The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE) is the flagship journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Founded in 1970, NASPAA serves as a national and international resource for the promotion of excellence in education for the public service. Its institutional membership includes more than 250 university programs in the United States in public administration, policy, and management. It accomplishes its purposes through direct services to its member institutions and by

- Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs through its Executive Council and its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation;
- Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of education for public affairs and administration;
- Encouraging curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship, practices, and issues;
- Undertaking surveys that provide members and the public with information on key educational issues;
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NASPAA provides opportunities for international engagement for NASPAA members, placing a global emphasis on educational quality and quality assurance through a series of networked international initiatives, in particular the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee), the Inter-American Network of Public Administration Education (INPAE), and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). It is also involved locally; for instance, directing the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Issues, which networks public affairs schools and local governments around environmental regulation policy issues, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency.

NASPAA’s twofold mission is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service. Consistent with NASPAA’s mission, JPAE is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs, defined to include the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. Published quarterly by NASPAA, the journal features commentaries, announcements, symposia, book reviews, and peer-reviewed scholarly articles on pedagogical, curricular, and accreditation issues pertaining to public affairs education.

JPAE was founded in 1995 by a consortium from the University of Kansas and the University of Akron and was originally published as the Journal of Public Administration Education. H. George Frederickson was the journal’s founding editor. In addition to serving as NASPAA’s journal of record, JPAE is affiliated with the Section of Public Administration Education of the American Society for Public Administration.

Symposium: Third-Party Government, Service Learning, and Civic Engagement in the Public Affairs Curriculum

The Increased Complexity of Public Services: Curricular Implications for Schools of Public Affairs
Steven Rathgeb Smith

Analyzing Policy Fields: Helping Students Understand Complex State and Local Contexts
Jodi Sandfort and Melissa Stone

Leading and Governing: A Model for Local Government Education
Willow S. Jacobson and Donna Warner

Developing Leadership Skills in Schools of Public Policy and Administration
Pamela Payne Lewis

Fostering a Civically Engaged Society: The University and Service Learning
Maria J. D’Agostino

Lessons Outside the Classroom: Examining the Effectiveness of Service Learning Projects at Achieving Learning Objectives
Kristina Lambright

Client-based Courses: Variations in Service Learning
Leona S. Walzlin and Debra Hunter

Client-oriented Projects: GIS Course Design with the Potential to Service Multiple Constituents
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Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum
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Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs: The Practitioner Perspective
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Flagship Journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration
SYMPOSIUM: THIRD-PARTY GOVERNMENT, SERVICE LEARNING, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CURRICULUM

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Third-Party Government, Service Learning, and Civic Engagement in the Public Affairs Curriculum

Mario A. Rivera, Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Public Affairs Education
Melissa Stone, Symposium Convenor and Co-Editor

The Core Symposium: Third-Party Government

The first four articles in this symposium are intended to respond to a challenge issued by Lester Salamon in his keynote address at the 2004 NASPAA conference: How do we comprehend and manage the complex collaborative governance systems created by third-party government? Although the blurring of sectoral boundaries has long been remarked (see, for example, Kramer, 1981, and Salamon, 1987), public affairs education has seldom reflected this reality (Salamon, 2004). The opening four articles in this issue, a core symposium that contributor Melissa Stone convened and edited, provide broad thematic material, conceptual frameworks, and specific tools of relevance for public affairs educators and scholars.

The first article, by Steven Rathgeb Smith, titled “The Increased Complexity of Public Services: The Curricular Implications for Schools of Public Affairs,” identifies ways in which public affairs education must change to meet today’s complex policy and organizational challenges. This complexity is reflected, for example, in the diversity of tools through which public services are delivered by private contractors, as well as in the hybridization of organizational forms and revenue streams that mix nonprofit and for-profit components in service delivery. Smith’s central thesis is that material on this “new mixed world of public and private services” must be brought more fully into public affairs curricula in order to address pressing management challenges related to accountability, institutional and program design, performance assessment, and citizen engagement. Smith offers a series of recommendations for better integrated multidisciplinary curricula, new case materials, expanded executive education offerings, and joint degree programs.

The next article, by Jodi Sandfort and Melissa Stone, “Analyzing Policy Fields: Helping Students Understand Complex State and Local Contexts,” extends Smith’s argument by presenting a conceptual tool—policy field analysis—that enables students (and policymakers) to devise strategic ways to lead and manage in these contexts. Synthesizing pertinent work from several disciplines, the article first develops the concept of a policy field as a constellation of public and private institutions, in a substantive public policy or program area, in a particu-
lar place. Fields shape the way that state and local actors work to solve public management problems, and their pursuit of programmatic goals in turn structures the originating policy fields in a process of circular causation. Building on the policy fields framework, the authors present a series of analytical questions and mapping tools that help students better understand 1) the structure of complex policy environments at federal, state, and local levels; 2) the institutional and inter-organizational relationships involved; and 3) the kinds of resources that both constrain and enable local actors in these same domains.

The authors use a well-known teaching case, “Integrating Housing and Social Services: Local Initiative versus Federal Mandate,” to illustrate the use of these questions and tools in the classroom. (The case is available on the Electronic Hallway, at www.hallway.org).

The third article, by Willow Jacobson and Donna Warner, titled “Leading and Governing: A Model for Local Government Education,” presents a newly revised leadership training model for local government officials that recalls themes from the previous studies, reflecting the fact that leadership in a community is now often shared among a wider range of actors than in the past and that public problems cross jurisdictional lines and sectoral boundaries. The article describes how the new model was developed by the School of Government faculty at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, with the participation of local government officials, and how three core components—governance, leadership, and public service—are addressed so as to foster a common understanding of these topics among participants. Specific content related to these core components, however, are tailored to the varying needs of different student audiences. For example, the curriculum for line supervisors focuses on developing leadership skills, while the one for managers and elected officials emphasizes how to work across sectors and jurisdictions. Jacobson and Warner point to several lessons learned, emphasizing that developing this kind of curriculum is a time-intensive process that requires a joint commitment between faculty and public officials. Early evaluation results have helped identify the particular strengths of this participatory pedagogical model.

The fourth article, by Pamela Payne Lewis, “Developing Leadership Skills in School of Public Policy and Administration,” completes the core symposium. It describes a course taught at the Heinz School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University suited to the policy and organizational dynamics addressed in the previous articles. Characterizing leadership as an interactive learning process that can be directed toward change management in public arenas, Lewis lays out a course design for developing public-speaking skills. However, the course does far more than encourage the development of presentation skills. Essential course components include public policy briefings built around data analysis, audience-tailored analysis, and guided reflection on class experi-
ence. Critical in this regard is Lewis’s argument that strengthening students’ leadership skills depends on their self-regard as effective change agents. Student evaluations indicate that the course has, in fact, accomplished these objectives.

These four articles respond to the challenge of “learning how to comprehend, and to manage, the reinvented government that we have created, how to design and manage the immensely complex collaborative systems that now form the core of public problem solving” (Salamon, 2005). They are complemented by a second set of essays that address service-based learning as a means to prepare students for these new forms of professional practice. These essays all propose that service-and problem-based learning are apt devices for community-grounded practice, amid new forums for collaborative network governance.

THIRD-PARTY GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE-BASED LEARNING

It is Lester Salamon (1987, 1995) who is credited with coining the term “third party government.” Critically important to the current transition toward new models of management, according to Salamon (2002, vii), is a clear understanding of “the extent to which actual public problem solving has come to embrace the collaborative actions of governments at multiple levels and both government and private institutions.” Decision making must now address policy-determinative factors that link up among hybrid organizations through public, nonprofit, and private venues. This means that public affairs education must find ways to engage students in problem-based learning in multi-organizational settings, often entailing internships and other forms of experiential learning, structured community service, and service-based learning.

Service-based learning and public engagement are not necessarily synonymous, nor does service learning necessarily promote committed citizenship (Reinke, 2005). However, these are overlapping pedagogical constructs, coinciding in the involvement of students in issues of public concern. A “form of experiential learning that combines classroom study with community service,” service-based learning is often proposed as a way to prompt civic engagement among students, although causality may well be indirect, so that “participation in religious, social, and cultural organizations,” or in nonprofit or third-sector organizations, might only lead to public engagement considerably later, prompting “political participation later in life” (Reinke, 2005).

However, Ingram (2000, 4) affirms that, in public-private collaborative programs such as Americorps, service-based learning programs “can facilitate civic engagement and support,” particularly in the contexts of “citizen mobilization and voluntarism.” Seth Pollack (1998) notes that service learning “provides students with direct experience in the responsibilities of citizenship and the rewards of civic engagement,” then argues for a federal role in the support and advancement of service learning. Pollack also calls for recognition of the value of faculty
research on service- or community-based learning on the part of colleges and universities, which have an inconsistent record in rewarding such scholarship. Writing as director of the Service Learning Institute at California State University, Pollack argues that well-designed service learning programs could transform “a university’s relationship to its surrounding community.”

Integration of third-party government in the public affairs curriculum is frequently sought through service-based learning, with the recognition that public management has come to require collaborative governance across sectors. Service learning is necessary, argue its proponents, in order to endow the public managers of the future “with the knowledge and skills to be intermediaries in building communities and engaging stakeholders in public problem solving” (Bramson, 2005, 1). In an earlier issue of JPAE, Imperial, Perry, and Katula (2007, 243) proposed that if service learning is to produce “desired objectives,” several course-design principles appear to be paramount, namely “explicit connections between the service activity and learning objectives; reflection; appropriate time commitment; student input; faculty commitment; perceptible impacts; and feedback loops.” The key factor seems to be reflective practice, which distinguishes service learning from community service per se.

Mathur and Skelcher (2007, 231) argue that networked forms of collaboration that involve governments and nonprofits in joint projects are changing the role of public administrators from “neutrally-competent servants of political executives” to “responsively competent players in a polycentric system of governance.” The charge for public affairs education is, therefore, to impart competencies related to the entrepreneurial and leadership challenges of these ever more difficult public policy and administration agendas.

It is these considerations that prompted author Rivera to expand the core symposium to encompass service learning. In his capacity as editor-in-chief, he selected six additional articles from essays that had successfully completed peer review, articles that clustered around the related themes of service learning and student engagement. These articles are summarized in the section that follows.

**Extended Symposium: Service Learning and Civic Engagement**

Drawing from a large-scale survey of MPA program chairs, Maria D’Agostino, in “Fostering a Civically Engaged Society: The University and Service Learning,” argues that “[i]ncreasing civic engagement requires addressing one of the core problems contributing to its decline—deteriorating community caused by a lack of social capital.” Her research finds “a positive association between service learning and social capital.” Kristina Lambright, in “Lessons Outside of the Classroom: Examining the Effectiveness of Service Learning Projects at Achieving Learning Objectives,” concludes, more cautiously, that “there is some evidence suggesting that service learning projects may be more effective than traditional
classroom assignments at helping students master [germane] course material and linking theory to practice.”

In the seventh essay, “Client-Based Courses (CBC): Variations in Service Learning,” Leora Waldner and Debra Hunter find that such courses can enhance “service learning in nontraditional course formats such as distance learning [and] compressed timeframe (nine-week) courses, with adult graduate student learners.” In a similar vein, Susan Mason finds in her study, “Client-Oriented Projects: GIS Course Design with the Potential to Serve Multiple Constituents,” that client-focused courses incorporating spatial analysis and Geographic Information Systems are regarded by students as more effective than traditional classroom courses in allowing for real-world experience and creating a practice-based curricular orientation.

Doug Goodman, in “Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum,” outlines a case-based pedagogy that enables students “to solve complex, real-world problems, think critically, learn to collaborate with others, and assume responsibility for their learning.” In the final article in the symposium, “Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs,” Walter Wymer, Adrian Sargeant, Wendy Scaife, and Kym Madden suggest ways to “better serve the needs of nonprofit managers by offering additional education and training that focuses on skill development rather than the learning of general concepts and theories” in “condensed, focused learning formats rather than a traditional prolonged semester system.”

In its entirety, this symposium therefore traces an arc from hybrid forms of collaborative governance to new pedagogies based on practitioner-oriented, problem-focused, and service-based learning. Curricula, course delivery media, and course formats, it is proposed, need to be tailored to different cohorts of students, and—in executive programs—various types of practitioners.

The symposium aims to contribute to ongoing discourse on the extent of correspondence between public affairs education programs—as professional curricula—and new, enterprising modes of managerial leadership. Collaborative and networked partnerships require of public managers an entirely new set of leadership, entrepreneurial, boundary-spanning, and brokering skills. Service learning, problem- and community-based, particularly in cross-sector inter-organizational settings, is emerging as a pedagogy of choice for a new public management and a new public affairs curriculum.
REFERENCES
Information for Contributors

The *Journal of Public Affairs Education* (*JPAE*) is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs broadly defined, which includes the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. *JPAE* pursues its mission by publishing high-quality theory, empirical research, and commentary. The core values of *JPAE* are rigor, relevance, clarity, accessibility, and methodological diversity.

**Articles:** *JPAE* welcomes contributions from all public affairs educators who seek to reflect on their professional practice and to engage *JPAE* readers in an exploration of what or how to teach. *JPAE* articles are intended to influence experienced educator-specialists but also to be comprehensible and interesting to a broad audience of public affairs teachers. Articles appropriate for publication in *JPAE* include comprehensive literature reviews and meta-analyses, carefully constructed position papers, critical assessments of what we teach and how we teach it, thoughtful essays about commonly shared teaching challenges, experimental and quasi-experimental assessments of students’ learning, evaluations of new curricula or curriculum trends, national and international/comparative disciplinary and pedagogical developments, and field studies of particular teaching methods.

In addition to articles, the editors welcome proposals for symposia. Proposals that are accepted will be announced in the journal and will be accompanied by a call for papers. Submissions for symposia will be considered through the normal review process.

Decisions about the publication of all articles are based on the recommendation of members of the editorial board using a blind review process. Substantial content, writing style, and length are all relevant to a decision to publish a manuscript. Depending on the type of manuscript, the review process takes into account the following criteria:

- Research-based: adequacy of theoretical grounding; reliability and validity of findings; significance of the topic; significance of the findings.
- Interpretive, reflective, critical, theoretical: significance of the topic; quality of the argument; quality of the supporting evidence.
- Creative pedagogy: creativity of the approach; soundness of the explanation; evidence of effectiveness; utility for faculty.
- Case studies: pedagogical value; scope of potential use; clear teaching purposes.
- In all cases, writing quality is an important consideration.

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Manuscripts submitted should not have been published and should not be under consideration elsewhere. Papers presented at a professional conference qualify for consideration; in fact, the submission of manuscripts that have been thoroughly revised following presentation at a professional meeting is encouraged.

In general, authors are strongly encouraged to have their work reviewed and evaluated by colleagues prior to submission for formal review in order to facilitate the editorial process.

Manuscripts should be sent to jpae@uncp.edu. Only electronic submissions sent to this email address as Microsoft Word attachments will be considered. Any accompanying message should be addressed simply to “Editors,” not to a particular editor.

In order for manuscripts to be reviewed as quickly as possible, authors are asked to observe the following requirements:

- Ensure that the manuscript is anonymous by leaving off your name and putting self-identifying references in a separate Microsoft Word file and as a separate attachment.
- Use margins of one and one-half (1-1/2) inches at the left, right, top, and bottom of the page.
- JPAE uses the in-text parenthetical reference system with all references at the end of the text in alphabetical order. Notes are to be kept to a minimum. See the Chicago Manual of Style for guidance.

It is important that you identify the type of manuscript you are submitting: (1) research based; (2) interpretive, reflective, critical, or theoretical essay or position paper; (3) creative pedagogy; or (4) teaching case study.

Creative Pedagogy: The purpose of Creative Pedagogy is to feature innovative approaches to teaching specific public affairs subjects or concepts. The goal of this feature is to present experimental exercises, simulations, role plays, or other creative teaching technologies in a format that colleagues can readily use. Submissions are peer reviewed.

Contributions to Creative Pedagogy must include substantive details (e.g., text for the case, role descriptions for a role play exercise) and a narrative discussion about how the pedagogy is used, student response to it, suggestions for instructors who may wish to use it, and results associated with its use. The presentation of the pedagogy should be thorough and lively so that teachers reading the article will be stimulated and able to use the information.

Submissions for Creative Pedagogy should be sent to Editors, JPAE, at jpae@uncp.edu, as indicated above.

Review Essays: Reviews will commonly use a cluster format in which several books, videos, software programs, cases, CD-ROMs, Internet sites, or other instructional materials will be compared and contrasted in an essay. Review es-

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says should offer a point of view but should seek to treat each item in the cluster fairly. Essays could be structured around a comparison of related resources, resources related to the public affairs education enterprise, or resources that directly or indirectly have something to say about public affairs education. Review essays should strive for clarity, brevity, and timeliness. Inquiries about review essays should be sent to Nicholas Giannastasio, Managing Editor, at jpaed@uncp.edu.

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The Increased Complexity of Public Services: Curricular Implications for Schools of Public Affairs

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Abstract
In the last two and a half decades, the tools of government and methods of public service provision have markedly diversified. The increased complexity of the policy and organizational environment presents difficult challenges for public administration programs, especially in the design of a curriculum appropriate to the new mixed world of public and private services, and particularly if curriculum material appropriate for managing contemporary public and nonprofit agencies is to be fully integrated into the MPA curriculum. This paper discusses the changing public service landscape that the MPA curriculum must address and ways in which the curriculum can be adapted to prepare students to meet the changes and challenges of contemporary public service provision.

Schools of public administration have grown rapidly in number and size in the last 25 years, fueled by the growth of government and the nonprofit sector as well as the overall push for accountability, performance management, and outcome evaluation. Moreover, the growth of government has been marked by increasing diversification in the tools of government and the organizational forms used to provide public services (Salamon, 2002). These varied policy tools include direct grants, government contracts with nonprofit and for-profit agencies, tax credits and deductions, tax-exempt bonds, vouchers, and government-backed loans. In part because of increased reliance on an array of policy tools to achieve public purposes, the complexity and variety of the public sector’s relationship with nonprofit and for-profit organizations has increased markedly. State and local governments have extensive contracts with nonprofit social and health agencies.
Many public organizations have affiliated public charities for the purposes of raising money and/or receiving public and private grants. Many nonprofit agencies receiving public funds also have for-profit subsidiaries or, in the case of many low-income housing organizations, affiliated for-profit partnerships that they control for the purposes of developing and maintaining their publicly subsidized properties. Many important local public projects involve complex collaborations between public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations. Lester M. Salamon (1981) has referred to this increased role for private organizations in providing public services as “third party government.” These developments reflect many trends, including the continuing effects of the New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Behn, 2003), the “reinventing government” movement (Osborne and Gaebler, 1991), and the widespread interest in nonprofit organizations, voluntarism, and community service.

The increased complexity of the policy and organizational environment presents difficult challenges for public administration programs, especially in the design of a curriculum appropriate to the new mixed world of public and private services, and particularly if curriculum material appropriate for managing contemporary public and nonprofit agencies is to be fully integrated into the MPA curriculum. The challenge of this integration is the focus of this paper.

BACKGROUND

The roots of public administration programs are in state and local government administration. Indeed, many programs were initially focused on training city managers, and some programs still focus on this part of the public service community. As public administration grew, its mission broadened to include service in the national government and a variety of policy analysis positions in public organizations, research institutes, consulting firms, and advocacy groups. The curriculum shifted to place more emphasis on policy analysis and less on the skills needed for working in state and local agencies, especially local municipal agencies.

In the 1990s, more and more MPA programs added faculty to teach courses related to nonprofit management, reflecting the surge in the number of nonprofit organizations and the staff and volunteers working in those organizations. In particular, many college students decided to work in nonprofit agencies after graduation through programs such as Teach for America, City Year, Echoing Green, and AmeriCorps. After two or three years in these programs, many individuals decided to seek advanced education in public administration programs, spurring these programs to add faculty, courses, and concentrations in nonprofit management.

Initially, most MPA programs added curricular material on nonprofit organizations without fundamentally changing the rest of their curriculum. Thus, the core required classes in management, analysis, statistics, and leadership continued.
The Increased Complexity of Public Services: Curricular Implications

to be taught with a focus on public organizations. Nonprofit curricular content was limited to specialized nonprofit courses on nonprofit management, philanthropy and fundraising, and the history of the nonprofit sector. Often, these courses were part of the specialization or concentration in nonprofit management. These specializations also took inspiration and guidance from specialized master's programs in nonprofit management established in the 1980s and early 1990s at the University of San Francisco, Case Western Reserve University, and Seattle University.

The growth of nonprofit organizations and a shift in thinking among policymakers and foundations toward support for collaborative solutions to public problems also prompted schools of public administration to add classes on public-private partnerships, collaboration, consensus building, and conflict resolution. The focus of these courses was diverse; some focused on public-nonprofit partnerships and collaborations, while others took a much broader view and concentrated on the diverse models of partnerships as well as the design of effective partnership relationships. To the extent feasible, this partnership material was also integrated into the public management core curriculum. The Kennedy School at Harvard, the Electronic Hallway at the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, and other institutions developed many cases on collaboration, partnerships, and conflict resolution to be used for instructional purposes in MPA programs.

Over time, additional developments in the delivery of public services created new challenges for MPA programs and for courses and programs on nonprofit management and partnerships. First, a shift away from direct contracts and grants has occurred, albeit to varying extents across the country. Contracts between government and nonprofit organizations, which sharply increased in the 1960s and 1970s, were typically direct contracts between a government agency and a recipient agency. For example, a state government agency would contract with a child welfare agency to provide foster care services. The state agency would provide funding to the agency directly, often through monthly payments tied to the number of clients. (Some of the well-known Kennedy School of Government cases used to illustrate the management and policy challenges of contracting, such as La Alianza Hispana, were based on this direct contracting model.) Increasingly, though, state and local government contracting with service providers has become more indirect and much more complicated. Many states and localities have moved to use third-party managed care firms for their contracts with local service providers. Typically, a nonprofit or for-profit firm will be paid by the state or local government to manage the services of a specific number of clients. The firm then subcontracts with local service providers to offer these services. Another example of the indirect nature of this contracting is the widespread use of vouchers or voucher-like payment systems for services rather than direct contracts. Vouchers are widely used now for child care, and housing vouch-
ers are frequently critical components of the complicated public-private partnerships that are used to build low-income housing units. In addition, Medicaid, which has grown rapidly in recent years, is central to funding a wide array of social service and health agencies. Medicaid reimbursement is complicated, but it has some features of classic vouchers—like housing vouchers—because funding is tied to the client and it is only available for eligible clients (see Steuerle, 2000). The shift away from traditional contracts is also evident in low-income housing and community development organizations. These organizations rely upon a mix of funding that includes tax credits, foundation and corporate grants, vouchers, contracts for services, and fees from property management. As a result, these organizations are in a web of complicated relationships with public and private organizations.

The second major development—the increasing diversity of organizational forms—is related to the shift away from contracts. The assumption of traditional public management programs was that public and private agencies were distinctly different organizations. Thus, the curriculum was designed to teach key concepts related to public organizations. As programs evolved, separate courses on nonprofits were developed, but the design of these courses remained underpinned by the assumption of distinctive differences.

Yet, the growth of organizations such as nonprofit low-income housing organizations exemplifies the hybridization of the organizational universe wherein more and more organizations providing public services have features characteristic of public, nonprofit, and/or for-profit organizations (see Skelcher, 2004; Koppell, 2003; Joldersma and Winter, 2002; Smith, 2007). Low-income housing organizations receive money from private investors, government, foundations, individuals, and corporations. They are responsive to government mandates and priorities but are also entrepreneurial and are interested in various types of partnerships with for-profit organizations. Community development corporations (CDCs) have similar characteristics.

In addition, many organizations have affiliated structures and organizations. For example, many public and nonprofit organizations have created affiliated “foundations” for the purposes of raising money. Usually these foundations are 501(c)3 public charities, but their purpose is typically restricted to raising money for the parent organization. Many nonprofit organizations of even modest size have created for-profit subsidiary operations, usually as an earned income opportunity for the agency. And many 501(c)3 organizations, such as the Sierra Club, have affiliated (c)4 organizations as well as their own political action committees (PACs).

One other notable example of this trend toward hybridization is the increasing use of public authorities for a variety of public policy purposes. Public authorities have long been used for economic development and transportation (Walsh, 1978). However, public authorities are now increasingly common in other areas.
of public policy, including housing, education, cultural institutions, and historic preservation. Public authorities also work in partnership with other nonprofit and public institutions. For instance, the Seattle Art Museum recently developed a world-class sculpture park on the Seattle waterfront. This sculpture park resides on land owned by the Museum Development Authority, a public development authority chartered by the state of Washington. Public authorities typically have some characteristics of public agencies—such as the ability to issue bonds, unionization, and public disclosure requirements—but they tend to have more operational and program flexibility and can operate in a much more entrepreneurial fashion than many public agencies.

The third development related to the transformation of the organizational universe is the growth of intermediary organizations serving and/or representing public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations. As reliance on private agencies has grown, concerns about the capacity, performance, and sustainability of private agencies have escalated, especially concerns about many of the newer nonprofit organizations—from arts organizations to social service agencies—that are often undercapitalized with small boards and staff. Many different types of intermediary organizations now serve these agencies: regional and statewide associations of nonprofits; nonprofit and for-profit consulting firms; university-based training and education programs; and a variety of training and technical assistance programs offered by local community foundations and United Way chapters. Increasingly, MPA graduates work in these organizations and programs.

Some intermediary organizations also play a critical representative role for service agencies providing public services. For instance, regional and state associations of different service provider groups in fields such as low-income housing, child welfare, the arts, and home health have grown rapidly. These associations lobby government for more funding and favorable regulatory action. In addition, many associations work to increase general public awareness of their particular issue or focus; some associations combine this effort with specific research that supports their goals and objectives.

The diversity of organizational forms has, of course, affected the work of many staff employed in public agencies. Many public agency administrators primarily manage contracts and funding with private agencies. They also may need to collaborate with private agencies in order to achieve goals such as reducing homelessness or improving the foster care system, even if their specific job responsibilities do not involve managing a specific contract or directly funding a service provider agency.

**Management Challenges of Policy and Organizational Diversification**

The transformation of the organizational environment in the provision of public services has in turn created a set of urgent and complicated management
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challenges for public managers. This section briefly discusses five of the most critical of these challenges: 1) transparency; 2) collaborative or relational management and contracting; 3) institutional and programmatic design; 4) performance assessment; and 5) citizen involvement and participation.

Transparency
In traditional public agencies, established policies such as open meeting laws and public disclosure rules on budgets and other matters mean that an opportunity exists for policymakers, agency staff, and citizens to monitor and review the operations of public agencies. (To be sure, accountability problems occur, and it is difficult for many citizens to monitor increasingly large public agencies.) But policy and organizational diversification and the split between a public agency as a purchaser of service and private agencies as providers of service create complex organizational relationships in which the boundary between public and private agency is very difficult to discern. Further, private agencies are typically not subject to the same disclosure rules as public agencies, and many of the existing disclosure regulations for private nonprofit and for-profit agencies inadequately capture the increased complexity of the organizational operations, creating obstacles to monitoring and evaluation by public and private funding agencies.

Collaborative or Relational Management
Government contracting with private agencies often evolved from informal connections and relationships between government officials and private agency staff and board members (Smith and Lipsky, 1993). Over time, pressure for accountability and performance spurred governments to create more formal contracting procedures with competitive bidding, detailed contracts, and a very hierarchical relationship between government and the contract agency. But the more varied policy tools such as tax credits, vouchers, loans, and tax-exempt bonds and greater reliance on tax deductions often creates collaborative relationships among partners that require a new skill set to manage and sustain. And increasingly, governments and nonprofit agencies are discussing contracts as a long-term investment requiring a genuine partnership to ensure funding adequacy and performance. In addition, public and private funders are encouraging more partnerships and collaborations among organizations, partly in response to the proliferation of new organizations in the last 25 years and growing recognition of the need to develop collaborative responses to complex problems (see Bovaird, 2004).

Institutional and Programmatic Design
An extensive literature exists on the structure and operations of public organizations as well as the management of nonprofit and for-profit organizations. The emergence of third-party government, with its varied policy tools and revenue...
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sources, challenges the field of public and nonprofit management to develop new approaches to programmatic design. In mixed public/private systems, the incentives facing the staff and volunteers of these organizations is especially critical, as is the clarity of authority structures and reporting systems. Put another way, the production of public services in the contemporary era entails the cooperation of many public and private actors, requiring careful attention to the incentives for cooperation and good performance.

In addition, the proliferation of service provider agencies, especially nonprofit agencies offering public services, creates a challenging resource environment that strongly encourages the staff and boards of these agencies to pursue revenue diversification, further contributing to the hybridization of organizational form. But revenue diversification requires creativity and a clear organizational strategy if it is to succeed. Thus, the staff and board of nonprofit service provider agency need to have a comprehensive grasp of different revenue raising strategies including private fundraising, grants and contracts, vouchers, bond financing, and private foundation grants. As noted, many nonprofit organizations have restructured their organizations to include an affiliated foundation for the sole purpose of fundraising.

Performance Assessment

The split between government as purchaser and private agencies as provider creates a challenging principal-agent relationship, especially as it pertains to provider performance (see Donahue, 1989). That is, the reliance by government and private agencies is an example of a classic principal-agent relationship whereupon government is the principal and the private provider is the agent of the principal. In the context of private agencies providing public services, government is in a position of relying upon the private provider for information on performance as well as depending on those agencies to address social problems in a way consistent with government priorities and objectives. Thus, government policymakers and administrators need to design performance systems that are not overly burdensome, yet fair. Further, many of the mixed public/private program initiatives present especially daunting evaluation challenges because they require the joint production of services.

Citizen Involvement and Participation

Greater reliance on nonprofit organizations is related in part to the desire of government officials to respond to particular groups or interests or to provide greater opportunities for citizen involvement in service delivery. Nonprofit organizations appear to offer this opportunity, because many nonprofits are rooted in communities, neighborhoods, and ethnic groups. Their boards are comprised of volunteers, and many nonprofits rely upon local volunteers to provide service. Many collaborations and partnerships also emphasize extensive citizen involve-
ment in the design and implementation of programs. However, the sustained engagement of citizens is a challenge, regardless of the type of agency or partnerships, especially because many programs are started with public or private grants without regard to a long-term strategy of sustaining the citizen involvement and participation that may be critical to the agency’s success and long-term survival.

Citizen participation is an important aspect of this increasingly mixed public-private system of services in another way. The reliance on private organizations creates a political constituency for government funds. Thus, private agencies lobby government directly or through third-party intermediary associations representing their interests. And revenue diversification for these agencies often means obtaining additional government contracts from new public funding sources, which requires a carefully designed political strategy that can entail the active engagement of board and staff in seeking additional funds. Arguably, the personnel of private nonprofit and for-profit agencies need to be very knowledgeable about political strategy, advocacy, and the rules and policies governing political activity if they are to be effective in obtaining resources for their agencies.

Adapting the MPA Curriculum

MPA programs have responded to the changes in public services with many curricular modifications and revisions. Perhaps the most visible of these changes is the addition of nonprofit concentrations to the MPA curriculum and the hiring of faculty to teach courses in nonprofit management and related areas (Mirabella, 2007). Many MPA programs have also launched executive programs focused on local public and nonprofit service providers. Given the trends in organizational and policy diversification, however, MPA programs need to undertake additional changes to their curriculum to reflect the realities the rapidly changing world of practice in public and nonprofit agencies. These changes are 1) restructuring the core curriculum; 2) broadening elective offerings; 3) developing new case materials; 4) offering more concurrent or joint programs; and 5) expanding executive education.

Restructuring the Core Curriculum

Central to this restructuring process is the integration of material on nonprofit organizations, partnership, contracting, and related themes into required courses. As noted, material on nonprofit management, philanthropy, and partnerships has tended to be restricted to classes on these subjects. Thus, students often do not obtain relevant curricular material until they take their elective courses, typically later in the student’s MPA career. And only a subset of the entire MPA student body in a particular school is exposed to this important curricular material. In addition, the material in the nonprofit courses tends to naturally focus on nonprofits and philanthropy rather than situating the study and practice of nonprofits and philanthropy within the broader context of public policy and manage-
ment. To be sure, many programs offer courses on nonprofits and public policy and/or nonprofits and their relationship to government. However, only a subset of the entire MPA student body in a particular school takes these courses. Further, courses on nonprofits do not tend to address the increasingly complex web of revenue streams and policy tools encountered by nonprofits as well as other types of nonprofits. In addition, public authorities and various special districts are not likely to be directly addressed in the MPA curriculum, either in the core or at the elective level, despite the increasing prominence of these entities to the development and implementation of public services.

One important goal, then, should be to integrate material on the increasingly complex relationship between the public section and nonprofit and for-profit entities into the core curriculum. The required management courses are a logical candidate because they typically address the structure of public organizations, and greater material on nonprofit organizations, contracting, partnerships, and related themes can often be incorporated well into modules on strategic planning, stakeholder analysis, performance management, and outcome evaluation. However, it would also be quite helpful to incorporate this type of curricular material into the core analytic courses, including quantitative reasoning and applied micro-economics. This integration can provide a solid foundation in the changing world of public service for students to build on in their elective courses.

The integration of theoretical frameworks from the disciplines into the core curriculum, as a way of promoting greater understanding of public services, can also be quite useful in enhancing MPA students’ educational experience. That is, given the complexity of public programs or publicly supported programs, it can be very helpful for students to be provided conceptual frameworks from the disciplines. For example, organizational theory from sociology can be extremely valuable in understanding the changes underway within public and nonprofit organizations. Rational choice and game theory can be very instructive in forming strategic planning and priority setting. Theories of collective action and incentives drawn from economics, political science, and sociology can help managers construct political strategies, volunteer and staff management policies, board governance procedures, and the design of public-private partnerships and collaborations.

One other critical component of the MPA curriculum is the capstone project, similar to a master’s thesis. Given the increased complexity of the organizational environment, students can greatly benefit from client-based projects that require a close working relationship with a client organization. These projects can be structured so that a student can work on a project that reflects the increased complexity in public services, which will provide invaluable insight into the actual practice and policy issues in contemporary public services. Many MPA programs would be well served by providing direct or indirect support for these client projects because they can be time-consuming to arrange and monitor.
Broadening Elective Offerings

Of course, students and faculty to a degree would always prefer more elective offerings, particularly in their areas of interest. More specifically, though, the changes in organizational practice should be integrated into many elective offerings. For example, courses on community and economic development should include specific attention to several important topics, including public authorities, special districts, tax credits, and public-private partnerships. Courses on environmental policy could usefully incorporate material on partnerships, land trusts, collaborative planning, and tax credits. Urban policy courses present a similar story; indeed, urban policy today depends to an unprecedented extent on complicated public-private initiatives and sometimes complex public policy tools.

But broadening should occur through other means as well. A couple of examples illustrate the point. First, classes on philanthropy and fundraising have tended to focus on students who are concentrating on nonprofit management. Yet, a wide variety of public and nonprofit organizations are currently engaged in fundraising and grantwriting. Many public agencies at the local level have created their own foundations for the sole purpose of raising funds for the parent organization. Thus, classes on fundraising and grantwriting should be designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of the student body. Capacity limits should be constructed to allow many different types of student into these classes. Second, micro-credit programs are an increasingly popular strategy for addressing poverty, both internationally and domestically. Typically, teaching about micro-credit is restricted to classes on international development. But it would be quite useful to integrate this material into other elective courses such as social policy, urban policy, economic development, and nonprofit management.

