scandlyn, John Brett, and Sharry Erzinger 204

COMMENTARIES

Awards of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology, Carla Littlefield 217

**Reimagining Ourselves and Our Work: A Challenge to My Fellow Anthropologists,
Some Thoughts upon Receiving the 2008 Omar Stewart Award**, Pennie Magee 219

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The Applied Anthropologist

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL

Editor in Chief and Book Review Editor

Jean N. Scandlyn (Ph.D. 1993, Columbia University, Anthropology)
Departments of Anthropology and Health and Behavioral Sciences
University of Colorado Denver, Campus Box 103, P.O. Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217-3364 USA
303-352-3976 office, jscandlyn@ucdenver.edu

Associate Editors

Kreg T. Ettenger (Ph.D. 2004, Syracuse University, Anthropology)
Department of Geography-Anthropology, University of Southern Maine
300 Bailey Hall, 37 College Avenue, Gorham, ME 04038 USA
207-780-5322, ettenger@usm.maine.edu

Robert Guang Tian (Ph.D. 1996, York University, Canada, Anthropology)
Medaille College, 18 Agassiz Circle, Buffalo, NY 14214 USA
716-880-2104, robert.g.tian@medaille.edu

Peter W. Van Arsdale (Ph.D. 1975, University of Colorado at Boulder, Anthropology)
Chair, Human Rights and Social Justice Committee, Society for Applied Anthropology
Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver
102- G Cherrington Hall, 2201 South Gaylord Street, Denver, CO 80208 USA
303-871-3281, pvanarsd@du.edu

Copy Editor

Francesca Nicosia (B.A. 2002, DePauw University, Sociology/Anthropology & Conflict Studies;
M.A. Candidate University of Colorado Denver, Anthropology)
Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado Denver
Campus Box 103, PO Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217-3364 USA

Layout and Production Editor

Jeffrey B. Fuller (attended University of Alaska at Fairbanks, Wildlife Management,
and the University of Oregon, Eugene, Fine Arts and Writing)
Crescent Moon Communications, 3071 Fulton Circle, Boulder, Colorado (CO) 80301-2291 USA
303-543-0542, j.b.fuller@comcast.net

HPSfAA Newsletter Editor

Benjamin Jewell (M.A. 2008, Colorado State University, Anthropology)
School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University
900 South Cady Mall, Room 233, Tempe, AZ 85281 USA
480-206-7651, benjamin.jewell@asu.edu

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The Changing Face of Academic Publishing

With this issue, I assume editorship of *The Applied Anthropologist* after serving three years as an associate editor under the guidance and mentorship of Lawrence F. Van Horn, the sixth editor (he also served as the third editor) of the journal since its founding in 1980. His tenure as editor in chief took the journal through a name change and the production of three years of outstanding volumes filled with peer reviewed articles discussing a wide variety of current topics from primary health care in Laos to neoliberalism and heritage conservation in Peru. On behalf of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology and myself, I wish to thank Dr. Van Horn for his leadership, high standards, dedication to the journal and its readers, and his distinctive ability to help writers achieve clarity and elegance in their prose. I have learned so much from him and hope to continue his work over the next three years. Additionally, I would like to thank Pennie Magee, Rich Stoffle, Kreg Ettenger, Carla Littlefield, and Peter Van Arsdale for their assistance in producing this first issue under my editorship.

Academic publication is changing rapidly, providing challenges and opportunities for professional journals with small circulations such as ours. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors and members of the society to explore alternative avenues for publishing and indexing *The Applied Anthropologist*. The journal's mission, to explore "how humans approach, analyze, and develop solutions to cultural, ecological, economic, and technological problems" could not be more relevant today, and the articles we publish need to reach the broadest possible audience.

In this issue of the journal I wear two hats: one as the new editor in chief and the other as the guest editor of a special issue on "Integrating Practice and Teaching: Anthropology in the Field and in the Classroom," the theme of the annual spring meeting of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology held in April 2007 in Denver, Colorado. For that conference I invited papers that address the interaction between teaching and practice as conceived broadly to include formal classroom instruction and the informal teaching that occurs as part of everyday interactions in the course of practicing anthropology. Teaching and learning are fundamental elements of anthropological practice inside or outside the academy as we document, analyze, and engage in rich encounters for the transmission of knowledge. We speak of learning from the people that we study, of viewing them as our teachers and collaborators in the collection and analysis of data and in formulating research questions and projects. But we also teach them about other ways of viewing the world, about finding significance is what is taken for granted, and about examining social phenomena systematically. How does our practice of anthropology inform and transform our teaching, both formally in the classroom and less formally in the field, working with students and with members of other disciplines, community leaders, and members of the groups or institutions that we study? How does what we teach in the classroom inform and transform our practice in the field?

The special issue is followed by a special section on awards given by the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology and the talk given by Pennie Magee, recipient of the Omer Stewart award in 2008.

I look forward to working with those who would submit material for consideration for publication. Editors are always looking for good articles to publish, so do not hesitate to contact me with your submissions. Please see the guidelines for authors at the end of this issue and the earlier page giving contact information for the editor in chief and the associate editors.

Engaging Undergraduate Students in Collaborative Research: The Challenge of Combining Teaching with Practice

Kreg T. Ettenger¹

Abstract

This paper explores the various dimensions of incorporating applied anthropology into teaching through classroom and field experiences. The context for this discussion is my developing program of research on tourism in the Cree communities of Northern Quebec, where I worked as a consultant for ten years before taking a teaching position. This paper explores the positive aspects of involving undergraduate students in applied research, including the impact on their skills and understandings. It also looks at the challenges of combining teaching with practice, from the pedagogical to the logistical. Finally, I discuss how the added dimension of collaborative research further complicates the combination of teaching and practice, while creating new opportunities for exploring important methodological and ethical issues. [engaged learning, undergraduate research, field courses, tourism, collaborative research]

Introduction

As many teachers and practitioners of applied anthropology know, collaborative forms of research are often complex and demanding. Engaging students in one's research is also a challenge, especially at the undergraduate level. To combine the two while being an effective teacher is not for the faint of heart. This article describes my experiences during my first four years teaching only undergraduate students at a mid-sized public university in a department where I am the sole faculty member teaching cultural anthropology. Like Roberts (2001), I am attempting what might optimistically be called an "incremental implementation" of an applied anthropology curriculum, including research opportunities, for our students. I am also a former consulting anthropologist who had a decade of experience in applied research before taking a teaching job. In responding to the questions raised by the editor of this special issue regarding what our research practice does for our teaching, and what our teaching does for our practice, I draw upon both parts of my career.

To understand how my practice has influenced my teaching, and vice versa, it might help to know how I became an applied anthropologist, and later a teacher. In the first instance, I was a latecomer to the field of anthropology. Having completed a B.S. in geosciences at Penn State in the mid-1980s, I had something of a revelatory experience the following year while driving around the U.S. in an old Chevy Suburban, hiking and camping in

national parks and reading books like *A Sand County Almanac* (Leopold 1949) and *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich 1968). My environmental awareness was nurtured in the back of that Suburban, and on the trails of Yosemite, Redwoods, Zion, Arches, and other national parks and works of nature. I then entered an environmental science graduate program at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, where I worked as an intern on an environmental education project in Ahmedabad, India. I spent eight months in that dense, dusty city, learning at least as much about myself as about Indian environmental issues. The main thing I gained was an appreciation of the role of human beings in environmental problems. Hence was born my interest in anthropology, and in particular environmental and applied anthropology.

Around this time (the early 1990s), the Quebec Cree were engaged in a very public battle over Quebec's plans to dam the Great Whale River. Following completion of my master's thesis at SUNY, I ended up as a cultural anthropology doctoral student next door at Syracuse University, studying the Cree from an environmental anthropology perspective. In 1993 I went to McGill University for one year as a visiting research student in the Anthropology of Development program. This was the point at which my own education moved from the theories and case studies of the classroom to the real world of people, politics, and the transformative power of anthropological

knowledge. I worked under Colin Scott, who had studied in James Bay since the 1970s, and in the spring of 1994 I was hired as his assistant on a project to collect Cree testimony on the impacts of the La Grande Hydroelectric Complex, the first phase of the James Bay Project. The stories we collected, of rivers dammed, family hunting territories flooded, and new roads that brought sport hunters to the land and drugs and alcohol into the Cree communities, had a powerful effect on my own social and political consciousness (Scott and Ettenger 1994). Although I did not know it at the time, it was from that point that I became committed to the ideals of applied or action anthropology. What I did know is that I felt a sense of profound injustice when sitting across the table from an old man talking about how the land he loved was now underwater or an old woman telling about her sons who were now working in the community and spending their pay on beer and video poker in the dingy bars of Val d'Or during weekend road trips. My knowledge of Cree culture and the complexity of their social challenges has expanded since that time, but I am still interested in understanding and, when possible, assisting in the transition they are making from their traditional lifestyle to a new reality (see Ettenger 2004b and 2005 for an analysis of change in Cree society and the role anthropologists have played in this transition).

Over the next ten years, while completing my dissertation on Cree land use issues, I worked off and on as a research consultant for the Cree government. I conducted studies related to land use, resource management, environmental impacts, and cultural heritage preservation (Ettenger 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b). Professionally, I learned to bridge the gaps between research and policy, to think and act quickly while in the field, and to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. I also learned (not completely successfully) to accept the conditions that consulting brings: copious travel, often on short notice; less than ideal accommodations and food; firm deadlines for research products; and the financial uncertainty that comes with short-term projects. Despite these challenges, I found consulting to be a rewarding and intellectually stimulating way to make a living. Perhaps most rewarding was the belief that my

work was helping the Cree achieve important goals with respect to land rights, political sovereignty, cultural autonomy and economic self-determination. My life as a consultant in the Cree communities, working with regional and local Cree officials and interviewing real people about real problems, forged my identity as a researcher. Without these experiences—had what I learned been mainly from books and journals, had my research been mainly in libraries and archives, or had my fieldwork been focused on academic rather than applied questions—I would not be the researcher I am today.

Like many consultants, I remained engaged in academic circles through conferences, journals and other means. Occasionally, I also taught courses in anthropology and Native Studies. Partly as a result of this connection with wider debates, I became more interested in working collaboratively with communities and organizations, rather than simply applying my own expertise to a problem. This was also a reaction to growing concern among the Cree that they had become highly dependent on outside researchers while not building up their own expertise in certain areas, including social science research. Many younger Cree were searching for employment, and some wondered why outside consultants continued to come into the communities to do work that local people might be trained to do. Also, the imposition of outside ideas and theories on the Cree, and the taking of information and knowledge from them, were increasingly being treated with skepticism by Cree political leaders and activists alike. I grappled with some of these issues in my doctoral dissertation, which eventually became an examination of the way that local knowledge is used in political negotiations, and the role of anthropologists in that process (Ettenger 2004a).

Meanwhile, others who worked directly with the communities on a long-term basis, including archaeologist David Denton of the Cree Regional Authority, were insisting on collaborative approaches and building these into research projects. The Nadoshtin Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Program (ACHP), which Denton devised and with which I was involved from 2002 to 2005, is a case in point (Denton, Ettenger and Moses 2003). The ACHP involved

teams of young Cree researchers working with elders and some outside experts to document the prehistory and oral history of the Eastmain River near the new EM-1 reservoir. A Cree Program Coordinator and an Advisory Committee of elders and community representatives oversaw the multi-million dollar project. The collaborative structures and processes developed under the ACHP are continuing under new funding related to the EM1-A/Rupert Project, which involves the damming and diversion of the Rupert River. My work with the ACHP has substantially informed my thinking on what a truly collaborative research project looks like and the benefits of collaboration for those involved.

Developing a Program of Teaching and Research on Tourism

Consulting has its rewards, but financial stability and employment benefits are not among them; hence, in 2004 I decided to accept a job as Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern Maine (USM). USM is a mid-sized public institution with three campuses in the greater Portland and Lewiston-Auburn area. Its combined enrollment of roughly 11,000 makes it the largest school in the University of Maine system. I teach in the Department of Geography-Anthropology, a small department (six full-time faculty) that offers a combined major with concentrations in either discipline. As the only full-time cultural anthropologist, I am responsible for offering the bulk of our introductory, mid-level, and upper-level ethnographic and methods courses. Some of these now contain components focusing on my applied work. My main incorporation of research in teaching, however, is a summer field course that I have run for the past three years in northern Quebec, described below.

While full-time teaching creates definite limits on research time, I have tried to maintain an active research program in the Cree communities. The focus of this research in the past three years has been tourism, an area the Cree are exploring as they focus on local economic development. In an article published in 2005 I described Cree tourism as an area in which anthropologists should become more

involved because it holds both economic potential and the ability to support other priorities of the Cree communities, notably cultural heritage protection. That same year I initiated dialog with the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA), an indigenous organization charged with developing this sector of the Cree economy. Initial conversations led to the development of a collaborative research program that, while still in its early stages, holds the potential to support COTA and the Cree while providing opportunities for students and researchers at USM.

COTA was established under the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, but did not really achieve momentum until the 2002 signing of the “New Relationship Agreement” between the Crees and the Province of Quebec (Ettenger 2004b, 2005). This agreement provided secure funding and institutional support for COTA and led to the hiring of an Executive Director, the election of a board of directors, and the development of a website, marketing campaign, and other activities. My work with COTA is designed to support their efforts at tourism development while also providing them with data, feedback, and analysis that should lead to more effective policies and practices in regional tourism. The other goal of the research program is to provide opportunities for undergraduates at USM to learn about, experience, and develop skills in applied anthropology research and methods. In addition to classroom courses that incorporate this research, I developed a summer field course that focuses on tourism and is specifically designed to support the ongoing research project with COTA.

In this special issue Editor Jean Scandlyn asks us to consider how our practice has influenced our teaching, both in and out of the classroom, and how our teaching has in turn affected our practice. In thinking about these questions, I realized that while I do not explicitly focus on my applied research in most of my classes, my *beliefs* about anthropological research—specifically, the belief that all such research should contribute not just to human knowledge, but also to the solution of human problems—pervade my teaching. These beliefs

affect everything from my choice of texts to the assignments I design and the research I expect students to do. The remainder of this article tries to address the questions raised by the editor while describing challenges I have faced in my attempts to combine teaching and practice within my own department and university.

Developing Applied Research Opportunities for Students

My initial job description stated that the department was searching for an applied anthropologist, but the reality of our small interdisciplinary department is that many basic courses need teaching and that is where I have focused my efforts. I have taught eight existing courses in the major over four academic years, most of them multiple times. No doubt this situation is familiar to other faculty in small departments struggling to meet the needs of majors and provide general education offerings. I mention it here only to illustrate that while I was brought in as an applied anthropologist, and in theory my colleagues are supportive of my goals in this area, the current reality in my department makes this nearly impossible to achieve. My approach has therefore been to incorporate my research practice into existing courses so that students can gain applied skills and experience while still meeting requirements for the major. I have brought examples of my work into nearly all of my courses, from an introductory cultural anthropology course to upper-level courses on ethnographic methods, anthropological theory, and public anthropology. These efforts introduce students to the main goals, methods and critiques of applied and collaborative research. A more substantial attempt to infuse research into teaching came in 2007 when I offered an upper-level course called *Indigenous Peoples and Tourism*. Students conducted a market survey in collaboration with COTA at two sportsman shows in Maine and met with COTA officials and community representatives at the shows. Other than the field course, described below, this class was the most substantial effort to date to combine my applied research and teaching at USM.

When I came into the department I saw an opportunity for an ethnographic field course for

students interested in cultural anthropology that would also meet the department's field course requirement. My first summer (2005) I took five students into the field, building upon past relationships and contacts in the Cree world. Four of these students took part in an archaeology field course supervised by a colleague and organized by the collaborative ACHP. By the next year I had established a relationship with COTA and met with their directors to discuss an applied ethnographic field course. They liked the idea of having students engage in tourism activities and then report on their experiences to COTA and the participating communities, and we agreed on a general format and itinerary for the field course.

In August of 2006 I took seven students to the field, visiting five communities over two weeks. We spent some time doing ecotourism activities, taking a short canoe camping trip with a middle-aged couple who are experienced tourism guides, and spending two days in a traditional fishing camp on the Rupert River. These experiences, and shorter visits to other communities, were described in a fifty-page report presented to COTA at a board meeting the following January. The reaction to the report, and especially to the involvement of students as tourists and researchers, was highly favorable, and led to us being invited back for a similar trip the following summer. In 2007 the trip was a week longer, involving four communities. We also visited two traditional gatherings, annual events held by several communities at historic village sites. These events are viewed as potential tourist attractions as they tend to focus on traditional foods and activities, which most tourists are seeking. A total of five female students took part, one of whom was from another Maine college. In terms of training and data collection, this course was better designed than that of the previous year. Students conducted interviews in the communities and engaged in participant observation at the gatherings. In terms of student satisfaction the course came up short, in part because the students were expecting to do what their predecessors did: canoe, camp, and engage in cultural activities. The gatherings were enjoyable, but are not highly structured. Other than

participating in a few craft workshops, most participants go there to relax and socialize with family and friends. Students were not sure how to react or what to do in these settings, either as tourists or as researchers, leading to a general sense of uncertainty about what we accomplished.

In terms of balancing teaching and research during the field course, I am still trying to find the right mix between the needs of students, the expectations of the Cree communities, and my own research needs. Some field schools (e.g., Gmelch and Gmelch 1999; Grant et al. 1999; Stafford, Carpenter, and Taylor 2004) are mainly designed to provide students with methodological training and field experience, while others (e.g., Diamante and Wallace 2004; Iris 2004; Roberts 2004; Van Arsdale 2004) place community needs and research agendas either before or on par with methodological training. For an applied, collaborative research program like the one I am trying to develop, it is essential that the field course (and other student research) contribute to the larger goals of the project. To this end, I have tried to negotiate a role for students that is meaningful and logical both to them and to the communities. For the time being this involves students acting as users and evaluators of local tourism facilities and activities, and reporting their findings to the communities and to COTA. Eventually, if the field course expands in its scope (especially with respect to time in the field), this research goal may be expanded as well, with students working with individual communities or with COTA on collaboratively identified research needs.

Influence of Applied and Collaborative Research on Teaching

My background in and commitment to applied research and collaborative models have influenced my teaching in several ways. For one thing, being a consultant has given me a much greater appreciation of the need to be accurate, fair, and ideologically honest (if not exactly neutral) in my teaching. I have written about this in a previous article (Ettenger 2004b) in which I was critical of anthropological accounts of the Cree that continue to depict them as a monochromatic hunting society despite

profound changes in their economy and society over the past 30 years. My skepticism stems in part from what I perceive as the negative consequences of over-romanticizing indigenous cultures. The opportunity to engage with local and regional officials who are struggling with complex economic, social, and cultural challenges—as well as the time I have spent in the communities working with local residents—makes me highly critical of ideologically biased, simplistic, or inaccurate accounts of Cree society, many of which are based on limited experience or outdated information. Ironically, applied anthropologists are often seen as the *most* biased observers of cultures they describe due to the fact that they are often called upon to support their clients' claims. But honest appraisals of the social problems we study are often what we are paid to provide. We owe our students that same level of honesty as we address them in our classrooms or in the field. My interest in Cree tourism stems in part from my belief that it can support local goals and values without being tied uncritically to idealized depictions of past ways of life.

Collaborative approaches and methods also influence my teaching. Students benefit from being taught by someone who is not only familiar with the communities being studied, but actively engaged with them in collaborative research that provides a feedback loop for our potentially inaccurate or value-laden depictions of their ways of life. As Iris says, "Over the last two to three decades, the climate of research with indigenous populations has shifted, from one of unrestricted access and total academic independence to an environment that emphasizes responsiveness and accountability to both local communities as well as larger social and political units" (2004: 70). The first step in introducing collaborative methods and values to students comes through course readings, lectures and other materials, and in class discussion. Books and articles on collaborative (cf., Harrison 2001) and participatory research are discussed in at least three of my classes, including ethnographic methods. Even in introductory and mid-level courses I often refer to the nature of my relationships with the Cree and how this has affected my research. I also

explore issues such as indigenous peoples' relations with non-Natives and the state, which again reflect my experiences working as an applied research consultant for the Cree and other Native peoples.

One way to reinforce collaborative ideals is to invite officials and other community representatives to share their views directly with students. Several Cree have visited USM in the past three years, including COTA Executive Director Robin McGinley as well as some younger Cree who worked on the ACHP. McGinley, who visited in the spring of 2007, gave presentations and engaged in discussion in two courses, including an upper level seminar course for majors that I co-taught with the Provost who at that time was a geographer and member of my department. I note this because Robin's comments about research collaboration with indigenous communities helped inform the university's highest academic officer about an important aspect of my own research and a growing area of concern for applied practitioners. Inviting community partners into the classroom for discussion of critical issues also shows students that we respect these individuals' knowledge and experiences as equal to our own, and that they can play a meaningful role in the construction of scientific knowledge.

Collaborative values are reinforced during my ethnographic field course, when communities have some control over the research we are conducting and how we carry it out. This can be disconcerting to students as they are generally unaccustomed to giving up control over their actions to anyone other than their instructor. I make it clear in each community whom we are working with and for, and in meetings with these individuals I often let them set the tone for the parameters of our visit. This might include negotiating the aims and products of our research, and letting their needs determine much of what we do. Students get to see how research goals, methods, and products are discussed and developed collaboratively rather than imposed on communities to reflect a researcher's needs or interests. This reinforces students' understandings and appreciation of concepts critical to collaborative and participatory research, such as ethics, control, and data ownership.

One challenge of collaborative research is the time it takes to develop relationships and the need for constant adjustment and clarification of research goals at home and in the field. Students may not be comfortable with such fluidity, especially during fieldwork. Already disoriented and unsure of themselves, students are faced with the added uncertainty of what we will find in each community and what we will do there. Some are looking to rapidly apply their basic research skills, and wish to be let loose with surveys in hand or other concrete tasks to perform. A quote from one student's reflective essay, written shortly after returning from the 2007 field course, illustrates this attitude:

It was difficult at times when I felt like we were not solving problems right away when we entered a community. I really wanted things to be black and white and to be able to identify what needed to be solved and how to go about solving it. It became clear very quickly that it was not that simple.

Each time we enter a community we have to invest time and energy in finding the right people, talking to them, and figuring out what we are going to do. This is quite different than the normal classroom-based research experience, or field courses with predetermined goals, methods, schedules, and outcomes in mind. But it is an important value to teach students, and one that can only be taught from within the framework of a collaborative research program grounded in practice.

One of the most challenging aspects of engaging students in collaborative research, for me at least, has been helping them understand how relationships with communities affect things like research access and methods. An example of this came during the 2007 field course while visiting a traditional gathering. An official concerned that a group of university students might be disturbing to residents told us that we shouldn't "go around bothering people with a lot of questions." He also described a group of students from the year before who upset residents through their late-night noise and antics. I took these comments as simple suggestions that we should follow general Cree rules for social behavior, which would permit

talking with people and asking questions (like any other visitor) but not recording conversations or taking notes – certainly not being rude or inconsiderate. For some students, however, these remarks were a pointed challenge to their presence at the gathering. As one student, also enrolled in the 2007 session, said later, “I found it very intimidating...when we were just starting out and we were explicitly warned not to bother people. I felt intrusive and I was very uncomfortable with the whole situation. All I wanted to do was hide in my sleeping bag!” In such a case students can let their natural fear and uncertainty overwhelm them. I suppose if something positive can be said, it is that no one from the communities ever told us that we were breaking an unwritten rule. Then again, the next group after us may have been warned not to act like those *other* Americans who were just here!

The Effect of Teaching on Research

How has being a full time university instructor affected my research practice? While it is still early in my teaching career, already there are some fundamental changes in my research that bear noting. Foremost among these, in practical terms, is the lack of time. Like most university faculty, my field research period has shifted almost exclusively to the summer months. This means that now I must give myself several months (or years) to complete a project, and it is almost impossible to take on work that is subject to other peoples’ deadlines or is a critical part of some larger process, such as a land claim. This effectively removes me from some of the most important and interesting projects with the Cree. During brief visits with former colleagues in the consulting world I am reminded of the types of projects with which I could be involved were it not for the constraints of the academic calendar. At the same time, of course, with teaching comes the possibility of financial stability and planning. Consulting and grants are not essential to maintain the type of research I am currently doing on tourism in the Cree communities. This is a benefit not only to me, but to the communities as well, as they do not have to pay consulting fees and expenses for my services. The field courses are paid for through student fees, which cover their costs as

well as mine. As a result, COTA and the participating communities receive useful products that would otherwise, if provided by consultants, cost them considerably more.

