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## Service-Bonded Inquiry Revisited: A Research Model for the Community-Engaged Professor

Tom Martinek, Don Hellison, and Dave Walsh

The intent of this article is to inform readers about ways in which scholarly inquiry can be expanded. An overview and a refinement of a research approach called *service-bonded inquiry* are provided. Service-bonded inquiry is a response to the call for changing the way research is interpreted, conducted, and evaluated. At the heart of this approach is the integration of service and scholarship. Service-bonded inquiry attempts to equip community-engaged professors with a framework for answering the many questions generated from working in school and service programs and engaging in the lives of kids. First, a description of service-bonded inquiry is given along with the required steps for doing this type of research. Next, an example of a study that applies the concepts of service-bonded inquiry is provided. Finally, ways that by-products of service-bonded inquiry can be evaluated are suggested.

For years, the mission statements of universities and colleges have proclaimed a commitment to producing new knowledge through scholarly inquiry. These statements often underscore the importance of research serving the community and even the world! Recently, these proclamations have been publicly challenged by political watch dogs and community members themselves. A major focus of these criticisms is the enormous gap that exists between what universities produce as knowledge and how the public can use that knowledge. This gap has been created largely by the perceived irrelevant nature of research and its inability to address real societal problems. The gap is widened by views that this knowledge is strictly used in academic circles. Eugene Rice (1996), former Director of the American

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Association for Higher Education Forum on Faculty Roles and Reward Systems warns us that the current issue facing higher education today, one that generates the greatest concern by the public, is the mismatch between universities' priorities and societal needs. Downward swings in rural and urban economics, increased pathology of youth lifestyles, decreased educational resources due to reprioritization of spending (e.g., military expenditure), and shifting roles of schools (e.g., full-service schools) have presented formidable challenges for teachers and community youth leaders. As a result, calls for help by community leaders are increasingly being directed to universities.

Providing and assisting in programs that serve youth and their families, evaluating and contributing resources to these programs, and giving much needed staff development opportunities are but a few of the requests received by universities from urban and rural agencies. We feel that these calls must be heeded. If they are not, the public's perception of university faculty roles will become even more skeptical. Hal Lawson (1997) stresses that regaining public trust will take more than paying mere lip service to its constituencies who often view professors and their programs as public property.

### The Emerging Community-Engaged Professor

A sense of urgency to respond to community needs is beginning to be felt by some institutional leaders. For example, a recent issue of *Quest* was devoted to changing the way we view the professoriate and research. In that issue, the Dean of the Graduate School at Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Karen Depauw, proclaims that universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be willing to "dance to change":

To dance with change, universities must balance relentless demands and dreams of society, be viable and stable, be philosophical and historically grounded, meaningful and practical, and interactive, responsive, and proactive. (Depauw, 2003, p. 19)

Recently, universities have begun to respond to the challenges placed upon them by society. This response has come mainly from professional schools that prepare people to work in the community settings (e.g., schools, recreation centers, YMCAs, and YWCAs, etc.). A key element in their response is to reinforce and support faculty engagement in the twenty-first century (Christina, 2000). Participating in urban and rural immersion programs, joining university and community partnerships, and teaching in youth programs have now become part of the college experience for faculty and their students. In addition, "full service" schools have been established to meet the pressing needs of nearby underserved neighborhoods. As a result, university faculty become key players in these "community hubs" by engaging their academic and teaching resources to address community problems.

At the forefront of this response is the redefinition of faculty roles—that is, to recognize and even promote the concept of the "community-engaged professoriate." Community-engaged professors do research in the community setting and produce information that practitioners can use. That is, they honor their social responsibility

to meet community-neighborhood needs. They attempt to do research, and teaching with these needs. Krahenbuhl not only have knowledge and technical skills but also possess the ability to work with other people.

The concept of the community-engaged professor involves educators immerse themselves in places where sweat and blood are shed: classrooms, community centers, playgrounds, and so on. It requires passion and commitment for doing the right things that lead to successes and failures, acceptance and rejection, criticism and overwhelming support (Martinek, & Hellison, 2003). They become "self-collaborators" (Hellison & Templin, 1997) in the concept of the professor-as-teacher-as-researcher.

Interestingly, the three of us have taken slight detours in our careers to become community-engaged professors. We have served as mentor in youth programs based upon the Social Responsibility Model (Hellison, 2003). Our vocation as faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students of their ivory tower to run programs and work with students also collect and analyze program evaluation data to assess impact on kids and improve their programs. They all bring personal qualities from these experiences.