Developing New Case Materials

MPA programs rely heavily upon case teaching. Until recently, case development had not kept pace with the increasing complexity of the organizational environment. To be sure, many fine cases on nonprofit management focus on issues such as board governance, executive director-board relations, development, and volunteer management. In the last few years, though, many cases have been produced on nonprofit-for-profit partnerships, social enterprise by nonprofit, public, and for-profit firms, and public-private partnerships in the United States and abroad.

Additional cases certainly should be developed, particularly on the following three topics. First, few recent cases exist on public authorities and special districts. Given the complex mixed public/private character of these entities, it would be especially helpful to have curricular material addressing the management and governance issues facing these organizations. Second, more good cases need to be developed that incorporate the governance and financial aspects of these organizations. This is especially important given the sometimes intricate
financing of these entities. Third, extensive curricular material exists on the management of nonprofit and public organizations, but relatively scant material directly addresses the infrastructure and capital needs of nonprofit organizations. As many scholars, policymakers, and practitioners have noted, many nonprofit organizations providing public services—especially the newer agencies—are severely undercapitalized. Consequently, one of the greatest needs facing these organizations is capital financing. Cases of successful and creative capital financing would be especially instructive to practitioners and policymakers.

Another area of importance is diversity-related issues and concerns. Many newer organizations, especially agencies based in local communities, represent specific ethnic or immigrant groups, neighborhoods, or communities of faith. Indeed, government may be supporting these agencies because they offer an opportunity for government to diversify its response to a particular social problem or issue. Excellent cases developed in recent years have highlighted the diversity issues involved with nonprofit and for-profit organizations providing public services. The challenge remains to integrate these cases and other teaching materials into the MPA curriculum.

Offering More Concurrent or Joint Programs

As noted, the diversification of policy tools and organizational forms has increased the complexity of public policy, creating a need for MPA graduates with a broader range of skills. For instance, students interested in urban policy could arguably benefit from a joint degree in urban planning. A joint social work-MPA degree would offer students a broad base in social policy and social services as well as the management of public and nonprofit programs. Similarly, a joint MPA-environmental policy degree would be well suited for a student interested in a career in environmental policy organizations.

Students can also achieve some of the goals of a joint degree program through less elaborate or complicated means. For example, many universities now offer certificate programs in a wide variety of areas, including nonprofit management, international development, environmental policy, and real estate development. Many MPA programs also have concentrations in areas such as nonprofit management. However, these concentrations need to be flexible in their requirements, allowing the student to integrate material from across the curriculum and outside the public affairs school into their overall plan of study.

Expanding Executive Education

The rising importance of mixed public/private organizational forms means that many people working in the public and nonprofit sectors were not specifically trained to address the management challenges posed by the changes in service delivery. For instance, state and local parks departments around the country currently face pressure to develop an array of partnerships with nonprofit and
for-profit organizations, requiring new skills in managing volunteers developing corporate sponsorships and knowledge of nonprofit board governance. Most park department employees, for example, do not have specialized training or education on these issues. MPA programs can play a key role in educating these employees through a variety of executive education opportunities. MPA programs can offer an executive master’s degree tailored to working professionals in leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. Ideally, these programs would include substantial curricular material on partnerships, social enterprise, nonprofit management, and public finance. Because most executive master’s programs tend to have a large percentage of required courses with relatively few electives, it is especially important to integrate material on third-party government into the required curriculum. New curriculum material based upon the experience of senior executives also needs to be developed.

Other executive education opportunities can be important as a way of increasing the reach of MPA programs to individuals working in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. For instance, rising demand exists for short-term executive education that can include 3- to 5-day residential programs, one-day seminars, and leadership training programs for mid-level and senior management in private organizations. These nondegree educational options are typically quite separate from the regular MPA program. However, schools of public affairs should these executive education opportunities to engage practitioners working in the community in private and public settings in teaching. Over time, these practitioners may assume a larger role in teaching in the regular MPA program and increase the access of students to instruction on key management and policy issues affecting private organizations providing public services.

In essence, MPA programs need to look across all of their programs and strive to understand the ways in which these different programs complement, reinforce, and support each other. Curricular material in an executive program can be transferred to the regular MPA program and vice versa. Relationships with client organizations for student projects can lead to case development, students for executive programs, and over time the adoption of new curricular material in the regular MPA curriculum.

Conclusion

In sum, successful integration of curricular material on the increasing organizational complexity of public and nonprofit services into the MPA curriculum requires adaptation and a fundamental rethinking of the current curriculum. Further, it requires a broadening of the disciplinary background, skill set, and expertise of the MPA faculty. Thus, MPA programs should be open to joint appointments, professors of the practice, and individuals working at the intersection of policy and management and/or the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors. Faculty with strong disciplinary backgrounds who are nonetheless interested
in working in an interdisciplinary setting such as an MPA program can also be very valuable.

A more diverse and broad-based faculty allows MPA programs to position themselves to adapt the curriculum in ways that allow flexibility and innovation. To an extent, one ongoing problem for MPA programs is that they have had difficulty responding to the rapidly changing character of public service practice, given their current faculty and their traditional curricular commitments. The diversification of policy tools and organizational forms requires more much adeptness on the part of MPA programs, hence the need to diversify MPA program offerings while providing a solid core of required courses that provide a strong base in management and analysis for students.

Regardless of the specific MPA program, it will be critical for MPA programs to devote more attention to the issue of governance, broadly defined. Mixed public/private organizations present complicated governance challenges, especially given the pressure on government and nonprofit organizations to be more responsive to citizens while at the same time maintaining high standards of accountability and performance. MPA programs and their faculty should be providing the leadership to educate and train people with knowledge of governance in this more complicated governance environment. To achieve this important goal, MPA programs will need to conduct ongoing research on governance and use this research to inform their teaching and the development of new curricular materials.

NOTES
1. See the Electronic Hallway at the Evans School of Public Affairs, the University of Washington at www.hallway.org; the Kennedy School of Government Case Program at www.ksgcase.harvard.edu; and the Harvard Business School Case Program at http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbsp/case_studies.jsp.

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Analyzing Policy Fields: Helping Students Understand Complex State and Local Contexts

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Abstract
A collaborative approach to public management is critical in an era of governance that depends upon networks more than centralized bureaucracies, yet public affairs education has not adequately responded to the need to develop new tools to support analysis of complex settings. Policy field analysis is one tool that can help professionals-in-training learn to act purposively within complex policy environments. Policy fields—public and private institutions, in a substantive public policy or program area, in a particular place—shape how state and local actors work to solve public management problems, and their pursuit of programmatic goals in turn shapes the policy field. Using a well-known teaching case, the authors present a series of analytical questions and mapping tools that help clarify the structure of complex policy environments; the institutional and inter-organizational relationships involved; and the resources that influence interactions in the policy field.

Many public affairs scholars have noted the significant transformation in public service provision over the last 30 years (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; Kickert et al., 1997; Milward and Provan, 2000; Salamon, 2002). The centralized state has given way to the hollow state in which governments at all levels rely upon other public, nonprofit, and private organizations to carry out public programs. These same governments utilize a variety of investment tools—such as tax incentives, purchase of service contracts, loan guarantees, and vouchers—to work with these diverse organizations. Increasingly, unusual partnerships are being formed between nonprofit agencies and public agencies, citizen groups, and businesses to modify public programs and carry out policy ideas. There are new calls for a collaborative approach to public management and for scholarly attention to the
new governance that depends upon networks more than centralized bureaucracies (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006; Kettl, 2006).

Yet, in spite of these changes, public affairs education lags behind. As Lester Salamon argued in his keynote address at the NASPAA annual conference in 2004, the central challenge in public affairs is “learning how to comprehend, and to manage, the reinvented government that we have created, how to design and manage the immensely complex collaborative systems that now form the core of public problem solving” (Salamon, 2005). Arguably, this should be a central focus of education within schools of public policy, public administration, and public affairs.

To respond, public affairs educators need to develop new tools to support analysis of complex settings. We also need more refined processes to help students develop nuanced management competencies and program design abilities (Bingham, Sandfort, and O'Leary, forthcoming). Rather than depending on authority-based formal hierarchy, individuals must earn others’ respect through their insights, their use of information, and deft interpersonal process. In this paper, we discuss how to develop these skills by the use of policy field analysis.

The approach was developed to cultivate more knowledge about the dynamics of complex policy environments. Through answering a series of questions, students come to better appreciate the institutional environment in a state or local context within a particular policy area. Questions focus on important dimensions of the field: the concentration of authority, the density of networks, and the nature of financial and professional relationships. These dimensions are then captured on visual maps. The process of mapping and the maps themselves help make concrete the forces so important within state and local policy contexts.

Defining and analyzing policy fields is one important tool for those engaged in collaborative practice focused on addressing our most important public problems. Yet we do not believe that public affairs education merely entails assembling heuristic tools that can be deployed at precise moments to ensure strategic action. Instead, a tool such as policy field analysis offers an alternative way to understand complex situations. Such alternatives provide mechanisms that allow practitioners to exert their judgment as socially skillful actors (Fligstein, 2001). In other words, analysis helps them see what was previously obscured. Awareness, in turn, helps people become more purposive in their actions. Policy field analysis is one tool that fosters a public affairs education that is more focused on helping professionals-in-training be able to act purposively within complex policy environments.

**Rooting Policy Field Analysis in Lessons from Theory and Research**

Let’s start our discussion with the example of a significant public problem—the reality that the housing market does not allow all families to access affordable shelter. Since the 1960s, the public sector has used an array of mechanisms to
shift market dynamics and improve the supply of affordable housing. The field involves the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, funding from the federal Department of Health and Human Services, state financing agencies, county and city governments, and various philanthropic and nonprofit agencies. Yet, the shape of the field varies in important ways across states and localities. Let’s take, for example, two mid-sized metropolitan areas. In one, city and county administrators have worked together for years on constructing affordable single- and scatter-site housing units. Their collaboration is facilitated by a state financing authority that helps assemble various public revenue sources for construction and rehabilitation. Numerous nonprofits also bring specific technical expertise on land acquisition, site development, and post-construction services; these nonprofits also draw upon philanthropic partners who, through sizable donations, create funding pools to provide additional resources for these activities. When new public policy ideas get proposed, various actors within this field are mobilized. When initiatives are passed, those actors work together—trading information, insight, or frustration—to implement new policies. When the leadership in these organizations changes, many mechanisms—collaborative projects, funding meetings, policy strategy sessions—help socialize new hires to the contours of the local policy field.

In contrast, in another mid-sized community, only two nonprofit organizations work on housing affordability. The leaders of the two organizations often differ on strategy and, as a result, rarely present a unified front. For the last 30 years, one manager has headed the public housing authority and, because of an event many years ago involving the county commissioner, she is unwilling to work with the city’s community development office. Private developers have an interest in constructing new units in the community but, because publicly subsidized tax credits are inadequate, they are unable to create sufficient financial packages. When leadership turns over in one of the nonprofits, the new executive director must chart for herself the contours of this policy field.

How are students to make sense of the diversity in local field conditions? If they are placed as protagonists in each setting, how could they craft strategic action to develop and implement a new program idea? Certainly, they could refer to factors commonly attributed to such local differences: economic conditions, political ideology, demographic characteristics, managers defending turf. Yet, these explanations do not promote focused analysis into the situation. Nor do they suggest how individuals can work strategically within these contexts to improve system operation. For such an analysis, students must undertake more subtle analysis that takes the policy arena, the intergovernmental relationships, the networks of local actors, the relative power of these actors and their relationships seriously. They must come to understand how the structures that shape the local policy fields in both communities are also shaped by the insight and energy of individual actors, in the small and large decisions they make. They must under-
take policy field analysis. We developed this tool through a synthesis of research and theory from political science, sociology, and public management. Because policy context, institutions, organizations, and individual actors are all significant in complex policy environments, we must use concepts relevant to these various levels of analysis.

We begin with the work of political scientists, who study the workings of policy domains. This stream of literature draws attention to the sets of institutions and organizations involved in the policy process in a particular substantive area or issue, such as national defense, the environment, or health care (Burstein, 1991; Granados and Knoke, 2005; Knoke and Laumann, 1982; Laumann and Knoke, 1987). Research usually focuses at the national level, exploring public and nongovernmental institutions and organizations involved in legislative acts or regulatory judgments that alter the policy arena. A policy field analysis begins with the recognition of the unique knowledge and limited pool of organizations involved in particular substantive policy area, such as education or housing. To work within a policy field, practitioners master very specific content knowledge within the domain: Are the formulas used to calculate housing affordability accurate, given disparities in regional median incomes? To be conversant with others in the field, one must know the answers to such basic questions. Many graduate courses in educational administration, urban planning, and public policy focus on this type of foundation knowledge. Such courses help to familiarize students with the basic terminology, programmatic knowledge, and important institutional actors in the field. What they learn through such courses, or from months on the job, is often technical knowledge about the public issues. In fact, because of the specific content knowledge they develop, many individuals spend their careers moving back and forth between nonprofit and public organizations within a particular field. In this way, fields often are somewhat closed systems.

Secondly, policy fields have both vertical and horizontal bounds. Political scientists also study intergovernmental relationships. Although often presumed to be hierarchical, research documents that each level of government—national, state, and local—often possesses the ability to exert influence in policy implementation (Cho and Wright, 2004; Elazar, 1965; Peterson, 1995). While focused on state and local settings, policy field analysis includes an awareness of the national and inter-governmental relationships that establish the local boundaries. Certainly, legal and regulatory frameworks created by federal, state, and local governments are quite significant. Often, they define the nature of the public problem and the range of remedies that can be employed to address it. Laws and history also often directly inform where administrative authority is concentrated. Although government at various levels sometimes has overlapping roles, there is an awareness of historical concentration of administrative authority. For example, the federal role in housing production was established in the late 1960s and changed significantly in the mid-1980s. As others note (Cho and Wright, 2004), heated
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public debates in many fields often center upon the altering of historical centers of authority within the intergovernmental context.

Policy field analysis also highlights the horizontal relationships that structure a policy field at the state and local levels. Sociologists offer the concepts of societal sectors and organizational fields to this endeavor (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott and Meyer, 1991). In a particular place, there is a pool of organizations interested in a particular issue (Galaskiewicz, 1979; Goetz and Sidney, 1997; Hjern and Porter, 1981; Milward and Wamsley, 1984). The pool of organizations can include government, private nonprofits, small or large businesses, or philanthropic institutions. Their interest in a particular issue emerges from organizational reputation and staff expertise, as well as their assessments of the economic or political viability of engaging with others to work on the problem. One of the most interesting findings from the study of public policy implementation is how organizations that should have conflicting relationships often work together in different roles and capacities (Hjern and Porter, 1981). To be considered legitimate within the field, organizations attend to norms, values, and beliefs in the local institutional environment. This leads to a local social order that helps actors frame their actions in relation to each other (Fligstein, 2001). The horizontal bounds of a policy field are both framed by and come to frame this local social order. DiMaggio and Powell (1991, 1983) describe the order that emerges from the ongoing process of interaction and information sharing as the “structuration of organizational fields.”

The concept of organizational fields builds upon the work of other social theorists (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1984) who conceptualize social structures as both constraining and enabling. Structuration theory seeks to explain how the constraining nature of institutions and the enabling elements of human knowledge and action can exist simultaneously. This theory highlights how the pre-existing rules and resource distributions within institutions operate as sources of power. Individual actors can use their social skills to both reproduce and form new institutions. The reproduction of fields depends on skills of actors in dominant organizations, often under conditions of relative field stability (Fligstein, 2001). Yet, in highly turbulent, crisis situations, individuals or coalitions do challenge the existing institutional order using social skills to create entirely new fields or transform existing ones (DiMaggio, 1988).

Other sociologists and public management scholars use network analysis to conceptualize the horizontal relationships present within policy fields (Galaskiewicz, 1979; Isett, 2006; Kickert et al., 1997; Klijn, 1997; Klijn et al., 2000; Milward and Provan, 2000; O’Toole, 1997; O’Toole and Meier, 2004; Provan et al., 2005). Networks can be analyzed in terms of their centrality and density, or by the nature of their ties, management, and outcomes. Managers and organizations may form networks to assess community problems and strategize about policy innovations or policy making processes. They may work together on
project-based initiatives and conduct program assessments. In a study of collaborative management within local economic development, Agranoff and McGuire (2003) found that variation in collaboration could be explained by both variation in environmental conditions—such as economic conditions or the presence of private philanthropic resources—and the tools, actions, and perceptions of local managers.

The final element of policy field analysis focuses on the individual beliefs and the resources found in particular localities. The insights offered by structuration theory suggest that both material resources and the understanding that develops from human relationships are significant in shaping the contours of the local system. As our example of affordable housing in two mid-size communities illustrates, localities vary significantly in the number of nonprofit organizations, the availability of philanthropic dollars, the engagement of private business in public affairs (Foundation Center, 2006; Grønbjerg and Paarlberg, 2001; Pratt and Spencer, 2000). Yet, as our example also highlights, local knowledge about people and organizations—the reputations and perceptions of effectiveness (or lack thereof) and capabilities—are also significant in shaping how resources flow among organizations and how work gets done (Sandfort, 1999). By the same token, though exhibiting “social skill” (Fligstein, 2001), individuals can analyze this context and persuade others to act, sometimes in ways that break with the prevailing local knowledge. In the second city in our example, the city manager could choose to adopt new practices that would fundamentally shift the dynamics in the policy field. Perceptions combine with tangible resources to become significant factors in policy field analysis.

We can now begin to explain variations between our two mid-sized communities in how the system to provide affordable housing is structured. Although environmental factors, such as economic, political, or demographic circumstances are important, policy field analysis would suggest that policy domain, intergovernmental relations and administrative authority, pool of organizations and networks between them, and reputations and social meanings shared in a place are essential. Yet how can teachers bring these various threads of research and theory into the classroom? How can they translate these lessons so they are palatable to practitioner-students? The policy fields tool provides a way to walk systematically through the levels of analysis and to create a visual map that simplifies field dynamics.

Before turning to how a teacher might work with students to conduct policy field analysis, it is important to note that our policy field construct resembles earlier political science writings about “policy subsystems.” As Milward and Wamsley describe (1984), policy subsystems were initially conceived as a construct that cut across conventional divisions of power and levels of government, involving multiple actors and possessing both vertical and horizontal linkages. It sought to provide more explanatory power to the games that happened between local actors.
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and organizations (Long, 1958). Yet utilization of the policy subsystems construct has remained sadly underdeveloped. In part, this might be because most research focuses on the national level (Goetz and Sidney, 1997) or because it has been associated with the Iron Triangle metaphor largely rejected within public administration. Recent studies seem to use “policy subsystem” as a heuristic for describing case study research rather than as a viable analytical construct. The advances in institutional, structuration, and network theories in the intervening years cause us to change terminology and incorporate these vibrant streams of more recent scholarship into our process of policy field analysis.

We also want to emphasize that, although policy field analysis focuses on state and local conditions, one should not ignore national and international conditions when teaching this tool. The passage of federal legislation, with the specification of a new policy problem or the creation of new means for ameliorating it, can fundamentally shift local policy fields. New policy tools can bring different institutions into the local organizational pool. New regulations can mandate the creation of new planning or service networks, or new funding priorities can shape how resources flow within that field (Goetz and Sidney, 1997). However, by understanding what already exists within a field, actors can better navigate the opportunities or constraints that accompany significant public policy change.

Teaching Others to Analyze Policy Fields

In the classroom, policy field analysis involves the systematic application of a series of questions to a particular situation. Through this application, visual representations of the actual policy field are created (Anderson et al., 2005; Dobel and Day, 2005). These representations allow people to understand the structure of the institutions and the nature of their relationships. They also provide a mechanism whereby students can communicate with others about the results of their analysis; the visuals may function like boundary objects that help with the sharing of complex, practice-based knowledge (Bechky, 2003; Carlile, 2002). In this paper, we are specifically concerned with exploring how this construct can be taught to master’s students in management, policy analysis, and topical courses offered in schools of public affairs.

In our experience, policy field analysis can be undertaken in two ways. The first involves students identifying policy areas of interest and conducting supervised field-based research to fully investigate each of the analytical questions. In addition to visual maps, more detailed memoranda can be created to document dimensions of the analysis difficult to reduce to visual representation. For more limited application, faculty may also utilize a written teaching case. These cases typically paint vivid pictures of the management and leadership dilemmas embedded in contextual detail. For the remainder of this article, we will pursue this second strategy to better illustrate the analytical steps. We will draw upon a widely available teaching case, “Integrated Housing and Social Services,” from

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the Electronic Hallway case series, focusing on segment A. We chose this segment because it provides a description of local context that is important for the protagonist to understand in order to act effectively; any teaching case with such characteristics could be used in the classroom for policy field analysis.

The Integrated Housing and Social Services case highlights a nationally honored local housing authority that has worked collaboratively with nonprofits and local government agencies to develop an innovative program, Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS). The program has successfully graduated 400 motivated families from public assistance. The case begins with the main protagonist, Steve Holt, needing to respond to a new national mandate from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Suddenly, PSS must provide universal access to all welfare families rather than just those the program operators define as motivated. Program operators believe strongly that the use of motivation as a selection criterion has led directly to the overall success of PSS. (See Appendix 1 for a more detailed summary of the case).

In our policy field analysis, we will take the perspective of Steve Holt, the director of the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO). Because the contours of policy fields often vary by institution setting, it is important to initially identify from whose perspective the analysis will originate. The following questions, built from the research and theory surveyed earlier, comprise the essence of the policy field analysis. They are summarized in Table 1.

**What policy domains are the actors working within? What are the large public problems they are working to solve?** In this case, the primary policy domain is public housing. However, because the PSS initiative involves providing a range of social and community supports to participants, it also involves other policy areas: mental health, family support, education. The PSS collaborative focuses on creating more stability for low-income families so that they can successfully use public housing subsidies to transition off public assistance. In the case, Steve Holt is now grappling with how to respond to mandated change in program implementation.

**What laws and regulations, national programs, and funding streams are being used to solve the problem? Where does administrative authority lie?** This policy problem is not contained within any particular public agency. At the local level, many laws and regulations, national programs, and funding streams come into play. From Steve Holt’s perspective, the laws, regulation, and funding coming from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are central. The unique component of PSS was its ability to leverage Section 8 housing certificates for families in poverty. These valuable certificates offer publicly funded vouchers that people can take to access rental property in the market. Many communities, including Snohomish County, have long waiting lists to access these vouchers. Additional funding for PSS, however, comes from the Community Services Block Grant program of the federal Department of Health and Human Services and is administered locally by the county’s Division of Community Services.
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To begin to represent some of these intergovernmental relationships and policy tools, visual maps are useful. Most broadly, causal maps (Bryson et al., 2004) are word-and-arrow diagrams that link ideas and actions. They can be used to explore relationships among interconnected values and goals or to articulate specific strategies and action. They also can trace both vertical and horizontal influence.

Table 1. Summary of Policy Field Analysis Using the “Integration of Housing and Social Services” Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Questions</th>
<th>Theoretical Base</th>
<th>Case Elements to Highlight</th>
<th>Conceptual Points to Highlight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the policy domains actors are working within? What are the large public problems they are working to solve?</td>
<td>Policy domains</td>
<td>Housing, social services; supporting employment and self-sufficiency among public housing residents</td>
<td>Focus on a substantive policy issue involving one or more parts in the policy process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What laws and regulations, national programs, and funding streams are being used to solve the problem? Where does administrative authority lie?</td>
<td>Inter-governmental relations; societal sectors</td>
<td>Project Self-Sufficiency pilot program; federal mandate; vouchers and block grants; federal/local control</td>
<td>Attend to forces that shape the local and state policy fields. Consider historic and current locus of administrative authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the state/local context, what organizations have an interest in this problem? Which organizations have power to make change related to it?</td>
<td>Organizational fields; structuration theory</td>
<td>Coalitions and range of local organizations involved in program development and delivery</td>
<td>Pool of possible organizations; stakeholder power and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ties exist between these organizations?</td>
<td>Network theory</td>
<td>Diverse linkages existing within the county among organizations in the field.</td>
<td>Nature of network ties—legal authority, funding, service, reputation and trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can resources and social rules be shaped by field actors?</td>
<td>Structuration theory</td>
<td>Protagonist’s understanding of available resources and relationships</td>
<td>Social skill needed to navigate the field and resolve the situation positively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Figure 1. Initial Map of Organizations in a Policy Field Illustrated by Teaching Case Facts

and resource flows. In our analysis of the Integrating Housing and Social Services case, we use causal mapping to visually display vertical flows of influence from the two key policy domains and the vertical and horizontal relationships within the local field. Through the process of mapping, students better understand how major laws, regulations, and funding streams shape local policy fields. They can visually see where administrative authority lies.

In Figure 1, we illustrate with a map drawn to represent the facts of this case. It depicts the broad contours of the relevant policy domains as well as local policy field boundaries. When fully developed, maps can become quite complex. Yet, it is important to realize that the process of creating the maps—of asking and answering the key questions about the important laws and regulation, the significant national programs and funding streams, the source of administrative authority, and other factors defining a policy field—comprises the actual analysis.

Within the state/local context, what organizations have an interest in this problem? Which organizations have power to make change related to it? In the Integrating Housing and Social Services case, numerous organizations comprise the pool of potential organizations to be involved in the field. In addition to HASCO, the Everett Housing Authority (the housing authority of the county’s largest city), the members of the Human Service Coalition, other nonprofit health and human service agencies, and the county council all had received national visibility from the innovative PSS program. In analysis of the organizational pool, we have found it helpful to ask students to brainstorm all of the potential organizations
involved in the policy field. Throughout the discussion, we refer to concepts from social sectors to delineate both vertical and horizontal dimensions of PSS’s task and institutional environments. In the Integrated Housing case, funders and government agencies at multiple levels vertically shape the task and institutional environment. The HUD regional office is significant, as is the state’s Department of Social Services. The county council also has considerable power in legitimating the effort. Numerous organizations also are involved in the horizontal provision of services: human service coalition members make referrals, local United Way funds supplement public dollars, partners are found with local educational institutions. Asking carefully about what is needed both from the task and institutional environment is important. In some situations, professional associations or accrediting bodies might be part of the institutional environment and have some normative or regulatory authority over the field actors.

Once the organizations with an interest in this area are identified, dimensions of power and authority can be unpacked using stakeholder analysis (Bryson, 2004a, 2004b; Freeman, 1984). A stakeholder is any person, group, or organization that can “place a claim on an organization’s attention, resources, or output or that is affected by that output” (Bryson, 2004a, 35). The analytical technique highlights the multiple and often competing stakeholder interests at play, especially salient for public and nonprofit organizations who must respond to the interests of various stakeholders even when they diverge. Although there are many variations of stakeholder analysis (Bryson, 2004b), all focus on trying to understand the distribution of power and interests. A basic analysis includes brainstorming the relevant actors, considering their current expectations of the organization, and identifying both their power and interest in the issue at hand.

The Integrating Housing and Social Service case can illustrate how to implement these steps in the classroom. For the organizations identified in the brainstorm regarding organizational pool, consider their current expectations of the PSS program. Also ask about other players not currently represented. For each, discuss their specific interests in the PSS program and the power they could wield in the federal mandate situation. For example, the federal HUD’s interest in this issue is fulfilling their Congressional mandate. Federal law gives HUD formal authority to mandate local compliance with the new regulations. However, there are multiple levels within HUD, and the staff at the regional office has an interest in sustaining the innovative work of PSS. These staff might have some ability to influence how federal laws are interpreted. The Human Services Coalition, on the other hand, has an interest in helping deliver a full set of services to get families out of poverty and in maintaining the current PSS program. Its power is based upon the six years of experience with PSS, but some agencies have board members who might be tapped to leverage other local philanthropic resources for supplemental funding. By systematically considering each actor’s interests, expectations, and power, students can begin to see different possibilities for strategic
actions given the contours of the policy field. A stakeholder analysis illuminates areas of competing interests and expectations as well as points of convergence that actors might utilize.

What ties exist between these organizations? Social network analysis encourages us to emphasize the nature of ties among entities in the policy field (Provan et al., 2005). Network theory suggests that organizations at the center of a large number of ties to other organizations are significant (Provan and Milward, 1994; Provan and Milward, 1995). It also differentiates among ties and introduces the concept of multiplexity. Organizations might be tied to others through joint programs, shared resources, clients, or funding. These ties might be evoked annually, monthly, or daily. They might be at various governance, administrative, or operational levels. Some ties are formal; they are created by positional or legislative authority or from formal contracts. Others are informal; they emerge out of social relationships (Isett, 2006). This variation stresses the multiplexity of relationships often present in local and state policy fields.

Drawing upon the initial map created in Figure 1 and enhanced by the identification of more stakeholders and discussions of power, students can begin to map the relationships in the Integrated Housing and Social Service case. Clearly HUD has power and legal authority in this case—its policies allowed for the development of the PSS pilot and its mandate causes the crisis to be resolved. The County Council has significant power and holds legal oversight of the county’s administration. The county’s housing administration spearheaded development of the initiative and will likely spearhead the communities’ response, working with the other partners. Figure 2 illustrates how such relationships are represented through causal mapping.

In this example, we have highlighted three types of formal ties—legal authority, funding, and service delivery—in the HASCO case. In some cases, or if students are creating maps based on field-based research, it may be important to also represent more informal ties such as social relationships or information exchange. Again, as students struggle to interpret the nature of the relationships, of identifying the types of linkages between the relevant organizations, they are actually doing the analysis of this policy field. The visual is just a representation of this analysis. Given the facts of the case, PSS is represented as central in this network. Yet, the case does not reveal important details that would affect the flow of resources and sense-making within this field. We do not know, for example, who comprises the PSS task force that acts as a governing body. It may be that certain nonprofit service providers sit on the task force, receive service contracts, and actively shape the agenda of the county’s Human Services Coalition. Such a group of nonprofits would be considered a coalition that has developed a similar interpretation of events and would be able to mobilize itself to act. Similarly, a set of local foundations could exist that fund these nonprofits, sit on the project’s task force, and fund it as well. Holt must identify the network characteristics of

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both coalitions in order to align and manage their interests, given the events that unfold in the case. These types of hypothetical situations can add richness to a case analysis where the local institutional context is made more concrete through the use of such visual maps. This now leads us to the final component of policy field analysis.

*How can resources and social rules be shaped by field actors?* Theories of networks and structuration that inform policy field analysis acknowledge the roles individuals play in shaping the structures of local contexts. For students of public affairs, it is important to cultivate an awareness of structures—their power to shape events, resource flows, and shared beliefs. Yet it also is important to promote awareness that public affairs leadership often requires strategic action in light of these same structures, sometime to change them, sometimes to ensure that the aim of public policy is truly carried out. In the Integrated Housing and Social Services case, the natural question that arises—given the policy field in Snohomish County with the power differentials, coalitions, and relationships—is what is Steve Holt to do? How can he take advantage of formal professional and organizational ties? How can he utilize the informal ties existing between individuals and organizations?
To facilitate a deeper analysis of the informal relationships and social processes—and to illustrate how such an awareness can help Steve know how to navigate the existing system—we find it helpful to explicitly discuss elements emphasized in structuration theory. In this tradition, resources are defined as anything that serves as a source of power in social interactions. They include human attributes, such as physical strength or knowledge and concrete objects, such as raw materials or written information. Virtual objects, such as wealth or status, are also resources. Rules are the virtual norms or conventions of social life. Rather than being formally written or stated, they often are informal and implicit. They are the knowledge people develop and share during routine actions within a group or an organization. As Table 2 illustrates, resources and rules of social life can be enabling or constraining, and Holt needs to understand them in order to move effectively within the local policy field and resolve his current dilemma. Specifically, certain social factors limit the possible actions that can be taken; the mandate rules out the possibility that current PSS clients can be served, people see the Regional HUD office as a force mandating compliance, and the HASCO board supports “housing only” in its mission. Yet at the same time, there are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Constraining</th>
<th>Enabling</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New mandate takes</td>
<td>Section 8 vouchers away from PSS clients</td>
<td>PSS has given Regional HUD legitimacy and prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 8 vouchers</td>
<td></td>
<td>DCS using more “hard money” from County Council to fund PSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>away from PSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Broad-based collaboration in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clients</td>
<td></td>
<td>Program results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social Rules       | Regional HUD represents compliance mandates                                   | Collaboration has created new methods for problem-solving                |
|                    |                                                                               | Broad conception of problem domain: need for multiple and well-coordinated services to lift families out of poverty |
|                    | HASCO board supports “housing only” mission                                   |                                                                         |
|                    | History of conflict between nonprofits and county DCS over block grant monies |                                                                         |

Table 2. Analysis of Resources and Social Rules in “Integrated Housing and Social Services” Case
many enabling forces. The HUD regional office has gained a great deal of positive, national attention from its involvement in PSS in Snohomish County. The program has more sustainable funding from the county and a broad coalition exists of diverse players who can advocate for ongoing support and draw upon solid program results. A new capacity has been built among the service network, and, among diverse constituencies, there is a palpable belief that a multiple service model like PSS is needed to help troubled families.

The analysis that emerges in the classroom from this simple table illustrates more completely how the social dynamics of the policy field shape the action possibilities. Often, when faced with complexity, people focus on the constraints that would need to be overcome. Yet, this analysis helps students to parse through the details and identify the reserves that can be tapped to deal with the situation at hand. Policy field analysis is, in the end, undertaken to help individuals better understand the complex contexts of public affairs and to make strategic choices within that context. Often strategic action hinges upon actors’ abilities to see that which constrains and enables them, and choose viable avenues.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have defined policy field analysis and have reviewed the research and theoretical foundations upon which it is built. We developed the foundation from a close reading of the literature in political science, sociology, and public affairs, all of which grapple with the complex working of public systems. The power of this tool comes from its ability to aid the work of those occupying many positions within local and state contexts. Policy field analysis can help those in public organizations see and appreciate the interdependence on others in the policy environment. It can help nonprofit managers see and appreciate their dependence and their ability to influence institutions within their local context. Policy field analysis can also allow private funders to see the context within which they make investments of grant dollars, staff time, and political capital. With this broad applicability, the tool is useful for public affairs students who might well spend their careers moving among those institutions.

As an educational tool, policy field analysis heeds the call to develop ways to help students and practitioners comprehend and manage the complex systems at the center of public problem solving (Salamon, 2005). More explicit knowledge must be built about inter-governmental relationships, institutions, organizational operation, network management, and group dynamics. Ways to cultivate implicit knowledge about how to work across boundaries—facilitating groups of actors where no one is in charge, values may conflict, and communication is challenging—also must be developed. From our experience, applying this analytical tool is a first step in cultivating an awareness of effective practice within an inter-organizational context. Through modeling the use of causal maps to represent complex relationships, students also experience how such visuals can aid commu-
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communication with others. When creating such representations in the classroom, faculty are able to discuss how such representations facilitate work across boundaries by sharing the analysis with others. With more explicit knowledge of complex environments present in the classroom, teachers can then cultivate more of the soft skills needed to be effective within such settings.

Like others (Fligstein, 2001; Agranoff and McGuire, 2003), we presume that more awareness of institutional and social structures is necessary for skilled, strategic management. As we have observed from practice, policy field analysis helps individuals make sense of ambiguous information, resolving the ambiguity inherent in much that is policy making and policy implementation. Awareness of institutional and social structures also helps individual actors choose among conflicting strategies by helping to narrow possible choices and prioritize action. For these reasons, public affairs education requires the development and use of tools, such as policy field analysis, that distill critical concepts from social science research and theory and apply them to public problem solving.