Becoming a teacher has made me restructure the time I spend doing research and the way I think about the life of a research project. As a consultant I worked with definite timelines and end goals, usually measured in months or weeks. I often juggled several projects at once, working on whatever problem had to be resolved at that moment. My schedule was determined by the needs of others, as were the goals of the project. As a teacher I must, and can afford to, take a longer view towards my research. Projects stretch out over the academic year, and then over several years, as issues develop and project goals emerge. While this is largely a result of the limitations of teaching, it is also, conveniently, a more natural model for collaborative research with communities. It allows for processing of ideas and information on both ends, which the communities appreciate. It involves making a commitment to a sustained research program that will likely involve dozens of students and multiple communities and responding to the evolving needs of the Cree with respect to tourism and related issues. There is also the aspect of return trips that is so important to maintaining ties with research communities, yet so hard to guarantee as a consulting anthropologist. While the students are different each time, we have been able to return to several Cree communities for the past three years, including the village where I did my early fieldwork. Communities feel respected by this loyalty, and students witness their instructor welcomed back into a community as a friend, which speaks well of the relationships that can develop over time between anthropologists and the communities in which they work.

Another way in which teaching has affected my research is that it has forced me to reconsider and modify my relationship with the Cree communities from one of an outside expert to that of a partner, facilitator, and learner. My knowledge of tourism was limited (and still is) compared to the expertise of people like Robin McGinley, so I was not selling myself to them as a tourism expert, unlike many consultants. The

resources I bring to bear on the issue are limited to myself, a few undergraduate students, and a bit of university support. This is quite different from a university researcher working with a large grant, for example, who can fund graduate students, organize workshops, hire local assistants or pay for someone's travel to conferences and meetings. This means that I must actually collaborate with the Cree as research partners, not impose a topic, agenda, or methods on them. As one example, I negotiate with COTA and interested communities each year about the goals of the field course, where we will go, and what we will do. I am also honest with them about what we have to offer, and humble enough to realize that I have more to learn from them than they do from me.

A final way that my research has been affected by my teaching is in my consideration of what the goals of my research are, what it should look like, and whom it should help. Because most of my students are new to ethnographic and applied research, my ambitions are limited in terms of the complexity and depth of what they and we produce. For the final report of the field course, for example, I have them focus on straightforward descriptions of our activities and observations. As a result, our research findings are rather basic—but this is just what many communities are looking for. They do not need a complex presentation of ideas and theories about tourism or an in-depth analysis of the experiences of other places; rather, they are typically looking for an easy-to-read presentation of what we found as visitors to help them in their economic planning and management. In short, thinking like a teacher has also helped me to develop a research program that is more relevant and responsive to the needs of the communities with which I am working.

That said, I am finding the same challenges that Wallace (2004) and others have identified with respect to developing collaborative research programs that involve students. This includes finding research topics that are both interesting to students and relevant to the needs of participating communities. Even when a general topic has been identified, like tourism development, there is a continual process of explanation, justification, and negotiation of

research goals and access to maintain the program. As Wallace has explained it for his own field school in Costa Rica:

At various times over the past few summers I have tried to engage local citizens, and municipal and commercial leaders, to see whether there was interest in encouraging me and my students to carry out targeted research focusing on specific issues of tourism growth and development.... The first year in town we received the key to the city of Quepos for our research reports on tourism, but since then there has been remarkably little interest in generating collaborative, applied research (Wallace 2004:35).

While it helps to know that others face similar challenges, it is discouraging to think that this may be a situation I face perennially. As a research consultant there was never a question of whether the work I did was wanted or useful; now, despite a collaborative approach, there is no guarantee that we will be invited or welcomed as researchers, or that our work will have any meaning or lasting effect in the communities. This is a hard pill to swallow for an applied anthropologist.

Weighing the Pros and Cons

Most articles about engaging undergraduate students in applied research are positive, albeit not without reservations. Some deal with the challenges of having students in the field, and describe travel risks, behavioral problems and other potential pitfalls (e.g., Diamante and Wallace 2004; Iris 2004b; Re Cruz 1996; Wallace 2004). Problems aside, for most of these authors the benefits of engaging students in research outweigh the negatives. Students and former students, for their part, generally have positive things to say about their engagement in applied research (c.f., Berman 2004; Hathaway and Kuzin 2007). While some offer criticisms and suggestions regarding their experiences, most see the opportunity to do actual field and applied research as undergraduates to be an important learning experience, and for many it is a formative part of their academic careers. While I respect the experiences of these faculty and students, I still have reservations and questions

regarding the overall value of engaging students in a program of applied research, especially one that involves close collaboration with a community or other research partner.

The need to protect relationships that one has worked hard to build and maintain should give any researcher or teacher pause before inviting novice anthropologists to join him or her in the field. The burden on communities of additional visitors, especially ones asking many questions, is just one factor to be considered. Students can test the boundaries of appropriate cultural behavior, often without knowing it, and may place themselves or others in awkward or even dangerous situations. And while students generally take away considerable knowledge from their first fieldwork experience, they can also leave with misperceptions, disappointments, and a sense of confusion, especially if the experience is too brief or unstructured. Negative encounters, at least as perceived by the students, are also a danger. Interactions with other students, the instructor, and community residents can all affect outcomes. Students can be inspired by their experience to become anthropologists, but they may just as easily be motivated to leave the discipline or not pursue further studies. I have seen all these results and more in just three years of field schools. These problems are significant enough to require careful analysis and consideration regarding the overall costs and benefits of engaging students in a field-based, collaborative research program.

Of course, my experiences are limited in a number of respects. The challenges I have faced are based on a handful of junior and senior undergraduate students, generally in their early twenties. Fewer than half are likely to pursue graduate studies or become practicing anthropologists. I am also fairly new to full time teaching and bringing students into my research. Consequently, the experiences and observations described are those of a novice teacher-practitioner still learning how to involve students effectively in applied research, and how to bring my own research into my teaching. And, of course, to say that one particular research site or project does not lend itself to a positive experience for students, or to meaningful data

collection, does not mean that this is a generalizable conclusion. Wallace (2004) describes going through several iterations of his own ethnographic field course, with initial disappointments followed by increasing levels of success and student satisfaction as the field sites, methods, and objectives changed.

Conclusions

Engaging undergraduate students in an applied, collaborative research program has proven to be highly challenging. In the most positive terms, students gain an appreciation of real-world problems while developing skills and confidence as field researchers. They get a better understanding of the complexity of communities and of the difficulties of doing research and generating knowledge. They also bring an added dimension to the field, creating new linkages and seeing things in different ways. On the downside, having students accompany one in the field can be difficult, frustrating, and ultimately disappointing. It means dealing with challenges in everything from logistics and data collection to emotional and interpersonal problems. The expectations of students may be unrealistic despite efforts to inform them beforehand of likely conditions and challenges. As novice fieldworkers they often do not have the tools to conduct research efficiently and evenly, and their presence means that I cannot be as effective a researcher either. I spend most of my time worrying about what *they* are learning rather than what *I* am learning. And there is constant concern about their safety, comfort, and satisfaction with the experience. Unfortunately, this worry does not always guarantee success in research, nor lead to students who want to pursue anthropology as a career.

In short, I am unconvinced that the benefits of engaging my students in applied research outweigh the negatives, at least for now. But I am willing to concede that it is still early in my efforts, and that I can improve my combination of teaching and practice in numerous ways. I look to more experienced colleagues who share their own experiences in print, at conferences, and in conversations. I also take note of what students say and to feedback from the communities. I expect that my former students

will report back to me in several years about how their experiences have affected them in the long run. I hope these reports are favorable, although I know some students will be engaged in careers that have little to do with their degrees or their work with me. Perhaps the other lessons that come with applied anthropological research, such as appreciating the complexity of cultures, applying concepts like relativism, or being flexible in the face of new situations, will help them in their lives. Possibly the most mundane lessons—such as learning how to get along in an RV full of other unhappy campers, how to use an overfilled outhouse without becoming sick, or how to do things for yourself when your teacher is too tired to do them for you—will be the ones that last.

Let I leave on that sour note, let me say that I intend to continue trying to combine teaching with applied research, at least for now. I do see potential in engaging students in research, although I see this as benefiting the students more than the research. On the other hand, I am learning things now that I never would have learned without the element of teaching in my research. These lessons should help me become a better researcher, more attuned to the needs of the communities with which I work. Teaching while doing research means you must always be thinking about how someone else is seeing what you are seeing, and ensures that you consider the needs of others, be they students or community partners. That in itself makes for good research practice. ○

Notes

1. Kreg Ettenger's Ph.D. in cultural anthropology is from Syracuse University. He is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern Maine, where he teaches courses on cultural anthropology, ethnographic methods, indigenous peoples, ecological anthropology, and digital ethnography. He has worked as a consultant on a number of issues related to land, resources, and cultural heritage. Since 2005 he has been studying tourism development in the Cree communities, including the linkages between tourism, sustainable development, and cultural heritage. He can be reached at the

Department of Geography-Anthropology, University of Southern Maine, 300 Bailey Hall, Gorham, Maine 04038. He may also be reached by email at ettenger@usm.maine.edu, or by phone at 207-780-5322.

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Decolonizing Higher Education: The Hard Work of Genuine Collaboration¹

Benjamin Jewell,² Bethany Mizushima,³ Kathleen Pickering,⁴
Jane Ridgway,⁵ and Walter Little Moon⁵

Abstract

Higher education assumes a pedagogy in which academics transfer specialized and exclusive knowledge down to students and community members serving as “research subjects.” This coloniality based model of higher education has been severely critiqued and substantially revised by applied anthropologists committed to a collaborative model of co-equal knowledge acquisition and exchange between academics and culturally distinct communities. This paper addresses some of the challenges in implementing a genuine collaborative model from the perspective of academics, students, and community members, in the context of research conducted on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. By meeting these challenges, genuine collaboration will transform the academic paradigm of appropriation by integrating community participants, modeling ethical practice for students, and improving the quality and accuracy of the ultimate research results, removing the artificial seams among teaching, research, and service. [collaboration, methodology, decolonization, Pine Ridge]

Introduction

The inspiration for this paper grew out of a seven-year longitudinal research project on household economic dynamics on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, which was conducted by Professor Kathleen Pickering from Colorado State University. In the course of randomly selecting household participants, Jane Ridgway and Walter Littlemoon, together with other household participants and Lakota organizations, were part of the constant transformation of the research toward more compelling needs and goals of the Pine Ridge Reservation. Graduate students, like Beth Mizushima and Ben Jewell, brought their own energy, perspectives and ethical journeys into the field, and created their own networks of resources, solutions and relationships with the household participants. Strangers at first, over the years friendships formed and trust was born, opening the door for honest, heartfelt discussions. In this essay Pickering, Ridgway and Littlemoon, Mizushima, and Jewell reflect on the challenges and opportunities surrounding the hard work of collaboration and the birth of human connection. We hope our experiences of joining to take on genuine collaboration will be a model for colleagues across the social sciences and communities across the globe.

Overview, written by Kathleen Pickering

Applied anthropology has been committed to identifying solutions for problems that have been identified by academics through basic research and theory. For example, the mission statement for the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology is to promote “the social and economic betterment of the ethnically and culturally varied human beings and communities with whom we work, and application of principles that explain and improve human relations, and the dissemination of this body of knowledge” (HPSFAA 2008). Sol Tax (1975) initiated a move toward Action Anthropology, which he described as the simultaneous pursuit of helping people solve a problem while gaining scientific knowledge. More recently there is a move toward “Appreciative Inquiry,” where underutilized, positive core strengths of a community can be illuminated to provide a sustainable source of positive energy, and to involve internal and external stakeholders to address the community’s unique needs (Ludema et al. 2003).

From the viewpoint of applied anthropology, the social sciences have farther to go. Finding appropriate solutions depends upon having sufficient culturally embedded understanding and experience to communicate with “ethnically and culturally varied communities” (HPSFAA

2008). That communication should be more than simply describing the results of completed research, although even that basic form of giving back to the community continues to be a shortcoming within much of current social science research. Communities need the opportunity to interpret results and derive their own solutions from those results. More fundamentally, communication should begin before the research is even designed, so that community perspectives are integrated into the research design. Collaboration is the term most frequently used to describe the active creation of shared goals, methods, and funding between academics and local communities to accomplish applied research (Harrison 2001). Although it may be challenging to engage in collaborative work, it results in sound research that can be utilized by the community for appropriate and positive program planning and development (Schensul et al. 1987:11). Collaboration therefore ensures benefits to all parties involved as the community has access to cost-effective and culturally sensitive services, such as grant writing, planning, advocacy and applied research, and researchers have access to research, employment and publications (Stull et al. 1987:41).

Genuine collaboration demands certain constants, like mutual respect, consensus, power sharing, transparency, and learning in two directions. Many barriers remain to achieving genuine collaboration, stemming from the often implicit legacy of colonial domination that was buried in the foundations of higher education. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), exposed the assumptions of privilege and power behind which academics have been trained to hide while transforming indigenous peoples into their subjects. More recently, Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson challenge the assumptions of power and control embedded in the university structure in their call to "indigenize" the academy for the empowerment of native communities (2004: 31-32).

This call to decolonizing higher education reignites our commitment as applied anthropologists not only to be aware of local concerns but also to remove the colonial

attitudes of control, superiority, and power that constitute the unacknowledged gorilla in the living room of our professional lives. We must have the courage to admit clearly who is teaching and who is learning when social scientists set forth to "help" local communities. We must own the unstated messages we convey to our students in higher education about appropriating knowledge, dominating discourse, and elevating specialization above the social integrity to be a compassionate human being.

This paper mirrors the transformation of my own thinking over the last twenty years of working on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. I now see the limitations of the applications of my own academic training and acknowledge the greater gifts of understanding, humility, and compassion that Lakota people have conveyed to me. I now appreciate in a more profound way the need to develop a collaborative language that appreciates distinctive world views and knowledge systems and is committed to an exchange of ideas and support among equals across a level playing field (see Sherman 2006).

I. Reservation Participant Voices: written by Walter Littlemoon and Jane Ridgway

Over the last several years, we have come to appreciate the efforts of Dr. Pickering and her graduate students to incorporate practical application of their research projects on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where we live. At the same time we realize that there are major obstacles innate to the reservation which need to be recognized, understood, and addressed before any long lasting, significant, positive changes can be brought about that will improve the well-being of the residents here. We hope our point of view, as participants from the reservation, will aid those working in the field of applied anthropology to achieve their ultimate goal – "to make our world a better place."

Historical trauma, multigenerational trauma, intergenerational trauma, complex post-traumatic stress, and psychosocial rehabilitation are big important words. Psychologists use them, as do psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists, and other scholars, to describe the psychological and physical devastation encompassing generations

of oppressed peoples. They form teams to study them, hold conferences to discuss them, and write tomes filled with charts, graphs and statistics to describe them. Those big words describe the suffering of millions of individuals who have survived acts of genocide and war brought on by the leaders of nations as they rally their troops under words of righteous indignation.

Those scholarly words describe the spider's web that has ensnared our lives on the Pine Ridge reservation. Their impact grows when coupled with an impoverished, sparsely populated, remote location. Most important, those words are incorporated into the personalities of children as they develop their understanding of the world, their relationship in it, and their response to it. Statistical numbers reflecting those words go off the charts in "Indian Country." On Pine Ridge, an area nearly the size of the state of Connecticut, teenage suicide is three times the national average. Higher still are the death rates for alcohol and drug related deaths, infant mortality, diabetes, tuberculosis, and countless other devastating conditions.

Difficulties in attempts to "make the world a better place" arise when the pervasive impact of these traumas are not recognized or understood. These traumas play out in our everyday life during the moments that we are communicating in everyday language. When everyday words join in with those scholarly words — frustration, distrust, fear, anxiety, confusion, and hopelessness — more people are able to comprehend them, and the possibility to work together toward positive solutions grows.

The impact of trauma can play out in different ways because we are humans with different personalities. Outsiders have called our ancestors "noble" and "beautiful." We want very much to be like our ancestors, but generations of negative changes have left those of us raised on the reservation in disarray. "What you learn intellectually lies in the shallow pools among the wrinkles of your brain. What you learn through the skin of experience sinks deep into your roots."⁷ Most of our children have been born into chaos and chaos has shaped them. We strive for peace and

contentment yet we have all but lost the way. We need a multifaceted network of help to achieve a more contented life. As long as help comes to us in fragments, we will remain fragmented.

We want to know what the scholars have learned through their research. More importantly, we want to be able to understand how that research can be applied toward our goals. We acknowledge that each profession has formed its own vocabulary to facilitate communication within their group, and that's okay. We have in our lifetime experienced the evolution of our own language, as well as of the English language. It seems quite often to be brought about through advances in technology and, of course, through the creativity of teenagers. However, when it comes to improving lives through the sharing of ideas and implementing plans of action between two cultures, we find friendly conversation, using simple words, to be the most useful for all involved.

In this paper, we share some of what has shaped us for applied anthropologists to consider. You have written books about us that we have never seen, or if we have, we rarely can comprehend their language. You have read the laws that have impacted on our lives and, again, few of us have seen them — though we have heard of them through word of mouth. You are called "experts" and people outside of the reservation turn to you for your knowledge. But who is an expert? A man we knew years ago was called to speak before a Senate committee because they considered him an expert. When he rose to address the Senators gathered there, he said: "Do you know the definition of the word 'expert'? It is a person who carries a briefcase and is more than 50 miles from home." That appears to many of us on the reservation to be true. Many of us are intimidated and feel diminished when in the presence of an outside expert.

Of all the laws, acts and treaties that the dominant society has placed on us, we feel the imposition of the boarding schools, both Catholic and federal, have been the most destructive. More than one generation of us were taught in them. They were meant to be institutions of learning, but were instead institutions of destruction. A Jewish counselor

once said that the impact of the Indian Boarding Schools on our people was as if “the concentration camp survivors from the Holocaust had to watch their children be taken away and placed in a camp” (personal communication, Jayme Shorin, n.d.). Those of us who were sent to the boarding schools as five- or six- year-old children were beaten and punished over many years to instill a different way of life, and from what we observed we learned behaviors that we should never use in our lives. When we became teenagers and young adults, the boarding school experiences stayed within many of us as anger and frustration. We have had a hard time expressing ourselves as adults. Some committed suicide, some drank themselves to death, and others just gave up and didn’t care whether they lived or died.

Those of us who have tried to carry on have found little on the reservation to give meaning to our lives. We have developed unique behaviors in order to survive. Our conversations tend to be guarded, and we frequently withdraw and fade into the background in a crowd, rarely stepping forward to participate. We cut conversations short just to get away from others; we tend to be suspicious of people, meetings and group activities. For many of us there are no feelings of freedom, or pleasure. Nothing. We are just there — silent observers of our own lives. We feel a need to be close, but just “close by,” not really involved. Few of us learned how to parent or form close relationships, as we spent all but three months away from home as children. Yes, we are individuals with differing personalities. Some of us can “put on a good show,” but in our quiet moments the show is over. Our children have learned through observation and follow the same path.

Along with the negative impact of the boarding schools, when we were very little children our mothers taught us to run and hide if a strange car approached. In those days, Mormons and others often came onto the reservation to kidnap children who they judged to be living in unsatisfactory conditions. So we were fearful of outsiders from a very young age.

At times strangers boldly looked in the windows of our homes or boldly walked in unannounced and would begin asking odd

questions. Some of our adults would make up stories just to get rid of them. Unfortunately, some of those tales were written into scholarly books as facts and now return to haunt us, as our younger people believe what they have read — for experts have written them.

These are just a few examples of events in our Lakota lives that have shaped us into who we are today and how we express our selves. Our way of responding to life has been altered from that of our ancestors. The emotional words that surround us like hopelessness, distrust, fear, confusion, frustration; the statistics; our illnesses; our remote location; our degree of poverty; and the substandard levels of formal education all reflect the impact reservation life has had on our people. However, even with all the changes in our lifestyle brought by a more dominant culture and, even though we now primarily speak their English language, we think as Lakota.

When applied anthropologists come to study us, and attempt to implement ideas and programs, we hope they will come realizing they are diplomats in a foreign land. We hope, as diplomats, they will learn a bit of our cultural differences before they come here. In general, we are not hugging people. In general, our jokes are used to lighten uncomfortable moments, to lift spirits, and not used to put down others. We hope they will translate their formal reports back into everyday language so that we too may learn and grow. In fact, we suggest those reports be produced in comic book form as many of us are more visual learners. Also, in translating scholarly reports into comic book form, we feel the anthropologists might find it helpful too. We hope they will recognize that some programs they develop, while potentially good, are confusing and foreign to us, and that we may need them to come again for help in straightening out the wrinkles. Nobody wants to be considered a failure. We hope that the applied anthropologists will come to realize that the impact of our multigenerational trauma at times causes us to feel shy, fearful, or even distrustful in working with others. We will act those feelings out differently, some of us will joke and bluff, some of us will run away, some of us will become argumentative, some of us will

just sit there trying to smile pleasantly. Many won't speak up or ask questions, for in our traditional Lakota way, we tend to listen to another share his plans and ideas, after which we decide as individuals whether we consider his plan to be a good idea. If we agree, we may offer to help, or we may wait to be asked. If we disagree, we will step away. This behavior becomes especially apparent if the idea is presented by an outside expert.

As the household economic project unfolded over the seven years, we recognized some of these behaviors, or at least the temptation to act them out, triggered within ourselves, often wondering how the other anonymous participants were doing with the questions. To begin with, we were offered twenty dollars and a coffee mug and asked: "What is your annual household income?" Whew — what a quandary! We kept our faces smooth and our eyes averted while we thought. On the reservation only government agents controlling "entitlements" ask about income and the answers given are based on the needs of the family to survive.

Sometimes politicians seeking election will come offering gifts and asking a few questions — after all the government is the largest employer, and we have very few jobs. Otherwise, people here will visit each other on occasion and ask: "How are you doing?" "Is everything okay?" If we see a need, we help if we're able to. We care and we share. So, for accepting a mug and twenty dollars to answer those financial questions, we felt we were in a pickle. We joked and then answered painfully and truthfully. As the years went on with the project, we gathered more courage and finally said, "We won't answer that." In retrospect, we wish we had reversed the question and asked: "How many times in an anthropologist's life have strangers come knocking on your door asking: 'What is your annual income?' Is that a respectful question in your culture?"

As time went on, other questions were asked that were psychologically easier to answer — questions about the health system and hunting and gathering. Each time we hoped the answers our anonymous group gave would result in positive changes to our lives here. Few changes, if any, have been seen. However, we have seen positive

changes for many people here from projects that were offshoots of the on-going research.

The first began with a parent who came to us with concerns over a lack of the school system to provide for her daughter's special needs. She mentioned as well another parent whose child was afraid of his second grade teacher. We wondered if other children were experiencing problems within the school system. Dr. Pickering and her students offered their help in compiling a survey/questionnaire with us. Her students went house to house in our community. Parents answered within the comfort of anonymity and several areas of concern were uncovered. Those responses gave us the ammunition we needed and set us on a path for positive change. The State of South Dakota's Department of Education and senators joined in. The Bureau of Indian Affairs School Superintendent joined in. The Federal Bureau of Investigation joined in. Positive change came hard and fast for those children and their parents. That's collaboration.

We Lakota do think a bit differently than outsiders. Our way of thinking is still Lakota — shaped by the land and nature - not by a city or books. In that way, we are still influenced by our ancestors who were observers of nature and men. Through the years as we have come to know Professor Pickering and her students we have found the common connection — we are human and we all want to help make the world a better place. More important we have a greater appreciation for what she and the students struggle to overcome in order to accomplish our shared goals. Through our relaxed conversations with each other, as friends, we have learned to speak from our hearts and hear more clearly.

II. Student Voices, written by Bethany Mizushima and Benjamin Jewell

The colonial influence within academia is reinforced by the way social science students, especially those studying anthropology, are trained. For graduate students, there are two main barriers to initiating collaborative research that we feel discourage alternative methodological approaches to M.A. theses or Ph. D. dissertations. The first is the institutional structure of academia, where disciplinary boundaries establish an atmosphere of

competition between students and engender a sense of ownership over ideas. Competition between students manifests itself through class performance, finding a unique thesis topic, and conducting individual thesis research. In addition, an emphasis on individuality and individual ownership of ideas and data are expected and rewarded. In general, collaborative work is not emphasized during our educational careers. There is a growing body of literature that critically assesses the pathways in which graduate students ascend to the level of Ph.D. (Brewer 1999; Golde and Gallagher 1999; Fry 2001). Golde and Gallagher (1999) highlight three main barriers in the institutional structure of academia that increase the difficulty of working collaboratively: the structure of bounded academic disciplines, the power of the advisor to shape research, and the requirements of funding agencies. Each emphasizes and perpetuates the individualistic nature of academic research (Golde and Gallagher 1999:282).

