© Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, Volume 25, Number 2, p. 23, (2021)
 eISSN 2164-8212

Faculty Perspectives on Coeducation and Reciprocity

Alexa N. Darby, Tammy Cobb, and Lauren Willingham

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate faculty members' perspectives on coeducation and reciprocity within service-learning partnerships. Participants included 22 faculty members from a variety of disciplines at a midsized private university in the southeastern United States. Faculty identified communication as well as teaching and learning practices as the two tools needed for effective coeducation. Participants emphasized giving and receiving, communication, and clarifying expectations as key factors required for reciprocity. This study can help guide faculty members in fostering coeducation and achieving reciprocity in service-learning experiences.

Keywords: faculty, reciprocity, coeducation, service-learning

Research has shown that service-learning offers both benefits and challenges for college students, faculty, and community partners (Jacoby, 2015). A key element of effective service-learning practice is ongoing reciprocity in the partnerships between universities and community organizations (Jacoby, 2015). Thus, it is crucial to examine how such reciprocity is established and maintained, as well as to explore the related but less researched topic of coeducation.

The meaning of *reciprocity* can vary, and the term is often not adequately defined in the literature, unintentionally creating confusion. Resolving this confusion requires not only clearly defining this term in the context of service-learning (Dostilio et al., 2012) but also examining how faculty themselves define it. Moreover, the means for achieving reciprocity are often misunderstood (Sandy & Holland, 2006). Faculty and community partners must have a shared understanding of the meaning of reciprocity within the service-learning partnership if they are to cultivate and maintain a successful relationship (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007).

Reciprocity occurs when faculty and community partners communicate ideas, take mutual responsibility, and pursue shared outcomes. Achieving reciprocity requires that members of the university aim to work *with* rather than *for* the community. Reciprocity is necessary to ensure that both the university—including faculty members—and the community will benefit from the service-learning relationship (Miron & Moely, 2006).

The need for reciprocity in service-learning differentiates this activity from other forms of volunteering, such as community service (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006). Henry and Breyfogle argued that given the centrality of reciprocity to service-learning, the provider–recipient model of service-learning needs to be rethought. Service-learning requires an enriched form of reciprocity that encompasses shared authority, flexible boundaries, and benefits for all parties. The belief that authority must be shared by faculty and community partners is highlighted by Blouin and Perry (2009), who asserted that enhancing the outcomes of service-learning for all parties requires sharing power and control.

George-Paschal et al. (2019) identified five themes that emerged from studying the overlap between the experiences of students, faculty members, and community

partners engaged in service-learning:

> the time-intensive nature of service-learning, the added value provided by the service-learning faculty member, the additional benefits created by service-learning connections, the unintended opportunities for discovery of self and others, and the impacts of the liminal space of service-learning transcending traditional academic boundaries. (p. 43)

Given that these themes are common to all stakeholders, they present key areas for consideration when determining the factors necessary for reciprocity and coeducation.

Looking at service-learning through a lens of reciprocity and shared responsibility supports a conception of faculty members and community partners as coeducators. Coeducation in service-learning involves sharing ideas in the pursuit of knowledge. Barreneche et al. (2018) explained that "co-educators explore the opportunities that exist to connect the course curriculum with areas of impact and need in the community" (p. 249). In the context of coeducation, learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom, and students may learn as much or even more from the community partner than from the professor (Darby et al., 2016). Because faculty members and community partners share the role of educators, if our goal is to create strong, effective teams of coeducators and to maximize the benefits of service-learning for universities and community organizations alike, it is vital to understand faculty members' perspectives on coeducation.

Cooper and Orrell (2016) explored how universities and communities interact with each other and provide students with the opportunity to obtain hands-on experience. Students gain valuable skills and exposure to a real-world environment through engagement in the community; as a result, they may be better prepared to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions when they enter the workforce. The learning that occurs both inside and outside the classroom as a result of the reciprocity and engagement between faculty and the community has a significant and lasting impact on students.