NOTES
1. For a more complete discussion of the theoretical foundation of policy field analysis see Stone and Sandfort (forthcoming).
2. This literature explores relationships between administrative bureaus, congressional committees, and interest groups as fairly closed systems.
3. Electronic Hallway is a teaching service of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington and can be accessed through www.hallway.org.

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Appendix 1.

Summary of “Integrated Housing and Social Services: Local Initiative Versus Federal Mandate (A)”

Steve Holt, director of the Housing Authority of Snohomish County (HASCO) in Washington State, faced a dilemma. After seven years of operating a nationally honored project, Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS), Holt and other housing authority directors were being told by HUD in Washington, D.C., to cease operating such programs in favor of a new standardized, federally mandated project. As one of the original demonstration sites, Snohomish County’s PSS had a national reputation for bringing single parents out of poverty. However, one of the keys to its success was that families were selected to receive precious Section 8 housing vouchers based on indications of initiative and motivation. The new mandate was to provide “uniform and universal” rather than selective access to Section 8 vouchers, thereby removing a principle element of the program’s success.

HASCO developed PSS in 1984 in response to a federal initiative to develop innovative programs for unemployed and underemployed low-income, single parents. The initiative provided additional Section 8 housing vouchers to PSS clients to help them become self-sufficient. PSS itself was developed as a collaboration of local government entities, nonprofits, and other private providers of a broad range of services. In Snohomish County, the Human Services Coalition—a private consortium of health and human service providers; local elected officials; private citizens; civic, service, labor and business organizations; and low-income groups—endorsed the PSS concept, largely because it would give the Coalition’s service agencies access to highly coveted Section 8 vouchers for their clients. Everett Housing Authority, representing the County’s largest city, came on board early and agreed to dedicate some of its Section 8 vouchers to PSS.

Because HASCO’s Board had decided that it should focus solely on housing, PSS was housed within the County’s Community Services Division of the Department of Human Services. The Division received substantial sums from the federal Department of Health and Human Services through the Community Services Block Grant program and decided to initially use these funds to support PSS. This was a controversial move. In the past, local nonprofits had been critical of how much of the block grant funds the Division actually passed through to them. If suddenly funds were being kept for PSS, less money would be available to these nonprofits for other programs.

PSS operated through referrals from participating nonprofit agencies, educational institutions such as the local community college, and county agencies. Upon acceptance into the program, clients received from PSS referrals to needed services, Section 8 housing vouchers and case management services that coordinated the set of needed services. Over the years, PSS had developed and coordinated a broad network of service providers and referral agencies. Its work was overseen by a task
force consisting of representatives from the housing, education, and social service agencies, as well as clients, themselves.

PSS was successful. It carefully selected clients based on indications of their personal initiative and motivation. More than 350 families had graduated from the program and 400 were currently enrolled. It had received awards for excellence in service delivery from the National Association of Counties and a HUD Sustained Performance Award. The HUD Regional director was a frequent participant in PSS awards ceremonies and a close friend of the program. Importantly, PSS convinced the Snohomish County Council, the County's elected oversight body, to put PSS into its annual budget. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services had also begun to contract with PSS to provide pre-employment and life-skills training to low-income families on welfare assistance.

Holt needed to fashion a local response to the new federal mandate that salvaged PSS and kept the successful public-private collaboration together.

The full case, along with segments (B) and (C), is available at the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs at http://www.hallway.org.
Leading and Governing: A Model for Local Government Education

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Abstract
The changing nature and increased complexity of governing is well documented and discussed by scholars and practitioners alike. This article presents a leadership training program designed to respond to the changing needs of local government officials. The design is based on current literature and research, fieldwork in North Carolina, and shared faculty knowledge and experiences. The model presents the integration of three critical concepts: governance, leadership and public service, in teaching conducted for multiple audiences representing varied levels within local governments. Initial results and findings are presented.

The world in which public leaders lead and govern is multifaceted, complex, and ever changing. Forces such as globalization, devolution, multi-sector partnerships, and other social transformations have profoundly changed the way the business of governing is done (Forrer, Kee, and Gabriel, 2007). In response, the School of Government (SOG) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has changed the way it educates and trains local government leaders. This paper shares research on the training needs of local government elected and appointed officials and presents a model used to design, implement, and evaluate public leadership education and training programs.

The SOG has a history and tradition of responding to the needs of North Carolina local governments through its teaching, research, consulting, and publications. The mission is to “improve the lives of North Carolinians by engaging in practical scholarship that helps public officials and citizens understand and improve state and local government.” As an educational institution, the SOG provides programs to develop the leadership capacity of local officials, helping
them to understand what it means to govern and lead in a democratic society and to appreciate and celebrate public service.

This paper presents the SOG’s efforts to develop leadership and governance excellence within its training and education programs for elected and appointed officials. In the last six years, the SOG changed its focus from management to leadership—from working with local managers on their internal management operations to helping local government leaders collaborate with others (governments, nonprofits, business, and community leaders) to engage and improve their communities and their region.

Scholars and practitioners alike are recognizing the changing way in which communities are governed. The very role of government is changing. Government, often considered the principal institution responsible for solving public problems, is now one of several institutions responsible for governing our communities (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary, 2005; Frederickson, 1991, 1999; Kettl, 2002; and Salamon, 2002). This means that public officials must cooperate and collaborate with businesses, nonprofits, and other governments. Knowing how to get the right people together to work on the right problem is as important as knowing how to solve the problem (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary, 2005; Boyte, 2004; Frederickson, 1991, 1999; Kettl, 2002; Salamon, 2002).

Similarly, leadership of a community is no longer directed by a small group at the top but is shared with a wide range of players. The ability of local elected officials and managers to solve public problems and plan for the future of their communities rests largely on their ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other local governments and public officials (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary, 2005; Boyte, 2004; Frederickson, 1991, 1999; Kettl, 2002; Salamon, 2002). Local governments recognize that they must work with a wide range of public and private entities and individual citizens to solve the problems facing their communities. Changes in the role of businesses and nonprofits have brought about corresponding changes in government’s relationship with businesses and nonprofits (Boyte, 2005). In addition to their economic role, many businesses engage in providing services to both citizens and governments and are seeking new markets in social arenas. Nonprofits play a critical and growing role in helping government fulfill its responsibilities to all citizens.

Few public problems obey the boundaries of legal or administrative jurisdictions (Frederickson, 1999). North Carolina local governmental leaders recognize that problems do not stop at the county and municipal lines; for example, local government policy decisions regarding water are defined by watersheds and rivers that cut across multiple jurisdictions and other states.

Elected officials and managers need to have skills to work across jurisdictional and sector boundaries to meet citizen needs, solve public problems, and improve local communities (Frederickson, 1999). John Nalbandian describes the role of a manager as “community building.” From a public official’s perspective, he
notes, community building essentially involves building political capacity—the capacity to make collective decisions amid diverse and conflicting interests: “In short, getting problems solved collectively while respecting the values of representation, individual rights, and social equity builds a sense of obligation to the collective good and constitutes one way of looking at community building” (Nalbandian, 1999, 189).

These changes requires local elected officials to understand what it means to be a steward of the public trust and to be able to move from campaigning as an individual to governing as a board with the interests of the community at heart. Many elected leaders run as single-issue or anti-government candidates, only to find themselves responsible for the very system they ran against. Some chafe at the checks and balances in the system without an understanding of the values and public purposes at stake.

Research on North Carolina local government managers echoed these findings, indicating that those managers see a need for skills to manage the changes occurring in their communities. They recognize the need to move from their role as a process expert to one of a convener responsible for bringing together disparate groups within a community and region to solve public problems. As one manager put it, “We used to fix potholes. Now we are traffic cops, coordinating public opinions. We have become facilitators. We need skills in negotiation and conflict resolution. We need to be able to work with our staff, boards and other governments” (Warner, 2001).

In response to these changing roles and responsibilities, the SOG created a strategic plan for its public leadership programs. The planning resulted in hiring faculty with expertise and professional interest in public leadership, governance and collaboration. Over the last six years, the Public Leadership faculty has revised and expanded the SOG’s programs for municipal and county elected officials, created a leadership academy for local elected officials, refocused the supervisory training, and developed a leadership academy for city and county managers, assistants, and key department heads.

Extensive field research and needs assessments, combined with current research and faculty knowledge of the field, informed the planning of the leadership academy. A model aimed at preparing local governmental leaders highlighted the need to have the following major segments incorporated across programming:

- Understanding what it means to govern in a democratic society
- Facilitative leadership skills
- The importance of public service.

This paper will present background on the SOG as well as the identified training needs for local government leaders within North Carolina, followed by the introduction of the model for local government leadership and governance education and training. The paper concludes with preliminary findings and next steps.
BACKGROUND

In 1931, Albert Coates created the Institute of Government (now the SOG) with a mission to improve the lives of North Carolinians. At that time, many municipal and county governments lacked attorneys, and the School's primary focus of service was on a wide range of legal advising, writing, and consulting. Through the years, the SOG added expertise in management, administration, and leadership. The SOG offers up to 200 classes, seminars, schools, and specialized conferences for more than 12,000 public officials each year. The hallmark of the institution is engaged scholarship—providing teaching, writing, and consulting assistance that is practical and applied.

Keeping with the core value of providing educational programs that are relevant and useful, the Public Leadership faculty continues to update and refine its offerings. To inform this process, field research with the SOG’s major clients—city and county managers, elected officials, and key department heads—was conducted to understand the issues and challenges they face and how the SOG might meet their needs. The research included extensive focus group work complemented by phone and personal interviews over a period of five years.

Research conducted in 2002 and 2003 showed a gap in newly elected officials’ understanding of what it means to lead and govern their communities. Elected officials wanted more from their orientation programs than an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as outlined by the statutes. They wanted to understand the “big picture,” the social, political, economic and demographic forces underlying what is happening in the state and region; how to construct strategic alliances with other local governments; and ways to work better together as a board (Warner, Austin, and Boyle, 2002; Warner, Austin, and Boyle, 2003).

The needs and requests outlined by SOG clients during the series of focus groups suggested a different approach than previous programs provided. Their needs are not unusual and are reflected in current academic literature about the changing nature of governance and training for practitioners. Much of the original demand for curriculum provided in traditional public affairs and administration programs was based on producing future public leaders skilled in administration, efficiency, and productivity. Knowledge of budgeting, human resources, and program evaluation is no longer enough to operate in an environment that is constantly changing, that relies on new information, and that is no longer tied to sectoral or geographic boundaries (Fredrickson, 1999). Along those same lines, much of the continuing education provided for practitioners had adopted a similar model by offering programs focused on new technical and legal advances, the introduction of new administrative practices, and updates on federal and state mandates.

Although the traditional aspects are crucial to operating a successful government, it is also necessary to educate public officials about leadership and governance, concepts that place the technical skills into a context and framework.
particular, many individuals working at the lower levels of government do not have degrees in public administration but in technical fields. Providing them with a foundation to understand the broader governance system and their place in it is an important contribution. Many department heads come to work in their municipality or county with expertise in the private sector. They do not understand the difference between citizens and customers or the public values that underpin their work. Elected officials who believed they needed help understanding their roles and responsibilities and how government works echoed these sentiments. As one elected official put it, “We know a lot about campaigning, but very little about governing.”

The North Carolina Experience

The SOG undertook a multifaceted effort to better understand the training needs of local governments, including focus group research. Additionally, faculty expertise and information from the literature was critical, as was information and feedback from North Carolina partner organizations. Empirical research conducted from 2001 through 2004 laid the foundation for the educational model presented in this paper. Focus groups were conducted with city and county managers, department heads and directors (mental health, social services, economic development, planning, library, and park/recreation), and elected officials including county commissioners, city council, and school board members. After six months of planning with internal SOG faculty, a consultant was hired to conduct focus groups to test assumptions about the strategic direction and to ensure that needs were accurately assessed. In 2001, five focus groups were conducted with a final sample of 91 participants. Focus groups on average had 12 participants and were conducted throughout the state of North Carolina offering regional diversity. The Public Leadership faculty continued to use focus groups as a way to validate their assumptions and to ensure that the needs of clients were being met and that scarce resources were allocated correctly. Focus groups were conducted over the next three years at annual meetings of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina City and County Management Association, and the executive staff of each of the organizations. Selected phone and individual interviews with municipal and county elected officials and their managers were also employed, as was a series of nine regional meetings conducted in 2004 with approximately 100 managers and assistance managers.

Specifically, the following objectives for training were identified and tested in the 2001–2004 focus groups:

1. to help participants work collaboratively to solve public problems;
2. to foster partnerships inside and outside government; and
3. to resolve conflicts by working across boundaries including work with elected officials, communities, and nonprofits.
Information from the focus groups reaffirmed the current literature as well as the faculty’s understanding of the needs and challenges facing local governments, and it highlighted several reoccurring themes. Specifically, this research found that the respondents indicated an understanding that government does not work in isolation and that new skill sets are needed to help public officials, both elected and appointed, work with their communities in planning and solving public problems. One respondent succinctly represented this point in his statement: “[T]he bottom line is that government is no longer working in isolation. With that change comes the need for new skill sets in order to be effective. Leadership and facilitation skills are needed to help us work with communities in planning. We need skills in conflict resolution, internal and external communication, and ways to educate the public regarding service delivery and boundary issues.”

Respondents recognized that the multiple challenges and structural changes present in their communities created a need for changes in the managers’ role as well. As one manager noted, “We do not just fix potholes anymore.” The focus group results indicated that there are no longer simple solutions to problems that can be made by a few people in a community. Instead, managers are working in a dynamic process involving diverse players, with tremendous pressure from declining revenues and, in some cases, increasing poverty, and a political framework that changes players and priorities every two years. They consistently reported being under stress and facing burnout (Warner, 2001).

Another major theme that emerged from the focus group data was the need for a framework for understanding what it means to govern. All respondents indicated agreement that elected and advisory board members need help understanding their roles and responsibilities and how government works. A lack of comprehension by elected officials on their roles was a consistent response. As one manager put it, “Boards don’t know how to lead. They look to the manager and that isn’t our role.” Respondents recognized a need to train board members to be leaders. The data from a focus group of managers revealed that they were challenged when they asked to lead and to make decisions that were out of their span of control, as well as when decisions could put them in conflict with statutory obligations.

A final two themes from the focus group research related to the need for additional assistance to be provided to boards on how to work as a team and training related to the recognition of larger public good issues compared to single interest issues. Several groups cited a need for boards to see the big or whole picture and placed this as a priority for training. Managers said they needed help in motivating elected officials to think and plan long term. As one manager noted, “Boards misplace their focus. The priorities of special interests take away from larger, more significant issues.”

In 2004, the Public Leadership faculty undertook the creation of an executive leadership academy for city and county managers. To help narrow the focus and
ensure that the education met the needs of managers, a series of nine regional meetings conducted in 2004 with approximately 100 managers and assistant managers confirmed earlier findings. The common themes and topics that emerged from discussions included improving manager-board relations; managing the changes facing their communities and the state; working with others in the community and region to solve problems; and ways to engage citizens.

In addition to the data gathered through the focus groups, the SOG was assisted in its efforts by the strong working partnership it has with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, and the North Carolina City and County Management Association. All three associations are committed to improving the quality of leadership and governance in the state and have strategic plans that reflect similar priorities. They were active partners in helping the School evaluate its efforts and they contributed their talent and expertise to the design of new programs and allocated sessions within their annual conferences for focus groups. They worked closely with faculty to design the Local Elected Leaders Academy and have made financial contributions for scholarships. The SOG has a unique relationship with these groups, one that is helpful in informing program needs and ensuring that the work of faculty is truly engaged scholarship.

**School of Government Public Leadership Program**

Informed by field research as well as the current academic thinking and faculty expertise, the SOG public leadership faculty set their strategic priorities around working with public officials to lead their boards, manage their organizations, and govern their communities. In 2002 they articulated the following objectives.

The Public Leadership Program will help

1. Elected officials understand what it means to lead and govern in a democratic society;
2. Board chairs and managers develop the skills to lead their boards and communities;
3. Close the knowledge and experience gap between managers and boards by assisting them to communicate “across the gap”;
4. Managers and elected officials appreciate, learn, and apply the importance of effective management within the legal, political, and administrative context of public organizations;
5. Managers and elected officials facilitate cross-sector collaboration through planning, decision-making, and conflict resolution; and
6. Government officials and community leaders come together to address public problems.

These internal strategic changes set the stage for the model presented in this article. This model provides continuity of concepts and skills identified as
important to North Carolina local government practitioners and reinforced in the current academic literature, both of which can contribute to the creation of high-performing governing systems. The key components of the model are weaving public service (understanding what it means to be a steward of the public trust and a celebration of what it means to serve others), leadership (specifically facilitative leadership skills—cross-sector collaboration through planning, decision making, and conflict resolution), and governance (understanding the democratic principles and their application) throughout the curriculum of a variety of courses.

The 2001–2004 focus group research indicated that education and training for elected officials should be the first priority. Additional focus groups conducted with the executive boards of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, county commissioners and municipal elected officials, and selected city and county managers helped to sharpen the focus and develop the curriculum. As a starting point, new components and a framework were added to the orientation programs for newly elected officials. This revised orientation program included a “state of the state”—a look at the trends, issues, and changes affecting local governments in North Carolina and the South and addressed understanding county government including the law, politics, and government; critical challenges facing counties; understanding public purpose—the roles and responsibilities of and obligations of local elected officials; developing effective governing relationships; and how local boards solve public problems and make good public decisions. This last session introduced participants to the values competing within a public problem; the concept of serving as a steward of the public trust; and an understanding that, as elected officials, they do not govern in isolation. Although elected officials campaign alone, once elected, they govern as a board. This means learning how to share power, make compromises, and come to consensus on issues (Boyle, 2003). The program for elected officials helped participants understand the wide array of players in the governmental decision making process and consider the long-term consequences of their decisions. The changes to this program were very well received.

A NEW MODEL OF INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The faculty continued to develop and work on a model to guide their efforts. A model was developed in 2006 to give appointed and elected officials a foundation in core concepts and principles. The model operates under the assumption that governmental managers and leaders from across the organization need a basic understanding of governance, leadership, and public service.

The specific instruction and conceptual depth is tailored to appropriately meet the needs of the varied audiences. By providing a common language and background, the diverse sets of participants are able to support and enhance each other’s learning as well as act as educators within their own organizations.
Figure 1. Model: Integrated Education and Training

- **COURSES FOR OTHER AUDIENCES AND TOPICS**: (Skill-based training)
- **FRONT-LINE SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS**: (ESMP)
- **DEPARTMENT HEADS**: (Emerging leaders)
- **MANAGEMENT FOR CITY AND COUNTY MANAGERS (PELA)**
- **ELECTED OFFICIALS**: Main focus on other subject matter expertise
- **SELF AND ORGANIZATION**: Greater focus on self
- **INTERSECTION, BOUNDARY-SPANNING**: Facilitative Leadership
- **GOVERNANCE**: Leadership Governance Teams
- **PUBLIC SERVICE**: Program Teams
- **Senior Management Teams**
- **Senior Management Teams**
- **Elected Officials**
- **Management for City and County Managers (PELA)**
- **Department Heads**: (Emerging leaders)
- **Self and Organization**
- **Intersection, boundary-spanning**
- **COURSES FOR OTHER AUDIENCES AND TOPICS**: (Skill-based training)
The model recognizes that local government elected and appointed officials will continue to receive and need education and training on the technical aspects of their work including the impact of policy and legislative mandates on governmental services. With this in mind, governance and leadership training is integrated into a number of programs including technical training courses to allow an introduction of these essential elements to a diverse set of audiences. The model helps to place the technical and skill-based training into context and provides new meaning and perspective for their work. For example, a tax collector gains a better understanding of tax code in the same course in which they explore how collecting taxes is the method by which communities create the “good life” for their citizens.

As funds allocated for training continue to bear the brunt of limited budgets, the focus of training and education for managers and supervisors is concentrated on skill development and/or technical aspects of work. These individuals may or may not be identified as potential leaders and as such would not be sent to, or choose to attend, leadership training. The inclusion of leadership, governance, and public service elements into other programming offers an introduction for groups of individuals that otherwise might not be given the opportunity to be exposed to this conceptual foundation.

Pickering and Matson’s 1992 article “Why Executive Development Programs (Alone) Don’t Change Organizations,” presents key findings learned from their two decades of experience with executive education programming. A key finding from Pickering and Matson’s experience was the understanding that, to effect change at a certain level, training should be targeted at that level, not the level below. In other words, in order to bring about organizational change, the entire organization has to be a target. Building from this, if leadership education programs want to affect governance, educational programming should be targeted to a broader set of actors within the governance process so they have a shared understanding and are not “strangers” being returned to “infertile” soil and lacking a common language or concepts.

The model (see Figure 1) used by the SOG provides a basic foundation in core concepts to local elected officials, managers, and department heads and provides a common understanding of what it means to lead and govern their communities. The incorporation of tailored education on facilitative leadership and governance throughout local government professional development education programs can help local government leaders gain a better understanding of the increasingly complex environment in which they act and govern.

For supervisory training, the curriculum focuses on what it means to be part of a governance system and developing individuals as personal leaders. For department heads, the focus moves to both self and organizational leadership; for managers and elected officials the focus is on how to work across boundaries and within a broader community and region. The Public Executive Leadership Acad-
emy, a two-week, cohort residential leadership experience, was designed with the express purpose of giving city and county managers the tools and experiences to work with others in their community to solve public problems.

The values of collaboration and strategic thinking were also woven into a new Local Elected Leaders Academy for elected officials launched this year for municipal and county elected officials. The academy contains programs at the orientation, intermediate, and advanced levels designed to help local officials develop their skills as citizen-leaders in order to manage change and think long-term about the future of their communities and the next generation.

MODEL ELEMENTS: CORE CONTENT

As noted above, there are two important aspects in this design. The first relates to defining the core elements of governance, leadership, and public service. The second is the notion that core concepts span multiple programs and audiences.

Governance

The work of the Public Leadership Program is grounded in governance. This involves giving citizen-leaders and citizen-administrators an understanding of democratic principles and their application to public policy and management including why we have government and what government can do. It involves recognition of how government officials need to build relationships and work with multiple stakeholders across jurisdictional and sector boundaries to meet citizen needs, solve public problems and improve local communities.

(Boyle and Warner, 2004, 1)

Governance has gained global attention, from academic and practitioner alike, with a breadth of discourse indicating its usefulness for exploring fundamental questions of democracy, civic agency, and politics (Boyte, 2005). Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary (2005) claim that “leaders in public affairs education say the watch word for the next millennium is Governance” (2005, 547; emphasis in original). Similarly, Harry Boyte, (2005) argues that “development in public affairs that stress governance—not simply government—holds possibilities for reframing democracy…. Such a shift has the potential to address public problems that cannot be solved without governments, but that governments alone cannot solve, and to cultivate an appreciation for the commonwealth” (536). The concept of governance has received academic attention from researchers in a number of fields including political science, public administration, policymaking, planning, and sociology (Kooiman, 1993; Ingraham and Lynn, 2004; March and Olsen, 1995; Peters, 1996; Rhodes, 1997; Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992).

Bringham et al. note, “In The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance, Salamon defines the new governance as a framework recognizing ‘the collabora-
tive nature of modern efforts to meet human needs, the widespread use of tools of action that engage complex networks of public and private actors, and the resulting need for a different style of public management, and a different type of public sector, emphasizing collaboration and enablement rather than hierarchy and control” (2002, vii)” (2005, 549).

Governance involves creating and implementing activities based on the shared goals of multiple parties (citizens and other organizations), many of whom lack formal authority or policing power (Agranoff, 2003). Governance is about sharing power in the decision-making process and “developing the common good through civic engagement” (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary, 2005, 548). For a more complete literature review on the topic of governance, see H. George Frederickson (1991, 1999), Donald Kettl (2002), Lester Salamon (2002), Bingham, Nabatchi, and O’Leary (2005), or Harry Boyte (2005).

This model recognizes that local government leaders often are working in these new environments without the skills or framework needed and thus the addition of the topic and associated skills are essential to the future success of local communities. The move to governance is marked by a transition from traditional hierarchy and control to collaboration and empowerment as the means for getting things done. The SOG’s empirical research indicates a recognition by practitioners that parallels academic writing. As previously discussed, focus group results indicated that managers, department heads, and elected officials recognized that the problems they address cross many jurisdictional and geographical boundaries and require a host of players to address them.

The model shows governance as a horizontal bar that cuts across audiences and classes and must be tailored accordingly. Teaching governance for elected officials translates into programs that help them understand their roles and responsibilities; enhances their ability to work effectively with their own board and with other governing boards; and helps them understand the roles and relationships between governments (federal, state, and local) and elected office holders. Curriculum includes segments on how to work with advisory boards and other citizen and community groups; resolve public disputes; conduct community visioning and strategic planning; and engage citizens.

Governance is introduced to local government department heads (police and fire, human resource, tax collection, streets and sanitation, clerks) through supervisory-level training. The program includes a facilitated exercise examining why participants chose local government as a career; what they see as the differences between the public and private sectors; and an understanding of the knowledge skills and abilities to meet the needs of the various stakeholders within their governance system. Participants emerge with a sense of themselves as street-level leaders; the idea is that the citizens in their communities form their opinions about government from the interactions with these people. They are literally the face of local government. The exercise also leads to important lessons around
their role and place in the governance structure, the values underlying public problems, and why government cannot be run just like business.

The Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA) program introduces governance to city and county managers through segments on a number of topics, including stakeholder mapping, the changing environment of public service, working with the community, and the role and interaction of elected officials and managers as well as the public values that are at play in solving public problems.

The Local Elected Leader Academy programming is designed for municipal and county elected officials. This is done in recognition that local government leaders do not govern in isolation. Increasingly, more of the public problems facing local governments are not owned by either a municipality or a county. Rather, solutions require regional solutions with a host of players working together. The educational programming is designed to walk the talk of collaboration by offering courses and workshops that give local elected leaders the opportunity to hear the same message, work through simulated exercises and case studies that bring cities and counties together, and network outside their normal venues of interaction.

Leadership

The work of the Public Leadership Program is grounded in facilitative leadership. Decisions by municipalities and counties require a great degree of internal communication, cohesion and collaboration between managers and their boards. Externally, managers and elected officials must work with their counterparts in other communities, with state government, and with business, non-profit organizations and community groups. They must be facilitators, pulling disparate groups and resources together and leading toward a common goal.

(Boyle and Warner, 2004, 2)

In 2001 the SOG’s Public Leadership faculty identified the following competencies as core building blocks for leadership education: help leaders develop, articulate, and share visions and values; think systemically; plan strategically; empower others; generate behavior consistent with values (integrity and ethics); lead teams; solve problems including creativity and innovation; be politically sensitive and able to manage multiple conflicting and overlapping interests; manage change by understanding how to introduce and make transitions; manage grief and celebrate progress; and use technology as a tool for gaining and disseminating information necessary for public participation and decision-making (Boyle and Warner, 2001).

As noted in earlier discussions, the environment in which local elected and appointed officials is changing the way organizations and communities are led. Leadership cannot be complete when it is solely based on the traditional com-
mand and control model in which government relies on the legally and formally derived authority. Instead, local leaders are operating in environments in which power is more diffuse and the need for collaborative and negotiating skills is greater. For this reason, the Public Leadership Program has adopted a facilitative or adaptive leadership model.

The work of Heifitz (1994) supports this change. Heifitz organizes leadership around two key distinctions. First, technical and adaptive problems demonstrate that different modes of leadership required to deal with routine problems are in contrast to those that demand innovation and learning. The second distinction provides a framework for assessing resources and developing a leadership strategy depending on whether one has or does not have authority (Heifitz and Linsky, 2002).

Denhardt and Campbell (2005) offer an interesting review of leadership education through an examination of how different educational approaches to teaching leadership differ in views and assumptions about leadership. They address four common approaches to public sector leadership, including trait theories, situational theories, transformational change theories, and value-based theories. They argue that for trait theories the classroom is used as think tank, for situational the classroom is a laboratory, and for transformational theories the classroom should be a flight simulator; for value-based theories, the classroom is a studio in which teacher and student share responsibility for course discussion and direction. They argue that value-based leadership—the concept that leadership is a complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good—is particularly important in developing a model for public leadership education. These elements fit into the understanding of leadership employed in this model and incorporated into instruction for multiple groups. The Public Executive Leadership Academy has used Leadership on the Line by Heifitz and Linsky (2002) as a text for the program. The academy gives managers the opportunity and time to learn about themselves as leaders and create action plans for making change in their communities. Participants gain insights about themselves through various self-tests and leadership dialogues; explore how they respond to conflict; determine the different types of power and how to use it; review the elements of systems thinking; apply the principles of leadership in team-building exercises; practice working with the media; and learn about various techniques for citizen participation. The academy is designed to give managers the time and skills to understand how they will use their personal leadership to bring about change in their community and region.

As mentioned in the previous section, supervisors are given the chance in their training to consider how they lead in their departments and how they represent street-level leadership. Their management and conflict styles are assessed and discussed; this includes sessions on when and how collaborative versus competitive strategies are best employed.
Leading and Governing: A Model for Local Government Education

Public Service

The patina of a career in public service has been lost in the current anti-government culture. Words like politician and bureaucrat conjure up negative images (Rainey, 1997). It is important to provide a forum in which public service is celebrated and experiences shared. Results from class discussions with North Carolina front-line supervisors over two years and eight courses showed they do not identify financial gain as their primary reason for continued service. This is consistent with many scholars who have found that employees in the public sector are consistently found to have a lower need for financial compensation, status, and prestige but a greater need for meaningful work (Houston, 2000; Perry and Wise, 1990; Rainey, 1982; Wittmer, 1991). Respondents identified a pride in serving their communities and acknowledged that a career in public service is not for everyone. There is something special to be found in serving others. Despite these encouraging results, many still indicated that the primary reason a career in public service was selected was the need for a job and the quality of public sector benefits. Many indicated that their reflections on their place within government and how they were involved in achieving larger social outcomes had been very limited. Providing an understanding of their roles and responsibilities within a broader democratic system helped them better understand the players, the needs, and the stakeholders with whom they work.

A second factor in selecting public service as a core component of the curriculum is that public service motivation has been found to have powerful pro-social aspects. The same focus group respondents consistently indicated dedication to their communities and pride in making lasting contributions to improve civic life. Their commitment to their community developed over time and acted as a retention and motivation factor. The most often used definition for the theory of public service motivation was written by Perry and Wise in 1990 and it says that "an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions or organizations" (1990, 368). The theory of public service motivation has been driven by the notion that some individuals have a public service ethic that attracts them to public service and, subsequently, influences their job performance (Brewer, Selden, and Facer, 2000; Perry, 1996; Perry and Wise, 1990; Perry, 1997; Rainey, 1982).

An increased orientation toward the public service aspect of one’s job, therefore, can have many benefits for the organization. Higher levels of motivation are associated with lower turnover, greater productivity, and less absenteeism (Rainey, 1997). Individuals with higher levels of public service motivation demonstrate high levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and achievement as well as other pro-social behaviors such as increased whistle blowing (Brewer and Selden, 1998). Research has indicated that the organizations can have a significant impact on the development and increased levels of public service motivation (Jacobson, 2003).
A third factor in selecting public service as a core component rests in the SOG’s mission of civic education. Some managers and supervisors come to local government with little education or understanding of how government works. Many working in the lower levels of government do not have degrees or background in public administration but rather enter government through technical fields such as budget, finance, procurement, or a professional field such as public health. Similarly, the elected officials themselves commented on the change in newly elected officials’ understanding of how government works. One noted, “Previously, elected officials came with experience working in the community on various boards. They understood the needs of the community and had experience working on a board making decisions. Now, many citizens are elected on a single issue with little understanding about the issues facing their town or county.”

**Preliminary Findings**

There are a range of findings, which are still preliminary, on the SOG’s experience with teaching and training in this area and with the new model that has been developed. The experience reveals some positive results as well as some interesting challenges. Though the elements listed above are being incorporated into teaching for various local government audiences, the level and intensity of instruction on these concepts is tailored to the particular group. For example, some groups may receive an introduction to the concepts as part of an overall program of municipal and county administration, while for others it might constitute the focus of the program. This customization has been found to be an important element of this design.

This section will not get into specific program design lessons for individual courses; rather, it highlights some basic learning across multiple programs. There have been many specific lessons learned on program design and delivery; for example, see Stenberg et al. (2007), who discuss design and implementation issues related to the Public Executive Leadership Academy (PELA), a course designed for top-level local government managers, and present two years of evaluation results. The understanding of the use and application of this model are limited at this time. Results and feedback from faculty and participants have been supportive both from a conceptual and practical perspective.

Initial evaluations and instructor feedback indicate that instruction on the elements of these models is being well received and is providing useful information to a wide variety of audiences. As mentioned, the level and depth of instruction on these topics vary substantially, depending on the audience. Tailoring the content, including varying delivery methods and length of instruction, is critical. Still, all groups responded positively about the relevance of adding these elements. The range of feedback includes comments from front-line employees who see how their role in the governance system informs how they work and who interact with players ranging from citizens to managers who understand why
multiple stakeholders should be involved in discussions of policy questions. Additionally, participants have responded positively to knowing that others in their government are hearing similar messages. These positive outcomes can be seen in the formative, process, output, and outcome evaluations that were designed to provide ongoing feedback to faculty about the relevance of the PELA program content and its long-term impacts for practitioners working on complex problems in their communities. As shown in the table, participants rated their perceived skills on eight PELA curriculum objectives at the start of the program. At the end of the program, participants were asked to think back and rate their skills at the start of the program and then rate their skills on the same items at the end of the program. Data from three PELA

Participants’ Perceived Changes in Skill Level for Core PELA Objectives (PELA Cohorts 2005-2007, n=52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item*</th>
<th>Retrospective to start of program rating</th>
<th>Post-program rating</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I know myself as a leader.</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>1.42*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I take a broad, systemic view of issues affecting my community.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>1.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I engage key stakeholders in creating a vision for my community.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>1.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I encourage teamwork, community-building, partnerships, and collaborative problem-solving across jurisdictions and sectors.</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>1.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I develop and hone listening and communications skills in working with governing boards and professional staff.</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>1.42*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I assess risks and develop strategies to minimize negative consequences.</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>0.98*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I facilitate change to improve the quality of life in their community.</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>1.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I celebrate the dignity and worth of public service.</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>1.42*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .001 level or higher using a t-test paired for two sample means.
* Rating for each item was on a Likert Scale from 1 (low) to 7 (high).
cohorts indicate statistically significant gains in participants’ perceptions of their skills from the start to the end of the program.

**INSTRUCTIONAL LESSONS—a.k.a. LESSONS FROM THE CLASSROOM**

Developing learning objectives and outcomes is an important foundation. As currently implemented, a set of defined learning objectives fits into a broader and more comprehensive leadership and management curriculum across the programs and core content presented. This design, with clear and linked course objectives, will also have greater long-term succession benefits for the SOG. In the event a faculty leaves, there is an accepted collective responsibility for core content. The established program direction and delivery transcends an individual faculty member or an individual contract relationship.

Programs must be practical and relevant. Research and experience with managers, department heads, and elected officials indicate that education and training programs are most successful when they are grounded in contemporary situations and there are tangible take aways, lessons that can be used and applied in the work place or board room (Mintzberg, 2004). Programming should be grounded in the world of practical, real-life problems and be hands-on. SOG evaluations show that elected officials want to learn about models and best practices, what other local governments are doing, and what works and what does not. A highly interactive, participatory method is more appealing and yields greater results than the traditional expert, lecture model. Experiential learning is used throughout the programming to help adult learners take an active role in learning the concepts presented.