In terms of bounded disciplines, students are force-fed the requisite theoretical development of a very narrow field. As students of social science, we are taught to first learn the different theories within our field and then to find the one that best suits our interests. During classroom practice we apply the selected theory to different communities. While this may be good for training, without guidance students may mistakenly believe that it is appropriate to mold a community to the needs of a pre-selected theory, rather than molding the theory to match the unique context of a community. This creates a situation where the theoretical model cannot reflect reality, and the lines between researcher and the researched become painfully distinct.

While learning how to negotiate these structures within academia, students must also address moral and ethical issues of research. These ethical issues are also structured by academia; however, they are less apparent or explicit. For example, if students opt to create their own research project, rather than working collaboratively with their advisor on an established project, relationships with informants must be developed independently. At this point, students need to determine how they

represent themselves to their participants. As social scientists we can approach a community either openly and honestly, or we can purposely obscure or alter our identity and intentions in the belief that “better data” may be obtained with an assumed identity and a hidden agenda. This decision may reflect the beliefs of the student, but we also argue that the colonial structures and barriers in place within academia potentially pressure students into choosing the deceptive route. In addition, the pressure to acquire knowledge which is novel and academically significant can entice researchers to do what it takes to encourage informant cooperation. This deception is often justified by those who participate in it by saying that they would not be provided access to their research endeavor if they were to disclose the truth about themselves. Through class sessions, and the overall prestige of academia, students are taught to speak with mastery and understanding. We learn to synthesize materials, critically analyze them, and then contribute to the academic pool of knowledge, thus making us feel as if we are experts. This builds self-confidence, but without direction or a strong moral sense, this confidence could be transformed into an assumption of power over the research participants, as the researcher controls all the information along with the decision to reveal it. We argue that if you must withhold information and obscure your true identity, then you are working on the wrong research project.

Within the applied anthropological realm, this example of deception of identity is one that rarely occurs, since working with a community towards collective goals depends on building trust and confidence. Trust evolves from a combination of good intentions, open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision making. Strong relationships and a solid sense of obligation towards people you work with inevitably follows. However, as students, we believe this discussion of ethics and obligations towards communities is needed not only in theory and methods classes, but also in all courses where the perspectives of “anthropological objects” could be illuminated. In the same manner in which students are taught to try on theories to see which one fits best,

students should also have discussions to try on ethical dilemmas that arise in applied anthropological research.

Another barrier to collaborative research faced by students relates to embedded tensions between community members and researchers who are outsiders to the community. On Pine Ridge, the anthropological legacy is dark and filled with researchers who have sucked information from the Reservation without giving back or who have disappeared as fast as they appeared; therefore, ethical issues are omnipresent for contemporary social scientists on the reservation. With this context, it is crucial that social scientists be honest about themselves, ensure that the research is driven by the community's needs, and create a collaborative and reciprocal relationship with the research participants. Entering this environment as students has presented particular challenges for us in terms of our ability to be effectively immersed in the social context of Pine Ridge. It is intimidating and discouraging to be repeatedly told by participants that what we are doing has no benefit and is nothing more than a continuation of past exploitations. This type of abrasive introduction into a social environment can be enough to send students packing; however, with consistent guidance by Dr. Pickering, fellow research assistants, and friends from the community like Ridgway and Little Moon, students begin to understand the context of the oppression experienced by the local people, expanding opportunities for meaningful relationships. It is a challenging endeavor to assess and address the needs of a community, especially if the community that you are working with is new to you. It can feel virtually impossible to become embedded within the community, do your research, and then publish in the little time that academia allows. Understanding the community you work in is just like the relationships and friendships you develop outside of academia: the bottom line is that it takes time, commitment, and a true affection for the people you work with. Your research participants then become your teachers, your co-workers, and your friends. As you develop relationships, the research, too, becomes holistic and deeper insights into the needs of the

community are slowly revealed. As a result, the research becomes important to persons other than the researcher, the body of academic knowledge to which it contributes. Real people and real lives can benefit.

The image of an anthropologist in the field independently negotiating the difficulties inherent in ethnographic research is one that is engrained in the lore of anthropological training. This "Lone Ranger" approach to field work has roots in the early period of anthropology and is often encouraged today by academic advisors as a response to who emphasize the financial and logistical difficulties in collaborative student research (Van Arsdale 2008:100). There are, of course, considerable hurdles to incorporating students in research. From the student perspective, however, field schools, particularly those embedded in longitudinal research projects, are critical experiential opportunities on the path through academia.

As academics have been calling for a greater discussion of interdisciplinary research (Naiman 1999; Jakobsen et al. 2004; Conrad 2002; Karlqvist 1999), and as collaborative work produces exciting and positive results, working collaboratively becomes more compelling. Building relationships and understanding the community you are engaged with takes time; therefore, we argue that longitudinal studies are one of the most beneficial methods to utilize. Longitudinal studies provide the opportunity to network and meet new people; the research also benefits from the input and guidance that colleagues and research participants contribute. Longitudinal studies that focus on collaboration with the community can teach students how to conduct research in a transdisciplinary fashion, where drawing upon the ideas and knowledge of community members, other practitioners, and academics can benefit the research exponentially (Fry 2001). Working with an advisor on a longitudinal study provides students access to communities where relationships have been developed. This allows students to see the importance of long-term relationships to the development of genuine collaborative research. Longitudinal research also provides opportunities for students to gain a holistic

perspective of the issues within a particular community by entering an ongoing collaborative project, rather than predefining a research agenda to impose onto a new community. The longitudinal perspective illustrates how an ethically and holistically driven research approach can produce academically sound results that have practical applications for both the local and global community. Students learn to engage in collaborative work with people who bring different resources, skill sets, epistemologies and methodologies to the table, furthering their preparation for careers, academic or not.

As well as instilling competition and individuality, academia instills in students a sense of the need to control and own knowledge. Citations allow authors to point interested readers to the foundational works upon which they have built their ideas, as well as to credit authors with individual ownership of ideas when they publish. This is problematic in the sense that it excludes the knowledge and ideas of those who are not a part of the academic community. With this ownership of ideas comes power: academia therefore excludes community members or practitioners while privileging the researcher. Learning through reality, such as by spending time in the field, is the best way for students to discover that they are not the experts and that they should be humble with respect to the teachings of the community members with whom they work. Through hands-on experience, the learned structures that support academic control, dominance, and other colonial ideals, slowly crumble. This is not to say that working in the field is the end all answer. Fieldwork can be a very tumultuous time for students as they are exposed, often for the first time, to commonly known cultural differences, but also to unexpected differences, like the lived consequences of economic disparity. Through these experiences, students can become connected through personal relationships to the positive and constructive perspectives of culturally distinct communities that inspire intellectual, social, spiritual, and emotional awakenings; these students are the ones that begin to see the larger picture.

III. Faculty Voices: Obstacles to Genuine Collaboration, written by Kathleen Pickering

While genuine collaboration is easy to endorse, it is extremely difficult to find in practice. Significant obstacles to accomplishing genuine collaboration lie in deep, rarely stated contradictions between the way knowledge is constructed in academia and in the knowledge systems of communities of concern to anthropology. Rather than intriguing trivia of cultural difference, these contradictions work silently to perpetuate hierarchy, control, and distance between the social sciences and the communities we as academics imagine we serve. In an effort to stimulate a larger dialogue, I will briefly outline some of those contradictions.

Who is Driving? Theory and Research.

Western academic training is premised upon obtaining abstract knowledge that has universal application and therefore may be learned independently of any concrete situation or application. This premise sets the stage for two obstacles to genuine collaboration. First, the social scientist arrives in communities with the assumption that what they have learned will undoubtedly apply to this new, unknown situation. Second, the reason they are in that community to begin with is driven by an abstractly defined need to test a theoretical hypothesis. Theory is driving the research, rather than the community where the research is located driving the theoretical issues.

To be clear, the solution to this obstacle is not that academics should abandon theory. To the contrary, I would argue that more theoretical rigor would improve both the outcomes and status of applied work in anthropology and other social sciences. The solution lies in changing the chronology of the research agenda to begin with: bringing the issues of theoretical concern to communities where those issues are relevant, before the research is initiated. For example, the theoretical framework for complex post-traumatic stress disorder was a breakthrough that allowed Walter Little Moon and Jane Ridgway to expand and progress in their understanding of the impacts of boarding schools on Lakota communities and families.

Fortunately, Little Moon and Ridgway had the personal capacity to identify a university resource and gain access to the information, theoretical frameworks, and the encouragement that universities have to offer. Many other local people have important insights to solutions for their communities, but feel that outside resources and support are outside their reach. If every social scientist had the obligation to identify communities where their theoretical frameworks might apply, and communicate the significance of that theory to those communities, other similar breakthroughs could occur. This also requires that we encourage funding entities to think more systematically about three-stage grants. These grants would initially cover the costs of developing a collaborative research agenda, upon a second submission would cover the costs of the research itself, and after a final submission would fund implementation and follow through based on research findings and collaboratively designed solutions.

What Time is It? Balancing the Short-term and the Long-term. While academics have acknowledged that time sense is culturally bounded (Pickering 2004), this important insight is completely neglected when it comes to constructing genuinely collaborative academic research. The academy remains completely embedded in short-term thinking. The tenure process, grant deadlines, agency requirements, publication revision schedules, degree deadlines, and the semester structure are all examples where the demands of short-term thinking dominate over the long-term processes of communities in relation to research. While an untenured faculty member may be working with a community toward a fabulous and innovative approach to defining and researching an issue of concern, the grant deadline demands that something be turned in, short-circuiting the community process and putting the power to define the project in the hands of the professor, who feels the pressure to get grants and publish quickly or be denied tenure. While graduate students may feel the importance of establishing a relationship with a community before they define their thesis topic, their paper is due within a sixteen-week semester; they must defend their

research proposal within eighteen months; or they are expected to complete their master's degree within three years. Yet the communities who accommodate these time-constrained academics may have a completely different conception of time. Academics, as well as other entities and agencies working in applied fields, need to respect the organic processes of communities in identifying priorities, making decisions, and implementing plans. Consensus, capacity building, local ownership, and empowerment are all terms that are popular in the social sciences today, but are strangely disregarded when academic practice comes into play. Interestingly enough, by constructing long-term, collaborative research relationships with communities, students and academics can work together to join ongoing projects, as well as being part of the process of creating new research, within a time frame that is both comfortable to the community and capable of complying with the time discipline of the academe.

Where is it Happening? Places of Pedagogy. The university model is still dominated by learning in the classroom. Classrooms, however, are not places where communities can influence the dialogue. To the contrary, classrooms are spaces where faculty can control and dominate the pictures being presented with as much romance or disparagement as they choose, protected from the annoying intrusion of community perspectives. Yet, once again, the theoretical literature on pedagogy all recognizes the superior outcomes gained through hands-on and experiential learning. Learning through reality presents students with the pretty and the dark, the inspired and the traumatic, the unexpected and uncontrolled nature of real life that can lead to workable solutions to community issues, rather than colonial fantasies of other people's lives. Field schools, service learning, and more vigorous recruitment and retention of ethnically diverse students are all attainable methods for reducing the obstacles to genuine community collaboration.

Who Owns This? Takers and Givers. One of the fascinating characteristics of capitalism that is deeply embedded in the academic process is

the colonial drive to appropriate. The lens of appropriation sees only those pieces that can be extracted for the profit and accumulation of the production process. In a completely subliminal way, academics are trained to apply the same lens to knowledge and research. Those pieces of a community's history and culture that we can use to advance our own research agenda we quickly fix on and make our own, leaving out the rest as irrelevant. The products of that appropriation are then used for career advancement, or to build relationships with funders, at times without ever reporting the research results back to the community. The drive toward appropriation is even built into the way graduate students are trained to read other academic literature, picking and choosing out of a rapidly growing body of literature the paragraph or phrase that serves their argument, without ever engaging the whole argument of the author or the body of work that author represents. And yet there are countless examples of research that focuses on a disembodied aspect of a society, for example, political or economic transactions, only to find that religion or kinship was in fact the key explanatory variable for how that society conceived of their own political or economic processes. By taking a holistic and reciprocal approach to research, looking at what we can contribute to positive community-based change, the errors, as well as the ethics, of appropriation may be overcome.

Who Am I? Specializing Out of Humanity.

Finally, the academic training to become a specialist or expert can also conflict with efforts at genuine collaboration. Initially, the sense of superiority that stems from being an expert is easily perceived as condescending arrogance in communities without the privilege of income and education. Furthermore, there is an unstated assumption that being an academic expert absolves one of having fundamental social skills or patience for those outside of the expert realm. Academics admire efficiency, professionalism, and objectivity, all of which can be detrimental to the process of genuine collaboration with communities where compassion, family ties, and social relationships are the critical skills for success. Graduate students deserve to have their

emotional lives developed along with their intellectual lives, or we are training them to become the same detached, cold, rude, and arrogant outsiders that local communities have lamented for decades. By conveying a holistic approach to research that integrates across the heart, head, spirit, and body, faculty will give their students a better chance to build long-term responsive relationships between research and community. By accepting our biases and subjectivity, along with the limitations of our academic training, we will be forced to be whole people, to develop more than just our mental lives. In the long run, social scientists could be not only more effective but happier.

IV. Implementing the Model: Outcomes from Genuine Collaboration

Negotiating the barriers to genuine collaboration requires that students and faculty successfully balance the “demands of producing relevant knowledge...with the desire to do applied research” (Lassiter 2008:76). While daunting, this balancing act is not new to anthropology. In the final section we highlight two examples of revelatory experiences that we hope will shed light on the perspective that we have laid out. The first explores the process of uncovering root causes with an example from Beth's M.A. research on the health care system at Pine Ridge. The second expands on the notion of building from community assets with an example from Bradley Morse's M.A. video project on bicycle safety on Pine Ridge.

Example 1: Generic Medicines, written by Beth Mizushima and Ben Jewell. The first few times that we went to Pine Ridge we felt as if we were opening our eyes underwater; the more you do it, the clearer your vision becomes. As students who were new to the community, every experience we had, whether it was sitting watching dance competitions, asking Lakota households about how they make ends meet each month, or listening to stories about experiencing racism in border town stores, provided a better understanding of Lakota culture and day to day life on the Reservation. In the classroom we learned about Lakota history, political and economic policies, and current other topics like

institutionalized racism. Fully understanding how these processes impact peoples' lives today, however, required on the ground experience.

Making sense of how historical and current processes influence peoples' lives today was difficult, especially as problems in the community were new to us, but it made us feel passionate about solving them. For example, during household interviews we often heard people discuss negative experiences that they had at the Indian Health Service (IHS) hospital. One complaint often heard was that people were unhappy that they received generic versions of medications. At first, these experiences were overshadowed by the tragic experiences people had, such as having family members die as a result of misdiagnosis. Problems with the health care system seemed esoteric, and root causes were difficult to determine.

With the combination of more time on the reservation and more course work back on campus, we were able to have better conversations with community members. These conversations, which allowed us to delve deeper into the root causes of problems and make connections between things that would never have occurred to us before. Fueled by strong cups of coffee in late hours of the night, Walter Little Moon and Jane Ridgway helped mentally guide us through understanding how people with political power can help individuals in need; how an individual's clinical experience with their doctor can be influenced by the personality of the patient and the doctor; and how experiences in childhood shape the way one perceives the world. As a result of working closely with community members, it became clear that expressing unhappiness with the generic medication was one way that community members could illustrate their experience with institutionalized racism. The root problem was not about generic medicine. Instead, only having access to generic medication was an example of how Lakota people's power to make decisions in their life was being limited by the policies of the federal government.

Our ability to connect with community members was greatly influenced by the fact that we entered into a longitudinal project with Dr. Pickering. As she has worked on the reservation

for over twenty years, she introduced us to her friends and to people she knew could help us on our theses. Connecting with these community members allowed us to speed up, to some degree, the process of meeting community members and becoming comfortable in a new community. Other students who had been to Pine Ridge before helped us enter the project, let us know what was expected of us and listened to us when we felt uncomfortable. Most importantly, collaborating with community members provided a mirror that reminded us to be self-reflexive. With their patience, humor and concern, they reminded and encouraged us as students to evaluate our role in the research project and the community and to evaluate our own personal and academic growth. Like other types of growing pains, being self-reflexive was uncomfortable at times. We knew we had a large responsibility to the community, but as students new to the project, the community, and the pressure of graduate school, knowing how to translate our research into a beneficial project was overwhelming and challenging, and implementing it was even more so.

When working in a community with high rates of poverty and continued colonial oppression, it is common for new researchers to want to emphasize these features in their writing. Students in particular, perhaps out of a sense of shock and a desire to raise awareness, tend to focus on the negative aspects of Lakota society, ultimately perpetuating those aspects in the academic literature and consciousness. Working on a longitudinal project with Dr. Pickering, however, has shown us that it is important to identify the assets within the community rather than focusing on the negative.

Example 2: Building Community Assets, written by Jane Ridgway and Kathleen Pickering. Throughout the seven-year longitudinal study, we have repeatedly interviewed the same 300 Lakota households and have had the opportunity to meet other community members who are not participants in the study. The longitudinal study provided a large group of people with whom we can collaborate, expanded the skill sets and resources that can be drawn upon in collaborative efforts, and provided a stepping stone for smaller

projects to spin off. By interviewing households over time, we were able to hear about the community issues that participants were most interested in. Questions about these community issues were then incorporated into the interviews, which provided us a foundation of concrete and broad based information from which to build real action plans.

For example, one graduate student, Bradley Morse, wanted to make a video for his Master's project. He met a family whose son had recently been hit by a car while riding his bike to the school's summer lunch program. Because a number of the longitudinal household participants were also relatives of the young man, Brad gained immediate access to the impact of the death on the extended family and the Oglala community generally. He was invited by the family to make a video that would help protect other youths from similar biking accidents. In the course of video taping the family's involvement with the preparations and events surrounding the funeral, Brad captured the community desire to construct a lighted bike path for the youth of Oglala. Brad worked with the family to create a documentary about the need for bike paths in the community to keep children and families safe and healthy. His efforts joined with those of the Oglala community to create enough visibility around the issue of bicycle safety that ultimately a bike path was built with specially allocated federal funds. Everyone involved agreed that this was a genuine collaborative effort.

Conclusion

Academia has a long colonial legacy of appropriating the experiences and knowledge of culturally distinct communities for the expansion of Western scientific knowledge, without regard to the interests or needs of the appropriated community. We wrote this paper because we believe that it is not only possible but critical to transform the relationship of social scientists to communities of concern. Genuine collaboration can be the engine for transforming the academic paradigm of appropriation. A new process is needed by which academics and communities of concern meet on an equal playing field to discuss, design, and accomplish

research of practical and scientific importance. Community participants are fully informed of the purposes, methods, and outcomes of the research. Students are given a model of ethically informed research practice that values the teaching provided to them by the community where they conduct their research. Faculty are supported by students and the community to call out the contradictions between participatory action research and ongoing forms of colonial privilege. Research results are improved as motivated communities and academics produce informed and insightful findings from which to implement positive and constructive change and model greater scientific understandings.

There is a wealth of powerful outcomes waiting at the end of genuine collaboration, where community and research meld into one. Furthermore, higher education is improved as we remove the seams among teaching, research, and service. We can all play a role in constructing a language of collaboration that makes this future possible. ○

Notes

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2. Corresponding author Benjamin Jewell received a M.A. in anthropology from Colorado State University (2008) and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Arizona State University. He may be reached by mail at the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 872402, Tempe, AZ 85287-2402, and by e-mail at benjamin.jewell@asu.edu
3. Bethany Mizushima has a M.A. in anthropology from Colorado State University (2008), and is currently working towards a Master's of Public Health from the University of Washington.
4. Kathleen Pickering is professor of anthropology at Colorado State University. She received a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of

Wisconsin-Madison (1996) and a J.D. from the NYU School of Law (1984).

5. Jane Ridgway and Walter Little Moon are resident activists and cultural facilitators from the Wounded Knee community of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota. They are authors, counselors, and senior consultants on issues of post traumatic stress disorder and the impacts of boarding schools on native populations.

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Where the Rhetoric Meets the Road: Collaborative Teaching and Learning in a Participatory, Sustainable Mountain Development Initiative in Northern Mexico¹

Emilia González-Clements,² Ph.D.

Abstract

The Carranza-Casillas Sustainable Mountain Development Initiative, sponsored by a private agency from Oregon, aims to build capacity of villagers in a river valley in Northern Mexico by providing training and financial, technical, and research support for their endeavors. The people share a history of exploration, conquest, colonization, migration, independence, hacienda, revolution, agrarian reform, modernization, privatization, and globalization. This article describes the exchange of teaching and learning between U.S. volunteers and local partners that builds on over twenty years of continuous mutual involvement from academic research to small participatory development projects. Participation and sustainability are development approaches that have emerged in the last few decades, which have a rich and constantly expanding literature—the rhetoric. When the rhetoric meets the road—collaborative planning in the field setting—process and content are highlighted, along with insights from research and application. [sustainable development, participatory research, technical support, Mexico]

Introduction

This article describes the current mutual teaching-and-learning stage of long-term research and action in rural Northern Mexico sponsored by the Fifth Sun Development Fund (FSDF),³ an Oregon-based private agency. FSDF works with the villages of Carranza and Casillas⁴ in Nuevo León, building on more than twenty years of continuous involvement in the area, from graduate academic research to small participatory development projects. The Carranza-Casillas Sustainable Mountain Development Initiative (SMDI) involves a valley that shares a history of exploration, conquest, colonization, migration, independence, hacienda, revolution, agrarian reform, modernization, privatization and globalization. The main economic products are avocados and kid goats for the regional market and pecans for export. Most families continue to struggle for land and livelihood and face insecurities in resources, basic needs, infrastructure, and development assistance. The overarching goal of the SMDI is to build the capacity of local small producers to improve their quality of life and to provide financial, technical and research support for their endeavors.

There is a rich and constantly expanding literature on development, development approaches, development planning, training for development, and project planning –“the

rhetoric.” What happens when the rhetoric meets “the road,” i.e., collaborative planning in the field? Guided by the rhetoric, full of good intentions, and armed with scientific concepts such as sustainability, the United States team members collaborate with local actors to plan economic development strategies. Before any of the rhetoric can be put into practice; however, the *Noreteamericanos* and the *Mexicanos* engage in crucial mutual teaching and learning. This article highlights the process and content of our mutual endeavor and presents insights that will enhance the initiative. Following a description of the research setting, I briefly discuss the recent development approaches and global framework that guide FSDF efforts—the rhetoric. I then outline the challenges of counterpart selection, collaborative planning, project design, and conceptual misunderstandings—the road. Finally, I discuss the research, teaching, and learning that form a major part of our initiative and present some insights for development planning from academic research and field experience.

Anthropology and Development

The SMDI is a participatory sustainable development initiative. Development is planned change, defined by Sanford as “conscious pursuit of certain objectives with a view to increasing welfare” (Sanford 1983:4 cited in van Willigen 2002:66). Development anthropology, which

emerged in the 1970s, is described by Little as “the study of development problems (e.g., poverty, environmental degradation, and hunger) and the application of anthropological knowledge toward their solution...a field of both study and application” (2005:33). van Willigen defines participatory development as “...a process in which the individuals and groups of a community work together on problems that they see as important in order to benefit their lives in some way.” He argues that a trained practitioner “...may be useful for increasing the rate of development activity, reducing internal conflict and expanding the resource base” (2002:65).

The concept of sustainability was introduced in the Brundtland Report: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987:43). McCabe (2003) introduced a group of papers discussing the relevance of sustainability for development anthropologists in which Fratkin and Mearns define sustainability as “the ability of a people to defend and preserve its way of life” (2003:113). Stone noted that “cultural complexity, persistence and change that are the hallmarks of anthropological approaches to sustainability” (2003:98). Anthropologists may have entered the debate on sustainability recently but with our “... unique perspective and unparalleled knowledge of peoples and localities...” we can make “...a significant contribution...that gives voice to and collaborates with the people we study” (McCabe 2003:92).

SMDI uses a range of participatory approaches, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (Chambers 1997). Projects are designed with the “new synthesis” in applied anthropology: local knowledge, participation, empowerment, critical consciousness, and sustainability (van Willigen 2002:44). Most importantly, the work depends on the participation of two local community project directors, and upon a multi-strand capacity building approach, using ideas from many disciplines. (See van Willigen 2002:65-75 and Little 2005:33-59 for an overview of changes in development theory and practice. Refer to

Chambers (1997) for a detailed explanation of the development of certain participatory approaches.)