For the first author (Tom) this work follows over 20 years of research. Documenting the way teachers view the self-perceptions of young people was a focal point of the research was done in school and sport settings, its in the context of the Pygmalion theory (Martinek, 1997). Occasional research practitioners. But, for the most part, findings were disseminated to the community through journal publications. A nagging question was: How could this research help kids and those who work with them? The question meant being out in community settings and working with community leaders. Armed with some of his past findings and research, he now derives knowledge by doing, feeling, and reflecting.

The journey for the second author (Don) has been over thirty years, his professional career has encompassed a wide range of work where enhancing personal and social responsibility was a key component. Developing and teaching in programs have allowed youngsters realize the contributions they can make in their lives. He has placed him in detention centers, community recreation centers, and regular school settings. Alternative approaches to research. Personal written accounts, translating ideas into practice. Reasons for successes and failures were but a few used for continual discovery and renewal.

For third author (Dave), nine years of experience in community programs have placed him on a career path that has dealt with the same problems he faced early in his career. At the University of Illinois at Chicago, he worked on the Community Leader Project. During this time, he created comm

on Forum on Faculty Roles and Reward Systems, facing higher education today, one that generates the mismatch between universities' priorities and needs in rural and urban economics, increased pathologic educational resources due to reprioritization of tax revenue, and shifting roles of schools (e.g., full-service schools). These challenges for teachers and community youth help by community leaders are increasingly being

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We have begun to respond to the challenges placed on us. The response has come mainly from professional schools in the community settings (e.g., schools, recreation centers, etc.). A key element in their response is to engage in the twenty-first century (Christina, et al.). And rural immersion programs, joining university and teaching in youth programs have now become a part of faculty and their students. In addition, "full service" has been established to meet the pressing needs of nearby communities. As a result, university faculty become key players in engaging their academic and teaching resources to

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to meet community-neighborhood needs. They attempt to interconnect programs, research, and teaching with these needs. Krahenbuhl (2003) feels these people not only have knowledge and technical skills but also possess a "social quotient" that defines their ability to work with other people.

The concept of the community-engaged professoriate also suggests that educators immerse themselves in places where sweaty kids reside—school gyms, classrooms, community centers, playgrounds, and church basements. It is their passion and commitment for doing the right things that nudges them through periods of successes and failures, acceptance and rejection, optimism and pessimism, and isolation and overwhelming support (Martinek, & Hellison, 1997). They also become "self-collaborators" (Hellison & Templin, 1991) whose role supports the concept of the professor-as-teacher-as-researcher.

Interestingly, the three of us have taken slightly different paths during our careers to become community-engaged professors. We now either direct, teach, and/or mentor in youth programs based upon the second author's Personal and Social Responsibility Model (Hellison, 2003). Our work involves other university faculty as well as undergraduate and graduate students who leave the comfort of their ivory tower to run programs and work with inner city kids. Faculty and students also collect and analyze program evaluation data in order to assess their impact on kids and improve their programs. They also learn more about their own personal qualities from these experiences.

For the first author (Tom) this work follows over 19 years of doing traditional forms of research. Documenting the way teacher and coach expectations mold the self-perceptions of young people was a focal point of his studies. While this research was done in school and sport settings, its intent was mainly on testing and retesting Pygmalion theory (Martinek, 1997). Occasionally, results were shared with practitioners. But, for the most part, findings were only funneled to the academic community through journal publications. A nagging question persisted, however. How could this research help kids and those who work with them? Answering this question meant being out in community settings and helping youth and program leaders. Armed with some of his past findings and mostly guided by his own ideas, he now derives knowledge by doing, feeling, and reflecting.

The journey for the second author (Don) has followed a different path. For over thirty years, his professional career has embraced a "kid first" philosophy where enhancing personal and social responsibility has been the centerpiece of his work. Developing and teaching in programs have allowed him to help underserved youngsters realize the contributions they can make to their community. His work has placed him in detention centers, community recreation facilities, and alternative and regular school settings. Alternative approaches to discovery have guided his research. Personal written accounts, translating ideas into action, and figuring out reasons for successes and failures were but a few of the many strategies that he used for continual discovery and renewal.