When faculty conceive of service-learning relationships in terms of doing work *for* community partners, they create a sense of distance and separation and establish a hierarchy in which the university holds the superior position. In contrast, faculty members who approach such partnerships with the mind-set of working *with* the community foster more equitable and mutually beneficial relationships. Although much of the focus in service-learning has emphasized its benefits for universities and their students, incorporating community perspectives is necessary to more fully understand how reciprocity and coeducation function in the context of service-learning (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

Some researchers have questioned whether service-learning does, in fact, yield mutual benefits for universities and community partners (Hammersley, 2012). Because little research to date has examined the relationship between faculty and community partners engaged in service-learning, the present study takes the crucial step of exploring faculty perspectives. For service-learning to result in a successful partnership, it must be reenvisioned as a collaborative endeavor between faculty and community partners (Hammersley, 2012). The purpose of this study is to explore how faculty members define and understand reciprocity and their role as coeducators in the context of service-learning.

Methods

The participants in this study are faculty at a midsized liberal arts institution in the southeastern United States. After receiving IRB approval, the researchers used purposeful sampling to identify potential participants, drawing on a university database managed by the Center for Service-Learning to identify faculty in all four of the university's colleges who were engaged in service-learning. Of 30 possible respondents, 22 chose to participate, yielding a response rate of 73%.

The sample is representative of the faculty who teach service-learning at the university. Fifteen of the participants are female and seven are male. Two hold the rank of full professor, 12 are associate professors, five are assistant professors, and three are lecturers. Fourteen of the faculty are tenured, one is non–tenure track, three are on the tenure track, and three hold lecturer appointments. Additional demographics are presented in Tables 1–4.

Table 1. Faculty Demographics: Years Taught

Years taught	Frequency
1–5	4
6–10	7
11–20	7
21–30	4

Table 2. Faculty Demographics: Number of Service-Learning Courses Taught

Number of S-L courses	Frequency
1–2	14
3–5	8

Table 3. Faculty Demographics: Number of Service-Learning Course Sections Taught

Number of S-L sections	Frequency
1–2	1
3–5	3
5+	18

Prospective participants received an email inviting them to participate in the study; if they did not respond to the email after a week, they were contacted by phone. Those who agreed to participate were interviewed in person, with interviews lasting on average 24 minutes, and all interviews were audio recorded. Faculty were asked to provide demographic information and respond to interview questions related to coeducation, such as "How do you define coeducator?" "How do you see yourself as a coeducator?" "Describe a time when you were a coeducator," and "What tools do you use as a coeducator?" Participants were also asked the following questions related to reciprocity: "How do you define reciprocity?" "Describe a time when you experienced reciprocity," and "What factors are necessary for reciprocity?"

Audio recordings were transcribed for analysis. Once we had compiled the participants' responses in a Word document, we conducted open coding, which involved identifying relevant excerpts in response to our analysis questions (Boeije, 2010). The following analysis questions guided the coding of each transcript.

- How do faculty define coeducation and what tools do they use as coeducators?
- How do faculty define reciprocity and what factors do they identify as necessary for reciprocity?

We then placed the codes in a table to identify patterns in the form of categories. A *category* is "a group or cluster used to sort parts of the data" (Boeije, 2010, p. 95). We created a visual display to help us examine the categories; this allowed us to see how the categories interacted, which led to the development of themes.

Findings

Four themes emerged from the findings in this study: defining coeducation, tools for coeducation, defining reciprocity, and factors for reciprocity. The definition of coeducation encompassed three categories: partnerships, methods of teaching and learning, and shared responsibility. Tools for coeducation likewise included three categories: communication, methods of teaching and learning, and discussion. Reciprocity was also defined through three categories: giving