Faculty can’t act as the sage on the stage. Successful programs combine theory and practice. Mintzberg, 2004, describes the experienced reflection model in which concepts from faculty combined with experience from managers meet in the classroom and create shared learning. The learning can then be taken back to places of employment to test its impact and again the managers bring these new experiences back to the classroom. This notion of combining faculty concepts with participants’ knowledge is an important component of the SOG teaching, consistent with Leete and Maser’s (2007) report on lessons they learned from designing and delivering executive education for state senators.

Fry and Carter (2002) find that the future of executive education will continue to emphasize customization, experimental learning, and rigorous evaluation of the results. They find that successful curriculum program design relies mainly on lectures, case studies, panel discussions, and experiential learning. How these concepts are presented to participants must vary based on their level within the organization, their background, and the broader context of the education and training. This requires a great deal of customization of the concepts presented.

SOG experiences have revealed that elected officials and managers see them-
selves as experts, with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with others. They view their experiences and insights as valuable as the instructor’s knowledge. With this in mind, the SOG faculty wear two hats—those of expert and convener. This model requires faculty members to share the stage with practitioners and others in the field as programs work through real-life, case scenarios. As an example, the orientation program for newly elected officials was changed to include not only SOG faculty but representatives from the elected officials’ associations and elected officials themselves. In many situations, particularly when talking about politics, it is more credible to have elected officials talk to each other based on their experience rather than have a faculty member talk to elected officials. Instruction that involves a high level of face-to-face contact and draws from a wide range of knowledge and disciplines has great success.

It has become clear that adding time for networking is important. Participants value each other and want time to talk. People in public service rarely have the opportunity for disparate groups to get together and have time to listen and learn from each other (Leete and Maser, 2007; Mintzberg, 2004). The SOG responded by adding more time to the public leadership programs for elected officials and leadership academy participants to talk with each other and share ideas. Networking is an important component of educational programming.

Finally, we found that this is a long-term commitment. Public problems and relationships by their very nature are not one dimensional and are usually not easily solved. They are systems issues, and there is no one right answer; rather, it is a process that requires facilitation and consultation. This type of instruction is expensive and time consuming. It requires faculty to be creative in building the capacity necessary to serve diverse groups. Managers, elected officials, department heads, and supervisors can’t learn all they need to know in one session. Many of the skills need to be practiced, reflected upon, and practiced again. In addition, the turnover among elected officials is 25 percent at each election. This means a board can work to develop plans and a way of working together that can be disrupted by the next election. For the SOG, it means a continuous commitment to educating the newly elected. This approach to programming is a long-term investment in local government’s capacity to govern.

Organizational Lessons

First, it is important that we respond to the needs of our clients. We are a public institution with a long history of applied research and service. Client groups are encouraged to see the SOG as a vibrant organization committed to meeting their needs and adapting to the changes in local government.

Second, this is a time-intensive process. The Public Leadership faculty, with support from SOG leadership, devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to develop a plan to guide their work. This included months of meetings with faculty and SOG leadership; several years of focus group work; and meetings with...
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key clients. The results of the planning have paid off in the years since the initial work was conducted.

Third, having a plan and a model in place is a powerful tool. The model provides a sense of clarity, identity, and purpose among Public Leadership faculty and SOG leadership. It allows the Public Leadership faculty to make strategic decisions as opportunities arise, to set priorities, and to plan work. The commitment from faculty is a powerful force. It allows for the maximization of limited resources. Faculty members assist each other in the design of programs and lend their expertise as necessary. Also, understanding core competencies and outcomes allows for improvement in the contracting and evaluation of outside facilitators and trainers.

Fourth, evaluation continues to be an important element. The faculty is interested in learning about the long-term impact its programs are having on the leadership and governance of the state. A system to undertake long-term evaluation of the programs is being established in order to understand more about the impact of this educational effort. As an example, the Public Executive Leadership Academy is contracting with a faculty member to do a long-term study and to evaluate the impact of the instruction on the individual participants and their work in their communities, in order to supplement the pre- and post-evaluations in which the participants report levels of key competencies.

Fifth, we have seen the benefits of working collaboratively with the municipal and county professional associations. Education for elected officials is a strategic goal for both organizations. They have received very strong and positive feedback on enhancement and changes to curriculum. There is joint commitment by all partners, including the SOG, to improve the governance of our state and to prepare citizens to be leaders. In turn, their boards have allocated funding for underwriting some program costs and providing scholarships, which not only helps participants attend these programs but is an important symbol of their endorsement and support of this work to their membership.

In summary, the programs offered in the Public Leadership curriculum focus on skill-based training and education programs for front-line supervisors and managers; emerging leaders (departmental heads and others); city and county managers, and elected officials. The specific training and content is tailored and customized for each audience. This means the depth and breadth of content varies considerably and with the unit of analysis. For supervisory training, the curriculum focuses on what it means to be part of a governance system and developing individuals as personal leaders. For department heads and emerging leaders, the focus moves to both self and organizational leadership; for managers and elected officials, the focus is on how to work across boundaries and within a broader community and region.
CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This model outlines one way to integrate key public management themes into education, a strategy that many are working to incorporate into curriculum design and planning. Empirical investigation and academic discussions have highlighted the importance and timeliness of these efforts. The model and effort presented here makes several important contributions. It presents a means for providing the delivery of education on crucial public management themes to a diverse set of working practitioners with the aim of providing all levels of a government the necessary training to share a common foundation to create higher-performing governments.

As the SOG continues to work in the area of engaged scholarship, the focus on leading and governing provides meaningful examples of the benefit of engagement. Faculty continue to learn and inform their research through the interactions with elected and appointed local government officials while simultaneously providing important content and academic instruction to these populations.

The two most immediate next steps around these efforts are more targeted and rigorous evaluations and additional programming and program refinement. Leadership programming evaluation has long been an area in need of more rigorous methods; initial efforts are underway but more work is needed. Fry and Carter (2002) predict that the future of executive education will emphasize rigorous evaluation of the results. Improvements in evaluation efforts are an important next step for all of the leading and governing programs. In the SOG, a program evaluation specialist has been employed to begin to undertake longitudinal evaluation of program impact on select programs.

The SOG is also make efforts to expand the Public Leadership programs to meet all of the vertical audiences described in the model as well as to provide additional or more advanced educational opportunities. Currently, the focus is on new programming for emerging leaders, education in skill-based courses, and advanced training for elected officials. In addition to providing additional programming, we will continue to evaluate, refine, and rethink the best ways to instruct the varied audiences on these crucial elements.

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REFERENCES
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Appendix A: Program Offerings

Current Programming
The Public Leadership Program collaborates with School of Government faculty and the North Carolina League of Municipalities, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and the North Carolina City and County Management Association to offer the following orientation and advanced programs for elected and appointed officials.

Public Managers
Orientation programs:
- Municipal and County Administration (MCA): The Public Leadership Program’s sections of the MCA focus on helping appointed officials understand public management and the dynamics of governance and facilitative leadership.
- Effective Supervisory Management Program (ESMP): The Public Leadership Program integrates facilitative leadership, public service, and governance into the learning objectives of the ESMP.

Advanced professional development:
1. The Public Executive Leadership Academy focuses on the current and emerging governance challenges facing municipal and county managers, their assistants, and key department heads. The program’s goal is to provide managers with an understanding of facilitative leadership. A major theme is leadership for adaptive change, as managers work to help others in their communities respond to new challenges with creative solutions.
2. North Carolina City and County Management Association Winter/Summer Conference: A Public Leadership faculty member functions as a liaison between the SOG and the association, helping to provide continuing education programs for managers (e.g., ICMA credentialing.)

Elected Officials
The Local Elected Leaders Academy is designed to help municipal and county elected officials gain the knowledge and skills they need to lead and govern their communities in the 21st century, to think strategically, and to plan for the changes impacting the state. The academy includes the following elements:

Annual orientation programs: An introduction to the legal, administrative, and political environment in North Carolina.
- Essentials of Municipal Government for recently elected and veteran mayors and council members, as well as managers, attorneys, and clerks.
- Essentials of County Government for recently elected and veteran chairs, commissioners, as well as managers, attorneys, and clerks.
- Leadership Seminar for Mayors for newly elected mayors.
- Leadership Seminar for County Commission Chairs for newly elected board chairs.
Intermediate-level programming: Focused, in-depth programs on topics and areas important for local government management. Public Leadership faculty members are responsible for the following programs:

- Working for Results as a Board strengthens the board’s knowledge and skills in communication, conflict resolution, board-manager relations, and connecting with the community.
- Strategic Leadership for Boards focuses on the roles, relationships, and competencies necessary for community visioning, goal-setting, and strategic planning.
- Board Self-Assessment and Manager Evaluation.
- Managing Conflict: Strategies for Elected Officials.
- Calling this Meeting to Order: Parliamentary Procedure.
- Topic-oriented conferences on subjects generated from ideas and discussion at annual orientation programs (e.g., NCACC mid-winter conference and NCLM Town Hall Day).
- Seminars and workshops on other leadership and governance topics.

Advanced level programming: The SOG plans to create a cohort academy for municipal and county elected officials to help leaders plan and implement strategies at the regional and state levels.

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Developing Leadership Skills in Schools of Public Policy and Administration

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ABSTRACT
Increasingly, schools of public policy and administration are acknowledging the importance of including leadership training in their curricula. This paper describes a core strategic presentation skills course that has been developed over time to strengthen students’ leadership skills—particularly their perception of themselves as change agents. The paper describes three major influences on the course’s evolution, outlines the design and content of the course, and concludes with an analysis of a survey that suggests that students’ self-perceptions as change agents were positively affected by their experience in the course.

In 1989, Astrid Merget asserted that public policy students who “want to serve and make a difference” must acquire leadership skills as well as skills in analysis and management (1989). It would be hard to argue otherwise. Even the most brilliant analysis is useless if not transformed into policy and implemented. This transformation usually requires the vision of leaders who know how to mobilize support for needed change. Increasingly, schools of public policy and administration are acknowledging the importance of including leadership training in their curricula. Three notable examples are The Center for Ethical Leadership, directed by Professor Howard T. Prince at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs; the leadership initiatives supported by Dean Richard Chilcoat at the Bush School of Government and Public Service; and the work of the Farber Center for Civic Leadership at the University of South Dakota.

Calling for leadership training, however, raises two questions: Can leadership skills be taught to students who are not born leaders? Can students be taught skills that help them make a difference whether or not they become known as...
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leaders? The title of this paper suggests that the answer to each of these questions is yes. Three related assumptions underlie this point of view: 1) the study of leadership skills does not necessarily produce charismatic leaders; 2) one does not have to be a visible leader to effect change; and 3) increased awareness of their ability to effect change—not just analyze policies—increases the likelihood that policy school graduates will find ways to put their recommendations into real-world action.

In the following pages I will show how a core course in Strategic Presentation Skills at the Heinz School of Public Policy has been developed over time to strengthen students’ leadership skills, especially with respect to their self-perception as change agents. I will describe three major influences on the evolution of this course, outline the design and content of the course, and conclude with an analysis of 173 survey responses that suggest that students’ self-perception as change agents were positively affected by their experience in the course.

Major Influences on the Design of Strategic Presentation Skills

Those who have taught longstanding courses know that no course stands still. Courses evolve over time in response to changing conditions within and without the university—such as the knowledge base being studied, students’ feedback, and the instructor’s own development. My own ideas have been markedly influenced by the work of Professor Howard Prince at the LBJ School; Parker Palmer, author of *The Courage to Teach*; and Bill Drayton, founder and CEO of Ashoka Foundation. What follows is a summary of major ideas that have shaped the current design and curriculum of Strategic Presentation Skills.

Howard Prince’s Definition of Leadership

According to Howard Prince, leadership is “a process of reciprocal influence among members of a social unit intended to help members of that unit achieve a shared goal that matters to more than one person” (Johnson, 2002). For Professor Prince, leadership is a complex interactive process, a process that requires “reciprocal influence” among members of a recognizable “social unit.” From these reciprocal influences a “shared goal” emerges.

What is striking about this concept of leadership is its interactive nature. The focus is on what is being accomplished—“a shared goal that matters to more than one person”—not the individual or “leader” who is effecting the change. Defining leadership as an interactive process runs counter to attributes commonly assumed to define leaders. As Gary Wills points out in “What Makes a Good Leader?” (1994), these attributes include charisma, determination, focus, and “rugged respect for principle.” Yet, as Wills observes, important social initiatives most often result from empowerment of a variety of stakeholders, not from individually led crusades. Prince’s definition of leadership is in line with Wills’ observations.
Parker Palmer’s “Community of Truth” model

Professor Prince’s definition of leadership bears a striking similarity to the “community of truth” model (Figure 1) described by Parker Palmer in *The Courage to Teach* (1998). In Palmer’s community of truth, observations and interpretations are freely exchanged, conflicts are openly voiced, and everyone wins by “learning and growing.” In such a community, says Palmer, “conflict is the dynamic by which we test ideas in the open” (1998, 103). Like Howard Prince, Palmer implies that consensus arises from open and respectful interaction among all stakeholders involved.

Palmer’s “community of truth” model is to the classroom what Prince’s “process of reciprocal influence” is to leadership: in each case the result evolves from respectful interactions among all parties involved.

Just as Prince’s definition of leadership differs from the view that leadership depends on charismatic individuals, Palmer’s description of a community of truth in the classroom differs from the traditional view that teaching is hierarchical. Palmer describes this hierarchy as “The Objectivist Myth of Knowing” (Figure 2), a one-way flow of information in which the expert determines what the amateurs learn. This model assumes that truth is objective and can be conveyed by experts to amateurs. Such a model resembles the myth that a strong leader “is
a superior person, to whom inferiors should submit” (Wills, 1994, 63). In a hierarchical model of teaching, the teacher is the expert. Within this model, students acquire knowledge through the lens of the instructor. Conflict is minimal because students are expected to receive the truth, not help discover it.

A course based on Palmer’s community of truth model differs markedly from hierarchical teaching. In a collaborative model, attention shifts to the subject being studied and away from the expert who conveys information about the subject. Learning is acquired through systematic mutual inquiry, not by fiat. Students as well as the instructor pose questions and observations. Insights multiply as interactions increase. Just as Prince’s model of leadership empowers stakeholders to help define and accomplish common goals, collaborative teaching empowers students to relate independently to the subject at hand and contribute to the learning process.

It would be naïve to deny that in the collaborative model the teacher still has a dominant role. (It would be similarly naïve to insist that charismatic leaders do not play significant roles in galvanizing change.) As long as the teacher assigns grades, this dominance will persist. Despite this imbalance, however, participants in a collaborative teaching model assume increasing authority as the course progresses. Peer reviews, open class discussion, and frequent self-evaluations strengthen students’ participation in the learning process.

Just as Howard Prince acknowledges the importance of mutually reciprocal relationships of all stakeholders in the leadership process, a “community of truth”

**Figure 2. The Objectivist Myth of Knowing**

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Bill Drayton’s Observations

A May 2005 conversation with Bill Drayton, founder and CEO of Ashoka Foundation, provided a third critical perspective on the development of Strategic Presentation Skills. During that conversation, Drayton observed that the most effective social entrepreneurs he knew were those who, as young people, had been empowered to facilitate social change within their own communities. Articulating, then implementing, a call to action teaches students that they, not just institutions and high-ranking officials, are change agents.

Drayton summarized this conviction in the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Peer Review (Spring 2005) when he wrote that “we perpetuate a world in which only 2 or 3 percent of the population are so-called ‘natural’ leaders. What a difference it would make for this society if we went from 2 or 3 percent to 50 percent in the next generation. Educators can play a big role in building our leadership base by promoting in students the development of the whole person.”

Drayton’s observation reinforces Astrid Merget’s assertion that “[w]e need to reconnect the substance of public policy to its execution, [joining] the skills that we teach to a sense of the mission of the professional in public service” (1989). One way to accomplish this reconnection, it seems, is to encourage students to envision themselves as agents of change for goals they believe in. But what is the best way to do this in a course originally designed as a class in public speaking?

Design of Strategic Presentation Skills

Reflection on the work of Prince, Palmer, and Drayton suggested a plan. During late May 2005, I met with Nicholas Wilson, a former teaching assistant, to restructure the course for summer 2005. In this new course, students were asked to develop briefings based on proposals related to their professional interests and personal values. These proposals could target specific government, nonprofit, or funding agencies with requests for legislation, funding, or other action. Proposals did not necessarily have to ask for change. Students could also lobby for no change, such as the preservation of threatened neighborhoods or cultural icons.

Whatever the goal, the student was to visualize himself or herself as the person actually making the “ask.” Other class participants were to role-play the intended audience. The briefing itself was to be interactive and include a question and answer period in which class participants would ask questions based on background information provided by the speaker.
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Preparation for the briefing included extensive writing: 1) a detailed audience analysis; 2) 10 questions likely to be asked by key decision makers within this audience; 3) an outline, including assumptions speakers made about the knowledge and prejudices of their listeners; 4) documentation of all sources; and 5) copies of visuals speakers used to support their claims. The instructor would evaluate these written materials, but the teaching assistant and class participants would contribute to the overall development and evaluation of the briefing.

Choosing the “Ask”

Participants’ choice of “asks” appropriate to their professional aspirations and level of experience was key to success of the course. As shown in Figure 3, the first assignment was to complete an inventory of possible topics. I asked students not to prejudge what they wrote down, but to include everything that came to mind: issues they cared about, issues they had worked with, and issues for which they had some kind of data.

Students were then asked to identify overlapping topics listed in the “Inventory” by inserting this information into a Venn diagram (Figure 4). Topics that intersected with logos, pathos and ethos would most likely be the best choices for students’ presentations. Students were expected to base their briefings on needs that could be documented. Because briefings were to be data-driven, most importance was given to logos, topics for which a student had accessible data. These

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**Figure 3. Inventory of Topics for Interactive Briefings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues I Care About (Pathos)</th>
<th>Issues I’ve Worked With (Ethos)</th>
<th>Issues for Which I Have Data (Logos)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I read about? Argue about? Support through contributions and volunteering?</td>
<td>What issues have I worked on as a professional and/or as an intern or work-study student?</td>
<td>What experimental data, survey results, demographic data, strategic plans, etc., are accessible to me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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data could include physical evidence such as organizational charts, survey results, and demographic analysis.

Also important was emotional involvement, or pathos. Speakers as well as listeners are engaged emotionally by what they value. Connecting with their own values would motivate students to prepare well and deliver their briefings with conviction.

The third consideration was credibility, or ethos, the speaker’s experience with his or her topic. First-hand experience can increase a speaker’s self-confidence as well as his or her credibility. But students were reminded that work experience alone does not engage listeners’ trust. As managers and policy analysts, speakers would be expected to demonstrate responsible use of data and analysis—which came full circle back to logos.

After students completed these worksheets, I met with them during office hours at the beginning of the course to discuss their inventories and to encourage them to develop briefings they could use in real-world settings. To establish the importance of peer collaboration, I asked students to sign up in pairs for their appointments. Students used our three-way discussions to choose topics that best reinforced their professional goals.

**Sample Briefing Topics**

During the summer of 2005, a total of 27 students participated in three sections of this restructured course. Predictably, the range of topics chosen for briefings was broad. These topics included the following:

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**Figure 4. Conversion of the “Inventory” to a Venn Diagram**

![Venn Diagram](image-url)
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- An appeal to the Office of National Drug Control Policy to suspend the U.S. policy of eradicating coca crops in Bolivia.
- An appeal to the Sub-Committee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security to change the crack cocaine/powder cocaine sentencing ratio from 100:1 to 20:1.
- An appeal to the Near Eastern & Southern Asian Affairs Committee to initiate an investigation into the ethics of Unocal's actions in Burma.
- An appeal to Program Officers of the San Francisco Foundation to support TiLT (Teaching Intermedia Literacy Tools) programming with a $50,000 grant.
- An appeal to the University of Florida Board of Trustees to invest 15 percent of their funds in socially responsible investments.

Despite differences in their proposals, speakers were required to use a common strategy: develop in-depth analyses of potential audiences, prepare data-driven arguments relevant to these audiences, and prepare for questions these audiences might ask. In each case, speakers were encouraged to acknowledge the values their briefings represented.

Figure 5. Basic Course Structure

1. Choose topic and define major goal
2. Draft analysis and outline; bring to class
3. Get feedback from instructor, TA, peers
4. Draft visuals; present in class: taped, not graded
5. Get feedback from instructor, TA, peers
6. Draft description of audience & key decision maker plus 10 likely questions; present in class: taped, not graded
7. Get feedback from instructor, TA, peers
8. Present interactive briefing: taped and graded
9. Get feedback from instructor, TA, peers
10. Prepare, present ceremonial speech: taped and graded
11. Get feedback from instructor, TA, peers
12. Review feedback from practice sessions. Apply tools used for ceremonial speech. Revise and present interactive briefing: taped and graded
Basic Course Structure

In order to support collaborative development of these briefings, the course included two practice sessions designed to elicit feedback from students as well as instructor and teaching assistant. As shown in Figure 5, these practice sessions (steps 4 and 6) occurred within an incubation period during which students could refine their analyses, outlines, questions, and visuals.

Presentations of completed briefings (step 8) began halfway through the course. Evolution of these briefings rewarded not only individual speakers but also peers who had contributed to a speaker’s development. By providing feedback for other participants, students strengthened their own skills. Class members discovered that each of them could contribute to the subject being taught: strategies for selecting, preparing, and delivering effective interactive briefings.

The Ceremonial Speech

Policy briefings are not unusual in a school of public policy and management. But the role of the ceremonial speech (Figure 5, step 10) may be puzzling. Here’s how it worked: Once they had presented their briefings, students were asked to decide whether their requests had been granted or denied. Either option was acceptable. Students were then asked to write a speech—not a briefing—that acknowledged the importance of this decision for themselves and the community at large.

For example, one student, Humberto Escalante, celebrated the impact that acceptance of his proposed adult literacy program could have for illiterate adults in El Paso, Texas. Humberto’s intended audience included the staff and volunteers from the Center for Civic Engagement at the University of Texas, El Paso. In his speech, Humberto recalled his previous experience as a volunteer for the Center, his deep satisfaction when one of his adult students reported she could now help her own daughter with homework, and the extent to which literacy empowers communities as well as individuals.

To increase the impact of their speeches, students were encouraged to use parallel structure, antithesis, and metaphor in their writing. Study of documents such as Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Quest for Peace and Justice” and “I Have a Dream” speeches provided examples of these tools. The objective of this assignment was to balance data-driven briefings with value-driven ceremonials in which students could articulate the visions that prompted their initial briefings.

My purpose was to encourage students to connect emotionally as well as intellectually with proposals they were presenting. My assumption was that students who could imagine the impact of their visions would be more likely to pursue them. Students were then encouraged to increase the emotional impact of their original briefings by incorporating use of parallel structure, vivid contrasts, and analogies used in their ceremonial speeches into the final presentation.
Initial Response to the Course

First responses to this restructured course were positive. I observed that after students had role-played change agents in their briefings, their authority and confidence as speakers increased. Students themselves reported these changes in personal comments to me after the course had ended. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing “excellent,” anonymous faculty/course evaluations at the end of summer 2005 rated the class 4.7 and the course instructor 4.8. Since the summer of 2005, I have taught 36 additional sections of this restructured course, with consistently high ratings.

Shifts in Students’ Self-Perceptions

Additionally, I wanted to see whether Strategic Presentation Skills influenced students’ self-perceptions as change agents. Between the late spring of 2006 and the late spring of 2007, I surveyed a total of 173 students in 18 sections of SPS on their perceptions. The survey included four questions:

1. How important is your topic to you?
2. How much do you know about this topic?
3. To what extent do you anticipate making future presentations on this topic?
4. To what extent will work in Strategic Presentation Skills increase your development as a change agent?

Figure 6. Self-Reported Changes by Participants in Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills (SPS), Spring-Summer 2006 (n=57)

![Bar graph showing self-reported changes by participants in SPS, 2006.]

Source: In-class surveys of 57 participants, conducted at the beginning and end of six Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills classes, spring and summer 2006.

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The survey was administered twice within each section: on the second day of class and after students’ final briefings. For the 57 students surveyed in six sections taught during the late spring and early summer of 2006, a positive shift occurred for each question (Figure 6). The biggest shift, 18 percent, occurred in the final question: “To what extent do you expect work in Strategic Presentation Skills to increase your development as a change agent?”

It was not surprising that the importance and knowledge of students’ topics increased. Nor was it surprising that students’ anticipation of speaking out on these topics increased. What was surprising was that in seven weeks their self-perceptions as change agents had changed the most. A number of factors may explain this shift:

1. Choosing their own topics allowed students to affirm their values. (Overall, students developed briefings that connected with their reasons for attending graduate school in the first place.)
2. Constructive feedback from multiple points of view helped students strengthen their arguments. (Strengthening the logic of their asks also reinforced the importance of their values.)
3. Anticipating and responding to questions that challenged their assumptions stimulated mental agility. (Practice in dealing with challenging questions increased students’ self-confidence in the face of opposition.)
4. Role playing an ask stimulated students’ imaginations. (If a student imagines he or she is speaking to the executive director of the Ford Foundation, then he or she is also more likely to step into that role in real life.)
5. Finally, students discovered that excellence in preparation and delivery is not a scarce good. Selection of an appropriate ask, completion of written and visual material, and sufficient practice almost always resulted in an effective briefing. Even students who didn’t like to speak discovered they could speak—an important advocacy skill.

The same survey distributed to 60 students enrolled in Strategic Presentation Skills during the fall of 2006 yielded similar shifts (Figure 7). For this set of students, the biggest change, 22 percent, occurred in question 2, “How much do you know about this topic?”

The positive shift for question 4 (“To what extent will work in Strategic Presentation Skills increase your development as a change agent?”) decreased from 18 percent to 9 percent. One explanation for this difference is that, for the fall 2006 students, expectations that Strategic Presentation Skills would increase their development as change agents were higher at the beginning of the course: 3.9 in the fall compared with 3.7 in the previous survey. Since initial expecta-
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tions were higher, students may have perceived less change. The actual difference between the two groups was relatively small: 4.2 in the fall compared to 4.4 for the spring and summer classes.

The final assessment of students' self-perceptions took place during spring semester of 2007. This group of respondents included 56 students enrolled in six sections of Strategic Presentation Skills. As shown in Figure 8, positive shifts in self-perceptions also occurred in this group of students.

For the spring 2007 students, expectations that participation in Strategic Presentation Skills would increase the likelihood of their becoming change agents increased from 3.6/5 to 4.09/5, a net positive change of 14 percent. For this group of students, initial expectations that SPS would increase their development as change agents were lower than for students surveyed in fall 2006 (3.6 compared with 3.9) and their expectations at the end of the course were higher (4.9 compared with 4.2).

When comparing these three sets of data, two patterns emerge:
1. Higher initial expectations that SPS would increase the likelihood of becoming change agents correlated with perception of less change at the end of the course (Figure 7).
2. Higher rankings of the importance of briefing topics correlated with perceptions of greater development as change agents at the end of the course (Figures 6 and 8).

Figure 7. Self-Reported Changes by Participants in Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills (SPS), Fall 2006 (n=60)

Source: In-class surveys of 60 participants, conducted at the beginning and end of six Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills classes, fall 2006.

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Ultimately, the extent to which Strategic Presentation Skills encourage participants to think and act as agents of change cannot be measured by surveys administered at the beginning and end of a seven-week course. What such a survey can indicate, however, is that changes in self-perception do occur in the short run and that these changes can help students think differently—and positively—about their potential as change agents.

**Summary**

This paper began with the observation that, although the development of leadership skills does not necessarily produce charismatic leaders, it is possible to teach a variety of skills that increase students’ potential for becoming change agents. This theme was developed in three sections:

- a summary of ideas of three individuals (Howard Prince, Parker Palmer, and Bill Drayton) whose work has influenced the development of Strategic Presentation Skills at the Heinz School,
- a description of how the design of this course seeks to model the collaborative process described by Prince and Palmer, and
- an analysis of surveys that show an increase in students’ self-perceptions as change agents after participation in the course.

**Figure 8. Self-Reported Changes by Participants in Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills (SPS), Spring 2007 (n=56)**

![Graph showing self-reported changes by participants in SPS](image)

Source: In-class surveys of 56 participants, conducted at the beginning and end of six Heinz School Strategic Presentation Skills classes, spring 2007.
CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be drawn from these observations, explanations, and survey results? Most important is that classroom exercises can make a difference in how students think about themselves. When students imagine themselves as change-makers, they begin to see themselves in a different light. Since Strategic Presentation Skills was restructured in the summer of 2005, a number of students have presented their proposals outside the classroom and their requests have been granted. One student, for example, used her briefing to convince the Heinz School to initiate a short course in South Africa during spring break. Another student used her briefing to create a summer internship for herself in Petra, Jordan. When students use their briefings to achieve real-world results, their potential for change-making is reinforced, and their self-perceptions as agents of change are enhanced.

I have not argued that a seven-week course in Strategic Presentation Skills will produce charismatic leaders. Practicing strategies that help to effect change does not necessarily create identifiable leaders any more than athletic training necessarily produces Olympian athletes. But if we decouple “change agent” from “leader” we can identify teachable skills that help to transform analysis into practice. Included in that set of skills is the ability to 1) identify specific goals and essential stakeholders and 2) engage stakeholders in the implementation of these goals. This engagement requires awareness of multiple points of view and strong communication skills that in turn can be catalysts for change.

What has been demonstrated here is that a course modeled on the collaborative principles described by Prince and Palmer can strengthen students’ beliefs that they can effect change, not just analyze it. To recall Drayton’s observation in 2005, “we perpetuate a world in which only 2 or 3 percent of the population are so-called ‘natural’ leaders. What a difference it would make for this society if we went from 2 or 3 percent to 50 percent in the next generation.” Why not use classroom exercises to lay the groundwork for development of skills that may help effect change whether or not they produce notable “leaders”?

Such exercises are not the only way to foster development of leadership skills in schools of public policy. But courses such as Strategic Presentation Skills can contribute to the process of preparing our graduates to “get the right things done in time to make a difference in people’s lives” (Prince, 2006). If we can indeed “reconnect the substance of public policy to its execution,” (Merget, 1989) we will have empowered our students to pursue the visions that brought them to schools of public policy and administration in the first place.

Based on a presentation made for the “Educating Leaders for the Public Sector” panel at the 2006 NASPAA Annual Conference in Minneapolis

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REFERENCES

RECOMMENDED READING

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Fostering a Civically Engaged Society: The University and Service Learning

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Abstract
As public administration is faced with the challenge of making governance work, the university is being called upon to become more involved in the civic engagement movement. Increasing civic engagement requires addressing one of the core problems contributing to its decline: deteriorating community caused by a lack of social capital. Although there is debate about whether there has been a decline in civic engagement or simply a change in the ways citizens participate, there is agreement about the need to increase engagement and to include universities in this process. One of the proposed solutions, advocated by Barber and Battistoni (1993) and Putnam (2000), is service learning.

Empirical data support a positive association between service learning and social capital (D’Agostino, 2006). This paper moves beyond theory to describe actual collaboration between universities and public administration to foster a civically engaged society. I will first show that the university is a key actor in community. I will then describe service learning as the means for universities to fulfill their role in community. This is followed by articulating how, through master of public administration (MPA) programs, the university can move this conversation forward. This effort by universities is then assessed through a survey of 133 MPA chairs.

As public administration is faced with the challenge of making governance work, the university is also being called upon to become more involved in the civic engagement movement. Civic engagement, defined as participation in voluntary associations and the political process (Kenworthy 1997), has decreased. For example, voter turnout in America is near its lowest point in history, with only 55 percent of registered voters actually voting in the 2004 presidential election. In addition, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, political activities, including volunteering on a political campaign, writing a letter to an editor, and participating in political rallies, fell by about 50 percent. Legitimate democracy
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is contingent upon citizens’ self rule (Macedo et al., 2005). The dearth of citizen participation is jeopardizing American democracy. Fragility of social capital, that is, resources that individuals and groups access in social networks and mobilize for purposive action, has been identified as the basis for the eroding civic culture (Barber and Battistoni, 1993; Putnam, 1995).

Increasing civic engagement requires addressing one of the core problems contributing to the decline—deteriorating community caused by a lack of social capital. Although there is debate about whether there has been a decline in civic engagement or simply a change in the ways citizens participate, there is agreement about the need to increase engagement and to include universities in this process. One of the proposed solutions, advocated by Barber and Battistoni (1993), Putnam (2000), and the Corporation for National and Community Service (2002), is civic education—specifically service learning. Service learning fosters the development of citizenship attributes. More significantly, service learning supports the idea that the university can be a partner in creating social capital (Dufour, 2005) in order to foster a civically engaged society.

Empirical data support a positive association between service learning and social capital (D’Agostino 2006). This paper moves beyond theory to describe actual collaboration between universities and public administration to foster a civically engaged society. I will show that the university is a key actor in community and then describe service learning as the means for universities to fulfill their role in communities. I will then articulate how, through MPA programs, the university can move this conversation forward. This effort by universities is then assessed through a survey of 133 MPA chairs.

THE UNIVERSITY AS A KEY ACTOR IN COMMUNITY

The university has historically had a role in civic engagement, rooted in educational and social principles developed by Dewey (1916) and Addams (1960). The role that the university can play in civic engagement is getting increased attention and being advanced by the broader national movement for civic engagement. This call for universities to be more involved in the civic engagement movement emphasizes the collaboration among faculty, students, and community in an effort to build on their strengths and address problems (Ostrander, 2004).

The drawing back from community affairs and politics has spurred a national interest to find a means of strengthening the civic mission of higher education (Skocpol and Fiorina, 1999; Boyte and Hollander, 1999; Ehrlich, 1999; Saltmarsh, 2002). Specifically, attention has focused on the role that universities and colleges play in promoting civic purpose. In 1995 the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges requested assistance from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to examine the future of public higher education. The commission called for “returning to our roots” of service in order to become the intended transformational institution (Kellogg Commission, 1999).
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Rendering service to society was the broad proposition on which higher education in the United States was founded (Wieckowski, in Jacoby 1996, 207). Nonetheless, service is often held as subordinate to teaching and research, even though service is included in the mission statement of universities (Holland, 1997). Service in higher education is perceived as a means of improving the community (Boyer, 1994, 1997; Bringle, Games, and Malloy, 1999; Eggerton, 1994; Harkavy and Puckett, 1994; Rice, 1996).

The university needs to be a collaborator in community building (Boyer, 1996). It can help to answer society’s most critical social, civic, moral, and economic problems, thus contributing to the common good and community building. Student community service at the college level has a long history, including the YMCA, the scouting movement, and campus ministry activities (Jacoby, 1996). The 1960s saw the civil rights movement and President Kennedy’s launch of the Peace Corps and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). Through these activities, college students began to address social problems and to challenge universities to participate in the process of social justice (Jacoby, 1996).

Despite the expertise and resources available on campus, universities do not respond to local problems (Kellogg Commission, 1999). Higher education continues to be called upon to renew its commitment to service and to assume a leadership role in addressing society’s increasing problems (Jacoby, 1996). This would answer criticisms of the university’s “fortress mentality” (Harkavy, 1993, 45, as cited in Jacoby, 1996).