The Rhetoric: Development Approaches and Global Frameworks

FSDI follows four global research and action frameworks (1) Agenda 21, (2) the Millennium Development Goals, (3) the World Summit on Sustainable Development’s “new development agenda,” and (4) the Sustainable Mountain Development research agenda. Agenda 21 is the action plan resulting from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Keating 1993). According to Hettne, UNCED, also known as “the Rio Conference”, introduced the principle of sustainability and a new emphasis on “perspectives of the excluded” (1995:xi-xiii). FSDI began its work based on Agenda 21, especially Chapter 13–“Protecting Fragile Mountain Ecosystems” and Chapter 14–“Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development.” FSDI used its expertise in social and technical assistance, including training for participation, and value-added products processing for economic development planning to establish a United States-local team and to identify potential natural resources suitable for marketing.

After UNCED, interest and concern in participation and sustainable development became mainstream, resulting in myriad publications from global policy to training manuals for beneficiaries. Global frameworks for research and action evolved and became more specific. One example is the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). FSDI sharpened both its research and action agendas in keeping with these new frameworks.

The eight Millennium Development goals form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions and have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world’s poorest. The MDGs were identified from the content of the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 governments in 2000. The eight goals target major development challenges and are to be

achieved by 2015 (UNDP 2000). The FSDF Initiative focuses on MDG Number 1, “Reducing Poverty”; Number 3, Promote gender equality and empower women;” and Number 7, “Environmental Sustainability.”

Following good applied practice to “fit” projects to international efforts, FSDF research will add to the growing body of knowledge about mountain systems as we plan locally appropriate responses to local felt needs. The research agenda is designed to gather data as outlined in the United Nations-based framework “Sustainable Mountain Development” (SMD) (1) status of mountain systems regarding global change, (2) pressures on mountains and consequences on different resources—human, natural and economic, and (3) responses created by different social groups and mountain societies (UNU 2002).

Ideally, agency efforts will interface with federal initiatives and global efforts. In support of national efforts FSDF will work with the 2007-2012 *La Agenda Ambiental del Estado Mexicano: La Ruta de la Sustentabilidad* (Mexico’s Environmental Agenda: The Route to Sustainability). *Secretaria del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (SEMARNAT, Environment and Natural Resources Secretariat) serves as the lead agency for Mexico’s actions connected to the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development. FSDF has been working with the local agent for SEMARNAT (*Secretaria del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* 2007). Key SMD research findings indicate that to achieve sustainable mountain development [planners] “...must consider biodiversity, cultural diversity, science and local knowledge...”, that mountain dwellers must share in the benefits of natural resources, and that gender equity in natural resource access must be addressed (UNU 2002). FSDF is working toward those goals.

An overarching research goal is to understand the links between poverty, use of natural resources, and sustainability, as a basis for development planning. These links comprise the “new development agenda” that came out of the 2000 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa (United Nations 2002).

The Mexican Development Context

“The Revolutionary goals of modern Mexico have not been met for the majority of Mexicans, especially small rural producers, commonly known as peasants (*campesinos*)” (González-Clements 2003:1). Among the internal strategies Mexico followed were agrarian reform, import substitution, industrialization, integrated rural development for commercial production, agriculture for export, and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Along with the national strategies were external development assistance policies and programs that followed a path from modernization to human welfare to structural adjustment resulting from Mexico’s inability to repay massive development loans, which in turn led to neo-liberal strategies of privatization and global markets (González-Clements 2003).

There are at least two perspectives on development in the study communities. People from a landed background feel that former peons are backward and unwilling or unable to succeed in the global context. Former peons point out that development assistance, when it does arrive in the campo, goes “*de cierta parte a cierta parte*” (from certain individuals to certain individuals), i.e., those in power capture the benefits and share them only with their own.

FSDF follows the principles refined over more than ten years of the COMPAS Programme, coordinated by the Schumacher Center for Technology and Development. The COMPAS goal was to understand traditional knowledge and values and their complementarity with modern knowledge and to share learning to develop principles for endogenous, bottom-up participatory approaches. Endogenous development is “development based on people’s own resources, strategies and initiatives. The available resources and solutions developed at the grassroots include material, socio-cultural and spiritual dimensions. It is local people with their own resources, values, knowledge and organizations who drive local development” (COMPAS 2007:1). COMPAS’ guiding principles for supporting endogenous development are (1) build on locally felt needs, (2) improve/ complement local knowledge and practices, (3) increase local control and decision-making, (4) identify local and regional development niches,

(5) use external resources selectively, (6) retain benefits in local area, (7) learn across cultures and religions, (8) build staff capacity for learning from/with locals, (9) link up and develop strategic partnerships, and (10) understand local forms of knowing and learning (COMPAS 2007:14-18).

The sustainable mountain development initiative is a major FSDF commitment with multiple projects in capacity building, visual cultural documentation, and economic development. This complex domain of application and development, with its changing and multi-faceted goals and approaches constitutes the rhetoric. What happens when the rhetoric meets the road in joint planning in the field?

The Setting and Social Actors

Development activity has focused on Carranza and its 350 inhabitants. I have selected two project sites, one in Carranza and one in Casillas. Casillas was added to the initiative recently, and Casillas data were gathered during

important for economic development activities. The villages are located in a valley about twenty kilometers long, separated by about fifteen kilometers of mountainous gravel road.

The project area is in the Sierra Madre Oriental, approximately three hours south of Monterrey. The area is ruggedly mountainous, with peaks reaching 2,500 to 3,000 meters. Carranza is located along the Río Casillas, which provides irrigation water. The climate is semi-arid, with summer temperatures ranging from twenty-five to thirty-five degrees Centigrade (seventy-five to ninety-five degrees Fahrenheit). The winters can be damp and cold. Villagers tell that in 1911 a *chubasco* (savage storm) was trapped in the mountains, and its violence caused the artesian wells scattered along the valley to form into the river that exists today. There have been seven years of severe drought in the last twenty years, one devastating flood when Hurricane Gilbert literally beat itself out in the canyons, and a fire that destroyed a forest just over the mountains from the valley.

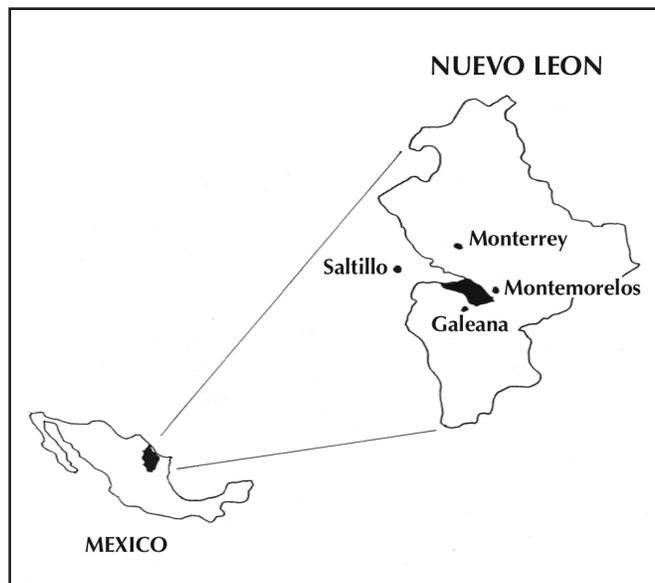


Figure 1. Nuevo León, México, and the Municipio (County) of Rayones

the 2008 summer field season. FSDF decided to include Casillas in the Initiative partly because the two communities are tied to the same socio-economic system, are in the same watershed, have essentially the same needs, and can provide the same natural resources

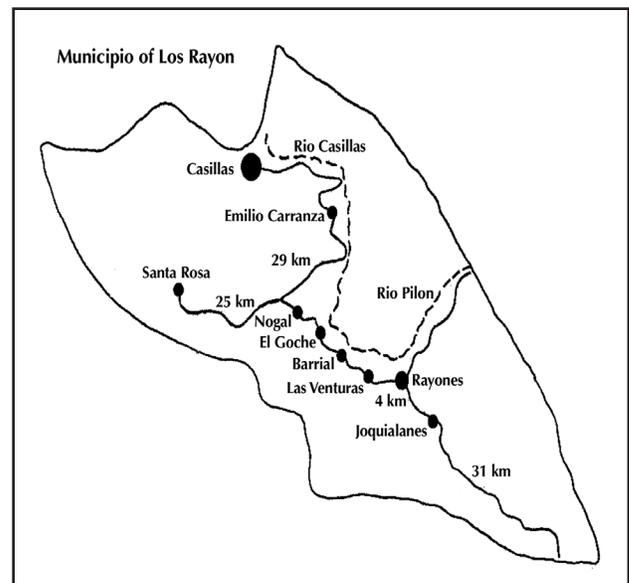


Figure 2. Municipio of Los Rayón (Rayones)

The area was first explored in 1800. Since its settlement in 1815, the valley between Carranza and Casillas was divided into eight self-sufficient haciendas. The *hacendados* (hacienda owners) were all of Spanish descent. Workers were brought in from Galeana to the south and Saltillo to the west. Many of these workers were families from

Southern Mexico that had been displaced by the establishment of haciendas and later, the war that resulted in Mexican independence from Spain in 1821. Most were *mestizo* (mix of Spanish and Indian). This economic division was also the social division. In living memory, there was only one Indian living in Carranza, a woman “who never wore shoes.” She was of the lowest social class, with mestizos in the middle and the Spanish-descendants forming the highest rung of local society. In this valley, the hacienda period lasted from 1815 until 1936.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 profoundly changed the laws about land tenure, providing a mechanism for former *peones* (peons) to receive usufruct over specific lands once held by the haciendas. The local haciendas were very small compared to the huge *latifundias* (large landholdings) in other parts of Mexico and did not involve large populations of displaced indigenous peoples. According to former local hacendados, the local haciendas were not subject to the new laws because of their small size and lack of co-opted indigenous communal lands.

The municipio “was so isolated that even the revolutionaries could not find us” (personal communication, Mayor don Idelfonso de La Fuente, 1980); however, in 1936 a local man brought the revolution to the valley when he organized the peones to demand their new rights. After a bloody three years, agrarian reform resulted in the haciendas being dismantled, the lands divided into *parcelas* (allotments) that were assigned to the new *ejidatarios* (parcela holders). Individuals who were not eligible to receive parcelas seized the opportunity, gained access to parcelas and created controversy that still smolders to this day. Lands were also set aside for house sites, fields, a town center, and a school. Former peones received animals, seeds, and farming implements. All the former hacendados moved to the county seat or the nearest cities, except for one family whose last remaining male was a young boy at the time the *ejido* (farming cooperative) was formed.

Following the agrarian reform, many of the new ejidatarios sold their animals, ate the seeds, and left to find work in the nearest towns and cities. From 1939 until 1950, people eked out an

existence by harvesting and selling *lechugilla* (a type of agave) fiber to a federal program created specifically to buy the fiber. Lechugilla grows wild all over the mountains, but harvesting it is hot, hard work. Still, informants say that *tayando* (preparing lechugilla) is preferable to being peones. There are one or two campesinos still living who worked on the haciendas as very young children before the agrarian reform. All the older adults remember “*esa otra vida*” (“that other life”), meaning life during the hacienda era when landowners had total control over economics, politics, and life-and-death itself. They remember working all day for very little food and not being allowed to pick any of the abundant fruits and vegetables for themselves or their families. People still close their eyes, shudder, and say a small prayer when talking about “*esa otra vida*.”

With population growth and migration resulting from land allotments, the town centers evolved and the remaining campesinos practiced subsistence farming and planted avocado orchards to sell avocados, a mainstay of the regional diet, in Monctmorelos and Monterrey, the nearest and largest cities, respectively.

In 1950 an entrepreneur from west of Monterrey came to the valley looking for land to plant pecan orchards to expand his growing business of exporting pecans to the United States. He bought up much of the land in the valley and in the several small towns in the municipio, as well as in the county seat. Soon thereafter, people all over the region began planting pecans. Local belief states that trees give warmth to the fields, but the shade cast by the growing orchards has made it impossible to grow subsistence crops. Pecans became the economic mainstay.

In 1992 Mexico privatized the ejidos as part of its neoliberal strategy. Privatization reached Carranza in 1994. Ironically, local campesinos told me “We are finally an ejido. The land belongs to us at last.” Carranza is still operating as an ejido, and the ex-hacendados who live in the county seat continue to say that the backward peasants still don’t understand anything. The main occupation is farming; particularly pecans for export and avocados and goats for the regional market. Only a few still

practice subsistence farming. The language is Spanish, and most families are Roman Catholic, although there is a protestant evangelical church in Carranza and an Adventist church in Casillas. The land is now privately owned, although the common grazing land (*el agostadero*) is cooperatively managed.

Over time, the communities have survived the aftermath of the Revolution, the creation of the ejidos, an economic transformation based on commercial production of pecans, the agricultural crisis of 1978, the economic crisis of 1982, and the move toward privatization of the Mexican economy, including the ejidos. Poverty and land pressure are increasing, government assistance does not reach the countryside as promised, and individuals are becoming increasingly critical of their government and its methods. Individuals in Carranza are aware of national and international events through word of mouth or through radio, and recently, television. There are now several satellite telephones in the valley.

Mutual Teaching-Learning Exchange

In this historical, political, economic and social context, the Fifth Sun Development Fund (FSDF) is in its sixth year of developing participatory sustainable development projects. There has been a long learning curve not only about the community, but also of the many development approaches and new foci such as sustainability. The long period of academic research and development projects has resulted in genuine mutual cooperation and interest in collaborative development planning on the part of the marginalized small producers.

FSDF is committed to providing financial, technical and research support for these communities. The agency has built a water tank, paid for locally, built sturdy shelves for two school libraries and brought school supplies and clothing for village children. Volunteers have worked for three summers to help gather data and to begin new projects. In every case, we asked for and received permission from the governing committee to work in the ejido. In implementing our first projects we invited and received active participation from community members in the identification, design, implementation, and

monitoring stages. We invited and worked with respected elders to serve as a bank to manage the cash involved in buying materials and paying workers. These small development projects resulted from individual requests. The next stage is to begin a process for collaborative planning based on locally felt needs.

In order to meet its goal to help meet social, cultural, and environmental basic needs sustainably, through capacity building, the FSDF team is engaged in a set of capacity building activities for its U.S. team and its local Mexican counterpart.

The U.S. team varies by field season and has included anthropologists, a U.S. public middle school teacher, several archaeologists, a value-added products expert, chemical engineer, a soil conservation expert, a historian, an ecomuseum specialist, two graduate anthropology student interns (health and ecotourism), and a cultural anthropology professor and his students.

Because FSDF has multi-disciplinary teams, we are developing training modules to create a common language and understanding about our perspectives and disciplines. Because development practice continues to evolve, staff and volunteers face a growing number of new readings and topics. Global problems require global solutions, so FSDF is beginning to identify other development agencies with which to collaborate. This self-learning and volunteer training is a major component of our work.

U.S. Multidisciplinary Team Learning Tasks

Four of the U.S. teams have worked together for three or more years—an applied anthropologist, an applied chemical engineer, a middle school teacher, and a historian. The historian is an American of Mexican descent who has lived in Mexico for the last thirty-five years and serves as government liaison. We have learned to understand one another's contributions and frameworks. Now, we and the student and professional volunteers are learning about United Nations best practices for capacity building, watershed management, adult literacy, composting toilets and simple furniture carpentry for our potential future projects.

Much of the US team planning is carried out

by email and telephone calls. Volunteers generally meet once in the months preceding the fieldwork. We then meet at the border to begin our trip to the work site. Students are recruited at conferences such as the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology (HPSfAA) or the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) or by referral from colleagues. **Table 1** presents a draft of our mutual teaching-learning endeavor.

This ambitious comprehensive training plan is an ideal that gives staff and volunteers a common background and local participants a set of skills for working on research projects. Once the Mexican counterparts were selected, they were included in every planning session and discussion. They were initially shy of voicing their opinions because they were embarrassed by their lack of literacy and struggled with the fact that we considered them to be experts. **Table 2** represents a process for capacity building.

I rely on my extensive past experience as a trainer and am sharpening my own skills with materials such as *Local Sustainable Development Planning* (Gerecheva 2003), *Power, Process and Participation: Tools for Change* (Slocum et al 1995), *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers* (Hope and Timmel 1999), and *Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities* (Chambers 2002).

For summer 2008, I provided the U.S. members selected materials in development anthropology, adult literacy, composting toilets, and capacity building. There is already expertise in development, group facilitation, appropriate technology, women's advocacy, economic development planning, project management, team building, field school training, and medical anthropology. As project director, it is my responsibility to oversee both the process and the content of our work.

The people of Carranza have hosted twenty years of sporadic academic field research and participated in three anthropology field schools. They have provided living space for staff and students and formed friendships that continue to this day. FSDF has a good reputation and established rapport. The field schools were careful to distribute spending among the stores and workers such as laundresses. Villagers were pleased to be asked about their activities, to be listened to,

and to realize that the learning was mutual. Over time, villagers did believe that we value their knowledge and experience and learn much from them. Staff and volunteers are free to go into almost any place and delve into almost any topic. Rapport translates into trust that facilitates our activities, especially important as we begin a formal process to promote full participation, a hallmark of participatory development.

Out of respect for local traditions of single-gender meetings and a desire to learn women's ideas for projects, several years ago I convened a focus group by bringing eight respected elder women to a home mid-way in the valley. I brought whole coffee beans (preferred to the ubiquitous instant coffee) and a large box of expensive cookies. We spent several hours talking in the Mexican fashion (personal talk first, then business) in a circle under an *enramada* (shade structure built for weddings where the couple receive the blessings of priest and family). The women talked to each other, but they answered every question I asked while FSDF volunteers video- and audio-taped the group. In the Mexican tradition, younger women and children were present, sitting respectfully out of the circle. Toward the end of the session, I asked the participants about their concerns and for their ideas about how I could help them and their communities. The eldest responded: "You've already helped us. You brought us together. You come back year after year. You have given us your friendship." It was an emotional moment for me, and it was a learning moment. I was in a project frame of mind, expecting a laundry list of potential projects. They were not. The rhetoric had hit a bump on the road. No matter how much I valued participation and felt needs, my internal agenda was already focused on development projects, from my perspective. This example, and others that follow, are like guideposts to keep me on the correct road as a participatory development practitioner.

Challenges of Collaborative Planning

Counterpart Selection. While the agency has a formal training agenda in place, much of our learning comes from conversations with our counterparts and community members. In the summer of 2006 FSDF conducted an applied

project for the Office of Governor Natividad González. The Governor was interested in exploring ecotourism as a development strategy for Nuevo León and wanted a local assessment, as well as U.S. perspectives on such a strategy.

The role of local beneficiaries is central to the principles of participatory development; the ideal is to involve local partners in every aspect of the development activities. FSDF staff had agreed to create a U.S.-Mexico development planning team of local counterparts that would be geographically representative, inclusive, participatory, and gender balanced, as well as age balanced. We knew about social differentiation in the communities, but did not really understand the kinship relationships well enough to know specifically who could/would work with whom and why/why not. Besides kinship factors, beyond social class and not counting land tenure conflicts, there was another type of differentiation. We learned that people who had not lived through the near-starvation period of *tayando ixtle* (preparing fiber) were not seen as having lived or having experience. Also, the manner of dress of the younger women was an affront to the older women. One elder claimed that the downfall of Mexican society was due to women who were “*pelonas y encueradas*” (“bald and naked,” that is, had short hair and wore shorts). Our counterparts had to pass not only FSDF criteria, but especially, be respected by the community. It took over two years to find our two collaborators. The two partners were chosen because of their motivation, honesty, energy, desire to help the entire community, and because they were respected by others in the valley.

Project Sites Selection. Our idea about choosing six people, three men and three women of various ages, from each of the two villages was premature. We learned from our partners that the valley is divided into very specific *comunidades* (settlements), not just the main villages. The *comunidades* identify themselves apart from the other locations. We documented the *comunidades* before we identified the potential project sites.

Collaborative Planning Training. Based on our earlier work, we already knew that collaborative planning would have to be introduced and taught as a set of skills. For example, for many of the women it is not proper to go to meetings and

to speak out. Thanks to our cultural understanding, we knew about the value of respect and that in these rural areas, there is a distinct difference in interpersonal behavior based on age. For example, it is still common for younger people to cross their closed palm across their chest when addressing their elders and to semi-kneel and kiss the hand of a much older person. Younger people will stand when an elder stands, and remain standing until the elder is seated. Elders speak first.

We were unsure how to facilitate a meeting with these practices. While we wished to respect cultural differences, how were we to deal with our own values of equality and gender equity? Our first step is to learn to work with our two community counterparts. In the first 2008 session, my husband suggested that we work with couples. My husband and I work together professionally, are locally identified as a couple, and felt that this was an appropriate way to include women in our planning activities. All three husbands are supportive of their wives' public endeavors. (Although I am called “*la Gringa*,” I am held locally accountable to Latino customs and behaviors.)

Project Design. Project design proved to be more sensitive than we expected. We wanted to start with felt needs identified during academic research, the most important being electric pump irrigation and fertilizer and pesticides for orchards followed by local jobs for the adult men and for the young adult men.

When global prices for pecans plummet, or when there is no crop due to drought or pest plagues, these rural producers cannot revert back to subsistence cropping unless they chop down the orchards with which they replaced their row crop fields. The men realized that they needed to find other ways to generate income without cutting down the trees. While it is the man's responsibility to provide for his family, women also add to family income and subsistence although there are very few opportunities for either men or women. FSDF debated designing projects that were small and successful (a good model for a beginning initiative) but did not create income, projects that immediately provided income but were short-term, or projects that aided women first. We discussed alternatives

to electric pumps, shied away from facilitating the use of toxic herbicides and fertilizers, and opted for projects that taught skills and provided cash income, such as carpentry for furniture making. Meanwhile, our senior technical advisor continues to gather the data required for long-term development strategies based on sustainable use of local natural resources.

Gender in Development

In informal interviews and from the elder women's focus group I learned about women's and men's differing felt needs: cultural documentation. During their focus group conversation, the elders mentioned the importance of finding a way to keep traditions alive. Doña Lola was upset that her daughter wanted to dig up a lechugilla plant that grows in an awkward place near the house and wanted her daughter to know that the plant was a symbol of survival. The other women identified things that had been forgotten by children who migrated to the towns and cities. This resulted in the *Abuelas Agenda* (Grandmothers' Agenda) to document traditions, as specified by the elder women.

The larger issue of how to involve women in development planning is a major task that we are working on with both local collaborators. Our plan was for FSDF to identify projects that benefit women and teach skills that help women earn money without breaking social and cultural norms. As it turned out, women in Las Gallinas and the three other nearby communities did attend our first community meeting. The 14-year-old daughter of our collaborators, who crochets and likes to sew, asked if we could provide training in how to make clothing patterns. Her girlfriends seconded her request. The result is that eighteen women signed up for a sewing workshop. Working on establishing links with state agencies, our government liaison has requested and received two sewing machines.

Scientific Concepts and Local Cultural Models

I discovered early on that conceptual differences had to be clarified and understood by volunteers and locals. During one of three summer field schools I led, students helped create transects of the different ecosystems

along the valley. At a community farewell celebration designed to thank the villagers for hosting the field school, I posted a large drawing of one transect that showed a cross section from the eastern ridge to the western ridge of the watershed and invited comments. After a respectful period of inspecting the diagram, the farmers began to teach me about the river. For me, "river" meant the banks and the water. For them, "river" meant the banks, the water, and the uplands where corn and other crops used to be grown. I also learned that bamboo, which we saw as a nuisance, is carefully cultivated to help change the course of the river and open up more upland or change boundaries. Further research informed us that the federal government has a specific definition for river. A "river" means from the middle of the watercourse to twenty-five meters on either side.

Another concept that has emic and etic definitions is the environment. To FSDF staff and students, the environment means the land, soil, water, flora and fauna, trees, plants and air. No one in the valley knew the words *el medio ambiente* (the environment). Two informants responded to this word with "prickly pears and trees" and "working with a hoe." To the term natural resources (*recursos naturales*) campesinos answered "pecan trees," "avocado trees," "peach trees," "*producción*" (essentially, "the harvest"), and "working the land." *La naturaleza* (nature), to women, meant "all the wild fruits," "the harvests," "water," "the plantings," "mountains," "the river," and "medicinal plants." To men, nature meant "avocados," "trees," "hills," "mountains," "the river," "squirrels," and "pecan trees." There were some gender differences, with men naming row crops and orchard trees and women naming wild plants. The most common definition, spoken with a sweep of the arms, was "The things God gives us." The next most common was "our hearts, our hands, and our strength," meaning not only physical strength, but perseverance in adversity. In August 2008 I heard a term, *el panino* (translation currently unavailable) that from the context may mean growing conditions. Further research will help us clarify other conceptual differences for "sustainability," "mountains," "watershed," "participation," and "capacity building."