Table 4. Faculty Demographics

Name	Gender	School/College	Rank	Years teaching	# of S-L courses	# of S-L sections
Tom	Male	Education and Wellness	Associate	6–10	3–5	5+
Beatrice	Female	Arts and Sciences	Professor	21–30	1–2	5+
James	Male	Communications	Associate	11–20	3–5	5+
Scott	Male	Education and Wellness	Associate	11–20	1–2	5+
Valerie	Female	Education and Wellness	Associate	11–20	3–5	5+
John	Male	Business	Associate	6–10	3–5	5+
Noah	Male	Communications	Associate	1–5	1–2	1–2
Megan	Female	Arts and Sciences	Assistant	6–10	1–2	5+
Charlotte	Female	Arts and Sciences	Lecturer	11–20	3–5	3–5
Katie	Female	Arts and Sciences	Assistant	1–5	1–2	5+
Olivia	Female	Business	Assistant	1–5	1–2	3–5
Marissa	Female	Arts and Sciences	Assistant	1–5	3–5	5+
Robert	Male	Arts and Sciences	Assistant	21–30	1–2	5+
Sophia	Female	Communications	Professor	6–10	1–2	5+
Jill	Female	Business	Associate	21–30	1–2	5+
Molly	Female	Arts and Sciences	Associate	21–30	3–5	5+
Cassie	Female	Arts and Sciences	Associate	11–20	3–5	5+
Robin	Female	Arts and Sciences	Associate	11–20	1–2	5+
Karen	Female	Arts and Sciences	Lecturer	11–20	1–2	5+
Ryan	Male	Communications	Lecturer	6–10	1–2	3–5
Emma	Female	Arts and Sciences	Associate	6–10	1–2	5+
Jessica	Female	Communications	Associate	6–10	1–2	5+

and receiving, mutual benefits, and equal exchange. Finally, factors for reciprocity incorporated two categories: communication and expectations. The following section illustrates these findings with quotes from participants.

Defining Coeducation

Partnerships

When asked to define coeducation, 12 participants offered definitions that emphasized partnerships. In the context of service-learning, partnerships may occur between faculty and community partners as well as among faculty, students, and community partners. Molly, who has over 21 years of teaching experience and has taught more than five sections of service-learning courses, explained,

> To me being a coeducator means that I'm not just trying to meet the needs of my students' learning outcomes, but I'm also trying to partner with my agency and trying to help meet their needs as well. That's part of teaching students, is what the community partner needs and engaging her fully in that process. So she's here at the beginning teaching them how to do it, and then she goes to probably three-quarters of the sessions that they facilitate at the schools and I go to the other ones. So we are in partnership to make that happen

> because we don't send the students anywhere without one of us being there.

Molly highlights the challenges associated with balancing the needs of her students with those of the community partner. An important part of her partnership with the community agency is having a coeducator present whenever students are engaged in service-learning.

Collaboration is crucial to the work between faculty and community partners. In her definition of coeducation, Jill, who has over 21 years of teaching experience and has taught more than five service-learning sections, observed,

> The first thing that comes to mind is the collaboration, the collaborative piece, is. . . the importance of getting to know the partner ahead of time and meeting with them. And if I can go into their organization or their business first, so that we can sort of plan out what it is that my students need to get from the collaboration and what they need to get from the collaboration.

Jill emphasizes the benefits of getting to know the community partner before the service-learning class begins. This preparation allows the two entities to organize and plan out the course in advance, increasing their likelihood of achieving the goals of both parties.

The university and community must work together in a partnership for coeducation to be successful. By establishing a partnership between those responsible for experiences both inside and outside the classroom, authentic learning can occur.

Methods of Teaching and Learning

Eight participants identified teaching and learning methods as an important component of the definition of coeducation. This category bridges a variety of educational perspectives on improving teaching and learning experiences. The ability to make connections between their education in the classroom and in the field represents one of the greatest benefits of service-learning for students. Students who are engaged in community organizations can apply the knowledge obtained from those experiences to the content they learn in the classroom and vice versa.

Cassie, who has taught more than five sections of service-learning in over 11 years of teaching, explained,

> Inevitably [students] talk about their fieldwork as the most pivotal learning moments for them; that that's when they really got a sense of, "All right, this is what this field is like. This is what it feels like." And they are able to make those connections. "Oh yeah, I remember reading about this in my social policy class. I remember reading that you've got to do a needs assessment before you can start to put all the pieces together. We're doing a needs assessment at my agency." That sort of thing. So one can't succeed without the other.

Faculty and community partners need to reach an agreement about the intended learning outcomes for students in a given service-learning context. This agreement can be formal or informal, but it should be intentional and explicit. Emma, who has taught 6–10 years and 5 or more sections of service-learning courses, noted that effective service-learning requires the engagement of "two people that come together from different fields or different perspectives, perhaps, that are working together for a common educational goal or a common learning objective."