Service Learning as a Means for University Involvement in Community

The Kellogg Commission maintained that, although excellence in teaching and research needs to be maintained, there is also a need to be responsive in this changing world. There is a need for "engagement," defined by the Kellogg Commission as including “institutions that have redesigned their teaching research and…service functions to become more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities” (1999, 13). It is through engagement that partnerships can be formed. The Kellogg Commission maintained that an engaged university should accomplish three things: (1) be responsive to today’s students, (2) enrich students’ experiences by bringing research and engagement into the curriculum, and (3) work on the problems faced by the community it serves. The commission maintained that these goals can be achieved through service learning because it provides the opportunity to integrate community and academic experiences.

Jacoby tied the theory of service learning to higher education’s tradition of service. Historically, the American college, “cloaked” with a public purpose, has had a responsibility to the past, present, and future (Rudolph 1963, 177, as cited in Jacoby 1996, 10). In fact, since the founding of Harvard College in 1636, a goal
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of American higher education has been the preparation of citizens’ community engagement (Smith, 1944, 55, as cited in Jacoby, 1996). After the Revolution, the purpose of higher education began to shift from individuals to the building of a new nation (Boyer, 1994, as cited in Jacoby, 1996). New institutions, including Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, contributed to the building of physical and social structures (Rudolph, 1962, as cited in Jacoby, 1996).

Jacoby continued to argue that service learning fits more clearly into the mission of higher education than in those of volunteer or community service programs. According to Astin (1994, as cited in Jacoby, 1996), service learning is the most effective means of achieving higher education’s stated mission: “to produce educated citizens who understand and appreciate not only how democracy is supposed to work but also their own responsibility to become active and informed participants in it” (24). Another goal of higher education is to prepare students for the world of work (Pew Higher Education Roundtable, 1994). Service learning provides, in addition to behavioral and attitudinal behavior, opportunities for students to develop the cognitive skills necessary to apply academic knowledge.

Service learning attempts to involve students in community service projects that are coordinated between the school and community. Service learning, borrowed from the field of experiential education, seeks to connect contemporary social problems to the curriculum in order to encourage reflection and analysis. Keeton (1983) argued that the critical-reflection component of service learning was the direct result of John Dewey’s theories of education. According to Dewey, “Experiential learning…transforms the individual, revises and enlarges knowledge, and alters practice.” It affects their perceptions and interpretations of the world (Keeton, 1983, 1, as cited in Stanton, 1999). According to Stanton (1999), service learning appears to be an approach to experiential learning, an expression of values—service to others, community development and empowerment, reciprocal learning—which determines the purpose, nature and process of social and educational exchange between learners and people they serve, and between experiential education programs and the community organizations with which they work (Stanton, 1999, 5).

Through the integration of community projects into the academic curriculum, lessons in the classroom serve as the basis for reflection and examination of the citizen’s role in the community. Service learning is often a for-credit course based in experience, where students take part in a service activity that meets a community need. Time for reflection, further understanding of the course content, and an appreciation of civic responsibility are also fostered (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995). Service learning is regarded as compatible with renewed awareness of the
collaborative mission of universities (Boyer, 1996; Holland, 1997, 1999; Rice, 1996; Zlotkowski, 1999). Service learning programs involve students in collaborative learning, enhancing student development, and contributing to the development of future civic involvement (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993; Sax and Astin, 1997). The adoption of service learning programs in universities is a “good choice” (Bringle and Hatcher, 2000). It augments not only student achievement but the role of community in civic education as well (Harkavy, 1996, 1998; Hatcher, 1997).

According to Wurtzdorf and Giles (1997), the term service learning arose in association with the Oak Ridge Associated Universities in Tennessee, which eventually expanded to include a total of 15 states under the Southern Regional Educational Board. However, the term service learning appeared in the work of Sigmon and William Ramsey in 1969, at the Southern Regional Educational Board. They defined it as, “the accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth” (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz, 1999).

The next significant milestone was the University Year for Action, a federal program that involved students across the country in serving their communities (Jacoby, 1996; Wurtzdorff and Giles, 1997). Several campus-based service learning programs originated at that time. Subsequently, the Office of Economic Opportunity established the National Student Volunteer Program. The program stimulates many service learning initiatives, although the program did not use the term service learning. Later, the program became the National Center for Service Learning. The VISTA and Peace Corps programs merged with the National Center for Service Learning to become ACTION, a federal center for student service.

Although the National Center for Service Learning was short-lived, community service at colleges regained momentum in 1985 with the establishment of Campus Compact: The Project for Public and Community Service. Its goal was the engagement of college and university presidents who have agreed to support academics-based community service. During the same period, former college graduates formed the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) to encourage students to serve the community. The National and Community Service Act (1990) and the National and Community Service Trust Act (1993) contributed to the acceleration and expansion of service learning at all levels. The 1993 Act established the Corporation for National Service, which funds higher education service learning under its Learn and Serve America grants. Internships have traditionally been part of the college experience, often carrying no academic credit. Therefore, with the increase of service-learning programs, many institutions already had structures in place to implement them.

Wurtzdorff and Giles (1997) contended that while “service” and “learning” have long been associated with institutions of higher education, there is no common
definition of the “service” component. Service is often associated with the type of research engaged in by faculty members in order to relate to broader community concerns. Student service, on the other hand, was considered the outcome of higher education and not something to be incorporated into the wider curriculum. It was assumed that the college curriculum would suffice in providing students the intellectual tools necessary to become active citizens in their communities. However, educators who advocate service learning have been challenging this assumption.

MPA Programs as Catalysts for University Involvement in Community

Universities have attempted to address the problem of community development through the institutionalization of service-learning programs. Organizations such as Campus Compact have been created and greatly expanded to provide support, indicators, and measurements of a successful service-learning program. The structure of service learning is considered a key factor in the program’s success (Putnam, 1995; Dufour, 2005). Dufour (2005) characterizes effective service learning as producing social capital. However, in order to be effective, service learning must move beyond institutional change to focus on academic culture (Saltmarsh, 2002). D’Agostino (2006) found that weak academic culture was associated with students not benefiting as much as possible from service-learning programs, even though there was institutional support. Thus, support and investment in the institutional change needed for a well-structured service-learning program is only a prerequisite for a service-learning program to attain full potential and build social capital. Although more data are necessary to further explore this concept, sufficient evidence supports the recommendation that service learning also become part of the academic culture as well as institutionalized. The question of how this can be achieved remains open.

Although limited studies have examined service learning at the graduate level, and specifically in MPA programs, service-learning goals go well with the mission of MPA programs and the university mission of service (Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004; Reinke, 2003). Bushouse and Morrison (2001) argued that MPA programs began incorporating service learning into the curriculum through the capstone course long before it became commonplace in higher education. Her study argued that MPA practicum courses (i.e., capstone courses) can benefit from service-learning principles such as reflection.

On the other hand, Reinke’s (2003) quantitative findings suggest that service learning may have decreased MPA students’ levels of civic engagement. However, the qualitative finding supported prior studies concluding that service learning helped students connect theory to practice through the process of reflection.

The academic culture of public administration encourages the allocation of time to “provide a bridge between classroom structures and realities of public service” (ASPA’s Code of Ethics) in order that future public administrators may
be trained to serve the public interest. Dicke, Dowden, and Torres (2004) asked how future public administrators can uphold the interest of the public if they are not interacting and learning with the public. Nonetheless, limited research has examined service learning as a pedagogical approach in a discipline that is all about civic engagement (Reinke, 2003). Nearly 1,000 colleges and universities are enrolled as members of Campus Compact. Of these institutions, 133 are NASPAA-accredited MPA programs, and 83 of these institutions are affiliated with Campus Compact. This means that 62.4 percent of accredited MPA programs have access to service-learning resources that could be used to offer a service-learning course in their programs.

**Method**

A list of NASPAA-accredited MPA programs was generated from the NASPAA Web site, thereby excluding programs that may have a service-learning program but are not NASPAA-accredited. The chairs of those 133 MPA programs were asked to complete an online survey in Spring 2007 (Appendix A). Fact-based questions were used to gather information about the implementation of service-learning courses or methods in MPA programs. Internship and capstone courses were specifically surveyed based on the premise that service learning goals not only go well with the mission of MPA programs but, according to Bushman and Morison (2001), MPA practicum courses can benefit from service-learning principles such as reflection and incorporated elements of service-learning into the curriculum long before doing so became commonplace. However, only limited research has evaluated the application of service learning in practicum courses.

**Findings**

Of 133 surveys emailed to MPA directors or coordinators, 46 were returned, for a 34.5% response rate. MPA directors completed 43.9% of the surveys; MPA coordinators completed 22%; others, including department chairs, administrative assistants, and internship coordinators, completed the remaining 34%. Eighty-eight percent of those surveyed were at public institutions, 31.7% of the programs were located within a political science department, and 29.3% were located within a department or program in a school/college other than business.

Nineteen percent of the programs require an internship for completion of the MPA program, 24.3% do not, and 51.3% would consider waiving the internship requirement based on professional experience in the public sector; others require an internship only for those without experience in the public sector. Sixty-four percent offer an internship course requiring the completion of class hours or assignments; only 6.7% offer no form of internship. Although 61.5% of the programs offer a capstone course and 85.2% require the capstone for completion of the program, only 2% offer the option to complete an internship as part of a capstone course. Fourteen percent of internship courses are categorized as service
learning—11% formally and 2% informally. Forty-seven percent of the internship courses require classwork and internships to be linked to wider societal problems; however, only three of these programs are also categorized as service learning. Furthermore, 12.5% of capstone courses are categorized as service learning. Sixty percent of the capstone courses require classwork and internships to be linked to wider societal problems. In addition, when asked, “How many service-learning courses are offered in the MPA program?” 35% responded zero and 24% responded other; comments included, ‘it varies by semester,’ ‘service learning is encouraged,’ ‘service learning is encouraged and is incorporated into courses as appropriate,’ ‘students have options in seven courses to do work related to service learning.”

As summarized in the table below, the qualitative data provide insight into the similarities of the internship, capstone, and MPA program goals. The internship goals can be categorized into three themes: (1) to gain experience in the public sector, (2) to build connections to community, and (3) to apply theory and skills to real-life practice and public service problems. Theme three was the primary capstone course goal, and theme one was the dominant mission of the MPA programs.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

As anticipated, the majority of MPA programs offer an internship and/or a capstone course. However, the majority of courses are not identified as service learning. The implications of the findings are two-fold: (1) the opportunity for MPA programs to implement a service-learning course is present; (2) civic engagement should be specified as one of the MPA goals or objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internship Goals</th>
<th>Capstone Goals</th>
<th>MPA Mission</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Gain experience in/prepare students for careers in public sector.</td>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Gain experience in/prepare students for careers in public service.</td>
<td><strong>Theme 1:</strong> Gain experience in/prepare students for careers in public service.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2:</strong> Build connections to community.</td>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> Apply theory and skills to real life practice and public service problems.</td>
<td><strong>Theme 3:</strong> Apply theory and skills to real life practice and public service problems.</td>
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More than 90% of MPA programs offer an internship course and 52% offer a capstone course. A service-learning component can be incorporated in either the internship or capstone course. The resources needed to implement such a change are available on campus through Campus Compact but are not being utilized. Thus, the structural changes needed to incorporate service learning are minimal and the academic culture of public administration supports such changes.

The findings support the inclusion of civic engagement as one of the specific MPA goals or objectives if the MPA program is intended to foster a civically engaged society. As argued by Dicke, Dowden, and Torres (2004), the reason for adopting service learning must be transparent if the intended learning goal is to be achieved. Therefore, if civic engagement—measured as social capital—is expected to be an outcome of service learning, it needs to be clearly stated.

Through collaboration, the university and MPA programs can achieve their goals through service learning. The university has a community responsibility, whereas the main goal of MPA programs is to prepare students for careers in public service. The MPA culture supports service learning, enabling it to prepare students for careers in public service while fulfilling the wider university goal and responsibility to foster a civically engaged society.

Notes
1. Service-learning takes many forms, including nonacademic-based programs.
2. Reinke (2003): The qualitative findings, analysis of reflective essays, clearly established the students’ perception that service-learning did aid their learning course material, helped them connect theory to the practice of public administration. However, the quantitative findings do not support the idea that service learning promotes civic engagement in graduate students. Rather, the results suggest that students may have decreased their previous levels of engagement. This could be the result of small sample size, the project itself, or public service motivation.

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Fostering a Civically Engaged Society: The University and Service Learning


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Survey
Following are 25 (twenty-five) short questions developed to obtain information about the Master of Public Administration Program.

1. Are you a private or public University or College?
   [ ] Private    [ ] Public    [ ] Other __________________

2. Is the MPA program located in
   [ ] Separate Professional School or College
   [ ] Separate Institute or Center
   [ ] Dept. or Program Located within a Business School/College
   [ ] Dept. or Program Located within a School/College other than Business
   [ ] Program Located within a Political Science Department
   [ ] Program Located within a Department other than Political Science
   [ ] Other Organizational Location ______________________________

3. Are you the
   [ ] MPA Director
   [ ] MPA Coordinator
   [ ] Other

4. How many full time students are enrolled in the MPA program (academic year 2005/06)?

5. How many part time students are enrolled in the MPA program (academic year 2005/06)?

6. Does your MPA program offer
   [ ] An internship course (Internship placement plus required class hours and assignments)
   [ ] The option to receive credit for prior work experience (Without an internship, required class hours or assignments)
   [ ] The option to receive credit for completing an internship as an independent study
   [ ] The option to receive credit for completing an internship as part of a capstone course
   [ ] No internship (course) is offered (If NO, please go to question 13)

7. What are the goals of the internship course?
8. How does the internship course contribute to achieving the broader goals of the MPA program?

9. Are students required to link classwork and their internships to wider societal problems?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

10. Is the internship (course) categorized as a service learning course? (Service learning is an approach to experiential education that seeks to connect contemporary social problems to the curriculum in order to encourage reflection and analysis.)
    - [ ] Yes (If YES, go to question # 11)
    - [ ] No (If NO, go to question #12)
    - [ ] Other

11. Is the internship (course) categorized as a service learning course:
    - [ ] Informally (The service learning method is applied but not required)
    - [ ] Formally (Described as service learning in course description)
    - [ ] Other (Please specify)

12. Is an internship (course) a requirement for completion of the MPA program?
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No

13. Does the MPA program offer a capstone course (Capstone course is defined as a practicum in which students apply skills learned in the programs to the real world)?
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No (If NO, go to question 20)
    - [ ] Other

14. Is the capstone course a requirement for the completion of the MPA program?
    - [ ] Yes
    - [ ] No
    - [ ] Other (please specify)

15. What are the goals of the capstone course?

16. How does the capstone course contribute to achieving the broader goals of the MPA program?

17. Does the capstone course require students to link classwork to wider societal problems?
18. How does the capstone course require students to link classwork to wider societal problems?

19. Is the capstone course categorized as a service learning course? (Service learning is an approach to experiential education that seeks to connect contemporary social problems to the curriculum in order to encourage reflection and analysis.)

20. How many service learning courses are offered in the MPA program?

21. Is your college or university affiliated with Campus Compact? (Campus Compact is a coalition of universities and colleges committed to fulfilling the public purpose of higher education. They provide support for the implementation of a successful service learning program.)

22. Please state the MPA program mission statement:

23. Please state the university or college mission statement:

24. Additional Comments:

25. Your email:
Lessons Outside of the Classroom: Examining the Effectiveness of Service Learning Projects at Achieving Learning Objectives

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Abstract
This paper investigates how the delivery of course material affects student learning. It explores whether service learning projects are more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives. Student evaluations of their group projects and final exam scores from three sections of a MPA research methods course were compared as part of this study. One of the sections participated in a service learning project for their group project; the other two sections wrote mock research proposals for their group project. Based on the results from student evaluations of their group projects, there is some evidence suggesting that service learning projects may be more effective than traditional classroom assignments at helping students master course material and link theory to practice. However, participating in a service learning project did not have a significant impact on student performance on the final exam.

When designing a course, instructors must grapple not only with what material to cover but also with how to most effectively present this material. This paper investigates how the delivery of course material impacts student learning. It explores whether service learning projects are more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives. There is no standard definition of service learning (Eyler, 2000). This paper adopts Barbara Jacoby’s widely used definition to guide its analysis: “service learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby and Associates, 1996, 5). According to Drucker, Stefanovic, and Cunningham (1996), “education limited
to the classroom may not connect theory to practice” (131). Service learning offers students an opportunity to apply lessons they are learning in the classroom to a real-life setting. It is an important pedagogical tool used in undergraduate and graduate classrooms (Fredericksen, 2000; Strage, 2000; Litke, 2002; Gallini and Moley, 2003; Anderson and Harris, 2005; Wells, 2006).

Several scholars have argued that experiential and service learning can provide master of public administration (MPA) students with valuable educational experiences (Holmer and Adams, 1995; Cunningham, 1997; Denhardt, 1997; Campbell and Tatro, 1998; Jelier and Clarke, 1999; Killian, 2004). This pedagogical approach is believed to help MPA students connect theory to practice, improve their self-awareness about their tolerances and prejudices, make community contacts that may be useful in their future professional development, and develop team building skills (Jelier and Clarke, 1999). They also offer potential benefits for MPA programs, including strengthening community networks for other research and service projects, increasing the visibility of the program in the community, and improving the instructors’ teaching effectiveness (Jelier and Clark, 1999). Despite the enthusiasm about service learning within the public administration community, there has not been very much empirical research assessing the impact of MPA service learning projects. In particular, little is known about whether service learning projects actually improve learning outcomes for MPA students. Most of the research on the impact of service learning on pedagogical outcomes has focused on undergraduate students. This study seeks to fill the gap in knowledge about the impact of service learning on learning outcomes for graduate students in general and the impact of service learning on learning outcomes for MPA students in particular.

This paper provides a greater understanding of the impact of course delivery on student learning and focuses on the effectiveness of MPA service learning projects at achieving a variety of pedagogical goals compared to traditional classroom assignments. It specifically examines whether service learning projects are more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving the following learning objectives: (1) mastering course material, (2) tying course concepts together, and (3) linking theory to practice. This information will be particularly useful for public administration programs as well as other graduate programs that incorporate service learning techniques into their curricula.

This study uses a natural experiment research design and is based on data collected from three sections of a research methods class taught at a large state university. The same instructor taught all three sections, and all three sections covered the same basic course material. The only substantive difference in the course design between the three sections was their group projects. Two of the sections wrote mock research proposals for their group projects. The other section administered a survey and analyzed its results as a service learning project for a local public agency. Student evaluations as well as final exam grades were
analyzed to compare the effectiveness of service learning projects and traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives.

In order to place this study in context of the service learning literature, past research is reviewed in the next section. Following this, the study’s methodology is described, and key findings are highlighted. In conclusion, directions for future research are considered.

SERVICE LEARNING’S IMPACT ON PEDAGOGICAL OUTCOMES

Dicke, Dowden, and Torres (2004) identify four different rationales for service learning projects: community service, moral, political, and instrumental. The community service perspective focuses on how community service performed as part of service learning projects can benefit both students and the community. The moral development perspective views service learning projects as a vehicle for promoting the moral and ethical development of students. Advocates of the political perspective believe service learning should be used to promote a social justice cause. According to the instrumental perspective, service learning projects are viewed as educational tools that help students develop specific academic or work-related competencies. This study focuses on the instrumental rationale for service learning projects and examines whether service learning projects are more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives.

Past empirical research on MPA service learning projects has examined the different goals of these projects (Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004), the effectiveness of incorporating reflection into capstone projects (Bushouse and Morrison, 2001), and the effectiveness of service learning at promoting civic engagement (Reinke, 2003). However, little is known about the effectiveness of MPA service learning projects at achieving pedagogical objectives. Although the impact of service learning on pedagogical outcomes for MPA students has not been well explored, several studies on this topic have been conducted in other disciplines such as political science (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993), social work (Anderson and Harris, 2005; Wells, 2006), sociology (Kendrick, 1996), and educational psychology (Simons and Cleary, 2006). This paper examines whether findings on service learning in these other disciplines can also be applied to public administration.

Past empirical research indicates that service learning has a positive or neutral impact on learning outcomes. Scholars have approached this topic from a variety of angles. Several researchers have used self-reports to evaluate the impact of service learning on academic achievement. Most self-reports suggest service learning positively influences academic achievement. As an example, students evaluating service learning courses were more likely to report that the course promoted academic achievement and was academically challenging compared to students evaluating non-service learning courses (Gallini and Moley, 2003). Service learn-
ers are also more likely than non-service learners to report being able to apply course concepts to new situations (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993; Kendrick, 1996). In addition to student self-reports, faculty self-reports have been used to assess the impact of service learning on the achievement of learning outcomes. Hesser (1995) finds that more than four-fifths of the faculty members surveyed reported that the quality of learning in courses with a community service component was better than the quality of learning in classes that did not have a community service component.

Researchers have also assessed the impact of service learning using more direct measures of classroom outcomes. The conclusions of this genre of research have been more mixed than research based on self-reports and indicate service learning has a positive or neutral impact on academic achievement. In a study of an undergraduate political science class, service learners earned significantly higher grades in the course compared to non-service learners (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993). Batchelder and Root (1994) also concluded that service learning had a positive impact on academic achievement. They compared the responses of service learners and non-service learners on pre- and post-semester assessments and found that service learners experienced significant cognitive gains relative to the non-service learners.

In Strage (2000), service learners performed better than non-service learners on the second midterm examination and the final exam but not on the first midterm examination. She concludes that service learners received higher grades on the second midterm examination and the final exam primarily because they performed better than non-service learners did on the essay portion of these examinations. There was not a significant difference in the performance of service and non-service learners on the multiple choice portions of any of the exams. Similarly, Kendrick (1996) found that service learners performed significantly better than non-service learners on the essay portion of course examinations only. In addition, his research indicates that there was no difference in the final course grades of service learners and non-service learners. In another study with mixed results, Fredericksen (2000) examined the impact of participation in a service learning project on both course exams and final grades and found that service learning was associated with higher grades on the second course exam and final course grades, but for males only. Moreover, service learning was not associated with higher grades on the first course exam for either males or females.

There is some evidence suggesting that the extent to which service learning is integrated into a course influences the impact this pedagogical tool has on learning outcomes. Eyler and Giles (1999) interviewed 57 students from six colleges to assess their understanding of a social problem they had studied. Students who took classes in which service learning was well-integrated demonstrated greater understanding and ability to apply knowledge than did students who took courses in which there was no service learning or in which service learning was not
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well integrated. According to Eyler and Giles, service learning is well integrated into a class when the service experience is closely connected to course activities and students have frequent opportunities to reflect on the connection between the service experience and course material.

Although past empirical research suggests that service learning has a positive or neutral impact on student achievement of learning objectives, the vast majority of this research has focused on undergraduate students. One notable exception of a study that examines the impact of service learning on learning outcomes for graduate students is Wells (2006). Consistent with other service learning research based on self-reports, Wells found that service learning is associated with positive learning outcomes. According to student evaluations of a service learning project for a research methods class for social work graduate students, 80 percent of the students indicated that service learning activities helped achieve course objectives. However, Wells examined the experience of service learning students only and did not compare the learning outcomes of service learners with the learning outcomes of non-service learners in her study. This study expands the research on service learning’s impact on academic achievement in graduate school classrooms. It explores whether the positive impact service learning had on pedagogical outcomes in a graduate social work classroom are also true in a public administration context, using a more rigorous research design.

Methodology

This study uses a natural experiment research design and is based on data collected from three sections of a research methods class taught by the author of this paper. Service learning projects have been effectively incorporated into other research methods classes (Strand, 2000; Potter, Caffrey, and Plante, 2003; Wells, 2006) and can help reduce student anxiety about such courses (Wells, 2006). The research methods course that this study focuses on is an introductory course that is required for all MPA students at a large state university. It specifically teaches students how to design research projects. In addition, the course introduces students to several data collection and analysis techniques and covers both qualitative and quantitative methods. At the end of this course, students are expected to be able to (1) design basic research projects, (2) describe selected qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, (3) describe selected quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, and (4) critically analyze research projects conducted by others.

Two of the sections of the research methods class were taught during the fall 2006 semester. There were a total of 25 students in the fall cohort, 14 students in the first section and 11 students in the second section. The other section of the research methods class was taught during the spring 2007 semester. There were 9 students in this section. The same instructor taught all three sections. In addition, all three sections covered the same basic course material, and the same
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lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, books, and homework assignments were used for all three sections. In sum, the only substantive difference in the course design for the three sections was their group projects.

The two sections taught during the fall 2006 semester wrote mock research proposals for their group projects. At the beginning of the semester, each student was assigned to a group of three or four people to work on this proposal. Although each group was allowed to select the specific topic for their research proposal, groups were instructed that their topic had to somehow be related to Robert Merton’s work on dysfunctional bureaucracies (Merton, 1940). Groups were allowed to incorporate qualitative and/or quantitative data collection methods into their research design. The final research proposal was expected to contain the following components: a description of the research problem, a literature review, a statement of the proposal’s research hypothesis, a description of the data collection methods and sampling strategy, a discussion of the ethical issues associated with the study, a discussion of the potential threats to the study’s validity and reliability and strategies for minimizing these threats, and a mock Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. All group members received the same group project grade.

For its group project, the section taught during the spring 2007 semester administered a survey and analyzed its results as a service learning project for a local public agency. At the beginning of the semester, each student was assigned to a group of three people to work on this project. As part of this project, students designed a survey, administered the survey, analyzed the results of the survey, and wrote written reports summarizing the survey’s findings. The entire class worked together to administer the survey. The small groups performed the other major tasks for this service learning project separately. Each group designed a survey and completed an IRB application. The instructor then selected the best survey for the class to use for the data collection phase of the project and submitted that group’s IRB application for university approval. Similarly, each group wrote a final report analyzing the key findings of the survey. In addition to highlighting key findings, the final report was expected to describe the purpose of the survey, the sampling strategy, the protocol for collecting the data, potential threats to validity and reliability, and strategies the class used to minimize these threats. The instructor again selected the best report to give to the class’s community partner for the service learning project. Like the fall cohort, all group members in the spring cohort received the same group project grade.

The service learning project was integrated into the course primarily through class activities and discussion. Many of the class activities, including three written course assignments that students completed in small groups, were related to the service learning project. These activities required students to apply key concepts covered in the course readings and lecture to the service learning project. Considerable class time was also regularly devoted to discussing the service
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learning project. In these discussions, students provided status updates on various aspects of the service learning project, shared what they were learning from the service learning project, and talked about any problems they had experienced relating to the service learning project. As a part of some service learning projects, students are required to reflect in writing about the connection between the service experience and course material (Litke, 2000; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; Reinke, 2003). The research methods class that was the focus of this study is very labor intensive. It covers a significant amount of material in the span of a semester and requires students to complete several assignments outside of class. In an effort to keep the workload outside of class reasonable, students were not asked to complete additional written assignments reflecting on the connection between the service experience and course material.

Most students take the research methods class in their first semester in the MPA program, because this course is one of the two prerequisites for taking all of the other core courses in the MPA curriculum. The only students who do not take the research methods class in their first semester are part-time students. These students have the option of taking the research methods class in their first or second semester. In general, the fall cohort of the MPA program is larger in

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size, which resulted in two sections of the research methods class being offered in the fall 2006 semester. In addition, the fall cohort tends to be stronger academically than the spring cohort, as indicated by the fall cohort’s lower percentage of conditionally admitted students. Two-thirds of the spring cohort was conditionally admitted, while less than half of the fall cohort was conditionally admitted. Students are conditionally admitted to the MPA program because of weaknesses in their academic record. The table on the previous page compares the composition of two cohorts in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, work experience, and admission status. Other than admission status, the background of the two cohorts was fairly similar.

Effectiveness in higher education has been viewed from a variety of perspectives such as cost-effectiveness (Maxwell and Lopus, 1995), teaching effectiveness (Jiroveck, Ramanathan, and Rosegrant-Alvarez, 1998; Pike, 1998; Marsh and Hattie, 2002), and institutional effectiveness (Kim, 2001; Welsh and Metcalf, 2003). This study focuses on the effectiveness of group projects at achieving learning objectives and defines effective group projects as projects that enable students to master course material, tie course concepts together, and link theory to practice. Course material and concepts in this context refer to research design, qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Both student evaluations of their group projects and final exam scores were analyzed to compare the effectiveness of service learning projects and traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives. At the end of each semester, all students in the three sections completed a separate evaluation of their group project. This evaluation was completed during class and included both closed- and open-ended questions. In the closed-ended question section, students were asked to compare the effectiveness of the group project and homework assignments at reinforcing course concepts and to evaluate the extent to which the group project helped master course material, tie together course concepts, and link theory to practice. In the open-ended question section, students were asked what they liked best about the group project, what they liked least, and how they felt the group project could be improved. The student evaluations offer an indirect measure of learning outcomes and indicate student perceptions about the impact of the group project on the achievement of learning objectives rather than the project’s actual impact.

In addition, the grades on the take-home final exams of the three sections were compared. The two sections from the fall 2007 semester were given identical take-home final exams. The specific questions on the final exam for the spring cohort were different from the fall cohort’s exam. But the structure of the questions and the course concepts covered on the spring cohort’s exam were the same as the fall cohort’s exam. Each final consisted of two essay-style questions. The first question asked students to interpret the multiple regression findings of a recently
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published peer-reviewed article from a major public administration journal. The second question asked students to design a research project to answer a question important to contemporary public administration research. For the fall cohort exam, students designed research projects comparing the level of red tape in public and private organizations. For the spring cohort exam, students designed research projects examining how the level of stakeholder agreement on goals for a public-private organization collaboration affects the likelihood that the collaboration is successful.

Comparison of Learning Outcomes for the Two Cohorts

Based on the results from the student evaluations, there is some evidence suggesting that service learning projects may be more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving learning objectives. Approximately 56% of students in the spring cohort (5 of 9 students) reported that the service learning project was crucial in helping them master course material. On the other hand, only 24% of students in the fall cohort (6 of 25 students) reported that the mock research proposal project was crucial in helping them master course material.

Compared to the fall cohort, students in the spring cohort were also more likely to report that their group project was crucial in helping them link theory to practice. Roughly 44% of students in the spring cohort (4 of 9 students) reported that the service learning project was crucial in helping them link theory to practice. In contrast, only 24% of students in the fall cohort (6 of 25 students) reported that the mock research proposal project was crucial in helping them link theory to practice.

While there were differences in the extent the two cohorts reported the group project helped them master course material and link theory to practice, there was not a notable difference between the cohorts regarding the other learning objective on which this study focused. The percentage of students reporting that the group project was crucial in helping tie course concepts together was similar across the two cohorts. The percentage of students reporting that the group project was more effective than the homework assignments in reinforcing course concepts was also similar across the two cohorts.

In addition, student performance on the final exam was examined. The spring cohort’s average grade on the final exam was a 19.67 out of 25. This was only slightly higher than the fall cohort’s average grade on the final exam, which was 18.74 out of 25. The median grade for both cohorts was a 20. The impact of participation in a service learning project on final exam grades was further analyzed using ordinary least squares regression. Participating in a service learning project did not have a significant impact on student performance on the final exam when gender, international student status, work experience, and conditional admission status were controlled for.
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CONCLUSION

This paper investigates how the delivery of course material influences student learning and explores whether service learning projects are more effective than traditional classroom assignments at achieving different learning objectives. It specifically examines whether service learning projects are more effective at helping MPA students master course material, tie course concepts together, and link theory to practice. To answer these questions, the learning outcomes for three sections of a research methods class were compared. Based on the results from student evaluations of their group projects, there is some evidence suggesting that service learning projects may be more effective than traditional classroom assignments at helping students master course material and link theory to practice. However, participating in a service learning project did not have a significant impact on student performance on the final exam.

This study provides a greater understanding of how service learning impacts learning outcomes for MPA students. Study strengths include the use of a natural experiment to compare the learning outcomes of service learners with the learning outcomes of non-service learners. The same instructor taught all three sections of the research methods class, and all three sections covered the same basic course material. The only substantive difference in the course design was their group projects. In addition, multiple measures were used to evaluate student learning outcomes.

Although there are important benefits to this study’s research design, there are also some limitations. Neither of the measures used in this study to evaluate learning outcomes are ideal. The student evaluations only provide self-reports of learning outcomes. Moreover, it is possible that student satisfaction with the group project may have influenced perceptions of project effectiveness. Student final exam grades are a more direct measure of learning outcomes. However, the course exam still tested students’ ability to apply knowledge in an artificial context rather than in a real-life setting. Applying knowledge in a real-life setting is an integral part of service learning projects. Perhaps if students were evaluated in their ability to apply course concepts in a real-life setting, there may have been a greater difference between the two cohorts.

Another limitation of this study is the extent to which the service learning project was integrated into the course. As discussed in the literature review, Eyler and Giles (1999) find a positive association between the extent to which service learning is integrated into a course and learning outcomes. The service learning project in this study was integrated into the course primarily through class activities and discussion. However, service learning students did not reflect in writing about the connection between the service experience and course material. The lack of a formal written reflective component in the service learning class may also help explain why service learners did not perform better on the final exam than non-service learners.
In addition, the teacher of the research methods class and the author of this study are the same person. While this is a study limitation, it can also be viewed as a study strength. By playing this dual role, I was able to ensure that the evaluation instruments used were appropriate given the projects’ objectives and that the experiences of the three sections were as comparable as possible, a critical feature of the research design.

Finally, the sample size for this study is small. Of particular concern, only 9 of the 34 study subjects participated in a service learning project. Given the small sample size, generalizations from this study should be made with caution.

Service learning offers MPA students exciting opportunities to apply the skills they are learning in the classroom in a real-life setting while at the same time providing important services to the community. The finding that service learning projects may be more effective than traditional classroom assignments at helping students master course material and link theory to practice is encouraging. However, much more research needs to be done on this pedagogical tool in order to fully assess its value for MPA classrooms.

Future research should investigate whether this study’s findings can be replicated in other MPA programs and with larger samples of MPA students. The service learning component in these diverse settings will likely have different learning outcomes than the ones that this study focused on, and instructors will need to adjust, structure, and evaluate their classes accordingly. If possible, measures beyond just MPA student self-reports and final exam grades should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of service learning at achieving different learning objectives. For instance, it would be interesting to compare the ability of service learners and non-service learners to solve administrative problems in a real-life setting. In particular, future research could explore whether there are differences in the ability of service learners and non-service learners to transfer knowledge learned as part of their MPA training to the workplace. Researchers should also compare the learning outcomes of service and non-service learners over time. Do service learners retain more knowledge than non-service learners? In addition to examining the impact of service learning on MPA students from an instrumental perspective, further work is needed to assess the impact of service learning on MPA students from the three other perspectives that Dicke, Dowden, and Torres (2004) highlight: community service, moral, and political. The answers provided by this research will ultimately allow MPA programs to more effectively use service learning and maximize its potential as a pedagogical tool.

**Note**

1. Students are admitted to the MPA program in both the fall and spring semesters. Students in the spring cohort were no more or no less likely to be late admits to the MPA program.
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References


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Client-based Courses:
Variations in Service Learning

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Troy University

Abstract
This article explores the use of service learning in nontraditional course formats such as distance learning, compressed timeframe (nine-week) courses, with adult graduate student learners, based on explorations in seven courses. The authors’ experiences suggest that service learning, or client-based courses, can be successfully utilized in these contexts. Other successful variations on the concept included client-sharing and client-based course collaboration among academic departments, stakeholder-based presentations, and newspaper articles as a template for a service learning course. The paper also explores the general benefits of client-based courses in public administration and other courses, as well as their logistics and limitations.