A Local Opportunity

Our summer 2008 field season marked an important change in our methods. While we doubt anyone can argue with our list of assessed needs, when we began the actual participatory planning in May, the resulting list was completely different. The Las Gallinas men's group had been thinking about their local resources and the need for income-generation and wanted help with a *bloquera*-making (cinder block making) business using the rocks from their fields as a source of sand and a bottled-water enterprise using water from a nearby artesian well. Based on our follow-up research in the U.S., FSDf supported the *bloquera* project, but informed the group that the bottled water project was much too expensive (machinery costs \$20,000 - \$200,000 U.S.) and required specialized twenty-four hour, seven days-a-week expertise and laboratory.

Literacy Training

After the first formal meeting of the core U.S.-Mexico team, I learned that one of our carefully chosen collaborators had a second grade level of education; the other had more or less one year. Expecting that neither person had much experience with formal meetings, I had brought agendas that I read out loud carefully, with frequent explanation and discussion. Our meeting started with dinner at the restaurant next door. I wondered why one of the collaborators had brought two young adult male relatives to the meeting with him. As we continued the meeting at our headquarters, the collaborator gave the agenda to one of the young men to read for him.

I had assumed because there had been schools in the area during their early years, that the collaborators had at least a 6th grade education and, therefore, could read and write, but even though there have been schools in the area since 1938, neither had the free time to attend school as a child. Fortunately, both of them were very receptive to the idea of improving their reading. Hence, the adult literacy program began with focused training for the collaborators, and I added that topic to our master teacher's responsibilities. While we will

continue collaborative planning and project support, our next step is to design and implement an adult literacy program for a small group of local villagers who wish to be involved in the project planning as few adults have schooling beyond the third grade. A challenge is that people live in scattered settlements, women do not generally go to meetings, and everyone has a full workday. DIF will send a group facilitator for literacy training, but community members must first form a group. There are also issues of meals and lodging for the teacher that need to be managed.

With the increasing number of volunteers and students interested in working on the SMDI, and because of our commitment to long-term development assistance, FSDf is now seeking a location to build a headquarters in the valley to continue our work. We will also be hiring applied anthropologists with the necessary training to work full time at our headquarters. We particularly need applied anthropologists with training in environmental anthropology and agricultural anthropology and consultants with expertise in watershed management. While I have no formal training in those domains, I rely on Kedia and van Willigen (2005) to learn enough to know what to look for in applicants.

Social Relations

One issue that continues to be problematic is the social relations in the valley. Historically, there were landowners and peons. After the agrarian reform, people identified themselves by land tenure types. Even though former peons were now landowners, the original hacendados have kept control over the financial and political systems. They still resent the loss of their haciendas and do not work cooperatively with the poor. Some guides to participatory development strategies describe methodologies for "bringing together the aspirations and capacities of governments, civil society, and the private sector to create a vision for the future, and to work tactically and progressively towards it..." (Gercheva 2003:7). Unfortunately, we do not see that happening any time soon in the campo. The campo itself is divided into factions.

The Rhetoric and The Road

Finan and van Willigen identify anthropology's contribution to problem-solving as "social knowledge: an encompassing understanding about a local community, its regular and discernible behavior patterns, its cultural logic, and the nature of its integration into wider systems" (1991:1). Using anthropological and other methods, I have amassed a wealth of social knowledge of the valley system, including local definitions of "the environment" and "development." I must know these local definitions for project development, but equally important, I need to review the literature on "cultural logic, cultural models, and folk models" to talk intelligently with other anthropologists and be able to teach my multidisciplinary team colleagues or, in Finan and van Willigen's words, "accurately translate their categories of knowledge into categories we understand and use in other contexts, such as development" (ibid.:1). Meanwhile, I am now focusing on both general ethnographic data and specific project-related research in the two project sites.

The rhetoric and the road are constantly changing. The rhetoric now includes a growing literature on capacity building in which I am immersed. Goals involve projects in the domains of development, environment, economics, health, agriculture, and education, all requiring more familiarization with literature and methods. FSDF will be hiring applied anthropologists with expertise, but for now, I must know enough to select applicants and keep the project planning sufficiently designed. All this self-education will help to improve the chances of success in settings where my activities engage in the realities of other people's lives.

The road also keeps changing. The realities of the potential beneficiaries are deteriorating. As the drought continues, people adapt by not keeping small animals or kitchen gardens. Their main commercial crop harvests are no longer dependable. Men search for other economic activities. Re-concentration of land is occurring in one of our project sites. Fully one-half of the agrarian reform fields have been purchased by a member of one of the wealthier families; this transfer of ownership has economic, political

and religious impacts. The new owner has fired workers for not following his political will, and the patron saint's annual parade through the village must skip half of the fields.

For the first time, in May of 2008, FSDF was warned about interfering in the business of the ejido. While searching for a site for the August student group, a local teacher suggested asking the school parent group for the use of the porch of the local school. The porch is large, high, dry and roofed. It has electricity and a cement floor, with flush toilets and water faucets. While I was inspecting the site, I noticed two large dome-like structures nearby. Lupe, my counterpart, had accompanied me, as appropriate, and explained that the smaller one was the community water source and was located on her brother's former property. The new owner inconsistently provided water from the smaller tank and had fenced off the larger water tank that the community had built after the loss of the smaller one.

As any anthropologist with field experience knows, human groups are complex. This particular setting has a history of social class conflict, land ownership violence, political polarity and rural elite dominance. The wealthy new owner wonders why I (from a landowner background) am working with poor people. His wife is the sister of the leader of the local parent group (whom I've known for over 20 years) who is also a leader of a different political party. The teacher (whom I've worked with for over five years) has been re-assigned to a school in a different part of the county, and my counterpart is with the group that built the larger tank. My interpretation is that the ejido leader, who succeeded and is related to the wealthy new owner, thought I was checking out the tanks, involving myself in the controversy on the part of the poorer people. My counterpart's interpretation is that "They do not want you to open our eyes. They are trying to recreate the old (hacienda) system."

The rhetoric, as I went into this multi-year set of projects, gave me a good foundation for what questions to ask and what methods to use to gather data. As I understood the road better and began working on projects, I have identified gaps in my knowledge and abilities; hence, the

multiple reading lists I've developed. Fortunately, my relationship with the marginalized villagers continues to grow. The team stayed with Lupe in Los Nogales for its August fieldwork. We rented a room and moved in our portable tables, chairs, crate-bookcases and cots. We were able to observe daily activities (including scrambling to collect water when it was available), eat with the family, sit in the shade and talk, gather firewood (heavy work with lots of walking) and formally and informally complete the next steps planning for our projects. We have been invited to use Lolo's spare room in Las Gallinas, which we will do in the future.

The current mutual teaching-and-learning stage of long-term research and action in rural Northern Mexico is in full swing. Literature review while in the U.S., is as important as the literacy training for counterparts that we began this summer. Since all three core U.S. team members speak Spanish, our work documenting local knowledge and beliefs continues. The teacher-volunteer and engineer-volunteer understand the anthropological perspective and are now using basic methods of data gathering. Counterparts have learned and are creating kinship charts and correcting our census. They are paid for their professional time and for providing food and shelter. We are evolving into a true team, with common goals. We even shared a nuanced joke. The wife of the mayor had been making visits to the communities. There was a presentation scheduled for Los Nogales. Lupe and almost every other woman attended, not knowing what to expect. Later, Lupe told us that her topic was about traditional customs and activities that were being forgotten, such as serving *nopalitos* (wild-gathered cactus paddles), once a mainstay of the diet. We agreed, it was sad, but who had the time to go gather, clean, take off the thorns, cut up and cook nopalitos? Did she serve nopalitos? Did she grow, gather and grind corn for tortillas? We laughed. We both knew that she and her husband had worked as migrant laborers in the United States for years. She wore pants; she drove a truck. We understood the irony. Lupe concluded that it had not been a total waste of time; her mother had gotten a gift of ten *pesos*.

Recent Fieldwork

The summer 2008 team began specific research to build on the academic findings collected to date. We began a poverty assessment, sanitation survey, and a study of energy use patterns in support of our assessed needs. Because of teaching schedules, the 2008 work plan was divided into two sessions: the first session involved fourteen undergraduate students from Metropolitan State College of Denver, their professor, and his assistant. In 2006, FSDF completed a study on American Perspectives on Ecotourism Development for the Office of the Governor of Nuevo León. In early 2008, FSDF was asked by the Governor's office to write descriptions of local tourist spots for potential publication on U.S. tourist websites. American Perspectives on Ecotourism Development II involved visiting each locale on a locally produced tourist map as well as writing a general description of the county seat of Rayones and of several locations along the valley. The project included visual documentation with still photography. Goals for the first session were to (1) establish rapport with Las Gallinas/Las Trancas, (2) re-connect with Los Nogales, (3) identify felt needs at each project site, (4) begin ethnographic profiles of selected sites, (5) conduct exploratory research regarding assessed needs (FSDF-identified projects), (6) meet with local collaborators, and (7) plan next steps with collaborators. The ethnographic research agenda included collecting basic data about the two project sites of Las Gallinas/Las Trancas, and Los Nogales. Technical tasks focused on compiling a handbook on composting toilets and gathering information on natural resources, including the river's depth and current.

Projects planned for summer 2008 included building composting toilets, building furniture for field volunteers (as a mechanism for organizing a men's group), adult literacy projects, and enrichment classes for primary students at selected sites. As often happens, the realities of the field changed our plans. Our selected individual for the demonstration of the composting toilet (who had had no toilet at our last visit) had built a very good, sturdy, cement toilet. Although he volunteered to let us "cut into the system wherever you need to put in the

compost part,” we decided to find another location in the future. There was not enough time or resources to build furniture. The literacy project had to be re-scheduled for the second session in August, and the school enrichment classes cancelled due to a major change in the teacher-volunteer’s schedule.

In spite of the changes, FSDF did meet its fieldwork goals. Students and staff spent time in Las Gallinas creating GPS and manual maps, beginning a census, and in general, building rapport. Staff held a participatory planning community meeting that resulted in three felt needs project ideas and led to including two nearby communities in the development initiative, Sillares and Chilares, bringing the men’s group to thirty-five members.

Exploratory research on the assessed needs (composting toilet, micro-central for electricity) showed that due to local customs and priorities and to federal policies respectively, neither project is viable at this time.

Fieldworkers and community members of all ages participated in our traditional community event, a *lotería* (Mexican bingo) where winners picked from an assortment of gifts donated by students and staff. Our Las Gallinas counterparts provided a dinner for all participants where every community member received one or more prizes.

Next Steps

FSDF staff and volunteers will return to offer a requested workshop on pattern making to women and girls in Las Gallinas. Several women from Los Nogales will also attend, working out places to stay for the two-day event. We will work on advancing the bloquera project in the four northern communities and the papalote project in Los Nogales. Our focus is still the literacy training of collaborators. We will be selecting a site for a field office, probably in one of the four northern villages where there are more people and they are much better organized. We are also in negotiation with a non-governmental agency in Nuevo León whose goals are to find marginalized small rural producers for economic development programs.

In 2009 we will be adding two projects to the elder women’s request for cultural documentation.

I plan to show the original focus group video in honor of the participant who passed away two years ago and to film two additional videos: Los Nogales Community Celebration for San Isidro (the patron saint of rain) and the History of the Ejido Emilio Carranza with key informant Doña Jesusa of Los Nogales whose father distributed the first agrarian reform land parcels. She is eighty-four years old and an ejidataria. This story would make a wonderful addition to a future Casa de la Cultura.

The video is an offering to San Isidro. When we took the students on a familiarization trip in May 2008, they rode in the back of our two pickups. At Lupe’s home, she showed them a poster of San Isidro and explained that he was the saint to whom they prayed for rain. I took the students to the church, dedicated to San Isidro. There is a painting of the patron saint there that is a bit unusual. San Isidro was considered a very good man who stopped and helped poor people and is often depicted as guiding a plow, with an angel somewhere in the picture. The priest, who infrequently comes from Saltillo, paid for the painting and told me that he had left out the angel because the local people didn’t understand. I warned the students to be respectful of local beliefs.

The valley is experiencing a drought; however, on our trip back, we had hard rain, hail and a rockslide, caused by the rain, which pelted the students. They were wet, cold, dirty and absolutely thrilled to have had their first field experience.

Success Factors

The use of basic applied anthropology methods, techniques, and values facilitated the gathering of information, especially listening with respect and joining in daily activities. Growing academic experience resulted in improved research design and more useful research questions; however, where the rhetoric meets the road, intangibles proved to be just as important. First, the innate courtesy of the villagers to share their lives, second, my being from a *“familia fuerte”* (powerful family) with local connections, and third, repeated visits with a long-term commitment to provide assistance all facilitated this work. It also helps that I am

an elder with grand children and therefore a “wise, experienced person.” Factors contributing to success include gaining the trust of the local population, knowing how to work in multi-disciplinary teams, respecting local beliefs and cultural models, and discipline and dedication

to field work tasks even in trying conditions.

Most locals that we work with say that all they ever get are promises, never any help. FSDF is committed to continue providing assistance and to learning better ways of providing that assistance. ○

Table 1. Mutual Teaching-Learning Phases

Phase One: Volunteer Training	Phase Two A: Partner Training	Phase Two B: U.S. Team Training	Phase Three: Joint Planning
Literature Review	Literacy Program	Local Knowledge	Selected Projects
Assigned Readings	Project Skills	Cultural Models	Project Design
Topical Teaching	Research Skills	Project Ideas	Selected Locations
Orientation to Site	Participation Skills	Location Ideas	Emerging issues
Academic Insights	Leadership Training	Counterpart Selection	Monitoring/Evaluation

Table 2. Training for Development Planning

1. Education	Literacy, mountain ecosystems, watersheds
2. Training	Participation, research, planning, project management
3. Practice	Teaching, facilitating
4. Collaboration	All SMDI activities, community celebrations

Notes

1. The author presented an overview of the global frameworks and sustainable mountain initiative at the spring conference of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology in Denver, Colorado, on April 29, 2007. The presentation was titled “Where the Rhetoric Meets the Road: Collaborative Teaching and Learning in a Participatory, Sustainable Mountain Development Initiative in Northern México.”

2. Emilia González-Clements is founder and director of the Fifth Sun Development Fund (FSDF) a private development agency located in Oregon. She holds a Ph.D. in applied social anthropology with an emphasis on alternative development practice from the University of Kentucky (2003). Her area of interest is international development, primarily in Latin America. Her professional background includes social work, women’s advocacy, social justice

advocacy, university-level teaching in applied anthropology, advocacy agency management, and entrepreneurship. Born in Texas, she is a member of the González family of El Carmen, Nuevo León, México. She can be reached by mail at 2725 S.E. Washington Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222, by e-mail at egc@fsdf.org, and by telephone at 503-860-4808.

3. The Fifth Sun Development Fund is a private development agency headquartered at 2725 S.E. Washington Street, Milwaukie, OR and at Calle Profesor Miguel Valdez Gallardo No. 100, Colonia Centro, Rayones, Nuevo León, México. Emilia González-Clements founded the agency as a vehicle for development activities in her former research sites. The FSDF *vision* is of a world based on equitable, collaborative, sustainable development, with respect to the social and natural environments. Its *mission* is to build capacity in individuals and groups to

improve their quality of life. *Strategies* include projects in basic needs, planning and financial assistance to meet self-determined goals, technical assistance to enhance economic development, and documentation of cultural traditions for future generations. Program areas include: (1) Capacity-building Grants – Individuals and Groups, (2) Ethnographic/ Visual documentation – Traditions and Customs, and (3) Sustainable Mountain Development Projects – Villages and Tribes.

FSDF works with project counterparts, practitioners, academics, interns and volunteers in the natural and social sciences and engineering. Advisors include Dr. John van Willigen, professor of anthropology at the University of Kentucky (project design), Mr. Clyde Tyndall, a member of the Omaha nation (tribes/native populations), Susan Ugai, Attorney-at-law, Lincoln, Nebraska (nonprofit governance and legal issues), and Dr. Art Campa, professor of anthropology at Metropolitan State College of Denver (Latin American settings).

4. The villagers have given their permission for FSDF to use the names of their communities and their own names in professional presentations and publications.

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From Direct to Deferred Reciprocity: Service- versus Community-Based Learning in International Anthropology Training

Sarah Hautzinger¹

Abstract

This essay shares reflections about teaching an international service learning course in Brazil for the first time in 2006 and compares these reflections to subsequent efforts to adjust the course to enhance learning outcomes in 2008. From the 2006 pilot experience, in which the course was based on a service learning model (SL), it was apparent that with a relatively short time in the field and students' limited language skills, cultural competency, and personal relationships, the SL model did not offer students the opportunity to gain a highly contextualized understanding of difference that is a core commitment of anthropology. In 2008, we redesigned the course strongly in the direction of community-based learning (hereafter CBL), and away from a pure service model. Where the SL model flirts with presumption and unrealistic expectations in the face of students' cultural competence, I suggest, the CBL model can swing too far in the direction of social tourism and superficiality. What remains the same, regardless of SL or CBL methodology, is the overall commitment to various considerations of reciprocity with those with whom we enter into relationships as a result of academic experiences that are civically engaged and problem-based (applied) in their orientation to the discipline of anthropology. [reciprocity, service learning, community-based learning, international field courses, Brazil, Latin America]

Introduction

Strictly speaking, of course, “international service-learning” is not an oxymoron. We all know students, after all, with experience rolling up their sleeves and building a school, vaccinating at risk populations, installing latrines, or improving water systems for rural villages. That said, my own first intensive encounter teaching in an international service learning (hereafter SL) model, I would submit, was to encounter it at its most oxymoronic.

As a professor at a small liberal arts college, teaching mostly in anthropology, I was recruited to alternate with a colleague in sociology offering South American SL courses, mine in Brazil and his in Bolivia and/or Peru. This essay shares reflections about the first run of the course in 2006, titled, “Building Citizenship in New Democracies: Work Placements in Bahia, Brazil,” and compares these to our subsequent efforts to adjust the course to enhance learning outcomes in 2008. The 2006, service-based version of the course raised sobering questions, mostly surrounding whether students could be “of service” in places where they don’t speak the languages, have individual relationships, or understand the rudiments of deep or recent

histories. How much could students, in fact, learn when cut loose to “work” in communities where they are outsiders of *de facto* cultural infancy? Timely rhetoric about global citizenship aside, how much can — or should — students be “civically engaged” in countries where they are not, in fact, citizens? If such questions persist about contemporary SL programs, in part it is because we seem unable to avoid reproducing and reinforcing an order of post-colonialism, how far have we moved beyond an international service model excoriated in 1968 by Ivan Illich? He called late-60s Peace Corps an exercise in “hypocrisy,” and leveled that “sentimental concern for newly-discovered poverty south of the border combined with total blindness to much worse poverty at home justified such benevolent excursions” (1994 [1968]:1). All of these questions, in large part, can be understood as challenges anthropology — the discipline most firmly committed to highly contextualized understanding of difference — places before increasingly visible and high-profile emphases on civic engagement and international study experiences.

In response to these questions and for reasons I detail, we designed the 2008 version of

the course strongly in the direction of community-based learning (hereafter CBL), and away from a pure service model. Here I recount our tinkering with the recipe – seeking the winning mixture for good applied anthropological, international education – with all humility, acknowledging the difficulty of perfecting the mix. As those committed to CBL and SL know, too, the process depends on so many factors beyond one’s control that the historical moment and student chemistry in a course can take the same recipe to different final products. Where the SL model flirts with presumption and unrealistic expectations in the face of students’ cultural competence, I suggest, the CBL model can swing too far in the direction of social tourism and superficiality. Neither is immune, moreover, from liberal pretensions about the fortunate rescuing the downtrodden, or from reinforcing post-colonial structuring of roles by nationality, class, gender and so on; these problems have to be confronted case-by-case, inductively. What remains the same, regardless of SL or CBL methodology, is the overall commitment to various considerations of reciprocity with those with whom we enter into relationships as a result of academic experiences that are civically engaged and problem-based (applied) in their orientation to the discipline of anthropology.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, and Anthropology

The single-most formative piece of guidance I received in my early path toward incorporating service- and community-based learning into my teaching came from Karri Heffernan, associate director of the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University, during a workshop on the topic. Heffernan argued that despite service-learning/community-based-learning/civic-engagement (SL/CBL/CE, varying emphases sharing a similar core idea) having become an area in higher education with its own journals, conferences and institutional formations, it was best to understand the thrust as nothing new. Rather, she urged us, we should view it as simply applied aspects of one’s own discipline; in her case her background in Women’s Studies was immanently complemented by the SL/CBL/CE

thrust. Anthropologists should take note that, in the case of so many SL/CBL/CE programs, we are disproportionately well represented, for understandable reasons in view of our inductive, field-based, and ethnographic epistemologies.

Heffernan’s admonition is useful, particularly for those who know they’ve long been doing SL/CBL/CE work, as anthropologists, and see the partnership across disciplines, departments and programs as trendy interloping. Moreover, doing applied anthropology in the context of international education may be particularly challenging – and potentially problematic – for anthropologists. Why? First, studies about when transformational learning occurs in its most significant forms emphasize such factors as student empathy and caring in which “students would identify themselves and residents ... as members of the same community” (Kellogg 1999:64). As anthropologists are well aware, we often introduce students – in classroom and field experiences alike – to settings decidedly foreign to them, in which attaining understanding of the historical, sociocultural, and structural aspects of social problems is a life-long endeavor, beginning with basic issues of linguistic and cultural competence. It can be just as important to impress upon students what they do *not* understand or have in common with distant communities as what they do. Unproblematized presumptions about students as global citizens who automatically share interests with community members can be as counterproductive as they are productive; particularly where service is most active, it can easily overflow into inappropriate or useless interventions, as well as deepening processes of cultural imperialism and hegemony.

Second, as Kiely (2004) points out, often we presume that the kind of dissonance students experience between intensive international service-learning study and their previous understandings of the causes of global inequality, injustice, human rights violations and so on produce an unmitigated positive effect. Without effective contextualization for what they glean from such an experience, however, some effects can be negative, such as alienation, defensiveness, feeling misunderstood

by, and disillusioned about, family and friends for divergent views and engagement with global disparities in living standards. As professional border crossers and cross-cultural interlocutors, anthropologists might be especially attuned to the negative effects that incomplete or inadequate guidance through these processes might produce.

The 2006 Course: Embedded Participant Observers

The site for both courses was the city Salvador da Bahia, situated in northeast Brazil and serving as the longstanding colonial capital during most of Portuguese rule. Bahia had been the context of my own ethnographic fieldwork for nearly two decades. In 2006, my spouse and Education Department colleague Tim Ferguson and I brought a small group of seven students from Colorado College to spend a month in Salvador. I sketch the array of models and techniques that we attempted to incorporate into realistic, constructive course design, as well as those we specifically eschewed as incompatible with our purposes or practical constraints. In frankly assessing the successes and shortcomings of the experience, and sharing how we rethought the course for the summer of 2008, I stress that students arriving at transformative “ahas!” (Albert 1996:185) is contingent upon numerous factors, including effective partnerships and compelling, inspirational local visions for social transformation.

As a Brazilianist ethnographer, I had long puzzled over how to effectively share perspectives of Brazilian grassroots struggles for gender, racial, and class equity with groups of predominantly North American students, all within the context of anthropological study. On the one hand, an anthropological framework was compatible with an immersion-based, service learning course in that both emphasize taking direction from local concerns and analyses, emphasizing immersion and participant-observation, and the productive triangulation and tension between emic and etic perspectives. On the other hand were limitations: of language and cultural competence, of the at-times contradictory postures between education (to discipline) and activism (to liberate, sometimes

to disrupt), and of student expectations that they would enter scenes with something to offer.

Time presented our most basic constraint, as we would have four and a half weeks for the program, with just three of those spent in Brazil. The first week and a half of the course was spent on campus in the United States, with intensive Portuguese lessons in the morning, afternoons devoted to seminar meetings on Brazilian history, culture, and society, with focal days on social issues and movements, as well film nights.

In response to our concerns about our students' limited linguistic and cultural competency, we elected to enter into partnership with an international volunteer organization, which offered ready work placements for our students in service-providing organizations. From the outset, we recognized that working with this organization would raise a variety of issues, some of which I detail below, but mostly because their voluntarism model was distinct from, and potentially in tension with, our service learning, participant observation model.