Shared Responsibility

Six participants emphasized the importance of shared responsibility when defining coeducation. Shared responsibility occurs when two or more people take ownership of common goals and outcomes. Tom has been teaching for over 6 years and has taught more than five sections of service-learning courses. His response to the question of how to define coeducation was direct and concise: "Shared responsibilities for educating, and that's a simple definition."

Megan, who has been teaching for more than 6 years and has taught more than five service-learning sections, expanded on this theme:

> It builds in some of the basic notions about service-learning. So coeducation with community partners, for me, is not a one-way

> thing. So we're doing for the partners, but they define what are the priorities, what are the things they want students to do. Some community partners have a clear idea about "this is what you're going to do," but there are still choices within that relationship with the students.

Participants also emphasized the importance of viewing the various relationships between faculty, students, and community partners as partnerships. Teaching and learning provide the framework within which all three parties design course objectives, achieve goals, and connect course material to real-world experience. Shared responsibility in coeducation involves faculty and community partners taking on complementary and cooperative roles in the service-learning experience.

Tools for Coeducation

When asked to identify the tools that must be present for coeducation to occur, participants most commonly referenced communication, specifically communication with a community partner outside the classroom setting. Teaching and learning methods, in particular the use of observation and reflection in the classroom, was the second most identified category. Finally, participants also highlighted discussion as a tool they incorporate in the classroom to promote coeducation.

Communication

Twelve faculty members raised the issue of communication in reflecting on the tools needed for effective coeducation. Katie, who has taught for more than one year and has taught more than five service-learning sections, emphasized the importance of maintaining ongoing and open communication with her community partner:

> So a tool I use, I would say, is consistent communication. So I really try to be in communication and connected with coeducators across the year in different ways. And so Practicum is a course that I'm constantly putting students out into organizations. But for the local organizations in particular I try to make sure that that's not the only time I'm communicating with people, that it's not just about this class, but it's about, like, How do we make connections in other ways, or what support can I offer to you as a faculty member? Is there some continuing, an education opportunity, or do you need a connection here? Or do you need student volunteers for this event? Or how can we work together kind of in a more continual way? So that's one tool, is communication.

John, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 6 years of teaching, also highlighted the need for all stakeholders to establish a foundation for effective communication and agree on expectations to achieve genuine coeducation:

> I start off every semester with a meeting between the client, myself, and the students. We can share at all levels, set expectations on what they get out of it, what the students need from the client in order to complete their project—which sometimes can be a challenge—and then what they're going to deliver to the client, to make sure they understand what to expect.

Methods of Teaching and Learning

Within the category of teaching and learning, participants described their use of methods such as reflection and observation in their pedagogical approaches to service-learning. Olivia, who has taught for over one year and has taught three to five service-learning sections, explained the importance of

> having the students engage in reflective writing and pulling themes out of it, and then having some open discussions. And students raise questions and reflection, [we] bring them out for the whole class [to discuss], we do a lot. We also, in trying to think about defining problems and solutions, use some of the design thinking framework.
>
> And so I'm trying to first empathize with people who are different from yourself to really understand what the problem is, and how to then—and then go very broad and thinking about solutions that you might propose to a partner. So that you're not

> just giving them one option to vote up or vote down, but really you're giving them a breadth of solutions and then listening and empathizing again, to hear their responses to it. To try it and create and iterate until you can work with that partner to create something of value.

Reflection as a tool enables students to analyze the relationships they establish with community partners and their constituents and illuminate the benefits of those relationships.

Incorporating the voices of community partners is critical in service-learning, and Charlotte accomplishes this by observing students herself and inviting community partners to offer observation-based feedback as well. Charlotte, who has taught three to five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching, explained,

> I like for [community partners] to do some sort of evaluation at the end. Let the people who are involved tell them what they think about what they did. And I guess that's a tool of sorts. And then I do like observing them in action. So if that's a tool, that observation is something that I like to do. And I generally do ask the partners to comment as well. I use that information as an instructor. I don't necessarily make it impact their grades so much, as so that they know what their strengths were or what the partner thought that the strengths were. So I share that with the students anyway.