Can service learning work in nontraditional course formats such as distance learning, compressed timeframe (nine-week) courses, with adult graduate school learners? Our experiences show that it can. This article explores the benefits of Client-based courses (CBCs) in public administration and other courses, and their logistics and limitations, based on our experiences at the Troy University Atlanta site. It also explores innovations we experimented with in service learning, including incorporating learning into nontraditional course formats such as 100 percent distance learning and compressed time courses, client-sharing and CBC collaboration among academic departments, stakeholder-based presentations, and using newspaper articles as a template for a service learning course. Each of these experiments enhanced the value of the service learning opportunities.

What are CBCs?
A CBC is a variation of service learning, and it simply means that the course is structured to produce a useful report or product for a client. The client’s issue becomes a focal tool for delivering course materials and integrating theories and
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practice. A CBC can have one client, or it can have several. The client can be a public agency, nonprofit, or even for-profit group. Numerous public administration courses can work as a CBC, including program evaluation, research, strategic planning, and other courses. In this model, clients do not pay for the service, nor would the university pay the client. Rather, the “client” terminology signals to the student the importance of their work—the client is counting on them, and nothing less than their best output will be acceptable (it also signals to administrators the value of the CBC endeavor to the community).

CBCs are a variant of service learning, a method of student learning through active participation in organized experiences that meet community needs (Perkins, 1994). Bringle and Hatcher (1996) defined service learning as “credit bearing educational experience” in which students “gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.” Service learning requires the infusion of course assignments that give students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills taught in the classroom to projects that benefit the community. Public administration programs sometimes incorporate service learning through seminars or capstone courses (McGaw and Weschler, 1999), internships (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996), and project-based classroom experience (Killian, 2004; Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Bernstein, Ohren, and Shue, 2003, Bushouse and Morrison, 2001). The CBCs are an example of the latter category of project-based classroom experience (see Imperial, Perry, and Katula, 2007).

The origins of service learning evolved from core assumptions of the prominent educational philosopher and theorist, John Dewey (1939, 1916). Dewey argued that philosophical orientations in educational institutions emphasize intellect over experience, passivity over activity, knowledge over vocation, work over play, and individuals over community and collectivity (Kezar and Rhodes, 2001). Accordingly, these imbalances prevent the evolution for education in a democratic society. Thus, Dewey suggested a new philosophy of experiential learning whereby students would learn by doing, stressing active learning rather than passive learning. Other key educational theorists whose work was instrumental to the development of service learning include Jean Piaget, David Kolb, and Paolo Freire (Wang et al., 2005).

**Why Do a CBC? The Theoretical Benefits**

In general, service learning creates a rewarding interaction among instructors, students, the university, and communities. In an extensive literature review, Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray (2001) found the following key benefits of service learning:

- Personal outcomes, such as an enhanced sense of personal efficacy and moral development, or positive effects on interpersonal development, teamwork and leadership skills (Wang, 2000; Astin and Sax, 1998).
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- Social outcomes, such as increased racial understanding (Barber et al., 1997), sense of social responsibility (Mabry, 1998), commitment to service (Eyler and Giles, 1999), and increased community involvement after graduation (Astin, Sax, and Avalos, 1999).
- Learning outcomes, such as a positive impact on academic learning (Astin and Sax, 1998), ability to apply knowledge in practical settings (Kendrick, 1996), enhancement of critical analysis, and other academic skills (Eyler and Giles, 1999), etc.
- Enhanced career development (Astin and Sax, 1998).
- Enhanced relationship with the institution, including stronger faculty relationships, improved student satisfaction, and increased graduation (Astin and Sax, 1998).

Eyler et al. (2001) also found several benefits to faculty, including higher satisfaction with the quality of student learning (Berson and Younkin, 1998), commitment to research (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, and Kerrigan, 1996). etc. They also found institutional benefits, including student retention (Astin and Sax, 1998), and enhanced community relations (Driscoll et al., 1996). Finally, they also identified community benefits, such as client satisfaction and development of useful products or services, and enhanced relationships with the university (Driscoll et al., 1996).

However, Eyler et al. (2001) also found mixed reviews on some counts. For example, some studies should no learning outcome difference between service learning and control groups (Parker-Gwin and Mabry, 1998).

Others found no significant difference in moral development between service learning and non-service learning control groups (e.g., Cram, 1998). Still other studies found that in some cases service learning may subvert cultural and racial connections rather than enhance them (Curran, 1999). Though on the whole the literature is generally positive about the benefits of service learning, it is important to keep in mind that some of the purported results are in dispute (for example, a RAND study found that service learning enhanced civic and interpersonal skills but not academic or career development (Gray, Heneghan Ondaatje, Fricker, and Geschwind, 2000, 39). Some researchers have even identified negative outcomes on occasion (e.g. Marks, 1994).

Scholars have noted that service learning may be a particularly good fit for public administration courses, given the students roles as current or future public servants. Dicke, Dowden, and Torres (2004) explain this perspective, noting that service learning can promote the traits of empathy, moral and ethical development, and respect for collaboration that are so important for public service. They also note that service learning dovetails with ASPA's professional code of ethics, which explicitly calls for members to provide a bridge for students between the classroom and the realities of public service. However, Reinke (2003) found that
service learning did not increase the levels of civic engagement for public administration course students in her study, perhaps because of high preexisting levels of service commitment that influences students to choose this career field. In addition, since most studies focus on undergraduate students, it is unclear to what extent the benefits hold for graduate students (Imperial et al., 2007; Reinke, 2003).

**An Example: Georgia Board of Dentistry and the Policy Analysis Course**

On the first day of the term, Sandra and David walk into their policy analysis class and see something rather unusual—a dentist at the front of the class, with a striking display of photographs. There are pictures of dental implements in moldy toilet water, pictures of victims suffering from brain swelling, pictures of extremely unsanitary rooms. They listen raptly while the dentist—the president of the state board of dentistry—tells them about the burgeoning problem of illegal dental operators, who are victimizing patients throughout the state. He then asks them for their help researching the problem, best practices, and several policy alternatives.

The course discussed above was inspired by a newspaper article in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* that highlighted the problem of illegal dental operators in metropolitan Atlanta victimizing the Hispanic and rural communities (Pickell, 2005). The article featured an interview with the president of the Georgia Board of Dentistry, and the instructor contacted him to see if he would be interested in serving as the course client for a graduate course in policy analysis. The instructor also contacted other stakeholders mentioned in the newspaper article—including the reporter, the Latino health groups, legal dentists mentioned in the article who had treated the victims after the fact, the state enforcement agency, and the newspaper reporter herself.

The president agreed to serve as client, and the other stakeholders agreed to come to the final course presentation to provide input and critiques for the students. The instructor provided the president with the draft syllabus and incorporated three products—a background paper on illegal dental operators (the extent of the problem, who is it affecting, causes of the problem, etc.), a best practices research paper that explores solutions other communities used to address the problem, and a final policy analysis that considers three alternatives and recommends one.

The president came to the first day of class to meet with the students and brief them on the situation, bringing the photographs that vividly illustrated the problem. He also briefed them on the state codes and policies applying to illegal dental operators. The students built upon this information to develop the three products. After each product was completed, the instructor put together a summary to add value. For example, in the best practices paper, the instructor devel-
developed an overview chart with all of the best practices found in the student papers, so that the client would have an easy reference guide to identify the practices and the student paper in which it appeared.

When the students completed their final papers—an analysis of three alternative solutions—the client returned to hear their presentations. The other stakeholders came as well, including the newspaper reporter. Several of the stakeholders, such as the Board of Dentistry member and the enforcement agent, had not met before, so they introduced themselves and exchanged business cards as they enjoyed the food and beverages before the presentation. The students had analyzed numerous alternatives, ranging from increased enforcement, an educational partnership between the Board of Dentistry and local Latino health groups, and more. The stakeholders and client critiqued the presentations effectively and were enthusiastic about several of the students’ recommendations, particularly the educational partnerships. Subsequently, several stakeholders distributed the students’ work to their agency or board members for further discussion and action.

Our Experience

The CBC project at the Troy University site in Atlanta was not limited to one program or professor. The CBC approach was developed jointly at the site across the business, public administration, education, and human resources programs, with all interested faculty members participating, and with support by the site director. CBCs were developed for both undergraduate and graduate classes, and in a variety nontraditional course formats, particularly compressed course formats (10 week courses for adult learners) and distance learning courses. At times the full-time faculty partnered with the adjunct team and facilitated a CBC course by identifying clients and connecting them with the adjunct faculty. In other cases, the faculty served as clients for each other’s courses—for example, the MPA program coordinator served as a client in the Executive MBA marketing course, and tasked the students with developing a marketing plan for the MPA program.

The faculty developed and distributed a flyer to prospective clients and alumni outlining the benefits of the CBCs, and the services students could provide. The flyers identified several courses in the business, education, and MPA program that could be made available as CBCs. Alumni were encouraged to use the service for their agencies or businesses. Though the flyer raised awareness, most clients were secured through individual faculty initiative. The business and public administration traded ideas and tips about clients, and even developed two long-term partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region IV and the local American Red Cross chapter that would be targeted for CBC integration throughout multiple business and public administration classes.

In addition to the Georgia Board of Dentistry, examples of other clients included the Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency, Care International, Uplifting People, Inc., the Wiregrass Human Society, and others.
**LOGISTICS: HOW IT WORKS**

**Step One: Identify Courses**

The instructor begins by identifying which courses are suitable for clients. Certain courses, such as research, policy analysis, grantwriting, program evaluation, and strategic planning are ideal; other courses may be less amenable to using clients, such as organizational theory. Other studies have noted that courses involving civic engagement, policy analysis, leadership, program evaluation, community development, public and nonprofit management, and others are often suitable for service learning methods (Jelier and Clark, 1999; Reinke, 2003; Bus-house and Morrison, 2001; Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Killian, 2004). Though the process will usually be intuitive, instructors can adopt specific criteria to determine whether the course is suitable (e.g., does it teach a specific skill, such as research or analysis? Can an agency benefit from that skill? Can the client be integrated without affecting the cohesion of the course?).

**Step Two: Identify Clients**

The instructor arranges for one or more clients for the course (multiple clients allow the students to select the project they are most interested in, but add additional logistical needs). To maximize the service component, clients generally include public or nonprofit agencies, though in some cases for-profit ventures may be appropriate.

Sometimes instructors already have relationships with prospective clients or a cause that is particularly interesting to them. In an adult education setting, and particularly where a program is delivered to students at their place of employment, the agencies where the students work can serve as client for the course. Students also identify future clients, and alumni frequently offer up their agencies as a potential client. In other cases, faculty members may save as clients for a university-related project.

If a client is not readily available, a compelling newspaper article provides an excellent ready-made foundation for a CBC. The article presents the issue to students in an easy-to-read and engaging manner, and it can be readily included in the syllabus. The reporter has already done the research on who the key stakeholders are; this helps faculty readily identify the client and the stakeholders. Moreover, the reporters typically have a high level of expertise on the subject due to their investigate research, and often have significant behind-the-scenes information that they did not incorporate into their newspaper article (which is why it is so important to invite the reporter to the course introduction and final presentations if possible).

Finally, with a current newspaper article, instructors are assured of work on a topic that is timely and pressing—and sometimes students even become part of

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the developing debate on the subject. For example, one CBC was inspired by an article about the lack of drug recycling programs in Georgia, and the millions of dollars wasted in unused prescription drugs that were literally flushed down the drain. While the instructor developed the course, the newspaper article was generating debate and even state legislation. By the time the students completed their work for the client (the Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency), the state law promoting drug recycling had passed and the agency tasked with implementation had the students’ work available, ready for use.

Of course, not all newspaper articles are suitable for use as foundations for a CBC. The issue has to be an appropriate course match, and should not be so broad or general as to defy analysis in a short timeframe. We found it works best to find cutting-edge issues that have not yet had extensive media exposure—for example, drug recycling, illegal dental operators, or small nonprofit issues. With these unique or understudied problems, there is more room for students to make a tangible difference.

Students in the CBC course can be tasked with identifying the client for the subsequent course. Students are often brimming with ideas for what subject the CBC should tackle next, and this often generates interest from students who participated long after the course ends. As one faculty member remarked, “I’m almost tired of them [the students] stopping me in the hallway and asking, ‘Hey, professor, what’s the course issue this term?’ But on the other hand, it’s great that they are interested.” In a sense, a sustained CBC effort at a site may take on a life of its own in a positive fashion.

Step Three: Determine Product and Integrate It into the Course

This step involves discussing the products with the clients and integrating those products into the syllabus and lectures. In the case of the policy analysis class, the standard products are background paper, best practices paper, and policy analysis of alternatives. However, it is important to alter those products to fit the client’s needs. For example, Uplifting People, Inc., focuses on community safety programs to help ex-offenders transition successfully back into society, thus avoiding recidivism. This savvy nonprofit already knew the best practices, so we substituted an assignment that tasked the students with identifying state policies and procedures that created barriers to successful transitions back to society.

In a nontraditional course format, it is also particularly important to fit the product to the timeframe (e.g., in a compressed time course). Students cannot produce the same program evaluation in a nine-week course as they could in a semester course. Products need to be of an appropriate scope, or they need to be divided up into two subsequent courses to allow students to complete the work.
Examples of CBC Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Board of Dentistry</td>
<td>Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Background assessment, best practices, policy analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Web site materials, trifold brochure, flyer, advertisement, donor letter templates, newsletter articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiregrass Humane Society</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Brochure, Web site materials, flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency</td>
<td>Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Background assessment, best practices, policy analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplifting People, Inc.</td>
<td>Grantwriting Public Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Grant research and development, legal barrier analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROY Atlanta MPA Program</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Program marketing strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROY MPA Program</td>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
<td>Development of MPA program evaluation instrument, pilot testing, execution of evaluation, analysis of survey results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Integrating the CBC topic into the lectures takes effort on the instructor’s part, and involves concerted and systematic efforts to tie the theories presented in the course lectures into the course project. The students were often enlisted into this effort, with the instructor introducing the theory (e.g., models of decision-making such as incrementalism (Lindblom, 1959) and rational-comprehensive) and challenging them to discuss the relevance to the project at hand.

Step Four: Arrange Logistics

This step involves determining dates for the clients (and other stakeholders, if available) to meet with the students at the beginning and end of the project. Instructors also need to provide directions to the site. It is important to give specific instructions to the client (i.e., how long to talk, what to cover, what materials to bring, etc.), otherwise the clients may feel compelled to speak for the entire class session (in one incident, that was four and a half hours). We generally advise the clients that it will be an informal atmosphere, where we will ask them to give a brief introduction to the problem and their needs. We also ascertain the client’s ideal level of involvement (e.g., do they want to work with the students throughout the course, or would they prefer the students to work independently and then present results)? We also ask clients if they are comfortable if we include the other stakeholders at the initial and final course meetings (clients have always
The logistics for the online courses are somewhat different. Prior to the start of the class session, the instructor solicited a client for the students to assist with marketing needs in the areas of advertising, promotional material, and research. The students were assigned to a group in Blackboard and conducted the project through asynchronous and synchronous sessions (i.e. live chats and discussion boards), teleconferences, phone calls, and email among themselves and the client. One student volunteers as team leader to coordinate the group work and submit the weekly deliverables in a timely manner (and to serve as key contact person with the client).

**Step Five: Product Delivery, Presentations, and Value-Added**

As the course progresses, the students develop their work and submit it to the instructor. The instructor grades it and forwards it (generally the ungraded version) to the client, typically with a value-added dimension such as an overview or summary of all the papers’ findings. A moral dilemma presents itself when a student paper is clearly subpar. Some instructors chose to forward the work, while others have not, only selecting the top student samples of the work. In rare cases, instructors have had to do significant additional work to make the product acceptable.

At the end of the course, the clients and stakeholders come back for the presentation of the final project (e.g., final research analysis, policy analysis, program evaluation). It is important to make this a celebration of the work, with food and beverages if possible. This final meeting provides the clients the opportunity to provide feedback, make suggestions, and discuss what may come of the student work product. One instructor uses the final celebration to discuss internship possibilities, asking the stakeholders if they would like to host interns from the program to work on the problem topic in the future.

In the distance learning courses, the product delivery system differs, since the students cannot present directly to the client. After receiving feedback on product components from the instructor and client, the students submitted the final products via email or regular mail to the clients. The students may also submit a detailed group report reflecting on their experiences providing consulting services in a virtual classroom.

**Step Six: Reflection, Feedback, and Assessment**

It is important to provide students feedback from faculty and agency partners (Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; Whitaker and Berner, 2004). It is also important to allow students to reflect on their experiences and to measure the success of the CBC. Reflective assignments can be integrated into the syllabus or course products. Feedback and assessment are most typically done through course evaluations.
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or post-course client feedback that is shared with the students. However, other perhaps more objective measurement techniques exist to gauge the success of CBC projects.

Some scholars have chosen to measure learning outcomes, while others focus on social or community outcomes. Steinke and Fitch (2007), for example, focus on learning outcomes. They have identified three broad categories of evaluation techniques, including research scales, written essays and protocols, and interviews or other qualitative tools.

An example of a research scale, developed by Steinke, Fitch, Johnson, and Waldstein (2002), consists of an eight-item scale with pre- and post-tests. Students are queried regarding their ability to apply course materials to real-world problems, among other questions. Steinke and Fitch also explore several examples of written essays or protocols as an assessment technique. Some of these techniques present a series of questions intended to explore students’ ideas on learning and knowledge. Others provide rubrics to measure the level of critical thinking demonstrated in essays. Their last category of assessment techniques include interviews and other qualitative tools, such as Eyler and Giles’ (1999, 2002) Problem-Solving Interviewing Protocol, which explores student understandings about causes, solutions and strategies for action concerning a problem. This strategy uses a pre- and post-test. Other measurement examples Steinke and Fitch discuss are based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) or Perry’s (1999) concepts of intellectual development.

Bringle, Phillips, and Hudson (2004) provide an excellent assessment and summary of numerous research scales that can be used to assess service learning outcomes. After establishing criteria for good research scales (e.g., validity, reliability, etc.), they describe various scales that can be used to measure motives and values, moral development, self and self-concept, student development, attitudes, and critical thinking ability and intellectual development (though these are not specifically geared toward public administration courses).

Other scholars measure social outcomes rather than learning outcomes. For example, Wang et al. (2005) developed a survey instrument to measure four outcome domains, including personal competence, interpersonal relationships, responsibility for community service, and responsibility for social justice through a specialized survey. Imperial et al. (2007) provide a comprehensive list of possible service-learning outcomes as a foundation for study.

Bringle and Hatcher (2000) provide a broad overview of five types of assessments, including reflection, process evaluation or monitoring, outcome evaluation, correlational studies, and experimental studies for service learning. They note the relative dearth of studies that support the purported effectiveness of service learning (as do Eyler and Giles, 1999), and encourage such assessments to be grounded in theory.
Sample Checklist for CBC Development and Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Identify courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assess curriculum to identify which courses are potential CBCs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step 2: Identify clients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish client criteria (e.g., nonprofit or public agencies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate potential client sources (e.g., alumni, community partners, newspaper articles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue invitation to client; discuss scope of course</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step 3: Determine products, integrate into course</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine product goals with client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate client goals into syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate client issue into course lectures and discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain benefits of service learning to incoming students</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Step 4: Course logistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange dates for client to come to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or set interaction goals for distance learning students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide logistical info to clients (directions, time for client introduction, level of expected interaction, information on other course clients/guests, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If on-site class, arrange for food and beverages</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step 5: Product delivery, presentations, and value-added</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine if additional instructor work is necessary to provide value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward final student work to client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange final presentation logistics</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Step 6: Reflection, feedback, and assessment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course evaluations and client evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assessment instruments as desired</td>
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</table>

**Overall Design Principles**

In addition to the steps above, it is useful to consider a set of overall design principles in designing successful service learning courses. Imperial, Perry, and Katula (2007) identify seven design principles to help facilitate success, after an extensive review of prior studies. The principles include explicit connections between the service activity and learning objectives; reflection; appropriate time commitment; student input; faculty commitment; perceptible impacts; and feedback loops. In the compressed time-format variations we attempted, appropriate time commitment might be hampered, though Marks (1994) concluded that an hour or two weekly of service provided benefits. Student input (and perceptible impacts) can be enhanced by developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among students and the client (Imperial et al., 2007), though this needs to be accomplished quite quickly in a compressed time-format class.

Bushouse and Morrison (2001) also note several variations that help adapt service learning principles to public administration courses, including the use of Request for Proposals (RFPs) for soliciting nonprofit or agency clients, an MOU to define the scope and expectations among the students and client, and reflec-
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tive journals. Several authors echo the importance of reflective activity such as journals and essays (Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; McGaw and Weschler, 1999; Koliba, 2004; Whitaker and Berner, 2004). Examples of these might include journals, class discussions, student papers and projects, progress reports, and focus groups (Imperial et al., 2007) (see Hatcher and Bringle (1997) for further guidelines on developing effective reflection exercises).

Dicke et al. (2004) also note that effective learning outcomes depend on three factors: establishing clear learning objectives linked to the service activity, effective project design, and appropriate evaluation tools to assess student learning. They note that the reasons for service learning—whether community service, moral development, political activism, or effective pedagogy—“must be transparent if successful learning outcomes are to be achieved” (Dicke et al., 2004, 207).

Nontraditional Course Formats Explored

Traditionally, service learning has taken place in brick and mortar educational institutions where students have the opportunity to visit their local communities and interact with client constituents face to face. However, the number of students who are completing their education through nontraditional course formats such as distance learning continues to grow. Killian (2004) experimented with a mixed format class that combined traditional face to face, distance, and service learning in an 11-week course, and aptly demonstrated that it worked well as measured by student and client satisfaction. Our experience also suggests that it can work even in 100 percent distance learning format, and even shorter compressed courses (nine weeks).

We incorporated service learning into several course formats, including the following:

- on-site adult education courses
- compressed time courses (nine-week term courses)
- on-line/distance learning courses
- cohort formats (where the program is delivered to students at their site of employment).

We viewed service learning as a way to enhance education—and that it some cases, it might be even more beneficial for nontraditional course formats than

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nontraditional Course Formats Employed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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traditional ones. For example, for distance learning, we surmised that combining service learning with Internet instruction would provide students with the opportunity to be actively involved in a concrete learning experience while pursuing their education in a virtual class format. A hybrid of service learning and Internet based classes may introduce a new motivation to e-learning while applying knowledge in a real world setting, and would compensate for a lack of interaction that is sometimes present in an online course.

All of the courses we attempted were with adult learners. Again, we conjectured that service learning would be particularly appropriate for these learners. Green (1989) argues that adult learners require fundamentally different teaching strategies than other students—specifically, that the demands or learning, the role of the instructor, life experiences, and the purpose for learning are quite distinct from traditional students. Green notes that adult learners have significant life experience, and that they benefit from connecting new learning to their knowledge base. He also notes that instruction for adult learners should ideally be task-oriented rather than content memorization. Service learning fits those criteria—it integrates key theories and concepts with active tasks, and it requires students to apply their life experience to creating the products for clients. In addition, clients benefit from the strong skill set that adult learners generally bring to the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9-week course</th>
<th>Distance Learning</th>
<th>Cohort Format</th>
<th>Adult Learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Board of Dentistry</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wiregrass Humane Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uplifting People, Inc.</td>
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<td>TROY Atlanta MPA Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>TROY MPA Program</td>
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Results

The CBCs proved to be a success in both traditional and nontraditional course formats. The courses generally resulted in products that were very useful to the clients, and the service format always enhanced the educational content of the courses. As Green suggested, the task orientation of the CBCs seemed particularly well suited to adult learners, as did their ability to relate their life and work experience to the task.
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Several benefits discussed in the literature proved true here as well, such as motivation, faculty development, enhanced link to the community, and external benefits to clients. It also provided other benefits, including student development of project and client management skills, and a social networking benefit among clients.

CBC Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Students</th>
<th>To Clients</th>
<th>To Faculty</th>
<th>To University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Products/services at no cost</td>
<td>Service to community</td>
<td>Enhanced link to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved writing and analytic, communication, and research skills</td>
<td>Ability to educate students about agency/issue</td>
<td>Enhanced teaching motivation</td>
<td>Enhanced awareness of program (marketing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management skills</td>
<td>Handshake benefit (social networking among project stakeholders)</td>
<td>Tenure benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service to community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience in real-world applications</td>
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Students and faculty were notably more motivated with the CBC courses, because they knew they had the opportunity to do something useful for society (and in the case of drug recycling or the illegal dental operator issues, perhaps even save a life indirectly). One instructor asks her students to stand at the start of the first class, and informs the students they will need to metaphorically “stand up” for the entire course and consistently deliver their best work for the clients. It surprised us how many students manage to personally connect to the issue, be it drug recycling (e.g., students’ grandparents who could not afford prescription drugs), assisting the humane society (students as pet owners), or transitional practices (e.g., students’ relatives who could not find jobs after release from prison). Faculty who participated welcomed the opportunity to provide service and infuse a fresh perspective into the course.

Students noted the use of the clients in their final course evaluations. Troy’s anonymous survey-based course evaluations ask students what they enjoyed about the course. In some of the CBC courses, student responses included the following:

- “The opportunity to apply classroom theory to real-life application by using an actual example of a current policy issue in the community.”
- “Real evaluation experience.”
Client-based Courses: Variations in Service Learning

For some instructors, the use of a CBC may thus be a possible route to improved course evaluations. However, as Dicke et al. (2004, 201) note, consumer satisfaction measures such as the ones above “do not in and of themselves constitute evidence that service learning provides added value,” which is why additional assessment tools are planned in the future to see if the CBC component genuinely enhanced learning.

Comparing course evaluations or other results among courses with service learning projects and those without may also reveal the value added by service learning (see Berson and Younkin, 1998 for example). However, such comparisons pose logistical difficulties. To minimize interfering variables, the ideal comparisons would be among the same course, taught by the same instructor, some with service learning projects and a control group course without the projects (but even then, the results might be affected by the additional enthusiasm an instructor may hold for a service learning course). Other factors may create further challenges. For example, during our experiments the University changed the course evaluation instrument and questions three times, which impeded the effort to make comparisons across courses (as did the different instruments used in onsite versus online courses).

Faculty also used the CBC issues to tie theory to practice. For example, the policy course featuring the drug recycling issue was used to illustrate a number of theories—why government should intervene in the problem (students justified it based on equity concerns, as well as externalities-based market failures from water pollution resulting from flushing drugs into municipal systems), how issues make it onto a policy agenda (e.g., indicators of drugs wasted), etc. The course issue tied in well with almost all course theories presented, and provided a tangible example for students to ponder.
The faculty hope that over time the CBC project will increase visibility of the academic programs in the community via use of the flyer, word of mouth, and perhaps in the future a Web site dedicated to the project. Faculty also fully intends to utilize the CBC experience as part of their service requirements for tenure, which is particularly appropriate for instructors that added value to the student products. Students’ increased awareness about the issue was also a potent benefit. Though many may not encounter illegal dental operators, they may indeed be inspired to recycle prescription drugs in the future or adopt a pet from a humane society. The clients were also pleased with the increased awareness. For example, Uplifting People, Inc. felt a significant benefit had been achieved by raising awareness in the students of how difficult it is for ex-offenders to transition back to society—particularly because several of those MPA students worked in federal, state, and local agencies that may deal with ex-offenders in some capacity.

One unanticipated outcome stemmed from the final student presentations in the on-site courses—what we termed “the handshake benefit.” Where newspaper articles had been used as the course template, the stakeholders were readily identifiable and instructors made attempts to invite them to the final presentations. The networking benefit from the stakeholders meeting each other was undeniable—state enforcement agents meeting a president of a state board, a state agency member meeting a nonprofit Latino health group, a hospice director meeting the director of the state drug agency. As one faculty member remarked after completing her CBC, “This term, I think the clients got more benefit out of the networking than out of the student products.” In some cases, the stakeholders stayed to talk long after the students had completed their presentations.

An important benefit was the development of student skills, including in research, teamwork, presentation, and technology. In one assignment students were asked to use the Lexus/Nexus database to conduct their literature review; in another, students were asked to use Perseus to develop an online evaluative survey). Students also benefited from increased project management skills or client interface skills, even in the online format. Troy in Atlanta called these classes client-based classes, and this orientation was evident throughout the process. In some classes, students developed MOUs to determine client deliverables, appointed a task leader, appointed a primary point person to contact the client, used groups to create deliverables, revised products based on instructor and client feedback, then presented deliverables to the client based on that feedback. In some cases, the client interface aspect was taken a step further. For example, in the course with the humane society, the instructor offered students the opportunity to earn extra points on the final exam by “delighting” the client with additional marketing materials, which all team members chose to do. These experiences may help aid development of critical client interface and project management skills.
Challenges and Limitations

CBCS are not without their limitations. One limitation is instructor time—it can take time to find and manage appropriate clients, as well as arranging the logistics, incorporating added value into the student products or organizing them, and delivering them. Obviously, in a compressed time course format (e.g., a 10-week term), the turnaround time for finding new clients can create pressure. Killian (2004) also noted the additional time required to establish and implement service learning courses in nontraditional formats, and estimated it required approximately 15 to 20 percent more of her time.

Unresponsive clients have also been a challenge on occasion. In one case, the client failed to respond to student emails for clarification and refused to provide feedback on the product. This was a significant disappointment to the students, who had put a great deal of effort into developing the product. Fortunately this has only occurred once, and might be avoided through an MOU or by providing the client with clear expectations regarding the process. This situation occurred in a distance learning course, and we wondered if the lack of face-to-face accountability created an environment that contributed to the situation.

The uneven quality of student products can also be a limitation. Some products are astonishingly good, others stunningly bad, as with any student papers. Again, it is up to the instructor to decide how to address this, whether to only pass along the top papers or to forward them all to the client. There may be a benefit to full forwarding, as students may shirk if they know their work may not reach the client. However, a simply unacceptable product may reflect poorly on the instructor or institution. One option to avoid this scenario is to encourage students to submit early drafts for instructor or client feedback. Uneven quality was a challenge in traditional as well as nontraditional course formats. However, in compressed course formats, it leaves less time for students to improve the product based on feedback, and less time for instructors to make improvements if desired.

Another issue, perhaps particularly challenging in a nontraditional course format, is the short timeframe. Our classes lasted 10 weeks, with nine weeks of instruction. At the program inception, concerns were raised that the short timeframe might shortchange the client in terms of quality products. However, this was not the case. Students were able to produce high-quality products to the client’s benefit, despite the compressed course format. This may be attributable to the student demographic itself—because the students are often working adults, they bring a significant skill set to the course from their work experience, enabling them to generally complete the product quickly and efficiently.

In cases where the timeframe seemed problematic, instructors were able to distribute the workload among two courses (the same class offered in two sequential terms). This generally involves separating out the products. For example, in a graduate program evaluation course, the students in the first term were tasked with designing a program evaluation for master of public administration pro-
gram alumni (the program coordinator served as client). They developed evaluation questions, a logic model, stakeholder analysis, and more. The following term, the next set of students were charged with actually conducting the evaluation and analyzing results. Distributing the workload this way allows more substantial development of the product.

In a distance-learning format, collaboration and schedule conflicts proved to be an issue. Among team members, there were issues with the method of communication (i.e., virtual chat room, as Killian, 2004, also found) and conflicts in time for students to collaborate on project activities. Students recommended that the university support the use of teleconferences for virtual groups to utilize for meeting purposes as a way of overcoming this problem. Virtual chat rooms and teleconferences may present a problem because there are often conflicts with student schedules. Nevertheless, these alternatives must be available for the students to utilize as well as asynchronous forums. A combination of telephone, chat rooms, asynchronous forums, and email exchanges may prove to be ideal in future efforts. However, Killian (2004) notes that backup communication and material delivery strategies are important in the event that the technology fails.

Client/student communication in the distance learning courses proved to be a subtle challenge as well. Since the delivery media was Internet-based, there was less opportunity for social networking and client/student interaction that in other situations might lead to internships or other possibilities. The online format never made students less accountable, but in at least one case may have made the client less accountable. However, including the client in teleconferencing or virtual chat networks, or hosting a social network platform along with the class may lessen this problem in the future. In other words, the client may need to be encouraged to make better use of the electronic course format (the students are already up to speed in that regard). For example, in our onsite policy analysis course, the client stunned the students into awareness on the first night of class by bringing the pictures of people victimized by illegal dentists. Though distance learning lacks this face-to-face interaction, the instructor could help a distance learning client develop a PowerPoint presentation to the same effect.

**Conclusions and Future Directions**

The CBCs resulted in enhanced student and faculty motivation and produced useful products for clients. In addition to the benefits described in the literature, service learning produced unexpected benefits such as social networking among clients and enhanced project management and client interface skills. Despite the logistical demands, the faculty that participated considered the service learning projects highly rewarding for themselves and for the students.

Our experience also demonstrated that service learning can work well even in nontraditional course formats, such as a compressed nine-week course or a distance-learning course. Indeed, CBCs may be particularly beneficial in non-
traditional course formats, as these formats often involve adult learners. Service learning may be particularly useful for adult learners because it engages their life experiences and their ability to learn from hands-on tasks. Moreover, the CBCs can compensate for the potential lack of interaction that may occur in distance learning courses.

In distance learning courses, the students will not make face-to-face presentations to the client, but rather will present using alternative media such as email or powerpoint presentations. The nature of the student/client interaction may be different in distance learning and may require additional effort from the instructor. Online service learning courses may offer less social networking potential among clients and between the client and the stakeholder. However, the benefits of adding service learning components to a distance learning class far outweigh these challenges.

In a compressed timeframe course, the scope of the deliverables may need to be tailored to the short timeframe, or divided among several classes. Because of short terms, faculty may find it difficult to continually find clients (e.g., consider the demands of finding clients for five terms a year versus two semesters a year). However, keeping a pool of clients and sharing clients among faculty and academic programs may lessen this problem. We also learned that a newspaper article can provide an excellent ready-made template for a CBC course, because of the research invested in the article by the reporter and the ready identification of stakeholders. This also assists with client identification, as does fostering service-learning partnerships as an interdisciplinary, cross-program effort among departments. Such cross-program efforts may enhance value for repeat clients.

These experiments suggested that service learning can work in nontraditional course formats, including 100 percent distance learning and nine-week compressed course formats with graduate students. However, as Bringle and Hatcher (2000, 70) note, “to provide merely a description of a specific service-learning program or an isolated service learning class is severely limited because of the context-specific and idiosyncratic nature of the case description.” Thus, though the students and faculty expressed satisfaction with the course through end-of-term evaluations, further research must be conducted to provide more concrete evidence that these efforts genuinely provide enhanced learning outcomes in nontraditional course formats.

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Client-based Courses: Variations in Service Learning


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Client-based Courses: Variations in Service Learning


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Client-oriented Projects: GIS Course Design with the Potential to Serve Multiple Constituents

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Abstract

Project-based learning geared toward a client provides the instructor with an applied method for classroom teaching. This article provides detailed information on how to incorporate project-based assignments into public administration courses. Student evaluations indicate that students perceive their learning to be more effective when it is project-based and client- or real-world oriented. This article looks at the integration of project-based assignments to coursework even when there is no identified “real” client.