Our partner organization moved from what we believed to be a commendable philosophy, explicitly stating that it “defers to the needs and goals of the local community,” that they “recognize that local people know what is valuable and appropriate for their own community,” and that they “are committed to providing volunteer work that helps [local organizations] carry out their own set of objectives, rather than imposing another one.”² The in-country staff members were required to be exclusively Brazilian, and they worked exclusively with local, pre-existing programs.

At the same time, we were aware of the fact that many Latin American activists disapprove of voluntarism as a model for social change. They argue that because it creates dependency on the leisured classes, who in turn may have feelings of beneficence reinforced, volunteer-driven organizations were at worst unsustainable and at best hegemonic in influence. Our partner organization had dozens of placements they ran volunteers through, mostly young and English-speaking.

We attempted to prepare our students for possible dissonance between their multiple roles by referring to them (albeit not without irony) as

“embedded.”³ They were, first off, participant-observer anthropologists and service-learner college students embedded in, second, “units” of mostly-American, international volunteers. All of this sharpened students’ awareness that they were not merely learning about “Brazilians,” or “Bahians,” or even the subsets of those groups that were the target population for the service organizations with whom we worked. Rather, their focus included awareness of the international point of contact between local populations and organizations and the international volunteers and students.

We chose our partnership mainly because of the access it provided to established, tested work placements. Because most of the partner organization’s volunteers had considerably less preparation than our still-novice students, the placements tended to be in institutions where their volunteers could be of use with virtually no Portuguese or other background study or training. After assessing individual interests and preferences, our students were placed in a Mother Theresa (Madre Teresa) school and orphanage, several small schools in underserved, impoverished neighborhoods, and a home/hospice (depending upon residents’ levels of health) for children and adults who were HIV positive or who suffered from AIDS.

In most of these settings, our students worked with children, performing functions that did not require language such as playing, holding and cuddling, and helping change clothing or diapers, toilet, or feed children. While it somewhat concerned us that these roles were overwhelmingly tied to charitable services and generally limited to broader institutional orientations that were largely palliative (versus transformative), we reasoned that so long as we encouraged critical reflection about these issues, the advantages of ensured, face-to-face contact in working environments would still ensure the ultimate educational value of students’ experience.

To further specify for students what was intended by “participant-observer anthropologists” for the purposes of the course, we drew on Quetzil Casteñeda’s notion of experimental ethnography, and Brenda Ueland’s “Tell Me More: On the Fine Art of Listening.”⁴

This approach tries to break down the subject-object relationship of traditional ethnography, instead viewing all actors as ethnographers, mutually learning about one another. Rather than emphasizing an external end-product such as a written account or policy recommendation, we invited our students to view the interactive process itself as both the purpose and product of our work. We also stressed that their presence could serve as a means of helping communities recirculate and rediscover their own knowledge about themselves, through the process of representing themselves to outsiders.

The course assignments reflected this general approach and included: 1) journaling, at least three times a week, organized around the four Rs: reporting, reacting, reflecting, and relating; 2) two reciprocal assignments, where students would perform an immaterial gift exchange of some aspect of music, e.g., teaching “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” and learning to sing something Brazilian, e.g., “*Parabens*” (Happy Birthday) in return. We also asked them to gift a visual culture offering to their organizations, i.e., making a collage of photos taken or sketches drawn there. Finally, we required 3) an organizational report for the work placement, which examined structure, goals and beliefs, resources, leadership, strategy for social change, and challenges and obstacles.

Successes and Snags

To a person, every student found the course to have been a worthwhile learning experience; while one of the seven students reported that her expectations were left somewhat unfulfilled, the other six stated that the experience exceeded their expectations. Their work through the course promoted future involvement and research in Brazil: two of the students stayed on after the course to work on related projects, and two others planned to return in the future. By the end, six of the seven had attained at least a low level of fluency in Portuguese. Moreover, the experience promoted extensive critical thinking, especially about the voluntarism and charitable models and their limitations for producing significant social change.

Many of the aspects that sharpened our students’ critical cutlery, however, arose from

problematic issues related to our partnership; in the end, we felt that associated costs outweighed benefits. The first of these involved the placements themselves. Many of the regular staffers working in the organizations were so accustomed to the volunteers who knew no Portuguese and nothing to speak of about Brazil that they displayed what I called “volunteer fatigue”; they learned to invest little in attempting to communicate with the foreigners, and to minimize the ways in which they would involve volunteers/students in new projects, presumably because they had learned this was often more trouble than it was worth. As a result, the volunteers/students came to feel less-than-useful and bored at best, and alienated at worst.

Because our partner organization had prioritized finding settings that emphasized practical work to which their volunteers could contribute, there was a strong leaning in the direction of charitable, stop-gap organizations, many of which lacked far-reaching social analyses for the root causes of the social ills to which they attended or clear visions of social transformation. The Mother Theresa school and orphanage was the best example of this. It provided preschool aged children with a day program, but used the word “*orfanato*” (orphanage) for the program for babies and toddlers. Upon inquiring, we learned that these youngest charges were not, technically, orphans. Rather, they had been identified as severely malnourished during visits into surrounding neighborhoods by the nuns, who then approached the parents and asked permission to take the children into their care. The nuns told us that all of the parents appeared to be drug-addicted, presumably to crack. Because the nuns did not wish to contribute to permanently severing the children from their families, however, the following program was devised: The children spent Monday through Friday with the nuns. On Friday afternoon, the families would come and pick up their babies or toddlers, who were sent home with clean clothing and diapers, and sufficient food or formula to last through the weekend. On Monday morning, the children were returned.

The first time our two students placed in this setting witnessed a Monday morning transition,

they returned visibly traumatized. More than one of the babies and toddlers, they reported, were brought back to the “orphanage” in the same clothes they had worn on the previous Friday, now caked in filth, with the changes of clothes no where in evidence. Worse, several of them were near fainting from what appeared to be hunger; they guessed that they hadn’t eaten all weekend. When the students (with our facilitation) later interviewed the nuns for their organizational report assignments, they posed the inevitable question: was this program not complicit with facilitating the parents’ continued drug use and exposing the young children to indefensible, repeated trauma? The nuns did not disagree, but pointed out that they tried to counsel the parents to “*diminuir*” (diminish) their drug use, usually to no avail; we read this as bespeaking the nuns’ lack of familiarity with addiction and appropriate intervention. Though an extreme example, this placement exemplified a concern that became generalized: if the preponderance of what our students were learning rested in their own, largely negative critiques, for enterprises that their service led to them feeling complicit with, we owed them better. Straw-man examples pose too many limitations to student learning.

A parallel problem emerged between our students on the one hand, and their volunteer counterparts and our partner organization’s staff on the other. The volunteers, alongside whom our students were housed (we took out an apartment a block away), were (like our own students) overwhelmingly American, white and female, with the occasional male, English or South African, and person of color thrown into the mix. The most typical profile appeared to be adolescents or young adults from well-to-do, progressive families, who could afford to send their children to South America for a vacation, but who wanted it to be a valuable learning experience as well. Embedding Colorado College students, in a demanding course for credit, amid these volunteers proved to be the most uncomfortable part for our students, as they chaffed at being associated with the most objectionable of their compatriots, the “ugly-American-meets-valley-girls,” as one of them put it. The organization’s volunteers weren’t reading

about Brazil or studying Portuguese beyond the optional and rudimentary instruction through the program, and they grew bored and went on shopping sprees or flew to Rio for long weekends with striking regularity. Their sense of impotence in their placements led, in our view, to them falling back on stereotypes about “these people” who could not partner in better health care or schooling for their own communities’ benefit — these were the very stereotypes their experiences were supposed to contradict. We attempted to acknowledge this difference for our students’ sake, and let them vent when needed. Parallel to their work placements, we convened reflection and seminar sessions twice weekly at our apartment a block away, and students prepared a gift for their organization (usually an activity or a display), as well as presenting organizational analyses about histories, philosophy and mission, structure and policies, funding and leadership, along with assessments of effectiveness and critiques.

The lesson I took from the 2006 pilot experience was one of cost benefit: if one has four and one-half weeks for an educational experience, the students could have seen more, and gotten much more intensive content than the service-intensive model offered them, particularly in the context of our partnership.

The 2008 Course — The Pendulum Swings toward CBL

Two years later, we took the opportunity to completely rework a course design for a student group in Bahia. In the interim, I heard a story from a new colleague specifically trained in community-based education.

A group of Miami University of Ohio students travelled on a service-learning to Miami tribal community members in Oklahoma.⁵ The elders greeted students by thanking them sincerely for taking the time to visit, and assuring them repeatedly that they couldn’t imagine how grateful they were for the *service* students would perform. “Now, what we would like you to do for us while you’re here,” the leaders continued, “is nothing. Nothing short of watching, listening and — most importantly — learning.” Through such a process, the elders explained, the students might begin to become

familiar enough with *who* the Miami community were, how *they* understood their assets and challenges, and how best to *eventually* become true allies in Miami pursuits. To attempt to “do” more so early in their mutual acquaintance, the elders felt, would simply exacerbate misunderstanding, potentially creating more problems than it could resolve.

We found this Miami understanding of service-learning (which in practical terms may appear more as CBL) based in long-term, deferred reciprocity to be a good fit for students new to Brazil and to Portuguese. We titled our 2008 course “Visions of Social Transformation: Progressive Change in Brazil.” The course was designed in collaboration with two in-country co-instructors,⁶ both of whom worked with social development models grounded in social entrepreneur, assets-based and multiplier models (Bornstein 2004; Attanasio and Székely eds. 2001).

We began our stay with a four-day retreat to a small village on the island just opposite the bay of Tudos os Santos (All Saints) from the city. There we convened intensive, seminar-style study of Brazilian history, society and culture, alongside “start-up” Portuguese lessons. After this introduction, organizational visits based in the capital city comprised the greater part of the course, shaped around four focal themes: 1) educational equality; 2) gender equality; 3) racial equality; and 4) poverty alleviation and social development. The emphasis on equality rather than inequality was intended to highlight Brazilian visions, solutions to problems, and long-term goals. We typically spent a half-day, but in one case (Arte Cidadã), five consecutive days, with a project. Of the fifteen organizations we visited, those with arts-based programs for empowering youth represented over a third. Whether emphasizing dance, theatre, music, poetry, the projects shared anti-individualistic (as performance-based occupational cultures go, that is), how-can-your-voice-serve-your-community messages. They included several folk-preservation projects (such as CRIA’s “reclamation of childhood” efforts, which collect and recirculate children’s games, songs, rhymes); one of the world’s longest standing and most renowned organization working with street

children (Projeto Axé); and a group that helps disadvantaged youth break into high-tech music performance and production (Eletrocooperativa). The strong leaning toward these arts-based programs was not a premeditated part of our course design; in part it reflected our co-instructors' connections, and in part the singular vitality of the arts in Bahian culture, and its salience as cultural, social, and political capital, and indeed as the repository of historical memory and identity.

The other groups we studied varied widely in orientation, but shared the necessary criterion of holding an analysis of social inequality and a strategy with which to confront it. For the gender unit we spoke to activists at the domestic workers union Sindoméstico; NGO activists working to prevent sexual trafficking and exploitation of women at Projeto Chame; and policewomen and social workers facing gender-based violence at the local women's police station (the DEAM,⁷ see Hautzinger 2007). In our social development unit we visited an MST (Landless Movement) settlement, the trash-sorters' cooperative Catadores de Lixo, as well as the university-based CIAGS, which brings together unemployed textile workers, designs by professional designers, and progressive-elite markets that can meet the prices the products command. Projeto Tamar, which works to preserve not only sea turtles but the cultural patrimony and human capital of the fishing-village/tourist attraction where it's located, shared with us its school and tourist-guide training programs in a one-day side trip. Our study of race relations and education were both served with our visits to the Instituto Cultural Steve Biko, which "promotes the insertion of qualified black youth" for educational, social and political opportunities. To complement the educational unit, we visited a series of schools private and public, elite and poor in each category, and brought teachers and professors to dine with us and discuss their experiences. Brazil's incipient race-and-class quotas for public university systems were much on everyone's minds, and two students carried on a six-week investigation of the topic after the class disbanded.

In this breathless itinerary⁸ we kept alive the

idea of reciprocal exchange, and the possibility of "service," though in expressly modest senses. Several times we had activities set up to share with groups of children, only to find they were accomplished adolescent or young adult performers, which caught our group in awkward positions. For example, once we'd set up a series of hand games ("Oh Playmate," etc.) to show a group involved with preserving childhood traditions, only to find no children present and a crowd of older adolescents and young adults with multiple choreographed numbers to share with us that they'd been rehearsing for the approaching São João (St. John's day) festival. At the same visit, we had also prepared a chemistry demonstration, including pouring Mentos mints into a carbonated two-liter bottle to trigger a geyser, only to realize the probable cultural inappropriateness of wasting soda and candy in a setting where these were likely luxuries for special occasions. We did have novel craft projects for kids at Projeto Axé, lively interchange with the English class at Steven Biko, and various spontaneous sessions of *capoeira*⁹, and break-, hip-hop, and other dancing in the round. The latter, though, were trying for many students, in part because our class was majority white (European-American, with two Latinas) and one African-American. This sole black student, in a black-majority city, happened to also be the only accomplished dancer for the kinds of throw-down rounds that broke out. Many students ruminated in their journals on how our exchanges, while joyful, moving and beautiful, also at times seemed to reinforce stereotypes, simultaneously making them self-conscious and unable to subvert the "fictions of race" that felt nonetheless over-determined in many of our interactions.

For the last of four total side-trips from the city we visited Arte Cidadã (Citizen Art), a youth-in-the-arts project in a town six hours inland from the capital city. Our visit to Boa Vista de Tupim came at the end of our month in Bahia, timed to correspond with São João, the Saint John's day festival that celebrates the corn harvest, *caipira* (country hick) traditions and stereotypes, and jumping over bonfires for São João to become *compadres* and *comadres*, all fueled by an astonishing variety of fruit liqueurs. Boa

Vista de Tupim in Bahia rests between arid *sertão*, or drought-ridden interior, and the foothills for the Chapada Diamantina mountain range, where the French mined the industrial diamonds that dug the Panama Canal. Unlike previous São João's that I'd spent in the capital, where people dot freckles on their faces and blacken teeth with make-up and tie rough rope around their jeans for belts, the students from Arte Cidadã were the children and often the great-great-great grandchildren as well, of the backland ranching culture that the rest of Brazil caricatured. As part of my story of Boa Vista de Tupim below shows, they needed not makeup to burlesque the *caipira* images of their own region: they knew them intimately already.

Our group arrived before midnight on a Thursday, looking forward to some quiet time with our hosts before the festival got going that weekend. As the commercial bus rumbled into the town square, most of the students slept, and when they heard a live band playing, assumed it must be unrelated to their arrival."¹⁰ Gradually someone figured out this was wrong – the people playing were wearing Arte Cidadã tee shirts, and waiting for our group to climb off the bus. For the next two to three hours, after dancing and chanting their way to the project's center, the two groups frolicked and mingled according to the celebratory tone our hosts were setting. Sometime after 1 p.m., we were invited to a dinner at a nearby buffet restaurant, one of many for which they refused to let us pay.

This was how our five-night, four-day visit began. Students and the instructors' family were distributed for home-stays with families from the project's students. We stressed that what we called home-stays in English our Bahian hosts called *hospedagem solidária*– solidary housing, and that rather than understand this as an institutional and business arrangement as in most immersion-based programs emphasizing language training, here the arrangement should be understood in the context of mutual gifting in recognition of shared interests and goals. In most cases, their home-stays provided an agreeable reprieve from the institutional focus of our community-based experiences to date. In one case, two students were sharing a twin mattress while one suffered from a terrible, hacking

cough, something we instructors would have tried to remedy had we known, but for the most part our stays were gratifying windows into daily life we'd not yet known.

Our first day there, we were invited – though I don't think refusal was an option – to judge two streets that had been decorated in a competition for São João. Displays would include choreographed dance numbers of children, huge cacti cut in the *sertão* and replanted in the streets, exhibitions of natural wonders discovered in the region, and shacks where the treats of São João were to be tasted and tested by the judges, as the residents waited respectfully, though with visible hunger. We felt obligated to choose a winner and did so on what we found to be defensible grounds, but still feeling awkward and mystified at being cast in the visiting dignitary roles.

That night, I translated Weldon Bitencourt's (the artistic director's) invitation to some event early the next morning that "we're trying to turn into an annual tradition," assuring our students it was optional and no one should feel obligated to attend; not surprisingly, therefore, I was the only North American that gathered with them in front of the center at 5 a.m. the next day. I had no idea what to expect, but somehow imagined we'd be ascending the hill close by, where the Easter processions went, and where some students had already invited me to go early some morning. A mule-drawn cart approached, with a vat of a corn porridge drink. The students, gifted thespians that they were, were completely in character as their grandparents, mouthing hilariously authentic-sounding *caipira* greetings and sporting mismatched socks, baggy pants and old-fashioned shawls. At some point someone said, "There's the *trio elétrico*," or a semi-truck mounted with load speakers for *carnaval*; I looked over and saw a small, aged pharmacy truck, presumably making its morning delivery, and assumed they were kidding. But then, at second glance, I saw the speakers piled in the truck's bed. Just then, director Weldon turned on the microphone and started a chant that would continue for the next three hours as we paraded and danced up and down every street in the town: "WAKE UP, Boa Vista de TUMIM! Wake up! Wake up! São João begins early around

here!” House after house’s windows cracked open by sleepy eyes within, soon to be cajoled to accept a cup of porridge or a swig of *licor*, all while the speaker’s drawl and the *farró* music blasted through the early morning air. No one, except a number of North Americans from our group, found this outrageous enough to merit complaint.

That evening, we again were invited to jury the annual dance contest between *quadrilha* — a *farró*-based square dance — groups. Trying to be level-headed about this but growing increasingly exhausted and uncomfortable with our status as privileged, and somehow powerful, guests we agreed to place two judges, so long as the majority on the panel would be locals. To this they agreed, except two of the three Bahian judges did not show up, so two out of the three judges were North American. The rest of the group enjoyed the performance from atop the lit stage, looking down on the dancers; many of us felt ill at ease with this spatial arrangement. The next night, the American group was invited atop the full-sized, semi *trio elétrico* to dance next to the band. Meanwhile, the Bahians — conditioned as they are to expect the non-stop revelry that is São João — were often staying up much of consecutive nights and still energized by day — were puzzled at the fatigue at the North American group, whose members, they ventured, seemed to sleep an inordinate amount of the time.

We shared many poetry readings, radio broadcasts, dance rehearsals and sessions, and conversations with our hosts; fast friendships resulted, and yet our students expressed frustration that they felt helpless to meet expectations of keeping pace with their indefatigable hosts. They were cowed by the level of generosity to which they were treated, but also with the fact that the ways we were asked to participate and/or reciprocate afforded us influence we found undue and undeserved. In sum, this final visit encompassed contradictions that were at once productive and problematic: Even as we humbly learned alongside cutting-edge, progressive educational and activist work, we were also being deployed as symbols of foreign status and relative enlightenment in ways that legitimated their projects. Students

expressed mixed feelings about their symbolic casting; even if they supported the ends served, the means seemed to reinforce and reproduce problematic dichotomies, associating developed-country origins with power and status that felt extraneous to the Brazilian context. At the same time, we were well satisfied that this model exposed our students to substantive local analyses and strategies in a way far superior to our 2006 pilot model and served notions of deferred reciprocity and creating globally aware, critical-thinking citizens.

Middle Ground: Between Illich and Ayni

That anthropologists would call for broadening our notions of how long-term, deferred reciprocity fits into international education fits into SL/CBL/CE approaches is not surprising. Theoretical approaches in economic anthropology and feminist anthropology, in particular, have usefully contrasted short-term, “productive” models of organizing effort and work with longer-term, “reproductive” approaches. In economic terms, these may be the kinds of efforts not registered through waged labor markets; feminists note how often efforts that reproduce relationships, traditions and expressions of value remain unsung and frequently unremunerated forms of cultural reproduction. The “Miami model” indicated by elders with a preference for deferred reciprocity can be likened to a vote for valuing education that instructs students toward competence in performing long-term, culturally reproductive work over an intensive experience emphasizing “service” — some immediate return on students’ presence — which can be considered to be both more short-term and more “productive.”

Albert argues that the intensiveness of a student service-learning experience is directly proportionate to “more profound and complex... possible outcomes” (1996: 184). A comparison between the 2006 and 2008 summers in Bahia, however, requires that the relationship between “service” and “intensive learning” be qualified. In the 2006 course, I submit, the direct-service component was so intensive that it dramatically undercut the intensity and rigor of student learning. In 2008, by contrast, the elements of direct service were severely scaled back, where the

intensity of learning, broadly cast in the SL/CBL/CE spirit, was dramatically multiplied. While it is technically most correct to classify the 2008 version as primarily CBL with modest elements of SL, the deferred-reciprocity, long-term Miami model – with its stress on cultural understanding and mutual respect – offers us a way to understand CBL as still broadly faithful to the spirit of mutual exchange emphasized in service-learning programs grounded in social justice. In the latter case, we move decisively away from a charitable model of unidirectional giving from the privileged to the downtrodden, and successfully toward models of reciprocity so broadly imagined that they are faithful reflections of our ever-deepening awareness of global connectedness and interdependency.

When our students recoiled, in their first reading assignment in the course literature, from Ivan Illich's vituperative to-hell-with-your-good-intentions message, we asked them how they would account for themselves, in 2006 or 2008, on a SL/CBL/CE in Brazil. Their answers range from noting that our respective societies are all, already mutually intertwined and that North Americans are already grossly overrepresented in these relationships by evangelicals and other Christians on mission trips, business people, international volunteers, immersion-based language programs, and so on, such that the small addition their own participation added to the intercultural discourses, based as it was in a level of rigor, substance and critical thought that quality higher education does best, could hardly be considered a net negative. They also pointed to the many community partners in Latin American and other settings – Miami of Oklahoma included – who not only welcome but crave dialogue, contact with, and recognition from international student counterparts, and not only from students originating from places perceived as more powerful or economically advantaged that could serve instrumental interests.

Porter and Monard (2001) offer a different kind of salve for students' Illich-induced disquietudes. They draw on the indigenous Andean concept of *ayni* to ground notions of reciprocity in their Bolivia service-learning course geared to shape global citizenship.

Because theirs was based more upon direct service than our CBL-based version of the Brazil course, some of their emphases were different than ours: for example, they concentrated on projects – in this case, for continuing adult education – responding to needs identified by the local communities in immediate ways, as well as “lending a hand, not just writing a check” (2001:9, 11). Other aspects of the *ayni* model, however, fit well into our adaptation of the Miami model to Brazil, namely helping to “grow... networks of stakeholders shar[ing] ownership of the project” (ibid.:10), and “Giving ... joyfully and wholeheartedly” (ibid.:12). Most salient for my purposes here, Porter and Monard stipulate that “preconceptions about time need to be checked at the door.” They guided their students to move away from senses of “giving up” their spring breaks, “donating” or “sacrificing” their time, toward longer-term “investment” both in themselves and in their friends in Bolivia” (ibid.:13).

Our work shared Porter and Monard's long-term goals of creating student and community-member awareness of being “legitimate members of a global family” (ibid.:15). We tipped our work strongly in the direction of a CBL-based, deferred-reciprocity model – which I've been calling the Miami model here, and which attempts honesty about their neophyte status in Brazilian culture while maintaining high expectations for their learning – while nonetheless sustaining the emphasis on reciprocity and the spirit of SL/CBL/CE education as a whole. In our case, this shift required our community partners to also consciously embrace deferred reciprocity as a model, to invest in the exchange as effective for creating global citizenship in their own organizations, but also in the individual students who had come from so far away, at considerable personal and institutional expense, to learn together.