Incorporating observation from both faculty and community partners in this way strengthens the students' learning process.

Discussion

Discussion in and out of the classroom and the use of multiple forms of technology represent important tools for coeducation. The approaches that faculty use vary, but many seek to relate classroom learning to students' experiences at the service-learning site through discussion. Other forms of discussion come through the use of technology, such as meeting with community partners via Zoom.

Cassie has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching. She reported utilizing both large and small group discussions to connect in-class learning to the service-learning site.

> So I facilitate a lot of discussions, and I like to start in the small groups. I'll usually give some sort of writing prompt and then I'll get students together and say, "Talk about what you wrote about that you're comfortable sharing." And then I run around, I call it the hummingbird. I flit from group to group, and then we do large group processing: "All right, let's share some of the highlights." And the prompt is usually around a particular concept that they're having to apply to the service-learning site or activity or a particular idea or comparison.

Scott, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching, described incorporating multiple discussion formats that vary from in-person conversation to interacting through various forms of technology. Such discussions can help all parties identify goals and determine what needs to be done in the service-learning relationship.

> I think obviously discussion, but you have to . . . I feel like it helps to be able to articulate, What are your goals and outcomes? What do you want to have happen? So there's a lot of different ways to do that. I think that technology is one tool for that, but it all has to be done in collaboration through discussion. So I'm not sure how to apply tools and methods. I know some people do like surveys of sorts with the community partner, sort of identify needs. I tend to be more someone who likes to be present with them and be in the space and on the ground and listening and then try to infer, okay, this is what I hear, this is what I see, this is what I notice.

Participants identified communication, teaching and learning methods, and discussion as the primary tools necessary for coeducation. Communication focuses on students and faculty interacting effectively with community partners, whereas teach-

ing and learning methods encompass approaches such as reflection and observation. Discussion is a tool that may be utilized with students in the classroom as well as with community partners in other settings or via technology. These tools are indispensable in facilitating coeducation and deepening understanding among all parties.

Defining Reciprocity

Giving and Receiving

When asked to define reciprocity, a majority of participants (13 out of 22) emphasized the importance of giving and receiving. Marissa, who has taught for over one year and has taught more than five sections of service-learning courses, defined reciprocity as "the relatively equal give and take between collaborating members of some—whatever—just an equal give and take between people who have a vested interest in something." Similarly, Karen, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching, focused her definition on "give and take. What the students can do for [the organization] and then what [the organization] can do for our students. I see it as a give and take." These participants recognized the necessity of maintaining a two-way relationship between the university and the community partner.

Mutual Benefits

Six participants referenced mutual benefits when defining reciprocity. Jill, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 21 years of teaching, explained how empirical knowledge is gained from the collective experiences of all parties.

> I gain from my experience with you, you gain from your experience with me. I don't want to say one hand washing the other, but maybe the pieces kind of coming together in a reciprocal relationship, where both people benefit, both people learn, both people grow from it.

Noah, who has taught for over one year and has taught one to two service-learning sections, also highlighted the benefits of reciprocal relationships in his definition. He noted, "So I would say a dictionary definition of reciprocity would be the outcomes, the benefits, the deliverables for all the parties in a relationship, the sum of those."

Equal Exchange

In defining reciprocity, six participants spelled out the factors that make up an equal exchange. When engaging in a reciprocal relationship, Ryan, who has taught three to five service-learning sections in over 6 years of teaching, emphasized that "equal contributions and justness and fairness of behaviors and actions" are essential. Expanding on the idea that an equal exchange is necessary for reciprocity to take place, Charlotte, who has taught three to five sections of service-learning in over 11 years of teaching, also referenced issues of justness and fairness within the relationship, stating,

> I think that it's a win–win situation. That there's an exchange, an equal exchange or some sort of exchange that takes place from that relationship. It's a give and a take. Not all one-sided. Yeah. And I want students to give, certainly, to meet a need. But I also want them to have learned something. And I think in a way that's getting something by learning something.