Teaching at a metropolitan university in a master of public policy and administration program brings with it several expectations. One expectation is that the students can and will make contributions to the community through their coursework and beyond the completion of their degree. Frequently, the motivation and expectation comes directly from the students, who look for culminating projects that allow them to synthesize their program learning. Other times, students seek to tailor class papers into topics of specific interest to them to help solve problems and issues they have encountered in their employment. Presidents and provosts of universities may also have expectations that their programs will produce outcomes that concretely demonstrate the value of their educational institutions to a variety of constituents in the community. A master of public administration, public affairs, or public policy program provides a unique opportunity to create a nexus where these interests and outcomes become a reality. This paper discusses how to integrate client-oriented, project-based assignments for effective incremental skill building and for producing outcomes that serve multiple constituents.

Project-based learning is increasingly popular in public administration programs. The projects themselves may be internships that are geared toward an
agency’s needs to reach a particular goal (for examples that employ reflective learning, see Cross and Grant, 2006). Community Service provides another opportunity. When community service is integrated into course instruction appropriately, the service project will “illustrate, affirm, extend, and challenge material presented in reading and lectures” (Markus, Howard, and King 1993, 417). Root and Thorne provide a specific example from an applied statistics course in which participating in service learning was optional. The authors found the projects themselves assisted students who were not even involved in the community service element of the course by exposing those students to the relevance and applicability of the techniques and ideas in the course (2001). Other instances include experiential learning working in teams on projects for real clients in the community, as Whitaker and Berner (2004) describe. These projects may even be as large in scope as helping international nongovernmental organizations conduct research (see Miller-Millesen and Mould, 2004). Team projects can teach students the value of and skills needed for achieving effective team outcomes (see Schumaker, 2005, for information on effective group projects). Other examples that may not readily be viewed as project-based but certainly qualify as such include David Whiteman’s Ecology and Politics course, which entails a “syllabus-in-progress.” In this instance, the students are involved in creating the syllabus as well as being the client for the project (2003, 87).

Project-based assignments provide skill building while also potentially producing products that can serve a broader audience. It is perhaps obvious that team and individual projects can be created without having a “real” client in mind. However, having at least an intended client may bring more motivation, commitment, and appreciation to the task, whether it is undertaken by an individual or a group. This provides students the opportunity to marshal the skills and concepts they have been learning to produce applied projects. When the projects are of interest to the students themselves as well as others in the community, the students may be emboldened by seeing the way their work and skills can serve an audience beyond their instructor.

Client-oriented projects differ from fictitious exercises. A fictitious exercise’s purpose can be limited to demonstrating the mastery of a skill, theory, or concept. Students immediately recognize that the goal of the assignment is to demonstrate their learning. Client-based projects allow students to see the way the potential mastery of the skills or concepts can serve an applied purpose.

Student comments illustrate how having a real-world scenario enhances their learning. One student in my public policy analysis course said

[T]he opportunity to work in depth on a project for a college course that is also relevant to my job makes the experience of learning that much more meaningful to me. It also increases the project’s value to me, my employer...and the citizens I serve as a public agent.
If my classroom project had been a fictitious exercise or preselected topic I would not have been as engaged and committed to the project as I was. As master’s students each of us have topics about which we are passionate and/or professionally engaged. In myself and my fellow students I saw that by applying a new tool or skill to our individual areas of interest we were engaged in dynamic ways. We cared about what we were researching.¹

This article provides specific examples on the way to apply real and intended real client project-based assignments to coursework from a public policy analysis course I teach. This course requires students to perform spatial analysis using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. In the class, students actually have two projects: one that contributes to our Policy Center’s State of the Region report, and their final project, which is on a policy topic of their choosing. The instructor and student can tailor the final, project-based assignment to serve the broader community without necessarily enlisting a real client.

Project-Based Learning

Most of the scholarly literature on project-based research cites the use of a direct client. There are benefits to this approach. Students encounter and must overcome the real-life difficulties of applying concepts and ideas from their course to achieve the objectives. But what if there is a problem or issue for which there is no direct client? This is often the case in public policy, where the larger community is really the client. If there is no direct client, then it is worthwhile to identify outlets for the project-based assignment outcomes. Linking project-based assignments to university research centers’ needs and missions can provide an intended client.

This article looks at the integration of project-based assignments to coursework even when there is no identified real client. This client-oriented approach differs from other client assignments such as in-service learning or internships in which students interact directly with the clients. However, like these other approaches, the one described here has the potential of benefiting multiple constituents. First, I describe the way client-oriented, project-based assignments have been integrated into a course I teach. Then, as evidence of the value of connecting students’ learning to real situations, I provide accounts of how students perceived that the course enhanced their learning. Finally, I discuss the way this approach can be applied to other courses and types of assignments and I identify means other than a policy center that instructors can use to compile student work.

Project Assignment with a Client

There are really two client-oriented, project-based assignments tucked into the five assignments in my public policy analysis course. The first project-based
assignment actually has a real client—our public policy research center—even though it is clear that the product or report is intended to serve a much larger audience. In this assignment, students assisted in the production of the inaugural State of the Region report of a particular metropolitan area. The director of the Public Policy Center and I were looking for ways in which we could bring our MPA students into the project without the luxury of a budget to add more graduate assistants. We hit on the idea of incorporating an assignment into my course that would help the policy center with the report. Students would get an opportunity to see a real application of their work, and the policy center would benefit from the ability to add more maps and analysis to the report. Students knew that this report would be unveiled at the annual Leadership Conference. This conference is sponsored by the chamber of commerce of the largest city in the metropolitan region. Attendees include over 200 stewards of the region from the public, private, and nonprofit spheres. The conference is an annual opportunity for the leaders in the community to collectively look at the challenges facing the region. Additionally, guest speakers from around the country present best practices, research, and lessons they have learned in addressing similar issues. The State of the Region project presented at the leadership conference clearly provided students an opportunity to bring the value of their work to a client. Additionally, the project-based assignment benefited everyone involved.

Students indicated a sincere preference for this type of assignment. One student noted,

This broadened my understanding of how a common tool could be used in diverse ways. I also appreciated being a part of the final State of the Region report. This end use provided us with professional credibility and increased pride in our student work.

Another student wrote,

Knowing that the information generated may be used in an official document certainly pushed me to try harder in developing useful results and analysis. Projects that involve real data about an area I was familiar with made the assignment more interesting. Having personal knowledge of some of the areas under analysis added an extra dimension to the project and helped greatly in the analysis. For example, knowledge of the rural nature of surrounding counties helped in my analysis of law enforcement personnel issues. If I had not been familiar with these areas I could have only speculated about the underlying causes attributed to differing county data. Seeing that the results were included in the publication of the State of the Region report was also a great plus. The vast majority of projects and
assignments doled out in school simply disappear back to my file cabinet never to be seen again. I feel that at the graduate level...actual contribution to larger publications or useful community projects should be promoted whole-heartedly.

How was this assignment framed? The assignment was designed to be the students’ first foray into descriptive and/or exploratory analysis using GIS. The basic exercise, which has been crafted to be relatively easy, is to display data in an interesting fashion that requires making use of various tools in GIS. There are alternative ways to accomplish this using GIS, but the assignment required students to find the most appropriate means to display their data given the information they were working with for the project. The students had a choice from several topics. Once the students selected a topic, they were asked to make an interesting map that would tell readers of the State of the Region report something interesting about the region. In order to accomplish this, students made use of the GIS skills they had learned to date. It also required them to do some analysis for the first time. Suitable maps and analysis would be included in the State of the Region report, underscoring the fact that their hard work would be rewarded beyond their grade in this class. Students were asked to submit a first draft, knowing they would have a chance to create a final draft that might entail some revisions for the State of the Region report. For the first draft, students were asked to use the data provided for the topic they selected and present at least two interesting maps in both black and white and color for a total of at least four maps with analyses. Various types of data were provided for each topic. The students had to evaluate whether the different presentations told different stories about the data. Each student then made a recommendation and provided justification for including one of his or her four maps in the State of the Region report.

After I made comments on the draft versions, the students submitted a final map and text describing the map to be included in the report. Ultimately, every student had one map included in the report. Each student was acknowledged in the report and received a copy of the report for their personal library. The knowledge that a real client and potential broader audience would be the recipient of their project most definitely motivated students to do good work. Additionally, students were forced to look at their creations from the eye of an unknown user. This required more work than submitting a product to the instructor, who they could assume had some knowledge about what was expected in the outcome. When the audience was broader than just the instructor, the students had to provide identifiable detail and a concise description of the map rather than assume that their reader would automatically understand their work and its relevance to the region.

Feedback from students and attendees at the leadership conference was positive. One student’s evaluation noted, “We covered a lot of material in one semester. I
understand how it is applied in the real world.” Another student said, “I like the hands-on approach to GIS. I like the real-world, local tie-ins in the assignments.”

Evaluation forms from the leadership conference reflected comments on the State of the Region report that ranged from “nice job” to “on the whole very interesting and useful” and “great tool to have, especially over time.” All of the comments about the report were positive, and many suggested data and issues they hoped could be included in future reports. The positive evaluations are indicative of the value of the students’ contributions to the project for everyone involved.

**Project Assignment without a Defined Client**

Unlike the basic assignment, the final project did not have a direct client, at least not at the start of the students’ projects. For this assignment, students were asked to formulate a question of interest to them on a topic of research that is of importance for the state or metropolitan area. Students were asked to collect some data and use GIS to answer their question. The question was required to have a geographical anchor, but beyond that criterion I was open to the substantive area. Because the students’ topics were to have some potential importance to the state or the metropolitan area, we had a potential client for the outcome: the Policy Center. If the Policy Center deemed the projects and findings suitable, they would be placed on the Policy Center’s Web page under the heading “Student Work” for the interest of the community.

The key components of the paper were to formulate a question, to find or collect some data and do analysis using—at a minimum—GIS, and finally, to present the results in a useful and interesting fashion. The final paper was required to have the following elements:

- **Question**
- **Executive summary** suitable to be considered for publication by the Policy Center
- **Review of what has been done** on the topic and/or past and current state of the situation
- **Discussion of data**, including issues of reliability and any interesting stories about collection
- **Analysis**
- **Conclusions**, including a discussion of shortcomings.

Students could make a contribution of knowledge to an intended client or to serve the larger public in diverse ways. Students chose to examine seasonal park usage throughout the state and its relationship to water levels; identify available parcels of land for redevelopment that qualify for particular tax credits; explore
the spatial relationships between demographic and economic and geographic factors to identify hot spots for suicides; examine the effect of an implemented public art policy on the spatial dispersion of public art in a city; identify relationships between minority population settlements in the state and education and economic outcomes in communities; and examine the spatial relationship between population growth and housing value in the state. Ultimately, two of the projects were chosen to be on the Policy Center’s Web page.

Students once again revealed appreciation for the opportunity to connect their research to the real world. One student wrote,

As a nontraditional, ‘older student,’ I think the project approach allows the student to select an area of their interest…. This serves two needs. First it permits examination of an area in the student’s sphere of interest. Then it permits exploration and examination [of the subject] in depth…. An assigned project may not stimulate research and presentation to the same depth or detail.

Another student exploring methods she could use in her own consulting firm clearly appreciated the value of her work:

The purpose of the exercise is to prepare a real-life analysis for a development client in an effort to speed up the process of site control. That effort will make the consultant invaluable to the developer whether for a nonprofit or for-profit developer.

Another student who works for city government said,

My day to day work is often reactive to the issues and deadlines at hand. In class, being able to choose to focus on an in-depth research project in my professional area of interest allowed me to build on my existing body of knowledge but [also] to delve deeper into the subject matter in a way I can rarely do in my office. The outcomes of my classroom project in [the policy analysis course] are relevant data and narrative reports that I’ve already used at a board retreat and in a report to the mayor.

Another student indicated that

[Being able to choose my own project for the final assignment was also of great benefit to my educational experience. It provided one of the best opportunities of my graduate education to bridge the gap

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between my education and workplace. Because the project involved data collected from my workplace I had a much stronger motivation to try and reveal something interesting through my analysis.

It also afforded me the opportunity to share some of my educational experiences with my employer. This allowed me to showcase some of my newfound abilities that may not have been known to my employer previously.... Perhaps most importantly, in trying to study real-world problems I was exposed to the difficulties and complexities that real research and analysis involves…. Projects show students the difficulties in trying to connect theory to real-world applications.

Additionally, on two occasions, students were expected to present their work to the entire class. For the first presentation, the students were asked to give an informal presentation on the status of their project. This provided a unique opportunity for classmates to share experiences and insights and ask questions that the presenter may not have considered. Students also gave a more formal presentation of their results at the end of the term, which provided another opportunity to learn by interaction with classmates. Students found this experience valuable as well. One student indicated, “I really enjoyed the presentation as we learned from each other.” Another wrote, “It was interesting to see the spectrum of the subjects that were chosen by the class and the possible use that might be made beyond putting the material in a drawer and forgotten.” One other student said,

We were interested and surprised by some of our research results. It was a meaningful learning experience not only...[because of our] cool new computer skills but also in how we were able to analyze familiar topics in fresh and more complex ways. Through the presentation and reports at the end, I learned about others’ professions such as real estate, urban redevelopment, and state park preservation.

**Limitations and Advantages of the Client-oriented Approach**

One limitation to the client-oriented, project-based assignment is the potential for students to choose topics that are not a good fit for an intended client outlet. If a project is not a good fit, then in theory this could diminish from the overall learning and experience. However, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Students still participate and evaluate and appreciate topics that hold more promise for a broader audience and can learn from that insight. One student said,

The only difficulty I see with real-world projects is for those students who lack experience outside educational pursuits. These students may find it somewhat more difficult to collect data from outside
organizations. Because the MPA program requires students to have worked in the public sector or serve an internship, the problems of trying to find a suitable project are greatly alleviated.

In the case of younger students or students with less formal work experience, simulations may be another good option. Simulation can be a helpful teaching tool, particularly with younger students with less life experience (see Shellman, 2001, and Milam, 2003, for detailed examples).

Using client-oriented projects as a teaching approach has clear advantages and beneficiaries. One obvious beneficiary is the students who are motivated in their own learning and the pride they have in its outcomes. The clients and intended clients also benefit from this approach. The State of the Region report and its recipients benefited from additional maps and analysis that it would not have had otherwise for the report’s first publication and presentation at a major conference with 200 business, government, and nonprofit leaders in attendance.

The individual projects had several beneficiaries as well. Two student projects benefited their employers, and one student project is helping the student with her own long-term self-employment goals. Another student decided that, after all the work he put into the project, he would share his findings with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The local parks and recreation office indicated that they intend to use his data to evaluate whether any staffing changes need to be made.

Another advantage of client-oriented, project-based learning is that, if organized properly, it can feel like or actually be a career or professional experience for students, which adds depth to their learning outcome. Another benefit of project-based learning is that it provides students with an obvious opportunity to make presentations, evaluate others’ work during the presentation, and begin to see strengths and weaknesses in various approaches to a range of projects.

**Future Possibilities for Project Assignments**

One might conclude that teaching a software program, especially one like GIS, simply lends itself to this sort of application. Even if this is the case, it does not diminish from the usefulness of client-oriented assignments in other classes. I have integrated this technique into nearly every course I teach. Another example can be drawn from a planning course I teach in which I ask students to pick a topic or a city that is of interest to them. If they choose a topic they must find a city where their topic is in action. If they choose a city they must merely have interest in learning more about that city. I then provide a two-step, project-based assignment and have them integrate elements from both projects into the final paper. The first step involves collecting secondary data on the city and using it in an analysis. The second step is to find a best practice from that same city for deal-
ing with a planning issue that may be of interest to their boss or someone in the city; this gives them intended clients for the research project.

Client-oriented, project-based learning assignments could likely be used in many classes other than methods and planning courses. Topics such as public policy, grant writing, and budgeting seem obvious possibilities, but most anything in the realm of public affairs education is likely to be a good candidate for this approach. The range of assignments might include gearing a public policy options assignment to the director of particular agency or neighborhood association. It might include responding with a proposal to an actual request for proposal or creating and justifying the next year's budget for an particular agency. In these examples, the process could be taken a step further by inviting the agency or neighborhood association representative or panel of experts into the classroom to critique the final outcomes. This step has the added value of bringing the intended client a little closer to the assignment.

As noted previously, linking project-based assignments to a university research center’s needs and missions can provide an intended client. University policy centers can help distribute student work by posting high-quality student papers or executive summaries on topics of interest on their Web pages. Even if there is no policy center connected to the program, there are other ways to get students’ work out and to identify potential clients. Nonprofits, agencies, and small communities might all have projects or pieces of projects that could benefit from the skills being developed in a particular course. Bell, Mattern, and Telin provide a detailed explanation of the way they introduced this technique in a research methods class. They argue this approach has all the merits of service learning without the problems that critics often cite (2007). Specific examples of assignments could involve assisting an understaffed rural community that might need several maps for a report or perhaps a careful consideration of a policy. A few slightly more academic options might include having the student gear her work toward a professional or student journal. Annual poster sessions at the state capital, community center, or even student center are other likely outlets with audiences for student work.

**Conclusions**

Metropolitan universities and master’s degrees in public administration, public affairs, and public policy, in particular, provide unique opportunities to create learning experiences that can make lasting contributions to their communities while their students are still in school. At the adult education level, the real life tie-in can be important to students’ motivation and depth of learning. Project-based assignments provide a means for creating learning opportunities that develop applied skills and serve a broader audience than do fictitious exercises. Students indicated they appreciated delving into applying their skills as well as
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the depth of learning they acquired from project-based assignments with real and intended clients.

Some courses and some students are more prone to apply techniques to real-life issues of burning interest to the students or to meet community needs. Even the best-designed project-based learning assignments may not always go as expected. However, project-based learning, even with only an intended client in mind, can help motivate students and improve potential outcomes. Student contributions to the community via a policy center report, consideration by an agency director, or even an open poster session forum can reinforce the practical dimensions of their courses and keep students motivated in their own learning.

Thanks to Ross Barkhurt and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article, to Brady Baybeck (my former GIS instructor), and to Jim Weatherby, who was willing to give the client-oriented project idea a home. I would also like to recognize the spring 2006 Public Policy Analysis students, who all rose to the challenge.

REFERENCES

NOTES
1. Student comments are taken from the students’ written reflections and evaluations submitted to the course instructor. The student authors of these comments are not identified in order to preserve confidentiality.
2. The problems being reported are unequal power relations between the service providers and students and little or no input from community members.
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Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum

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Abstract
Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogy available to MPA professors who seek to provide students with a learning environment and skills that allow students to solve complex, real-world problems, think critically, learn to collaborate with others, and assume responsibility for their learning. Although problem-based learning is best associated with medical schools, its methods and learning style are beneficial to MPA programs. This article discusses PBL and its methods and evaluates the implementation of PBL in an MPA setting. The findings indicate that PBL helps students enhance collaboration and decision-making skills.

Today, our students must be prepared to function in a very different working world than existed even ten years ago. The problems that these future professionals will be expected to solve will cross disciplinary boundaries, and will demand innovative approaches and complex problem-solving skills. Those of us who teach [MPA students]...are obligated to rethink how we teach and what our students need to learn in order to prepare them for this challenging time. (Duch, Groh, and Allen, The Power of Problem-Based Learning)

Several years ago at the Annual Conference for Teaching Public Administration, Nancy Boyer (2001) suggested that problem-based learning (PBL) be implemented in the public administration curriculum. Heeding Boyer’s call, PBL was implemented in a core MPA course, the Seminar in Public Administration, in an attempt to enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills among our master of public policy and administration (MPPA) graduates. This article discusses PBL and its methods and evaluates the implementation of PBL in an MPA curriculum. It concludes with recommendations to enhance MPA education with PBL.

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Public Administration Education

Public administration has its academic roots in Woodrow Wilson’s (1887) call for academia to study the administration of government. Yet it would be another generation before the establishment of the first public administration schools and degree programs (Frederickson 2004). As public administration evolved over the years, many called for public administration to be relevant not only as an academic discipline but also for practitioners. Donald Kettl expressed those sentiments in his recent evaluation of public administration as a field. He writes,

Government managers are groping their way along trying to redesign their financial and personnel systems without the intellectual support they need. A troubling thought is that public managers fail to listen to what public administration has to say because it does not speak in a language they hear. Moreover, what they do hear might too often seem an answer to yesterday’s problems instead of the new issues on their desks today. (1999, 131)

Public administration as a discipline can better speak the practitioner’s language if classroom instruction is relevant and focuses on contemporary issues. Many public administration scholars seek to ensure public administration’s relevance to those who work in the public and nonprofit sectors. Journals such as Public Administration Review, for example, want to remain relevant for working administrators. PAR includes several practitioner-oriented sections to attract more articles by practitioners and to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Stillman and Raadschelders, 2006; Stivers, 2000). Journals such as the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management and to a larger extent the Journal of Public Affairs Education also prioritized public affairs education (Frederickson, 2004).

Many new doctoral graduates embark on an academic career with little or no formal training as teachers (Duch, Groh, and Allen, 2001). They mimic their graduate professors’ behaviors, styles, and pedagogies without giving much thought to the learning environment, learning objectives, and assessment. Many become teachers—good and bad—through trial and error. Many struggle to find new teaching methods that motivate and improve student learning. It is imperative that graduates of master in public administration (MPA) programs be “problem-solvers, capable of independent learning and teamwork, able to conduct and utilize research, and to communicate effectively” (Boyer, 2001, 2).

Public administration instruction witnessed concerted efforts to improve pedagogy and to get “out of the ivory tower” (Jelier and Clarke, 1999, 167) in the hope of melding theory and practice. Recent calls for new approaches to teaching public administration include pedagogies that incorporate practical experience and current real-world problems with theory. Some of these new teaching approaches include service learning (Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004; DiPadova
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and Hebert, 1998; Jacoby, 1996), community analysis (Jelier and Clarke, 1999), case studies (Watson, 2002), simulations (Dede, 2002a), the praxis approach (Dede, 2002b), experiential learning (Cunningham and Weschler, 2002), self-reflective learning (Herzog, 2004; Cunningham and Weschler, 2002), and problem-based learning (Boyer, 2001). Additionally, many MPA programs use practitioner adjunct professors to teach MPA courses in an attempt to make public administration relevant to practitioners and bring practical experience to the classroom (Felts, 1989).

Problem-based Learning

John Dewey once said, “learning is based on discovery guided by mentoring rather than the transmission of information” (as quoted by Boyer Commission, 1998, 15). Problem-based learning is a teaching method that encourages active learning by students. In short, students work together to solve problems. In doing so they learn the necessary skills needed to research and solve complex problems. PBL began in medical schools where medical professors used complex, real-world problems to guide student learning. PBL places the responsibility for learning on the students by generally requiring students work in small groups to solve complex, real-world problems (Duch, Groh, and Allen, 2001). In essence, PBL provides students with a learning environment and skills that will help students to

- think critically and be able to analyze and solve complex, real-world problems;
- find, evaluate, and use appropriate learning resources;
- work cooperatively in teams and small groups;
- demonstrate versatile and effective communication skills, both verbal and written;
- and use content knowledge and intellectual skills acquired at the university to become continual learners. (Duch, Groh, and Allen, 2001, 6)

Although PBL is best associated with medical schools, MPA programs can greatly benefit from its methods and learning style (Boyer, 2001). Many professional schools and programs utilize PBL to provide their students with the skills necessary to succeed on the job (Boyer, 2001; Stinson and Milter, 1996). In fact, one business school overhauled its entire curriculum to integrate PBL in response to criticism that business schools are “too theoretical and out of touch with business realities” (Stinson and Milter, 1996, 34).

What differentiates PBL from other teaching methods, such as the case study approach, is that the problems are brief, current, complex, and even ill-structured (Stinson and Milter, 1996). In other words, problems are more like the real world. Traditional public administration cases or end-of-the-chapter problems allow for groups to divide the work, answer the questions, and reassemble the
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answers for submission (Duch, 2001). By doing so, according to Barbara Duch, “students end up learning less not more” because they focus on the questions they need to answer and not the bigger picture (Duch, 2001, 49, emphasis original). In PBL, however, students are expected to solve current problems rather than re-hash cases that are out of date. For example, Stinson and Milter (1996) argue that the following five principles should guide PBL problems and/or cases:

- learning outcomes should be holistic, not divided by narrow disciplinary boundaries;
- problems should mirror professional practice;
- problems should be ill-structured; and
- problems should be contemporary.

Finding and/or designing PBL cases/problems can be a challenge. Because problems should engage student learning and be related to the subject matter, instructors generally design PBL problems to also incorporate the course objectives. Each PBL problem should include a decision element requiring students to make a decision and justify their decision. Problems should be ambiguous and can be designed in multiple stages that provide new information as the course progresses. Problems should be complex enough to allow input and participation from all group members (Duch, 2001). Duch (2001, 49) says, “the power of problem-based learning...lies in the ability of the group to synthesize what they have learned and connect that new knowledge to the framework of understanding that they are building, based on the concepts of the course.” Initial cases or stages “should be open-ended, based on previously learned knowledge, and/or be controversial so that all students in the group are initially drawn into a discussion of the topic” (Duch, 2001, 49). Finally, cases should link course concepts and objectives.

One of the challenges for PBL is identifying problems for the students; because of this, professors generally write their own problems to ensure that problems are holistic, ambiguous, contemporary, and tied to course objectives. The benefit of ill-structured or ambiguous problems is that they mimic real-world problems. Public managers rarely have complete information (Simon, 1997); rather, many problems that arise in the workplace are ambiguous, messy, and dynamic. Stinson and Milter (1996, 37) argue that problems that today’s managers confront are “not prepackaged, preanalyzed, and provided for the manager. There is no ‘Harvard Business School Case Study’ of the day.” Managers must be able to assess the problem and know where to turn to research and find answers to the problems that confront them on a daily basis (Stinson and Milter, 1996).

Finally, problems should be contemporary. The problems for an MPA course, discussed below, are contemporary problems that confront public managers.

The next section discusses the implementation of PBL in the MPA curriculum.
PBL AND THE MPA CURRICULUM

In the summer of 2004, Mississippi State University offered a workshop on PBL that I attended. Like many MPA professors I incorporate case studies in my curriculum. However, formal training for new Ph.D.s in any teaching method, let alone the case study method, is sporadic and inconsistent. Some resources for teaching public administration students exist, especially teaching with cases. These resources include titles such as Laurence Lynn’s *Teaching & Learning with Cases: A Guidebook*, Robert P. Watson’s *Public Administration: Cases in Managerial Role Playing*, Richard Stillman’s *Public Administration Concepts and Cases*, and Grover Starling’s *Managing the Public Sector*. Journals such as the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *PS*, the *Journal of Political Science Education*, and the *Journal of Management Education* provide much needed insight into the art and science of teaching public administration.

When I initially received information about a two-week PBL training seminar at Mississippi State University, I assumed the course would ground participants in teaching with cases. Instead, the course provided participants with a new pedagogy that promised to motivate and guide student learning. It also provided those who attended with a theoretical basis for using cases and problems in the classroom. The PBL seminar guided participants through the PBL process and methodology that includes planning the course, writing cases, facilitating the cases and learning, and assessing student learning.

Following the lead of my mentors and professors, I lecture very little in MPA courses. Much of the in-class time is devoted to discussing the readings and placing them into the public sector or not-for-profit context. Students lead the discussions according to their assigned readings. I view my role as a facilitator to generate discussions and keep them flowing toward predetermined objectives. I also make ample use of case studies—some of these cases are similar in nature to a PBL problem—to introduce students to practical problems they might encounter in the workplace. My teaching philosophy requires students to be responsible for their learning and to come to class prepared for informed discussions. This teaching philosophy encourages students to read and think critically, and it enhances their oral presentation skills. The use of case studies and simulations help enhance students’ problem-solving and decision-making skills. This type of instruction is not without its flaws: 1) some students think they do not have to read if they are not in charge of the presentation and 2) some students would rather be lectured to and spoon-fed the material rather than take on more responsibility for their own learning, even at the graduate level.

In the MPA courses I teach, I use case studies to provide students with problems that help build their decision-making and problem-solving skills. Case studies and problems are also used as a nexus between theory and practice. These instructional methods help provide students with problems that public managers face in the workplace. The downside of using cases is that many of the cases are
Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum

outdated and contain too much information. The questions at the end of the cases guide discussion, but they also compartmentalize learning and do not encourage in-depth research to answer the questions. PBL provides professors with an additional tool to help students become confident with making decisions and solving problems in a future public employment or not-for-profit setting. In many instances, PBL problems differ from cases in that they do not have questions for students to answer. Rather, students analyze the problem by breaking it down to reach learning issues. They then research these learning issues to answer the questions deduced from the problem.

In fall 2004, PBL was implemented in the Seminar in Public Administration course, which is the general overview core course for the MPA program. After perusing many online syllabi from similar courses and prior sections of this course taught in our department, I adopted the following course objectives for the Seminar in Public Administration. After completing the course students should be able to

• understand the nature, scope, and history of the field of public administration, and the variety of academic disciplines that have contributed to its theories and practices;
• gain an understanding of the competing values, traditions, and tenets that shape public administration as a field of both theory and practice;
• understand and apply a variety of normative and theoretical perspectives to the issues and practices of public administration;
• become familiar with a wide variety of theorists who have contributed directly and significantly to the field of public administration; and
• enhance their values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively in managing public organizations including information management, technology applications, and policy.

In addition to the course objectives, I hoped PBL would

• help students to learn how to read and write critically;
• enhance students’ communication skills;
• teach and enhance students’ leadership skills;
• instill the importance of collaboration and team building;
• enhance computer presentation skills; and
• enhance research skills.

For this course, student learning was assessed through weekly briefs, critical essays, oral presentations, group projects, and a final exam. These methods are conducive to the learning objectives outlined for this course. Each week, students wrote a brief comment (two pages) on the assigned readings. The paper was meant to be an articulate response to the materials read and to offer a critique or praise of the readings. The student had broad discretion in that the briefs may fo-
Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum

cus on a particular chapter, reading, or focus on the bigger questions studied that week. As appropriate, students were encouraged to draw comparisons with works read earlier in the course or in other courses. These papers were evaluated on the clarity and strength of student's writing as well as on the ideas they expressed. These briefs, essentially, were used to assess each of the course objectives. At first many students found it difficult to synthesize the week's readings into two pages. By the end of the semester, many students were experts at synthesizing the information. The weekly briefs proved useful for PBL assignments that required a brief memo or an executive summary.

The case studies and PBL problems were used to provide students with practical situations and to build their problem-solving and decision-making skills. For the traditional public administration case, students selected their own groups and one case to analyze and present to the class. Students used Robert P. Watson's *Public Administration: Cases in Managerial Role-playing* to select their cases.

For the PBL problems I randomly assigned students to diverse groups that included at least one solid “A” student. Each group chose a group member to act as a facilitator and a scribe. Problems were introduced in class. Students separated into their groups and were encouraged to begin analyzing the problem. Each group was allowed to work on the problem at their own pace and time. The problems required out-of-class research on topics to be discussed the week that the problems were due. They used the library, the Internet, textbooks, and appropriate government officials as resources to help develop solutions to the PBL problems. The end product, depending on the problem, was an oral presentation, a written essay, or an executive memo. At the end of the semester, students rated their group members and their participation (see Appendix).

Finally, the course utilized oral presentations to assess and enhance communication and computer skills (i.e., PowerPoint). Students presented assignments as individuals and groups. The oral presentation assessed learning and the ability to present learned materials to the rest of the class in a concise and coherent manner. Oral presentations also tested the presenters' knowledge and ability to answer questions on the spot.

The remainder of this article focuses on the PBL aspect of the course. I discuss the planning, implementation, and assessment of PBL.

PBL Planning

PBL requires considerable up-front planning to ensure that the problems/cases and assessment tools are linked together and reflect the course objectives. It is strongly recommended that PBL instructors develop a facilitator's guide to assist them with the case. The facilitator's guide provides an outline that reflects planning, implementation, and desired outcomes of the case. Table 1 presents a portion of the facilitator's guide developed to help implement the PBL problems.
Table 1. Goals, Learning Issues, and Expectations for Problem

1. Goals
   a. The problem will be presented in two stages. Each stage requires several weeks of research to adequately address the issues.
   b. Stage 1
      i. Introduce students to human resource management issues.
      ii. Students should be able to understand intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and their relationship to employee morale.
      iii. Students should be able to research and analyze different pay systems and recommend which systems best meet the needs of the organization.
      iv. Students should write a clear and concise memo communicating their findings.
      v. Students will work as a team.
   c. Stage 2
      i. Introduce students to the budgetary process in a political environment.
      ii. Introduce students to economic development issues.
      iii. Students should learn that policy priorities do not always remain a priority for political officials.
      iv. This case should help students anticipate the influence that politics has on public management.
      v. Students should recognize many times policies conflict with each other.
      vi. Students will present their findings in a clear and concise manner.
      vii. Students will use computer-aided presentation software to relate their findings.
      viii. Students will work as a team.

2. Anticipated Learning Issues
   a. Stage one
      i. Why doesn’t the current pay system work?
      ii. How is pay related to morale?
      iii. What types of pay systems are being used?
      iv. Can one of these systems be adapted to meet the needs of the city?
      v. How does the city’s pay compare to other entities in the area?
      vi. Can other rewards attract and retain employees? If so, what are some examples of these types of rewards?
         vii. How much will it cost?
   b. Stage Two
      i. What causes budgetary shortfalls?
      ii. What types of budgeting systems are available?
      iii. How do public policies relate to the budgetary process?
      iv. How is the budget used to entice economic development?
      v. How accurate are revenue projections?
      vi. How much will it cost?

3. Expectations
   a. The problem will be given in two stages. The first introduces a human resource management problem and asks for recommendations. The second—roughly two to three weeks later—introduces students to dilemmas that arise during the budgetary processes when attempting to implement and pay for previous policy recommendations.
   b. This class takes a broad look at Public Administration, focusing on two substantive areas that are not covered in-depth by the readings or class discussions. The problems provide students with more in-depth look into two substantive areas covered by other core MPPA courses.
Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum

Students are presented with a problem and begin to analyze the problem. Students develop five panels (columns) to guide their thinking: data/facts, questions, hypotheses, learning issues, and resources. For the first panel, students list all of the facts known about the problem; this panel is an exhaustive list of the information provided by the problem. Students next write down questions generated by the problem and the facts. A third column asks students to develop hypotheses or pre-theories that can be developed from their questions. Students outline questions they do not understand; these questions become learning issues. Learning issues are prioritized and researched. Finally, students list available resources to assist them with answering the questions generated in the learning issues panel.

Early in the semester, I provided students with a short case and facilitated the case to demonstrate how PBL works. The case read as follows:

Jonesville Police Department invested in a photo-radar system in an attempt to help control speeders. Photo radar is an efficient and effective way for the police department to control speed in targeted areas. There has been a 40 percent increase in speeding tickets since the department began using photo-radar. Corresponding revenues are also up. Since the use of photo-radar began two months ago, the mayor and city council members have received numerous complaints about the use of this new technology. Feeling the heat from the public, the mayor scheduled a meeting with the police chief to discuss the department’s use of photo-radar.

The class generated responses to each of the five panels. Most importantly, the students developed a number of learning issues. The key with the practice problem was to demonstrate PBL to the students and to provide them with a real-world complex problem that public managers face on a daily basis.