Conclusion

The two courses upheld for scrutiny and reflection here have many idiosyncratic aspects: the particularities of our partnership with the international volunteer organization in 2006, or of the issues created with the preponderance of

arts-based programs in 2008, need not be understood as bearing directly on the broader strengths of service-learning versus community-based learning as methodological tactics. Instead, I have invoked the shared spirit of SL/CBL/CE as encapsulated in a commitment to reciprocity and acknowledged interdependency, and considered the best recipe for students who are cultural and linguistic neophytes. As my account here makes clear, neither experience nor model was immune from reinforcing problematic, neocolonialist dichotomies or stereotypes. However, the fact that the 2008 CBL-based experience provided the students with considerably more of the best-quality grist for their reflective mills — grist of the most sophisticated and progressive sort Bahian activists had to offer — supported our assessment that this was a more apt model for students new to Brazilian culture and the Portuguese language. ○

Notes

1. Sarah Hautzinger, who has a Ph.D. in anthropology from Johns Hopkins University (1997), is associate professor of anthropology at Colorado College, 14 East Cache la Poudre, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 USA. She may be reached at 719-389-6359 by telephone and at shautzinger@coloradocollege.edu by e-mail.
2. I omit the name of the organization here because although some of what I report is not complimentary, I believe this may have resulted from specific players involved — volunteers, staff and placement programs alike — rather than problems that are necessarily endemic across the organization.
3. This was year three of the United States' invasion of Iraq, and a time when journalists, anthropologists and others were referred to as “embedded” with military units in Iraq and Afghanistan.
4. An elaboration of this version of experimental ethnography can be found at the Open School for Ethnography and Anthropology –

Community Institute for Transcultural Exchange (OSEA—CITE) website, http://www.osea-cite.org/history/exp_ethnography.php. Ueland, B. 1992 Utne Reader, Nov./Dec.:19-24.

5. I am grateful to Kira Pasquesi, Outreach Programs Coordinator in the Colorado College Partnership for Civic Engagement, for sharing this anecdote.
6. Eduardo Santos (of AVINA) and Faezeh Shaikhzadah Santos (then of Projeto Cria) served as invaluable collaborators, counselors and friends.
7. DEAM stand for *Delegacia Especializada em Atentimento à Mulher*, or Specialized Police Station for Women.
8. One of our students called the course “the block plan on crack,” citing Colorado College’s already concentrated, modular program at an even greater intensity. It was, without a doubt, demanding for all concerned, and appropriately so considering the resources involved with creating the opportunity. Were we to teach it similarly again, however, we could better prepare students for the more formidable challenges.
9. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art/game/dance form, originating on slave plantations in the 19th Century.
10. Those present will remember that I was not present for this part; for simplicity I leave that story out of this one.

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Practicing Fieldwork: The Transformational Value of a Collaborative Ethnographic Field School in Ecuador¹

Jean N. Scandlyn,² John Brett,³ and Sharry Erzinger⁴

Abstract

This article describes and critically evaluates a new and developing field school of the University of Colorado Denver (UCD) in the rural lowland community of Mondaña, Ecuador. The program combines Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Minkler 2000) with Rapid Assessment Process (RAP) (Beebe 2001) to conduct on-going research on sustainable development and health. Mondaña is home to the Yachana Lodge, a for-profit, award-winning ecotourism lodge whose profits help to support the Colegio Técnica Yachana (CTY), a technical high school that teaches male and female students from the Amazonian region, most of whom are indigenous, skills in sustainable agriculture, animal husbandry, ecotourism, and microenterprise. Students from UCD work closely with colegio students to complete each year's research project and present the results to the community. Although the field school uses a team-based approach to research in contrast to the more usual model where students conduct independent research projects, it nonetheless provides students with the opportunity for a transformative educational experience as demonstrated in their final reflection papers. [Ecuador, ethnographic field school, sustainable development, Participatory Action Research, rapid assessment process]

Introduction

The transformative nature of field experiences for students has a long history in anthropology (Hackenberg 1994). Bronislaw Malinowski set the tone in the early 20th century with his description of being dropped off onto a remote tropical island to live among the residents, "become familiar with his [sic] customs and beliefs" (1922:5) and develop cogent theory from his observations. In the process, though his diary suggests he actively resisted personal transformation, his emphasis on direct experience did transform the discipline of anthropology (Kolankiewicz-Lundberg 2008). Malinowski's model of the lone ethnographer left to meet the rigors of field-based research and the challenges of culture shock isolated from her or his native country, friends, and family remains a strong undercurrent, an unstated ideal within cultural anthropology. As Tim Wallace notes: "The 'sink-or-swim' approach is still considered by most to be the only way to learn" (Wallace 1999:211). Although the mystique of fieldwork is gradually changing, it has not entirely disappeared. Bill Roberts, who runs a field school in The Gambia, keeps his students together, initially noting, "Certainly the opportunity for 'lone-wolf' research exists during the latter half of the field school..." (2004:92). More recently,

anthropologists have begun to question this model of field experience, both methodologically and pedagogically, as a way to train practitioners in the discipline unless it is accompanied by adequate preparation in research design and ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis (Iris 2004a; Gmelch and Gmelch 1999). Classroom curricula in anthropology now include courses in research design, methodology, data management, and analysis not only at the graduate but also at the undergraduate level. Nonetheless, students are frequently sent into the field alone with the assumption that it is this lone struggle with cultural differences that facilitates their transformation.

Where does the transformation in fieldwork and in field courses originate? From being thrown into a situation in which you must find your way out by yourself? Or does transformation come through facing challenges to ways of seeing and being in the world? These challenges can come from many sources and, as many anthropologists have observed, teach us as much about our own society and selves as they do about another's. Does being and working with other members of our own society necessarily preclude this type of transformation? Can students in a fieldwork setting simultaneously learn about themselves and their

own society and about another society and its members? Linda Levine, commenting on a series of articles that reflect on mentoring students through field schools, asks: "Is there some irredeemable loss for first-time ethnographers when isolation is sharply reduced and blunders prevented or caught early on?" She further argues, "these experienced ethnographers make a strong case for *directly supervised* early fieldwork that includes extensive peer collaboration as well as individual activity" (Levine 1999:249). As Tim Wallace notes in his introductory essay to a special issue of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* on ethnographic field schools: "The authors in this issue argue strongly that field schools are successful strategies for improving methods training and contributing to the development of more competent and reliable ethnographers and anthropologists" and adds that students are often more aware of their need for guided and supervised field experiences than their professors (Wallace 1999:210).

Since publication of that special issue in 1999, the number of faculty-led ethnographic field schools in a wide variety of geographic, community, and institutional settings has expanded. A primary aim of these field schools is to provide undergraduate and graduate students with the type of supervised field study Levine and Wallace call for (Berman 2004; Diamante and Wallace 2004; Gmelch and Gmelch 1999; Iris 2004a, 2004b; Nichols and Iris 2004; Timmer 2004; Van Arsdale 2004; Wallace 1999; Wallace 2004; Wallace and Iris 2004). Only a few of these programs, however, incorporate peer collaboration and collaboration with local participants as fundamental aspects of their design.

In this article, we provide a description and analysis of a new and developing field school in the rural lowland community of Mondaña, Ecuador. The program combines Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Minkler 2000) with Rapid Assessment Process (RAP) (Beebe 2001) to conduct on-going research on sustainable development and health. The authors, two anthropologists and a doctor of public health, all members of the faculty at the University of Colorado Denver, designed and teach the course, which is open to advanced undergraduate and

graduate students. In Ecuador, U.S. students work closely with Ecuadorian students from the Colegio Técnico Yachana (CTY), described below, to answer each year's research questions. The research is directly supervised by the faculty and provides the opportunity for students' transformation as demonstrated in their final reflection papers.

Designing the Field School

In 2003, one of the authors invited the founder and executive director of the Foundation for Integrated Education and Development or FUNEDESIN and an Ecuadorian ecotourism guide who worked for the foundation, to visit the campus of the University of Colorado Denver. As they described the foundation's goals of creating and promoting sustainable livelihoods in the Amazonian region of Ecuador to anthropology faculty and students, we became increasingly excited about what it might mean for U.S. students to spend time in this remote region of Ecuador directly engaging with the people, settings, and issues involved in sustainable development in ways not possible in the classroom. Mondaña offered several advantages for a field school. First, it offered the opportunity to study the process of development longitudinally and the responses, actions, and understanding of local residents and NGOs with respect to ecotourism. Ecotourism as a mechanism of economic development and conservation is a key strategy of governments throughout Latin America; hence, studying this process from the actor's point of view is critical (Bauer 2007). Second, our personal knowledge of the Yachana Foundation and its founder facilitated a collaborative approach that, we hoped, could be extended to the residents of Mondaña and the surrounding communities. Although the colegio had been established just prior to our exploratory visit and thus did not figure strongly in our decision to choose Mondaña as a field site, working with students at CTY has proved to be one of the most valuable aspects of the field school.

After a preliminary trip to Mondaña over spring break in 2006, the authors developed a curriculum for the field experience that would take advantage of the month-long break between

UCD's fall and spring semesters. The course is based on the principles of experiential education (Dewey 1997), and its primary goal is for students to learn and use practical research methods to understand the dynamics of community development by asking questions about sustainable livelihoods. Because of the limited time in the field, we adopted Rapid Assessment Process as our approach to research and combined it with Participatory Action Research to facilitate collaborative projects with residents of Mondaña, faculty and students of CTY, and staff of the Yachana Foundation, which runs an ecotourism lodge in the community.

The Curriculum

The course begins in late December with a week of classroom sessions on campus that cover background information on the field site and on the history, culture, and ecology of the Amazonian region of Ecuador; practical information about traveling and living in a rural tropical environment; approaches to studying sustainable development and health care; and instruction in field methods used in RAP, e.g., surveys, systematic observation, mapping, pile sorts, formal and informal interviews, key informant interviews, and document analysis. Throughout the week, students and faculty discuss issues related to fieldwork and participatory research including ethics, protection of human subjects, power differentials between researchers and participants, community dynamics, and competing and conflicting agendas. Because residents of Mondaña speak Spanish or Quichua, students develop some understanding of the limitations of a field experience that uses local interpreters. By the end of the week, students and faculty together formulate the basic questions they collectively want to address during their time in Mondaña with the understanding that these questions may be amended or changed once we arrive and consult with our Ecuadorian colleagues.

After a few days' break, we depart for Ecuador on December 26 and arrive in Mondaña on December 27th or 28th, where students and faculty remain and work until mid-January

(eighteen to twenty days). Students live in a dormitory, aptly named "Casa Quest," (Quest House) on the grounds of the Yachana Lodge and take all of their meals, unless they are in the field, in the lodge's dining room. This arrangement allows students to congregate easily for group work and, because the focus of the course is learning research methods, in contrast to learning Spanish, frees them to concentrate on data collection and analysis. It also provides them with the opportunity to participate in the activities and rhythms of the lodge, experiences that have yielded rich insights into the complex dynamics of sustainable development projects that incorporate ecotourism and a counterpart to empirical and theoretical literature they read prior to fieldwork. Although living at the lodge does not provide the rigors and hardships of fieldwork that many students expect from a field school, the contrasts with local living conditions and the conflicts surrounding sustainable development are equally challenging. The first few days are relatively quiet as New Year's is a national holiday that provides community celebrations and a respite from work for Mondaña's residents and a time when student cohorts at the colegio change (see below). Our students spend the time meeting and interviewing key informants at the school and the lodge, e.g., Yachana's founder and the principal of CTY, and touring Yachana's various development projects, the school's campus, and the local market.

By January 2 students have settled into a daily routine in which they spend the mornings collecting data and the afternoons organizing and analyzing it. Instruction in data collection and management techniques (e.g., pile sorting) or the use of a database and data analysis (e.g., coding) takes the form of formal instructional sessions and is reinforced informally as students do their research and analysis. RAP demands daily analysis of collected data with assessment of progress toward research goals and identification of gaps in data or analysis and needed alterations to the research design (Beebe 2001). The first year, when sixteen students enrolled in the course, the group was divided into two major research teams of eight students each. One group focused on sustainable

agriculture and animal husbandry and the other group focused on community health. Each afternoon before dinner the research teams met to plan the following day's activities and every two to three days both teams would gather to share their results and provide critical evaluation of their progress toward the common research goals. In the second year, because five students enrolled in the course, the entire group participated in data collection and analysis as a single team. Toward the end of the second week, faculty directed students to work with the high school students to plan the presentation of their results at the colegio on the last night in Mondaña. The first year pairs of Ecuadorian and U.S. students presented their findings in Spanish and English; the second year a Spanish-speaking student from the United States gave the presentation in Spanish. The presentations were followed by a celebration with the colegio students and residents of Mondaña.

The Yachana Foundation and the Community of Mondaña

The field school is based at the Yachana Foundation (originally the Foundation for Integrated Education and Development) project on the upper Napo River in the Northern Ecuadorian Amazon basin. This is an area of major oil exploration and development with the town of Coca, about three hours down river, being a major oil services center for the region. This region contains Ecuador's largest oil fields that contribute to national production of 493,200 barrels per day, 60% of which is exported, representing roughly 40% of Ecuador's export income (CIA 2007). While some people work for the various oil and gas firms, the majority of the population is involved in tropical cash agriculture with the two largest crops being coffee and increasingly cacao. Beginning in the 1970s, the Ecuadorian government adopted what is arguably the "standard model" in the American tropics of dividing up large tracts of state-owned rainforest lands in the Amazon basin into 250 x 2000 meter (five hectare) "homestead" parcels that were granted to landless peasants and urban dwellers to settle these newly opened regions (personal communication, Douglas McMeekin, 2007). Oil

exploration and development have created strife with traditional peoples who have been displaced from their land and national and local government and oil companies.

The Yachana Foundation utilizes an innovative development model in partnership with over 10,000 regional inhabitants, including several indigenous and immigrant groups, to create development and income-generating activities that provide employment for local residents while being sensitive to ecological conditions. Through a variety of development projects over its fifteen-year history, the Yachana Foundation has focused on education and basic medical and dental services while working toward ecologically sound, sustainable livelihoods. One of the first projects that the Yachana Foundation undertook was the purchase of land from local farmers on which to build the ecolodge and begin the tourism program. The foundation donated two hectares of land beside the state-run elementary school so that members of the community could build houses closer to the school. The community of Mondaña has a population of roughly three hundred people and twenty-seven families. To date, the Yachana Foundation has purchased three hundred twenty-five hectares of land around the lodge and Mondaña, including 1,200 hectares on the north side of the Napo River as a nature preserve. The foundation plans to buy additional tracts of land as they are made available by local landowners. Additional information on the Yachana Foundation's conservation efforts can be found at the foundation's website, www.yachana.org.ec.

The Yachana Lodge and Colegio Técnico Yachana

One of the central long-term projects of the Yachana Foundation is the Colegio Técnico Yachana. CTY is a technical high school with four areas of study specifically oriented toward creating sustainable livelihoods in the rainforest: ecotourism, microenterprise development, sustainable agriculture, and animal husbandry. The school, which accepted its first students in 2005, has added one class of students each year for three years. It now begins with the equivalent of 10th grade in the United States and finishes

with the 12th grade. The first groups of students will graduate in August and September 2008 with a high school diploma. Given the dynamic nature of making a living in a rainforest environment, CTY has adopted a model of education based on direct experience and integration across all four subject areas. Students study all four tracks on a continuous weekly rotation so that they leave school with a broad, integrated base of skills and knowledge. In addition, students “live their education” by spending their mornings engaged in the broad range of activities central to the track in which they are currently assigned, followed by afternoon classes concentrating on the academic concepts and skills pertaining to each track. Although English and the basic academic subjects normally covered in a high school curriculum are included, as much of the classroom work as possible is tied to the content of the experiential curriculum. For example, English learning is geared first toward the specifics necessary to interact with tourists, engage in business, or understand and communicate agricultural information to outsiders. Math is based in the primary needs of making a living, for example, calculating the volume of a fishpond to generate a targeted harvest of tilapia. This combination of practical and theoretical skills and concepts results in an integrated understanding of a wide range of opportunities and processes within the local environment.

Because of long distances and travel time between students’ home communities and Mondaña, CTY is as a boarding school. All students, including those from the immediate region, live at the school. Part of the innovation of the colegio is a schedule designed to accommodate as many students as possible within the available infrastructure. The campus can house around sixty students and teachers; however, the demand is much greater. In order to accommodate larger number of students over time, students come for twenty-eight-day blocks during which time they are essentially in school full time from early morning until late in the evening seven days a week. By American or European standards, these are very long hours, but they are in line with the hours the students

would work if they were not in school but working in the subsistence economy typical of the region. Students have a four-hour work session in their subject area in the morning followed by three hours of classroom instruction after lunch, with homework in the evenings. Students then have a “break” of twenty-eight days when they return home and the alternate group begins its twenty-eight-day stay. During this twenty-eight-day “break” students are expected to design and implement projects in their home communities. Proposed projects range from creating a composting program to introducing sustainable farming practices into their community.

The Yachana Lodge, a commercial, for-profit, internationally recognized ecotourism destination, is the economic engine that drives much of the rest of the process. As a well-run ecolodge that has received numerous national and international awards, its profits and the support it brings from private donors, funds development projects and conservation efforts, and provides operating funds operation for CTY (see www.yachana.com for more detail on the lodge, its mission and awards). In addition to income, the lodge and its guests are linked to the school and its students through the four areas of the curriculum. When studying ecotourism (1) all students rotate through the lodge learning the core skills, e.g., English and setting tables and serving that are necessary to work in and run a complex, multifaceted business enterprise. In microenterprise development (2) students create business plans to sell products produced through the sustainable agriculture, animal husbandry, and craft production programs to the lodge to be consumed by tourists. In sustainable agriculture (3) and animal husbandry (4) students gain an appreciation for the demands and complexity of commercial agricultural production for the lodge while, at the same time, generating operating capital for the school.

Models for Ethnographic Field Schools

In 1995, Martha Ward and Tim Wallace organized a session on “Apprentice Ethnography” at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association that led

to a special issue on ethnographic field schools, published in *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* in 1999 (Wallace 1999) followed by an issue of the *National Association of Applied Anthropology [NAPA] Bulletin* on field schools published in 2004. These articles demonstrate growing interest in ethnographic field schools and their role in providing students with practical experience and instruction with field research. Two elements define a field school as ethnographic: direct experience with ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis in independent or group projects in a field setting (Grant et al. 2004; Wallace 2004; Iris 2004a; Gmelch and Gmelch 1999). Madelyn Iris (2004a:8) identifies four models for anthropology field schools: (1) problem-focused, (2) instructor-driven, (3) applied anthropology, and (4) study-tour.

The Field Experience in Ecuador most closely falls into the first category in which all the students investigate the same research topic in one or more sites. A review of websites describing thirty ethnographic field schools across the world identified five programs that explicitly combined community participation and team-based research by U.S. students.⁵ Three additional programs described active community participation in their projects and a team-based or collaborative model of research. For the remaining twenty-two programs, the level of collaboration was unclear or not specifically described on the website. The majority of field schools continue to require students to do independent research projects. For fourteen programs this requirement was clearly stated, but for thirteen it was unclear or unstated if projects were to be completed by individuals or groups. Unlike most field schools described in the literature, however, the Field Experience in Ecuador explicitly uses the principles of RAP (Beebe 2001). RAP was created to obtain some of the richness about social and cultural context and the holistic perspective of ethnographic research related to a single, specific research question in a shorter time frame than research by a single ethnographer permits. It relies on complementary skills and perspectives of the research team combined with reliance on local experts who have a depth of knowledge

about the question under study or the research setting. In addition, RAP utilizes data from government and institutional reports, census data, and published and unpublished research to triangulate field research and provide background material. In the case of the Field School in Ecuador, students take responsibility for identifying relevant sources of data to answer the central research question and then divide data collection among themselves. Because Spanish language proficiency is not a requirement to enroll in the course, interviews and survey administration generally fall to those with some Spanish language skills while observation, mapping, and other less language-dependent methods fall to those who are less proficient in Spanish. Students generally spend the morning block of time collecting data in pairs or working with students from the colegio, and then come together in the afternoons to write up their field notes, analyze that day's data, and assess their progress to plan for the next day's work.

In the first year, because sixteen students enrolled in the course, we were able to divide into two teams, each of which worked on one of two closely related research projects. One group concentrated on mapping, both geographically and conceptually, the physical layout of the school's agricultural fields, tilapia ponds, compost system, pens for hogs and chickens, and harvesting of lumber for construction projects at the school. These components were then developed into a model of the various interacting systems that were designed to promote their sustainability or, as one of our students aptly put it, "defining the loops." The analysis focused on the school was then expanded to include the village of Mondaña, the lodge, and the surrounding region. The second group concentrated on completing a baseline community health assessment that included mapping water sources and systems, sewage, power lines, toilets, buildings, gardens, recreational facilities, and pathways from the lodge to the colegio; semi-structured interviews with local residents about their perceptions of their health status (diet and practices around water and hygiene) and the health resources available to them; and interviews with key

informants, e.g., the community health promoter at the clinic. In addition, this group developed evaluation tools for a microenterprise project of the colegio students that involved assembling and delivering water filters to area schools along with a puppet show that provided instruction on the importance of clean water to prevent diarrheal disease. The second year, because we had a much smaller group of five students, the entire group collaborated on updating the evaluation of the water filter project through visits to four outlying communities.

Another important theme in the literature on ethnographic field schools is the desire to incorporate reciprocity into relations between students, faculty, and the community at the field site (Berman 2004; Diamente and Wallace 2004; Iris 2004b; Re Cruz 1996; Roberts 2004; Stafford, Carpenter, and Taylor 2004). Reciprocity in ethnographic schools may take many forms: presenting results to community members or local sponsoring individuals or institutions, providing copies of student reports and papers, working as volunteers on community designated projects for a portion of the field experience, or collaborating with community members or organizations to answer questions of interest to them. In the field school, we have adopted PAR as an essential component of the curriculum with RAP. Although RAP relies on the cooperation of community members to provide information on local environmental conditions, knowledge, culture, history, and social and political dynamics, it does not preclude projects in which the research agenda is set by outside researchers or institutions. PAR, in contrast, is based on the "... active involvement of the people whose lives are affected by the issue under study in every phase of the process" (Minkler 2000:192). When we first designed the field experience, we consulted with Douglas McMeekin and others at the Yachana Foundation to determine feasible lines of inquiry that would meet the needs of our students and of the Foundation and local community. This initial conversation was used as a basis for developing research questions in the classroom portion of the course prior to our departure for Ecuador. Once in the field, however, these questions were changed and

amended to reflect current priorities, conditions, and available resources in Mondaña. For example, it quickly became apparent that the colegio students would be an excellent group with whom to work collaboratively. They could work on their English and have contact with U.S. university students; our students could work on their Spanish and work collaboratively with Ecuadorian students; and the colegio students would learn about and observe ethnographic research while serving as links to local communities, translators, and cultural experts. As often happens in fieldwork, this arrangement had its limitations. Because of the demands of the colegio students' curriculum, they could only work with our students in the mornings collecting data and were thus less involved in analysis and planning than we had planned for or than we would have liked. The colegio students assigned to work on the research projects changed frequently, thus disrupting continuity. Competition for colegio students' time increased in the second field season, limiting the number of students who were assigned to work with us and the time they were permitted to work on the research projects.

"There is no uniform model for ethnographic field schools" (Wallace 1999:214), whose goals may be achieved in a variety of settings from the students' home country or a remote foreign location, the heart of a large city or a small rural village, to homes or public institutions such as schools or hospitals. The majority of students in both sessions of the field school had limited experience in rural or tropical living, so the heat, bats, bugs, and possibility of close encounters with a wide variety of snakes were the source of endless conversation, photographs, and shrieks. The climate and topography that contrasted so strongly with the blizzard we left behind in Denver may have provided as much shock for the students as differences in language and culture. Not only was this true for our students, it was sometimes the case for students at the colegio who came from larger towns and cities in the region. Another source of cultural difference for the American students was the complex social dynamics of a small rural town. After over a week in Mondaña, we learned that there was a significant rift in the village. A local curandero

and his extended family had created a separate enclave, complete with its own nursery school and playing field, away from the main village. Students had barely started to untangle kinship relations in the village by the time we left the field. Over time, students began to observe substantial differences among households in status and economic prosperity.

Learning Ethnographic Methods

A student's isolation in the field setting is not necessary and may in some cases be detrimental to students' learning what they need to learn (Diamente and Wallace 2004). Although home stays can provide for immersion in local social networks and culture (Gmelch and Gmelch 1999), it is not necessary for students to have a meaningful and transformative field experience (Roberts 2004). We chose to house students in the Yachana Lodge to facilitate students working together on their research and because there were insufficient accommodations in the village. The distance from Casa Quest to the village's central square where community residents congregated in the evenings was a short walk. They had to pass through the village at least twice each day on their way to and from the colegio, so there was ample time for meeting and socializing with people in the village. Because of their accessibility, the presence of accommodations other than homes, and the familiarity of residents with influxes of foreigners, tourist destinations are a common location for ethnographic field schools and tourism is a frequent topic of study (Roberts 2004; Diamente and Wallace 2004; Re Cruz 1996; Wallace 2004; Iris 2004b).