These three categories highlight how balanced two-way relationships between the university and community partners can promote both equitable contributions to the service-learning experience and an equal exchange of benefits and value.

Factors for Reciprocity

The participants highlighted communication and the clarification of expectations as the two most important factors for reciprocity. An important criterion for achieving reciprocity is a willingness to be part of the experience, knowing that the answers may initially be unclear and may need to be discovered over time.

Communication

Ten participants identified communication as an essential component of reciprocity. Clear communication helps improve both parties' understanding of one another within the service-learning relationship. Robin, who has taught more than five sections of service-learning courses in over 11 years of teaching, emphasized the importance of

> the willingness of both parties to

> engage and explore the space of interaction. But somebody has to propose that introduction. And once you have the proposal, then you need to have an honest discussion. Okay, what good is this for you? What good is this for me? I think having very good communication with your partner is the essential first step. If you don't have that you're setting up yourself for misunderstandings. That's important.
>
> What's also, I think, important is not forcing the partnership. If you realize that your partner is looking for something that's not going to match with what you can offer, then it's better not to engage. It's better to walk away and say, well, this is just not right as a partnership. Because I would be doing a disservice, then the relationship can be one-sided and that's not correct.
>
> I think, yeah, communication. Being very honest about expectations and not being transactional, because in many cases our partners are not looking just for a one-off. They are looking for an expanded space of collaboration. And if it's something that we cannot provide, then we cannot work with them. That's not right.

Robin highlighted the importance of open communication at the beginning of the partnership to clarify roles and expectations, noting that this early dialogue is critical for accomplishing shared goals.

Valerie, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching, offered additional insight into the verbal and nonverbal communication needed to fully engage with others:

> Open mind, open heart, willingness to work, willingness to admit errors and make mistakes, try again. [I] talked about humility before, willingness to be humble, willingness to listen, to be the learner rather than the expert, willingness to see the beauty in the families and the children that they're working with and take that as their guide.

Expectations

Seven participants noted the importance of expectations when describing the factors needed for reciprocity. Sophia, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 6 years of teaching, outlined the key role of

> Well, expectations. Setting up expectations at the beginning, and sometimes I think that's where the partnerships fail. That it's not clear that yeah, if this student isn't contacting you once a week or checking in or sending you content to review, then they're not really engaging in the level of relationship that we want.
>
> So I think setting up expectations at the beginning of this is what I'm expecting of my students. They're supposed to log a time sheet to show the value of what they're working on. Also, they're supposed to make a certain minimum number of contact hours with the actual client, and that, I think, enhances that experience. Then also just requiring them to go in person if it's an organization that is local, that they need to have that in-person contact to be involved on site.

Cassie, who has taught more than five service-learning sections in over 11 years of teaching, highlighted the need for all parties in the relationship to understand one another's expectations. She reflected,

> So there has to be mutual understanding of what the expectations are. The reason my partnership with [the organization] works so well is because it's been going on long enough to where people know, "Oh, you're from [class name]. You're going to bring [materials]. You're going to need to have one-on-one time. . . ." And then the students have to understand, "All right, time doesn't stop when you arrive there."
>
> So there just has to be, the expectations have to be clear. This is why you're here. This is who you're reporting to. This is what you're going to do while you're there. And on the other side, this is who this

> young person is. This is what this young person's here to do. And this is what it will look like. Just clear communication on both sides about what's going to be happening.

Discussing the student's role and responsibilities at the beginning of each session in this way lays the foundation for reciprocity to occur.

Communication and clarifying expectations underpin a successful service-learning experience. These factors require faculty members and community partners to sit down together and discuss their roles and responsibilities. By being forthright and clear with one another, faculty members and community partners foster and maintain reciprocity.

These categories illuminate the critical role of open communication in establishing and maintaining a strong relationship between faculty and community partners. A key element of this relationship involves giving and receiving, as well as the belief that this relationship can yield an equal exchange.

Discussion

Faculty view coeducation and reciprocity as necessary components that work hand in hand to create successful community partnerships. Employing teaching and learning methods both inside and outside the classroom is critical to coeducation. Effective communication emerged as a foundational component of both coeducation and reciprocity. Faculty report that giving and receiving in an equal exchange with community partners is key to fostering successful and lasting relationships.