In addition to the demonstration problem, I presented students with two more problems. The first problem was presented in two stages to acquaint students with human resources, budgeting, and policy issues in the public-sector setting. The final problem was presented as the final exam (students worked alone on the exam). Table 2 presents the two-stage problem used for this course. The first stage presented a human resource issue that quickly turned into a budgetary issue in stage two. Students were expected to research the issues needed to fulfill the assignment. In keeping with the PBL methodology, I never lectured, nor did we discuss in great detail the pay systems, budgetary systems, and economic development issues raised by the problems. Students researched the issues on their own to fulfill the requirements of the problems.
Problem 1, Stage #1

Case: Jonesville is an ethnically diverse city with about 25,000 people. The major industries in Jonesville include agriculture, a state university, and two prisons (one state, one federal). The city’s pay system does not adequately allow employees to move consistently across the salary scales. Senior employees are paid only slightly more than new employees because of the lack of movement across the salary scale; raises over the years are generally in the form of a cost of living raise that adjust the entire pay scale. Morale, especially among senior employees, is low. Each year the city loses many quality employees to the university and the prisons.

Assignment: The council hired your group as a consulting firm. Your task is to research pay systems. Next, you are to present the council with a plan detailing the city’s pay problems and provide three detailed options to improve the current system by the next council meeting (Tuesday, October 12). Be sure to include your five panels with your paper.

Problem 1, Stage #2

Case: Based on a consulting report, Jonesville’s human resource department developed and proposed a merit pay program for city employees. The new system allows employees to move across their respective pay scales. The new merit pay system requires that employees receive an annual evaluation. Employees who perform satisfactory receive a 1.5 merit increase; those who perform above satisfactory receive a 3 percent merit increase; and those who perform less than satisfactory receive no merit increase. The city council readily adopted the plan. Cost of living adjustments to the pay scale are separate from the merit increases.

The merit pay plan worked well for two years. The third year the city experienced a revenue shortfall of about $700,000 because of a regional economic downturn. The projected shortfall for the next fiscal year is $1.2 million. The city’s budget officer recommended against funding the merit pay system for a second year in order to save money. In addition, health insurance premiums will increase by 6 percent for a second year in a row. The employees threatened a work slowdown after it came to their attention that buried within the same budget was a large subsidy (nearly twice as much as raises) to a wealthy national retail store to build a regional supercenter. The store’s location within the city limits has the potential to increase sales tax revenue by 18 percent for the first year and about 14 percent for each of the three subsequent years. The contracts with the supercenter have been negotiated and signed. Groundbreaking begins within 90 days.

Additional Information: Four city council members are excited about the new store’s potential; they have been courting the supercenter for several years. Two council members are upset that current budget has no room for raises. One council member was just appointed two weeks ago to fill a vacated position. Three of the seven council members who support the supercenter are strongly opposed to raising taxes in any form. Two others are opposed but not as adamant. The other two think that the city is undertaxed for its size and the services it provides.

Assessment: Your group is now part of the city’s management team. Your task is to develop recommendations to the council. Your recommendations must be presented in the form of a memo (no more than one page) and a short public presentation on October 26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total revenues</th>
<th>$13,785,659</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carryover</td>
<td>(265,589)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated expenditure</td>
<td>14,709,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money needed to balance the budget</td>
<td>1,189,584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

Tables 3 and 4 present sample panels generated by the students. The first panel (column) for both stages relates the data or the facts of the case. The second panel lists questions generated by the problem. The third panel relates hypotheses, and the fourth lists learning issues. Students utilized the resources generated in the fifth panel to conduct research to answer the learning issues questions. Some groups realized an important part of the project was the brainstorming that occurred as part of the five panels. On the other hand, I found some of the panels were lacking. It appeared that some groups put the panels together as an after-thought. Nonetheless, the result—the group memos and presentations—were effective.

Learning was assessed in several different ways. First, students received grades on their written and oral presentations. Written presentations were in the form of memos and essays. Oral presentations utilized computer-generated (i.e., PowerPoint) presentations. Student grades for the PBL assignments were all in the A range. Second, students were allowed to provide feedback on their groups. The feedback, for the most part, was positive. Students enjoyed PBL and the problem-solving aspect of the course. Some enjoyed the group interaction and the group work. Finally, one student indicated that she liked learning from other people’s experiences. There were several complaints about group members’ lack of participation. There was one complaint about a perfectionist who micromanaged every part of the problem. In the end, that group had some of the best work; maybe the micromanaging paid off.

Finally, I assessed overall student learning with pre- and post-evaluations. The pre-evaluation was given on the first night of class, and the post-evaluation was given with the university evaluation at the conclusion of the semester. The post-evaluation demonstrated a change in attitudes and feelings from the pre-evaluation (see Table 5). Each item showed an increased score between the pre- and post-evaluation. Five of the items showed a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-evaluations. The significantly improved areas include:

- students are comfortable working with groups;
- they believe that group members respect them and their learning;
- they believe that group members listen to them;
- they feel confident that the skills they are learning in the program will apply to practical situations when they are in the workforce; and
- they feel comfortable in their abilities to prepare computer presentations.

Some of the written comments demonstrate that students were able to collaborate with each other and also learn. Several students indicated that they liked the PBL aspect of the course. Here are some of the responses to the question: What do you like about working in groups?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Learning Issues</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Jonesville is ethnically diverse</td>
<td>• What are the problems with the pay scale?</td>
<td>• Adequate pay will increase employee retention.</td>
<td>• What types of pay systems are there?</td>
<td>• textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 25,000 people</td>
<td>• Why don’t employees move from step to step on the pay scale?</td>
<td>• Implementing a new pay system could be costly.</td>
<td>• Which type will best serve the city?</td>
<td>• Web sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• major industries are agriculture, a university, two prisons</td>
<td>• How does pay influence morale?</td>
<td>• Raises are based on COLA.</td>
<td>• How much will it cost to implement the new system?</td>
<td>• Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pay system is inadequate</td>
<td>• How many city employees are there?</td>
<td>• The pay system does not address merit.</td>
<td>• Will morale increase with an adequate pay system?</td>
<td>• library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• employees don’t move across the salary scale</td>
<td>• What is the city’s personnel budget?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How will the city determine who gets raises?</td>
<td>• city government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• generally cost of living increases</td>
<td>• How much of the city budget goes to raises?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How will employees move from one step to another?</td>
<td>• city government associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• moral is low, especially among senior employees</td>
<td>• Where does the city get its revenue from?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• human resource consulting groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• city has a high turnover</td>
<td>• How will raises be given?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• employees leave to work at the prisons or university</td>
<td>• What is needed for an employee to move across the pay scale?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Which job descriptions need updating?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Sample Panels for Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Learning Issues</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonseville adopted a new pay system.</td>
<td>Why is there an economic downturn?</td>
<td>Shortfall is due to an economic downturn.</td>
<td>Will another pay freeze cause employees to leave?</td>
<td>Textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It initially worked well.</td>
<td>Why did the council choose not to fund pay increases?</td>
<td>The city council might be persuaded to increase tax revenues.</td>
<td>Can the city give a COLA increase and no merit increase or vice versa?</td>
<td>Web sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New pay system based on merit.</td>
<td>Why did the council choose to subsidize a wealthy business?</td>
<td>The city is obligated to follow through on its commitment to the supercenter.</td>
<td>Why did the city give the developer a large subsidy?</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees are evaluated annually.</td>
<td>How does the council get back on track?</td>
<td>The new pay system increased morale.</td>
<td>How much is the subsidy given to the new store?</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of living raises are also given.</td>
<td>What are other industries in the area doing?</td>
<td>The city council might be persuaded to increase tax revenues.</td>
<td>How long will it take to recoup the costs?</td>
<td>City government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue shortfall due to recession.</td>
<td>Are the universities and prisons offering raises?</td>
<td>The city is obligated to follow through with its commitments to the supercenter.</td>
<td>What types of budgeting does the city use?</td>
<td>City government associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$700,000 shortfall.</td>
<td>How accurate are the revenue projections?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City budget offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected $1.5 million shortfall</td>
<td>Will the new supercenter increase sales tax revenue by projected amounts or will it just shift the revenue from one business to another?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in health insurance premiums.</td>
<td>Will freezing pay create a balanced budget?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees angry over subsidy to new business.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected sales tax revenues to increase by 18% and 14% in future years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract signed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Seminar in Public Administration Scores from Pre- and Post-Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre.</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Diff</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable with working in groups.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable with asking for help from others in my group.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my group members show respect for me and my learning.</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my group members listen to me when I present informa-</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my abilities to find, read, and analyze information.</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe the use of real classroom problems stimulates my learning.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my abilities to analyze cases and problems.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my abilities to solve problems presented to me in a classroom setting.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in the skills I am learning will apply to practical situations once I graduate and am in the workforce.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable when presenting information to a group of people.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable with my computer skills.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable with my ability to prepare a computer-based presentation.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the idea of evaluating myself and my group members.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Incorporating everyone’s ideas and different perspectives in solving problems.
- Gaining insight and input on subjects I am not well versed in.
- I like to hear other people’s viewpoints and perspectives.
- Diversity of ideas.
- Variety of perspectives/ideas
- Social interaction/chance to meet new people.
- I like sharing my ideas with others and seeing the way others handle situations.
- Working in groups allows you to gain skills that others have.

The evaluation also asked students what they most liked about the course; students named the problem solving aspect of the course (thinking of solutions to issues); problem-based learning; case studies; group work and group projects; the seminar format of the course; and group interaction.

Finally, students’ biggest concerns about working in groups centered around workload distribution and free-riders. As with many group projects, one group had a member who went AWOL and did not contribute to the problems. Some students do not like depending on others for their grades. At least one student viewed PBL and the weekly briefs as busy work and suggested a workload reduction for future classes. Others wanted more information about the problem and about the logistics of the assignment. For example, I was asked questions such as the following:

- How many pages does the memo have to be?
- How many pay systems do we need to look at and discuss?
- Do we need to include an appendix?
- Do we need to include diagrams?
- Can we use Web sites?
- Are you sure the revenue projections are accurate?

I purposely provided them vague feedback to their inquiries in order to allow students to decide for themselves what appropriate measures they should use to fulfil the objects and solve the problems. The objectives of PBL are to enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills. Providing detailed instructions defeats those objectives.

In reflecting on the PBL process, I realized the need to budget more in-class time to work through the problems, especially the five panels. Finding time outside of class to meet was difficult for some working students.

DISCUSSION

PBL did help students learn how to read and write critically and enhance their communication skills, one of the stated course objectives. Written and oral
presentations assessed these objectives. The grades demonstrated proficiency in these two areas. Another objective focused on teaching and enhancing leadership skills; this objective was more difficult to judge. Two of the evaluation measures that noted statistically significant differences provide some insight. Students said that they believe that group members respect them and their learning, and they believe that group members listen to them. These two items point to important aspects of leadership and team building; students believed their peers listened to them and respected them and their ideas. Also, groups appointed leaders who directed assignments and collaboration within the groups.

The next PBL objective sought to instill the importance of collaboration and team building. Every self-evaluation item that measured collaboration, group work, and team building showed a measured increase between the pre- and post-evaluations. The first three of the statistically significant items also point to the importance of collaboration and team building: students became more comfortable working with groups; they believed that group members respected them and their learning; and they believed that group members listened to them.

The final objective was that PBL would enhance computer presentation skills. These skills were measured by the oral presentation grades, and the evaluation item that noted a statistically significant increase in the item, “I feel comfortable in my ability to prepare a computer-based presentation.”

CONCLUSION

As noted earlier, several years ago at the Annual Conference for Teaching Public Administration, Nancy Boyer (2001) suggested that PBL be implemented in the public administration environment. This article answers that important call for action and discusses PBL and its implementation in such an environment.

An MPA program provides an excellent context for implementing PBL, because public administrators and managers must solve problems and make decisions on a daily basis. PBL enables students to work collaboratively on contemporary problems; it makes them accountable for their learning. The same methods are apparent in the work environment; managers must confront and solve problems on a daily basis, many times with incomplete information. Public sector managers need to know where to turn for help with decisions and problems. PBL helps instills these skills in future public managers. The implementation of PBL discussed above helped produce statistically significant positive changes between pre- and post-surveys in attitudes about collaboration and confidence in managerial and computer skills.

This article indicates that PBL fits well in an MPA curriculum. Professors have to be willing to put in the necessary time needed to match the learning objectives, assessments, and problems. PBL has the potential to enhance critical learning, communication, leadership, collaboration, computer, and research skills in MPA courses, thereby providing students the necessary skills to be effective public managers.
Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum

NOTES
1. I also implemented a semester-long simulation in my public personnel management course. The simulation fits well into the PBL pedagogy. For more information on the simulation, see Dede (2002a).
2. The students were all graduate students who generally had an undergraduate 3.0 grade point average. Many of the students have a political science undergraduate background. Initially, 25 students enrolled in the course and 21 completed the course. The students were diverse: 43 percent were female; 43 percent were African-Americans; and about 20 percent of the students were in-service students. Finally, the class met one evening a week in a seminar room with tables and chairs that could easily be rearranged.
3. I found the syllabi used at the MSU and University of Utah especially helpful in designing this course.
4. These two areas were identified as essential skills for our graduates.
5. Strong members were based on my prior assessment and experience with the students. The purpose of the reassignment was to ensure that each group had at least one motivated member who was a solid “A” student.
6. If this were a real problem, students would then research the learning issues.
7. Several students who enrolled in Public Personnel Management the following semester readily recalled the information they researched when the class discussed pay systems.
8. The evaluation was adapted from Duch and Groh (2001, 107).

REFERENCES
**Problem-based Learning in the MPA Curriculum**


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Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs: The Practitioner Perspective

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Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis

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Queensland University of Technology

Abstract

A three-nation sample of nonprofit managers was surveyed to determine their preferences for additional education and training on a 37-item list of marketing topics. Preferences were ranked and compared to determine most preferred topics and cross-national differences. For educators and trainers, the results provide input on which marketing topics are of greatest interest to current nonprofit leaders. Findings on managers’ preferences for the format and delivery of training and education alternatives are also provided.

The number of nonprofit organizations in the United States has been growing steadily, from 12,500 in 1940 to almost 2 million in 2006 (Independent Sector, 2007; Wymer, Knowles, and Gomes, 1996). This trend has accelerated in recent years; between 1996 and 2006, the number of public charities increased 68.7 percent (NCCS, 2007).

This growth has stimulated a demand for nonprofit managers (Salamon and Sokolowski, 2005), and academic programs in nonprofit management have been
Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs

growing to respond to this demand (Wilson and Larson, 2002; Young, 1999). U.S. graduate programs offering three or more courses in nonprofit management areas numbered 17 in 1990, 32 in 1992, 76 in 1997, and 114 in 2001 (Irvin, 2003; Mirabella, 2004; Wish and Mirabella, 1998).

Students in public affairs programs are preparing to become professionals (Perry, 2005), and an increasing number of public administration graduates are seeking and finding career opportunities in nonprofit organizations. For example, more than one-third of Columbia University MPA graduates have chosen careers in nonprofit organizations. Over one-fourth of MPA graduates from Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government have chosen careers in nonprofit organizations. This trend is expected to continue (Cohen and Abbott, 2000).

Because a fair proportion of graduates are preparing for professional careers in nonprofit organizations, their education must be relevant to the demands of their professions (Dawes, 2004). Smith (2000) argues that nonprofit management education programs should be designed to respond to the needs of nonprofit leaders and managers. In order for the curriculum to be relevant, it needs to be developed and kept current with consideration given to practicing managers’ current and emerging needs. A common complaint of MPA graduates is that their education was not practical (Cunningham, Riverstone, and Roberts, 2005).

Cunningham, Riverstone, and Roberts (2005) argue that academics and practitioners are not communicating. They contend that poor communication between scholars and practitioners reduces the transfer of knowledge from academics to the public sector. Academics are not producing knowledge that practitioners need. Tschirhart (1998) provides an example of how the development of the nonprofit management curriculum at Indiana University was informed by surveying nonprofit managers.

Practitioner input to inform curriculum development should not be limited to domestic practitioners, but should extend to international practitioners. A number of international students in schools of public affairs who will return to their home countries after completing their programs, and their education needs to have relevance for their professional context. In addition, there are calls for the globalization of the curriculum (El Baradei and Newcomer, 2005). New MPA programs are emerging around the world, and NASPAA has shown an increased interest in international initiatives (Jennings and White, 2005).

The content of nonprofit management programs must respond to the needs of practitioners, but consideration should also be given to content delivery. In some programs, a good proportion of students, especially in graduate programs, are working professionals. For example, Larson, Wilson, and Chung (2003) surveyed students in six nonprofit management programs and found that about 90 percent of the students in their survey were working nonprofit professionals and were very interested in a curriculum that would help them more effectively manage the operations of nonprofit organizations. Additionally, Larson, Wilson, and
Chung (2003) examined what courses students believed were most important in their curricula and what courses needed more emphasis. Next to strategic planning, students rated fundraising and development as most important. General marketing, volunteer management, and advocacy in public policy were also rated highly.

**Marketing**

In an effort to provide more coherence to nonprofit management curricula, the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) formed a committee to recommend a model core curriculum for graduate programs in nonprofit management (NACC, 2007). Likewise, American Humanics has developed a list of competencies that students must meet before being certified (American Humanics, 2004; Ashcraft, 2001). Nonprofit marketing is included as one of 16 core areas in the NACC model core curriculum for graduate programs in nonprofit management (NACC, 2007a) and one of 13 core areas in the NACC model core curriculum for undergraduate programs in nonprofit management (NACC, 2007b). Among the American Humanics competencies, fundraising principles and practices and nonprofit marketing are listed (American Humanics, 2004).

Wymer and Mottner (in press) surveyed program directors in U.S. nonprofit management programs to assess the emphasis being giving to marketing in the curricula. They also examined the representation of marketing in these programs by looking at the variety of disciplines of program directors, the relative importance they assigned to marketing in the curricula, and the status of marketing instructors. In their study, program directors were asked to rank by perceived importance the 13 core areas in the NACC core curriculum. Marketing ranked sixth. Only one program director came from the marketing discipline; public administration was the most represented discipline among program directors (26 percent). Very few programs had a full-time faculty member dedicated to teaching marketing. Nonprofit management curricula had, on average, one dedicated marketing course. Some programs did not have a single marketing course in their curricula.

Wymer and Mottner’s (in press) findings are similar to those of Mirabella and Wish (2000): only a small percentage of nonprofit management programs included even one course on fundraising, marketing, or public relations. This indicates little improvement of marketing coverage in nonprofit management programs during the period between the two studies.

Most nonprofit management programs have evolved within schools of public administration (Smith, 2000; Wish and Mirabella, 1998). Marketing subjects appear to be especially deficient when the nonprofit management curricula are part of a public administration program (Cleary, 1990; Mirabella and Wish, 2000). This lack of substantial progress in improving the coverage of marketing in the curricula of nonprofit management programs is problematic because marketing
Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs

appears to be an area of growing importance to nonprofit managers. There has been a broadening and deepening of the marketing culture within the nonprofit sector (Salamon, 2002). This trend is, in part, due to the dramatic growth in the number of nonprofit organizations (Mirabella and Wish, 2001; Smith, 2000). Nonprofit managers must work smarter to differentiate themselves from other organizations. They must obtain public recognition of their name—their brand—and their mission. Nonprofit managers must more effectively identify potential contributors and manage supporter relations (Gainer and Moyer, 2004).

The Wymer and Mottner study (in press) and the earlier Mirabella and Wish (2000) study both found a deficiency on the coverage of marketing topics in many U.S. nonprofit management education programs. This study adds to our knowledge of what marketing topics should be included in marketing courses and other courses containing a marketing unit. To help in the development of nonprofit management education programs in the marketing area, data were collected from nonprofit leaders and managers in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Findings from our study indicate which marketing subtopics nonprofit managers find most important. Additionally, our findings indicate managerial preferences for content delivery.

Design of the Study

The study uses data collected from surveys of nonprofit managers and leaders in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The data were collected from summer 2005 to the first quarter of 2006. Survey respondents rated their level of interest, if given the opportunity, of learning more about 37 knowledge and skill areas of marketing. The list was not meant to represent course titles, but rather subject areas. The list of skill and knowledge areas was developed by the investigators with the consultation of practitioners. Literature in the area of nonprofit marketing was consulted to ensure completeness of topic coverage (Gainer and Moyer, 2004; Sargeant, 2006; Wymer, Knowles, and Gomes, 2006). The survey underwent multiple iterations. Some wording was customized to maintain consistency with phrasing commonly used by nonprofit managers in the three countries used in this study. Survey recipients were asked to rate their level of interest in receiving more training/education on a four-point scale (4=very interested, 1=not interested).

In the second part of the survey, nonprofit managers selected their preferences for type and format of educational delivery. In the final section of the survey, basic descriptive questions were asked in order to develop a profile of respondents.

Samples

Sample frames for the random selection of survey recipients were not available. However, the investigators widely disseminated and publicized the survey to recruit nonprofit managers at the national level in each of the three samples.

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U.S. Sample

The U.S. survey was administered as a mail survey and as an online survey. The mail survey included 40 local nonprofit organizations and 630 nonprofit organizations distributed throughout the nation. An effort was made to poll various types of nonprofit organizations to improve the diversity of the sample. Eighty-three usable surveys were returned, for a response rate of 12.4 percent. Recruitment for participation in the online survey was publicized through Web blogs, email distribution lists, and listservs. Fifty online surveys were completed, providing the U.S. sample with a total of 136 completed surveys. A profile of the U.S. sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. U.S. Sample (n=133)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising/development</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public relations/communications</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General marketing professional</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery professional</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other paid staff professional</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/provincial</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training/education funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely self funded</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared between self and organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completely funded by organization</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*<em>Mean</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of formal education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as nonprofit manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in current position</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not sum to 100 percent or N because of rounding errors or non-answers.
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Australian Sample

The Australian survey was administered online. The sample sought to cover the variety of people involved in nonprofit marketing. The survey and its link were promoted to databases of nonprofit CEOs, fundraisers, and nonprofit marketing professionals. This promotion mainly included emails to accessible databases, including those of peak bodies such as Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) and the Association of Development and Alumni Professionals in Education and organizations and individuals who have joined the Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (CPNS) database. Reminder emails were also sent to encourage greater participation. A story was included in the FIA’s Web site and the survey was promoted verbally at industry functions. These efforts produced 127 completed surveys. A profile of the Australian sample is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Australian Sample (n=127)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<td>Fundraising/development</td>
<td>38.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations/communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>General marketing professional</td>
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<td>Board member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service delivery professional</td>
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<td>Other paid staff professional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>23.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>State/provincial</td>
<td>38.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23.8</td>
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<td>International</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<td>Training/education funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completely self funded</td>
<td>17.7</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of formal education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years as nonprofit manager</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in current position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not sum to 100 percent or N because of rounding errors or non-answers.
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United Kingdom Sample

Ninety-nine completed surveys make up the United Kingdom sample (response rate of 19.8%), which is profiled in Table 3. The United Kingdom data were obtained using a postal survey of the top 500 fundraising charities in that country as ranked by voluntary income; together, these charities account for more than 80% of the voluntary income accruing to the sector.

Results

Importance of Skill and Knowledge Areas to Nonprofit Managers

Table 4 summarizes nonprofit managers’ interest in receiving more education/training on various skill and knowledge areas of marketing. The table lists the knowledge areas in order of greatest interest to least interest. For each subject area, managers were asked to rate their level of interest on attending seminars, workshops, or classes on the various topics. Respondents’ levels of interest were rated on a four-point scale, with 1 indicating the lowest level of interest and

Table 3. United Kingdom Sample (n=99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
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<td>CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising/development</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations/communications</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>General marketing professional</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Area</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>27.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training/education funding</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely self funded</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared between self and organization</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completely funded by organization</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of formal education</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as nonprofit manager</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in current position</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not sum to 100 percent or N because of rounding errors or non-answers.
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4 indicating the highest level of interest. Table 4 contains mean ratings and topic rankings for the entire sample as well as each national sample. Post hoc Scheffe comparison tests were conducted to identify statistically significant mean between-sample differences on any given topic.

The subject of greatest interest to our nonprofit managers was learning to use their Web sites for marketing and communications. Also rated highly were acquiring new donors, corporate philanthropy, fundraising using new technologies, fundraising planning, fundraising for major gifts, e-newsletters, legacies/planned giving, analyzing donor databases, online fundraising, and email marketing. Nonprofit managers participating in our study appear to be very interested in learning more about how to use their Internet tools for fundraising and communications. They appear to be interested in learning to better use newer tactics to attract funding. Managers do not appear to be especially interested in long-used, traditional methods for acquiring funding. For example, face-to-face fundraising, endowment development, payroll giving, and telemarketing ranked near the bottom of managerial interest. Some financial resource acquisition methods were of moderate interest. For example, capital campaigns, grantwriting, and direct mail were ranked near the middle of the subject list.

Communication dimensions of the marketing function were of lesser interest to our participating managers. These topics include publicity, issues/crisis management and communication, media relations, government relations, and public service announcements.

Marketing activities related to attracting people to the organization only received moderate interest. These topics included internal communications, board member recruitment and management, and volunteer recruitment and management. These personnel-related topics were of less interest to nonprofit managers than other topics previously discussed.

Between Sample Differences in Topic Interests

Some noteworthy differences between samples were revealed. Corporate philanthropy ranked third highest overall in level of interest. However, individual samples ranked corporate philanthropy substantially lower (U.K., 11th; U.S., 12th; Australia, 10th), indicating that the relatively high ranking for corporate philanthropy may be the result of an averaging effect rather than an indication of a very high level of interest. The Australian sample reported a substantially lower level of interest for legacies and planned giving than did the U.K. and U.S. samples. The U.S. sample indicated a much higher level of interest in publicity marketing than did the U.K. or Australia samples. The U.S. sample also rated analyzing donor databases much higher than the other samples. The U.K. sample was noticeably more interested in learning about branding than were the other samples. The Australian sample reported noticeably greater interest in issues marketing and internal marketing than did the U.S. or U.K. samples.
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Table 4. Marketing Subject Ratings and Rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill and Knowledge Topic</th>
<th>Combined Samples (n=259)</th>
<th>U.K.* (n=99)</th>
<th>U.S.** (n=133)</th>
<th>Australia*** (n=127)</th>
<th>Post hoc Scheffe ****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Web site for Marketing/Comm</td>
<td>Mean: 3.25 Rank: 1</td>
<td>Mean: 3.19  Rank: 2</td>
<td>Mean: 3.18  Rank: 1</td>
<td>Mean: 2.36  Rank: 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring New Donors/Members</td>
<td>Mean: 3.18  Rank: 2</td>
<td>Mean: 3.23  Rank: 1</td>
<td>Mean: 2.91  Rank: 9</td>
<td>Mean: 3.42  Rank: 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Philanthropy</td>
<td>Mean: 3.09  Rank: 3</td>
<td>Mean: 2.89  Rank: 11</td>
<td>Mean: 2.99  Rank: 6</td>
<td>Mean: 3.36  Rank: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Using New Technology</td>
<td>Mean: 3.09  Rank: 4</td>
<td>Mean: 3.08  Rank: 3</td>
<td>Mean: 3.01  Rank: 5</td>
<td>Mean: 3.14  Rank: 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Planning</td>
<td>Mean: 3.07  Rank: 5</td>
<td>Mean: 3.03  Rank: 7</td>
<td>Mean: 2.86  Rank: 12</td>
<td>Mean: 3.30  Rank: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising for Major Gifts</td>
<td>Mean: 3.05  Rank: 6</td>
<td>Mean: 3.06  Rank: 4</td>
<td>Mean: 2.97  Rank: 7</td>
<td>Mean: 3.13  Rank: 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Newsletters</td>
<td>Mean: 3.02  Rank: 7</td>
<td>Mean: 2.90  Rank: 10</td>
<td>Mean: 2.91  Rank: 8</td>
<td>Mean: 3.23  Rank: 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacies/Planned Giving</td>
<td>Mean: 3.00  Rank: 8</td>
<td>Mean: 2.98  Rank: 8</td>
<td>Mean: 3.02  Rank: 4</td>
<td>Mean: 3.00  Rank: 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing Donor Databases</td>
<td>Mean: 2.96  Rank: 9</td>
<td>Mean: 2.83  Rank: 12</td>
<td>Mean: 3.04  Rank: 3</td>
<td>Mean: 2.97  Rank: 19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Fundraising</td>
<td>Mean: 2.95  Rank: 10</td>
<td>Mean: 3.04  Rank: 6</td>
<td>Mean: 2.77  Rank: 17</td>
<td>Mean: 3.08  Rank: 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Marketing</td>
<td>Mean: 2.94  Rank: 11</td>
<td>Mean: 2.90  Rank: 9</td>
<td>Mean: 2.82  Rank: 14</td>
<td>Mean: 3.09  Rank: 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Benchmarking</td>
<td>Mean: 2.92  Rank: 12</td>
<td>Mean: 2.69  Rank: 13</td>
<td>Mean: 2.85  Rank: 13</td>
<td>Mean: 3.16  Rank: 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>Mean: 2.91  Rank: 13</td>
<td>Mean: 2.68  Rank: 14</td>
<td>Mean: 3.08  Rank: 2</td>
<td>Mean: 2.92  Rank: 22</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.66  Rank: 15</td>
<td>Mean: 2.67  Rank: 22</td>
<td>Mean: 3.02  Rank: 15</td>
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<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Mean: 3.14  Rank: 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Communication</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.67  Rank: 23</td>
<td>Mean: 3.10  Rank: 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Campaigns</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.56  Rank: 19</td>
<td>Mean: 2.70  Rank: 21</td>
<td>Mean: 2.96  Rank: 20</td>
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<td>Membership/Annual</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.52  Rank: 20</td>
<td>Mean: 2.56  Rank: 27</td>
<td>Mean: 2.99  Rank: 18</td>
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<td>Donor Renewal</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.56  Rank: 18</td>
<td>Mean: 2.55  Rank: 28</td>
<td>Mean: 2.93  Rank: 21</td>
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<td>Grant-Writing</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.38  Rank: 26</td>
<td>Mean: 2.74  Rank: 19</td>
<td>Mean: 2.83  Rank: 27</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.65  Rank: 24</td>
<td>Mean: 3.02  Rank: 16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Mail</td>
<td>Mean: 2.64  Rank: 24</td>
<td>Mean: 2.63  Rank: 16</td>
<td>Mean: 2.54  Rank: 29</td>
<td>Mean: 2.76  Rank: 32</td>
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<td>Board Member</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.30  Rank: 28</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.84  Rank: 26</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Recruitment/Mgmt</td>
<td>Mean: 2.64  Rank: 26</td>
<td>Mean: 2.24  Rank: 31</td>
<td>Mean: 2.80  Rank: 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment Development</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.28  Rank: 29</td>
<td>Mean: 2.79  Rank: 16</td>
<td>Mean: 2.67  Rank: 34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>Mean: 2.59  Rank: 28</td>
<td>Mean: 2.03  Rank: 35</td>
<td>Mean: 2.76  Rank: 18</td>
<td>Mean: 2.84  Rank: 25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social or Issues</td>
<td>Mean: 2.59  Rank: 28</td>
<td>Mean: 2.03  Rank: 35</td>
<td>Mean: 2.76  Rank: 18</td>
<td>Mean: 2.84  Rank: 25</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>Virtual Volunteering</td>
<td>Mean: 2.59  Rank: 28</td>
<td>Mean: 2.03  Rank: 35</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.84  Rank: 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Engine Marketing</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.14  Rank: 33</td>
<td>Mean: 2.45  Rank: 32</td>
<td>Mean: 2.91  Rank: 23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face Fundraising</td>
<td>Mean: 2.52  Rank: 34</td>
<td>Mean: 2.43  Rank: 25</td>
<td>Mean: 2.33  Rank: 35</td>
<td>Mean: 2.80  Rank: 29</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Payroll Giving</td>
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<td>Mean: 2.63  Rank: 25</td>
<td>Mean: 2.48  Rank: 36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>Mean: 1.98  Rank: 37</td>
<td>Mean: 2.01  Rank: 36</td>
<td>Mean: 1.86  Rank: 37</td>
<td>Mean: 2.08  Rank: 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*UK ≠ USA. **UK ≠ Australia. ***USA ≠ Australia. ****The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs

Although the differences noted previously cannot be attributed exclusively to the respective nation of the sample, governments do have different priorities. Government support of nonprofit organizations may differ between nations. Governments may have policies (for example, tax deductions for charitable giving, bequests) affecting the priorities of nonprofit organizations in those nations. Civil societies have different traditions.

In addition, the managerial roles of the survey respondents differed substantially, and it is likely that survey respondents’ expressions of interest reflect the needs inherent in those organizational roles. The U.S. sample has a high proportion of board members and other professional paid staff. The Australian and U.K. samples contain a high proportion of CEOs and fundraising professionals.

Managers’ Preferences for Educational Alternatives

The survey included items assessing managerial preferences for alternatives for receiving additional training and education. Those results are listed in Table 5.

Nonprofit managers in this study preferred to receive additional training and education as needed rather than as part of a formal educational program leading to a degree. This is not surprising given that nonprofit managers in this study are working professionals, well into their careers, who have generally completed their formal education and perceive additional knowledge acquisition as a means to more effectively perform their duties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Training</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal academic program leading to degree/ diploma</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-needed training to improve specific skills</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Format Preference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent study</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussion and collaboration</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Preference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration Preference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condensed into an intensive week</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensed into several weekends</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread over a semester</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals may not sum to 100 percent or N because of rounding errors or non-answers.
Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs

If given the opportunity to receive additional training through an online configuration, managers reported a slight preference for a learning context allowing for group discussion and collaboration. However, their preference for social interaction over independent study was not great. The U.K. and Australian samples showed a slightly greater preference for group discussion and collaboration than did the U.S. study.

When given the choice between receiving additional training during a weekday or a weekend, managers in all three samples reported a marked preference for weekdays.

When asked about their preferences on the intensity/duration aspect of training and educational opportunities, U.S. and Australian managers indicated that a condensed week of training was most preferred (the U.K. survey did not contain this question). This preference was more pronounced for the U.S. sample than for the Australian sample. Australian nonprofit managers in our survey were more likely to prefer a semester-long format than U.S. managers, who reported little enthusiasm for receiving training over a semester’s duration.

Discussion

This study examined the preferences of nonprofit managers from three different countries for obtaining additional training and education on various marketing subjects. All studies have limitations; one limitation of this study is that the samples are of modest sizes and were not randomly selected. Therefore, findings of this study need to be corroborated by other studies to more clearly define the boundaries of their generalizability.

As noted in the introduction, marketing is an important component of nonprofit management education and training. However, marketing has been generally been underemphasized in nonprofit management curricula as reported in prior studies (Wymer and Mottner, in press). This study contributes to earlier work by adding to our knowledge of what marketing topics would have the most relevance for nonprofit management professionals. Marketing is a multifaceted field containing numerous subparts. This study enhances our understanding of which marketing topics need to receive coverage in nonprofit management training and educational programs.

This study offers five implications: (1) Polling the needs of nonprofit managers can inform the continual development of nonprofit management educational programs; (2) determining which parts of a multifaceted field, such as marketing, to enhance or de-emphasize in an educational program is aided by input from current nonprofit leaders; (3) Some topics may be preferred by most nonprofit managers, and other topics may be influenced by the country in which the nonprofit operates; (4) Educational institutions and training organizations may better serve the needs of nonprofit managers by offering additional education and training that focuses on skill development rather than on teaching general concepts and
Curricular Content of the Marketing Component for Nonprofit Management Programs

theories; and (5) Managers typically prefer condensed, focused learning formats rather than a traditional, prolonged semester system.

REFERENCES

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