Finally, faculty who lead field schools agree that the key to creating a successful ethnographic field school requires striking a balance between instruction and supervision and allowing students to find their own way in the field so that they can learn from their mistakes. "The trick of a field school is to provide the support that structure provides, while allowing students to experience the difficulty of working in new situations where patterns are not known or are very different from one's home life." Wallace calls this "disappearing structure" (2004:46). In our first year, the lack of any prior

systematic data collection meant that obtaining baseline data on health and sustainable agriculture provided the structure, guiding our choice of methods and yielding a wide range of research activities in which students could engage and find their way. By the end of the field stay, students were working together and with their colegio colleagues to analyze their data and create their presentations for the community. This first year we did not achieve our goal of analyzing all or most of the data prior to leaving the field; once we returned to Denver students and faculty continued over the next six months to analyze the data to create the final written report and convert hand drawn maps into electronic formats.

The second year proved more challenging because we lacked an updated context for choosing a solid theoretical framework from which to generate research questions; the rapid pace of change in the small community from one year to the next required substantial adaptation of the plan. Although we finally settled on continuing the evaluation of the water filter project, it required some coordination with partners who had not been present the previous year. The second year, we were able to analyze all of the data prior to leaving the field site. We have now refocused our research on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (DFID 1999; Ashley and Carney 1999; Carney 2002; Frankenberger, et al. 2002). This theoretical model, with its focus on sustainable livelihoods, fits well with the goals of the colegio and thus will enable us to provide continuity to our students' research, plan each year's work more easily, and at the same time collaborate with the colegio students and other community members on projects that will be of interest and use to them.

One advantage of combining RAP and PAR approaches is that it provides the university students with marketable research skills at a basic level upon completion of the course. As one part of the students' final graded paper, they are asked to write a paragraph telling a prospective employer what skills and knowledge they gained through this course in field research. Students listed the following ethnographic research methods and skills that they acquired during the course: mapping and GPS, both completed by

themselves and in collaboration with colegio students; developing research questions and conducting individual and group interviews, formal and informal; pile-sorting; systematic observation; writing fieldnotes and keeping a field journal; documenting agricultural and animal husbandry systems; community health assessment; and designing baseline evaluation tools. In terms of data management and analysis, students listed developing a database, coding observational and interview data, developing conceptual models of agricultural systems and feedback loops, and organizing their work and time. As one student noted: "Working on a tight schedule in a constantly changing setting has helped me to develop flexible, reactive research skills that are responsive to a work environment that presented new surprises and challenges on a daily basis."

Can Collaborative, Group-based Research Be Transformative?

The theme that most consistently infuses the literature on ethnographic field schools is that the experience, for the majority of students, is transformative. George Gmelch, in 1992, observed that there was little systematic research on the short and long-term outcomes of ethnographic field schools and so undertook a systematic study of his own decades-long field school in Barbados. To date, his is the only study that we have found in the literature either in anthropology or education. Because our goal in the field school is to analyze as much of our data as possible before leaving the field site (a goal we did not achieve the first year), the students' final graded assignment is a reflection paper that is due ten days after returning to the United States. In this paper we ask students to respond to two questions: How their experience in Ecuador has or has not been a transformative experience, and How they would describe what they learned to a potential employer.⁶ As in reports of other ethnographic field schools, our students reported similar themes (Gmelch 1992; Gmelch and Gmelch 1999; Re Cruz 1996; Roberts 2004; Nichols and Iris 2004; Timmer 2004; Wallace 2004). Because knowledge of Spanish is not a requirement for enrolling in the field school, each of the students who did not speak Spanish acknowledged the

importance of knowing the language of the field site and those who had some facility with Spanish noted how much their language ability improved during fieldwork. Almost every student expressed increased awareness of materialism and waste in U.S. culture and a desire to change this in their own lives and in the lives of their friends and families. Because of the course's and the Yachana Foundation's focus on sustainability, they linked these through processes of globalization. The majority of students discussed their reactions to the poverty in Mondaña and their deeper understanding of its effect on their lives and decisions. Although cultural differences were noted as a source of transformation, more important were the visible operation of differences in power and status, both individual and institutional, in the lives of Mondaña's residents and the students at the colegio. Finally, students learned as much about themselves as about the people in Mondaña. "Learning about myself is probably the most important piece of knowledge I acquired. Learning how to deal with my own insecurities, knowing myself and my limits, being open to different ideas and figuring out when to question things and when to let it go."

To discuss in detail the wealth of reflections from the twenty-one students who have completed the course to date is beyond the scope of this paper; consequently, we will focus on those aspects of their reflections that touch on the core objectives of the course and its innovative design, RAP and PAR. As in other field schools, several of the students mentioned the need for patience and flexibility in conducting fieldwork. "Finally, it was impressed upon me how important flexibility and patience is for all aspects of field work" and "One practice that was fundamental was to anticipate that things don't always go as you planned and that you must always have a plan B, plan C and often a plan D ready in your back-pocket." The need for flexibility also provided many students with knowledge about their own need for structure and their ability to let that structure go.

I can also say with confidence that I have learned how to work on a specific research question with an end product in mind. Because of the unpredictable nature of field-

work, I have learned how to deal with unexpected changes and outcomes. I know that I don't need perfectly structured assignments, tasks, and goals to work efficiently. In addition, I know that it is sometimes necessary to change direction if a particular approach is not working.

A corollary of patience and flexibility is appreciation for the complexity of the issues that anthropologists examine and the lack of clear answers. "During our research into sustainable agriculture, my colleagues and I grappled with a definition of exactly what sustainability in fact is. Sustainability is a relatively simple idea in theory, but it is much more difficult to pin down in the real world." Becoming comfortable with this ambiguity was a definite challenge for some students: "My moment of clarity occurred when I realized that this argument was never going to end and that question was never going to be answered."

Several students expressed their appreciation for what RAP allowed them to accomplish in a short fieldwork experience. "However, the format [RAP] of the project also brought home one of the strengths of rapid assessment when conducted by a team – the large amount of information that can be gathered in a relatively short amount of time." Equally as challenging as cultural differences was learning to work as a team that RAP required. Most U.S. students are required to do independent academic work and may be discouraged or penalized for working together collaboratively. As one student expressed it: "In our method of rapid assessment we were a group of people that needed to organize and divide responsibilities but individual strengths of each member was unknown to us. Utilizing every member of the group within their greatest ability was an exercise in honesty of self and trust of others within the group." Others grappled with deciding when to argue a point or challenge an assessment and when to back off, when to take a role as leader and when to be a worker. The importance of listening to team members, both colegio students and fellow U.S. students was a recurrent theme. Not being able to participate in every activity so that more information could be

collected was a challenge for others. For the majority of students, working as a member of a team on a shared research project was a highlight of the field school experience and provided them with important skills. As one student noted in her list of acquired skills: "I am highly capable of working on a team and embrace the opportunity to be in an educational partnership with others."

Returning to the question of transformation and whether students can still face the challenges of working in a society and culture different from their own while living in a dormitory at an ecolodge and doing team-based research, the answer is "yes." Students repeatedly mentioned their work with the colegio students and their interactions with the residents of Mondaña as highlights of their experience that were essential to their transformation.

As I mentioned before, staying in one location for a prolonged period of time while traveling was a new experience for me. It presented challenges that wouldn't develop during a temporary stay. Learning how to engage people on a much more intimate level throughout an extended period of time was a challenge. It required developing those relations in a way which fostered a deeper understanding. However, despite the challenges of these interactions, this was by far the most rewarding aspect of the trip. The knowledge and insights gained through intensive communication were far more profound than those acquired through fleeting engagements. The insights gained, and the friendships acquired during our time in Ecuador were priceless.

Conclusions

By guiding students as they work together in a field setting, various aspects of sustainable development in an Ecuadorian community could be explored. In addition, the combination of RAP with the participatory dynamics of local colegio students in a PAR approach is an exciting model for ethnographic field schools that can provide students with the opportunity to learn research skills while immersed in a community setting. Though limited in time, the field experience can also introduce them to "ground truth," or "the

type of understanding that can only be obtained by being there, by *walking on the ground* among the people involved in the events in question” and its value in understanding complex social phenomena (Van Arsdale 2005:183). As evidence of the impact of the program on a student’s educational trajectory, many students have pursued their Spanish language learning, two have entered graduate programs in public health, and a number have been accepted into doctoral programs. The transformative quality of the field school experience, as reflected in their summary papers, has been borne out in their pursuit of learning. ○

Notes

1. The authors wish to acknowledge the many contributions of the first and second year students from UCD’s field school, the faculty and students at CTY, and Douglas McMeekin and staff of the Yachana Foundation toward making this field school an unqualified success.
2. Corresponding author Jean N. Scandlyn holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from Columbia University (1993) and a M.S. in nursing from the University of California San Francisco (1983) and serves as a research assistant professor at the University of Colorado Denver. She may be reached by mail at the Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado Denver, Campus Box 103, P.O. Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217-3364 USA, by telephone at 303-352-3976, and by e-mail at jean_scandlyn@ucdenver.edu.
3. John Brett is an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Colorado Denver, receiving in Ph.D. through the joint program in medical anthropology at the University of California, San Francisco and Berkeley.
4. Sharry Erzinger completed a Dr.P.H. at the University of California, Berkeley (1989), and has worked clinically as a Physicians’ Assistant. She serves as a research assistant professor at the University of Colorado Denver in the Department of Health and Behavioral Sciences.
5. This analysis is based on a web-based search of ethnographic field sites conducted in

September 2008. Thirty ethnographic field schools were identified and their websites evaluated for the following characteristics of their programs: name and description of the program, course credits, collaborative model (versus independent student research project), longitudinal research, language requirement, community involvement, and other.

6. The reflection paper assignment reads as follows: “Fieldwork can be a transformative experience. Being in a new place, having radically new experiences, being with large numbers of other people with whom you must work, play and sleep, having limited language skills, and some degree of isolation from the familiar often leave one feeling exposed and vulnerable. This is the basis of ‘culture shock’ but can also be the beginnings of new, sometimes profound insights. What we would propose is that you engage those feelings to understand the relationships between these experiences and your insights, whether transformative or not.”

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Awards of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology

Carla Littlefield, HPSfAA Archivist

The High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology (HPSfAA) currently has three awards bestowed at the annual conference: the Omer C. Stewart Memorial Award, the Friedl and Martha Lang Student Award in Applied Anthropology, and the Bristlecone Pine Award. Deward Walker proposed the Omer Stewart award at a meeting in 1993 of the Board of Directors, which immediately approved the idea. The first recipient was Mickey Crespie, Senior Anthropologist, National Park Service, at the 1993 annual conference held at the Denver Museum of Natural History (now the Denver Museum of Nature and Science). The Friedl and Martha Lang Student Award followed in 1999 and the Bristlecone Pine Award in 2007. The HPSfAA Bylaws were amended in 2007 to establish an Awards Committee consisting of the President, Past President, and President-Elect to select awardees and plan for the presentation of awards. The President may add others to the committee, such as the student representative to the board and the chair of the annual conference. A summary of the awards follows.

The Omer C. Stewart Memorial Award

The Omer C. Stewart Memorial Award is awarded each spring at the association's annual conference to recognize significant contributions to applied anthropology. Dr. Stewart was one of the founding members of the HPSfAA and one of the foremost anthropologists of his day. His ethnographic and ethnohistoric research into the Peyote religion revealed vast areas of cultural change among American Indians. His advocacy for American Indians included a relentless commitment to their religious freedom and to gaining compensation for their losses of traditional homelands. Many have had the honor of working or studying with Dr. Stewart during his tenure at the University of Colorado. For others this award is a reminder of our links with

previous anthropologists and that the torch is being passed to current and future generations. Omer's epitaph reads as follows:

Omer was a distinguished humanist, challenging teacher, loyal friend, and formidable adversary. He spent his life battling racism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, and their consequences among American Indians. Anthropology was his weapon. Conscience was his guide.

Epitaph for Omer Stewart by Deward Walker

A list of past recipients of the Omer C. Stewart Memorial Award follows.

- (1) Muriel K. Crespi, National Park Service, for 1993
- (2) Robert A. Hackenberg, University of Colorado at Boulder, for 1994
- (3) Deward E. Walker, Jr., University of Colorado at Boulder, for 1995
- (4) Darwin D. Solomon, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for 1996
- (5) Donald D. Stull, University of Kansas, for 1997
- (6) Gottfried O. Lang, University of Colorado at Boulder (Emeritus), for 1998
- (7) Howard F. Stein, University of Oklahoma, for 1999
- (8) Carla N. Littlefield, Littlefield Associates, for 2000
- (9) Kenneth M. Keller, Metropolitan State College of Denver, for 2001
- (10) Peter W. Van Arsdale, Colorado Mental Health Institute and University of Denver, for 2002
- (11) John van Willigen, University of Kentucky, for 2003
- (12) Edward C. Knop, Colorado State University, for 2004

- (13) Pamela J. Punttenney, Environmental and Human Systems Management of Michigan, for 2005
- (14) Lenora Bohren, Colorado State University, for 2006
- (15) Lawrence F. Van Horn, National Park Service, for 2007
- (16) Pennie L. Magee, Magee Consulting, for 2008

The Friedl and Martha Lang Student Award in Applied Anthropology

This award, which was established in spring 1999, is in honor of Friedl Lang, Professor Emeritus of the University of Colorado, and his wife, Martha, to acknowledge their contributions to students as well as to HPSfAA. Recipients present his/her paper or project at the annual conference; receive a framed award certificate; publish his/her paper or project in the *Applied Anthropologist*; and receive free room and board for the conference, one year's membership in HPSfAA, and a cash award of \$100.

Here follows past recipients of the Friedl and Martha Lang Student Award in Applied Anthropology.

- (1) James Schechter, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado at Boulder. "Anthropological Theory and Fieldwork: Problem Solving Tools for Forced Migration Issues," for 2000
- (2) Kurt T. Mantonya, M.A., Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. "Contamination Nation," for 2001
- (3) Rebekah Bennetch, B.A. Student, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Colorado. "Composition in the Age of the Dot-Com: How One Virtual Community Served as a Collaborative Learning Group in Response to the Events of September 11, 2001," for 2002

- (4) Abbas Barzegar, B.A. Student, Religious Studies Program, University of Colorado at Boulder. "Latino Muslims in the United States: An Introduction," for 2003
- (5) Christina Dorsey, B.A. Student, University of Nebraska, Lincoln. "An Exploratory Study of Young African-American Fathers in Lincoln, Nebraska," for 2004
- (6) Sarah Case, B.A. Student, University of Colorado at Boulder. "The Dynamics of Tribal Cultural Resource Management: Where Do We Go From Here?" for 2005

There were no student awards given in 2006, 2007, or 2008.

The Bristlecone Pine Award

In 2007, the HPSfAA Board of Directors proposed an amendment to the bylaws to institute the annual Bristlecone Pine Award. As approved by the membership, the amendment charges the Awards Committee to identify a recipient distinguished for their length of service and admirable dedication to HPSfAA, whether as an officer, board member or volunteer. The award was first bestowed on Merun Nasser, HPSfAA Treasurer, at the 2008 Annual Conference for her years of tireless organizational support and financial oversight for the Society.

Notes

- 1. Thanks to Deward Walker for his permission to reprint his summaries of The Omer C. Stewart Memorial Award and the Friedl and Martha Lang Student Award in Applied Anthropology published in the *HPSfAA Newsletter*, Volume 22, Number 1, January 2002, p.1.

Reimagining Ourselves and Our Work: A Challenge to My Fellow Anthropologists Some Thoughts upon Receiving the 2008 Omar Stewart Award

Pennie L. Magee¹

"In order to continually reimagine ourselves through our work lives, we must have a part of us that belongs to something beyond the status quo" (Whyte 2001:169).

I am honored to receive the 2008 Omar Stewart award from the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology. I know that many of the previous recipients of this award have a much more direct connection than I do to Dr. Stewart and his work. But I believe that we all share his deep conviction that anthropology is relevant in the here and now, and that it is our calling as anthropologists to confidently, yet with great humility and compassion, step into the fray.

I'd like to share with you two experiences that have shaped my thinking recently about what it is, exactly, that we are meant to do as anthropologists.

In January of this year I was completely tapped out from the demands of a profoundly unsatisfying consulting contract. Recognizing that the time had come for some solitary reflection, I packed some simple provisions, two bottles of wine, and my dog into my car and headed for a small cabin in the Rocky Mountains. I felt my numbed senses come alive again on my walks with my dog, as the fierce winter winds challenged my breath and whipped icy tears into my eyes. Every nerve in my body stood on alert in the evening darkness when the fur on my dog's back ridged sharply into a clear sign of alarm at some unseen presence hovering near the lonely dirt road upon which we trod.

Each time I returned to my cabin after one of these encounters with the harsh elements of nature, I was grateful for the comforts I found there: warmth, food, drink, my favorite books, an impossibly complex jigsaw puzzle depicting glorious beetles, and best of all, utter silence.

I woke up each morning before sunrise, took my dog out for a quick walk, made some tea,

turned off all the lights, and opened the curtains of just one window. For a full hour I sat, watching the sun gradually cast its glow on the north face of the mountain range. Each evening I observed the same ritual, watching the sun's light fade into darkness and bring out the stars in the icy velvet night sky.

I found a comfortable rhythm over those five days, alternately nestling in the snug cave of the cabin and striding out into the cold and wind of the winter mountains, always attuned to the changing light. Looking back on that time, I realize that I had created an effective way to clear out my body, mind and soul of the clinging cobwebs of doubt and frustration about my current work and my role in it.

When my mind had quieted a bit, and my body had reawakened, I felt ready to listen to another's perspective. I reached for the poet and corporate consultant David Whyte's *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity*. His words rang clear and true to me, "The antidote to exhaustion is wholeheartedness" (Whyte 2001:132). And, "The severest test of work today is not of our strategies but of our imaginations and identities. For a human being, finding good work and doing good work is one of the ultimate ways of making a break for freedom" (ibid.:60). And then,

"Good work done in the same way for too long, or done in the wrong way for any amount of time, eats away our sense of being right with the world. Often, in order to stay alive, we have to *unmake* a living in order to get back to *living* the life we wanted for ourselves. It is this cycle of making, disintegration, and remaking that is the hallmark of meaningful and creative work" (ibid.:76-77).

I knew I was not living wholeheartedly; in fact I was barely living halfheartedly in that moment as I contemplated my work. I had been

consumed by the rigid and unforgiving aspects of the client corporation. Imagination and delight were not permitted in that work environment, as people kept their heads down and their voices metaphorically low so that they would not become the next targets of a merger or layoff. Even though key people in the organization acknowledged that the research and recommendations I offered were relevant and well-founded, I could not gain traction to move the project into the implementation phase.

I saw that it was time to “unmake a living” so that I could move forward. I decided not to continue with the project and with the client. I could not lower my own voice just to stay on the consultant payroll. I deeply believed in the data and perspective I had provided them. But I understood that it was not going to be my time to harvest the seeds I had planted. I could be content to have been the seed planter and to let my ideas grow on their own merits.

I returned home refreshed and ready to approach my next work project with renewed wisdom and energy. I soon found myself invited to participate in a three-day summit. Our task was to think about how we might respond to the growing evidence that we are on the brink of a cliff where reside the dragons of the end of fossil fuels and the market economy, along with multiple disasters stemming from climate change. I accepted the invitation because I thought it would be interesting to see what I could contribute to the discussion as an anthropologist.

On that Friday morning of the first day of the summit, I joined some thirty others in a hotel conference room in a hotel in Boulder. We sat in a large circle, and introduced ourselves by name and with a brief explanation of why we had come to this place on this morning. Outside, the chill wind howled and keened, rattling doors and windows. The harsh smell of industrial-grade disinfectant mingled with the thick odor of kitchen grease from the hotel’s restaurant in the space adjoining our meeting room. We could hear the muffled voices of newscasters and sports announcers coming from the television on the bar.

With the preliminaries out of the way, the facilitator invited a petite woman in long,

embroidered skirts to open the sacred space. She knelt on the sterile, institutional carpet and laid out a large cloth rich in symbols and words of blessing in calligraphic form. She placed a candle at each of the four directions and lit them. As she invited us to offer prayers of thanksgiving and of blessing, she lit a bundle of sage and let its smoky herbal scent waft over us.

As the hours came and went, I encountered a very different experience than what I had envisioned would take place. The facilitator, a psychotherapist, was ultimately unskilled at guiding a healthy group dynamic. The weekend became a dive – not to say near-sinking – into a bottomless pool of fear: fear of loss of material comforts, fear of death, of massive plagues, fear of war, fear of political oppression, of torture, of starvation, of friendly and hostile aliens from outer space, and so on.

At one point on the second day, as emotions were running untrammelled, someone suggested that we all join hands in a circle. Suddenly the tumultuous emotion took on a life of its own, and people began wailing, tears running down their faces. It was a palpable, living entity in the room. As the facilitator encouraged the outpouring, I understood very concretely how the 1978 mass suicides in Jonestown, Guyana could have happened. I looked around me and found a half dozen kindred souls who were doing their best to hold the space intact. The experience felt profoundly wrong to me. It was not a healing catharsis; rather, it was an exploitation of people’s very real and deeply felt fears of the unknown.

In the days following the summit, I tried to more fully understand what I had witnessed. I began to understand how mob violence and self-destruction can happen, and I saw how easy it is to manipulate human emotion for one’s own ends. I also understood in a very visceral way how much fear is out there about our human future on this our planet Earth.

The words of deep ecologist and Buddhist Joanna Macy reminded me that there is another way. In 1978, she chaired a week-long session titled “The Prospects of Human Survival” at a conference hosted by Notre Dame. She set the tone of the session by asking participants to introduce themselves via their personal

experiences of how the global crisis had affected their lives. She wrote that in the process, emotions came to the surface, “touch[ing] some raw nerve connecting us all... I learned two things that week: that the pain for the world which I carried around inside me was widely and deeply shared; and that something remarkable happened when we expressed it to each other. Instead of miring ourselves in doom and gloom, the opposite had happened. We had turned some key that unlocked our vitality” (Macy 2000 In Plotkin 2008:367).

Since I first wrote down my thoughts for accepting this award, we in the U.S. have seen a rapid unraveling of our economy, and we have lived through many weeks of unnerving political discourse leading up to the presidential election. In this globalized world, all nations are connected, and so we see that our domestic problems have a ripple effect on the rest of the world. The future is uncertain, and we have a choice to make. How are we going to respond to our current situation? Are we going to respond with fear, or are we going to step up and make our anthropological perspective newly relevant?

Can we, as anthropologists, find the key that unlocks our vitality? We can and must be involved in the profound change we see all around us. We may feel uncertain about the outcome of this change, but we have a crucial set of tools to offer those around us. Because fieldwork is the cornerstone of our knowledge, we share a grounded understanding about the processes of change in communities, whether caused by natural disasters, government policies, or grassroots movements. We know how different groups of people achieve self-determination, protect their environments, and defend their lands and livelihoods.

Each of us has particular areas of interest and experience as practicing anthropologists. Can we take another look at what we think about our personal expertise, and ask ourselves to recalibrate what we think we know. For example, are we willing to reexamine our assumptions about the pre-agricultural communities we and our ancestral colleagues have studied, in light of our new understanding about the place of fossil fuels in our future? Too often we frame the research with the assumption,

even unconsciously, that these communities are in some way “less than” because they live without the ubiquitous presence of petroleum and electricity. Can we imagine what we would see differently if we had spent our time in these communities because we believed that we could learn from them how to live within a small carbon footprint instead? How might we reframe our understanding of all we think we “know” about our ethnographic work? In the process of rethinking our assumptions, might it not be possible to discover newly relevant implications for our changing world?

It is tempting to be content to hope that our local and national leaders will find a way to solve the current political, economic, and environmental crises. But as David Whyte observes,

“Almost always when we ask hard questions about leaders and leadership, we have to ask hard questions of ourselves, too. We have to take an inventory not only of the gifts we have to give but of the gifts we are afraid of receiving. What are we afraid of, what stops us from speaking out and claiming the life we want for ourselves?” (Whyte 2001:54).

Whyte was speaking primarily to those who work in corporations when he said this, but I believe we must ask ourselves the same questions when we think about how and why we carry out our work as anthropologists. What are we afraid of? What stops us from looking at the world as it is today, instead of as it has been or as we wish it were? How can each of us reexamine our gifts and use them in new ways? How can we open ourselves to new gifts that can give fresh meaning to our personal lives while at the same time helping our neighborhoods and towns meet the coming challenges? ○

Notes

1. Pennie L. Magee holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Florida (1990). Her current interests include energy and food production issues. She may be reached by mail at 398 Leonard’s Road, Boulder, Colorado, 80302, USA, by telephone at 303.473.9994, and by e-mail at pmagee@indra.com.

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