For third author (Dave), nine years of extensive involvement in youth programs have placed him on a career path that helps underserved youngsters deal with the same problems he faced early in his life. As a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, he worked diligently in Don's Urban Youth Leader Project. During this time, he created community partnerships with schools

and youth agencies as well ran after-school sport programs. His connections with inner city kids and their lives further crystallized his commitment to helping them overcome their fear and reach their potentials. This, in turn, reinforced those very same goals in his career and life. He is now well positioned at San Francisco State University to continue his work with inner city kids and service agencies.

Although we cling to these ways of knowing, our work is often scrutinized by our academic counterparts. Developing and running programs for kids, working with teachers and youth program leaders, and engaging university students in real world stuff are often viewed as not being academic enough. Where's your research? What theory are you testing? Are you publishing this work in scholarly journals? Aren't your data too soft?

Fielding these questions constantly reminds us (and others who do this work) of two important things. First, the discipline of physical education (or kinesiology or whatever we call ourselves) is steeped in traditional thought about what research and scholarship should be. This has come about by becoming entrenched in our parent disciplines' research agendas so that we can be more like them. Second, if professors' roles are to be expanded, so too must be the university's view of research. Socialized by multiple years of the "university experience," most faculty, students, and administrators embrace a rather narrow view of scholarly inquiry. We believe that by widening the boundaries of research, universities will be able to craft their own unique character and structure multiple roles for faculty who are attempting to address societal burdens. This will give the researcher-as-teacher more solid footing to conduct what Schon (1987) calls "practice-based" inquiry.

Several years ago, two of us (Tom & Don) published an essay about a new research approach called *service-bonded inquiry* (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). The article informed readers about ways in which the views of scholarly inquiry could be expanded. It was a response to the call for changing the way we interpret and conduct research. At the heart of this approach was the integration of service and scholarship. Service-bonded inquiry attempts to equip community-engaged professors with a framework for answering the many questions generated from working in school and service programs and engaging in the lives of kids. It also offers important segues between ideas and program development. We also suggested a variety of data-gathering strategies that could be used to depict the complex nature of working with children and youth.

This article revisits our original concept of *service-bonded inquiry*. Our purpose is to reinforce the intent of service-bonded inquiry and clarify its use and how it can be evaluated. It is not our intent to suggest that service-bonded inquiry replace more traditional models of research. Rather, we want to encourage universities to place service-bonded inquiry on equal footing with traditional forms of research.

First, we describe what service-bonded inquiry is and the required steps for doing this type of research. These steps must be acknowledged when describing the by-products of community engagement. Next, we provide an example of a study that applies the concepts of service-bonded inquiry. Finally, we suggest how faculty and service-bonded inquiry by-products can be evaluated. Criteria for evaluating the faculty's work are forwarded as potential rubrics, thereby legitimizing its place in the academic community.

## What Is Service-Bonded

Service-bonded inquiry focuses on kids and integrating the tripartite of teaching, research, and service. It offers ways in which this integration can take various forms. Practical inquiry (Schubert, 1986), reflective and researcher (Duckworth, 1987), curriculum as teacher (Housner, 1996), action research, and creative evaluation (Patton, 1987) are paradigmatic forms of service-bonded inquiry. Some have been recently represented in an article by a 30-year chronology profiles the application of these methodologies to evaluate the efficacy of responsibility. From these methodologies have been various stories and perceptions, kid quotes, interviews with friends, personal journal entries, school records, and researchers tell about the human qualities of teaching. These are ways, using methodologies that align well with the nature of the work.

While it appears that there is considerable resistance to service-bonded inquiry can be conducted, we believe that it can be done (Martinek & Hellison, 1997). They serve as a model for service-bonded inquiry:

- Examine personal values
- Conduct research in a particular setting
- Start with an idea
- Implement
- Disseminate

### *Examine Personal Values*

An important starting point is closely examining our values in improving the lives of kids. Our interest in physical education and school curriculum (Schubert 1986), especially in the area of academic environment. For us the important qualities of teaching, skills, interests, and personal identity are all part of the process to do as scholarship. Making a difference in practice is the purpose for doing service-bonded inquiry. Consequently, we actively plan and running programs become a part of our service-bonded inquiry agenda. Contributing to the field is our counterpart to those researchers who delve into the field. Most important is maintaining a steadfast commitment to the values of those with whom we work. Embracing our values assuredly nudge other researchers closer to a way of doing responsive research.

During our combined 65 years of work, we have found one constant that determines our relationships. All that we have done, whether