Similar to previous research (Henry & Breyfogle, 2006; Miron & Moely, 2006), in this study faculty stressed the benefits that result from the service-learning relationship. Blouin and Perry (2009) and Henry and Breyfogle (2006) identified the importance of shared power in partnerships between faculty and community organizations. This finding was echoed in this study in relation to equal exchange and shared responsibility. As illuminated in previous research and again in this analysis, effective reciprocity requires frequent and clear communication (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007).

Unique to this study, communication was found to be an important tool for coeducation, as well as reciprocity. In exchanges between faculty members and community partners, faculty noted, the expectations of both sides must be articulated and understood. Methods of teaching and learning, such as reflection and observation, were also highlighted as fundamental tools of coeducation.

Incorporating various forms of discussion can enhance students' understanding of the course content as well as the service-learning experience. Although previous research has discussed partnerships, it has not described the finer details of these relationships and the need for faculty and community partners to work together within a coeducation framework. The most frequently cited category, giving and receiving, illustrates the two-directional approach that is critical for genuine reciprocity.

The limitations of this study are based primarily on its demographics. All participants were from the same midsized liberal arts institution in the Southeast, and the sample size of 22 faculty members was relatively small and predominantly female. The majority of participants held an assistant or associate professor rank, with the exception of two full professors and three lecturers.

In addition, a majority of the faculty had considerable experience with service-learning, having taught more than five sections of a service-learning course. Prospective participants were identified through a database managed by the university's service-learning center, which could have influenced the participant demographics. Finally, the interviewer served as a faculty fellow for service-learning at the university, which could have influenced participants' responses. As a result of these factors, the results of the study are not generalizable to a broader population.

Implications

This study helps pinpoint the necessary components for developing strong service-learning partnerships based in a coeducational and reciprocal context. It recognizes the high value faculty place on elements such as giving and receiving, communication, clarifying expectations, teaching and learning methods, shared responsibility, partnerships, discussion, mutual benefits, and equal exchange. These qualities as described by faculty are essential to creating

authentic partnerships.

This data offers guidance for faculty seeking to establish and sustain meaningful relationships with the community organizations with whom they partner. Working *with* the community and not *for* it is part of how faculty can ensure a coeducational and reciprocal experience that fosters student engagement. More specifically, communication is essential prior to and throughout the experience; it is necessary for ongoing assessment and to ensure that mutual goals are achieved. In addition, incorporating various methods of teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom is necessary to prepare students to apply their on-site experiences to content taught in the classroom and vice versa.

Areas for future research include exploring the connection and overlap between faculty and community partners' perspectives on coeducation and reciprocity, as well as investigating students' perceptions of these key terms. Further research on specific approaches to achieving reciprocity would also be valuable. Although this study did not answer the question "Can reciprocity and coeducation exist separately?" future research should examine the relationship of these practices to one another. Finally, power differentials in relationships between faculty and community partners need to be explored to determine how these two parties can create an equal exchange. For example, future research should examine how reciprocity and coeducation may be influenced by race and gender.

Conclusion

The present study is intended to help guide early- and midcareer service-learning faculty and to support their planning from initial course design through the teaching of the course to the end-of-course assessment. Although this study examined faculty members' perspectives, it is equally important to acknowledge the community partners' role as coeducators responsible for maintaining the reciprocal nature of the partnership. Moreover, students also need to understand the complexity of these relationships. To be thoughtfully engaged with the community requires active and intentional efforts that contribute to teaching and learning and create meaningful experiences for students. As faculty teach more sections of service-learning courses and increase their experience and knowledge, they will continue to revise and deepen their understanding of their roles as coeducators in reciprocal partnerships.

About the Authors

Alexa N. Darby *is professor in the Department of Psychology at Elon University.*

Tammy Cobb *is the associate director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life at Elon University.*

Lauren Willingham *is an undergraduate student in the Department of Psychology at Elon University.*

References

Barreneche, G. I., Meyer, M., & Gross, S. (2018). Reciprocity and partnership: How do we know it is working? In B. Berkey, C. Meixner, P. M. Green, & E. A. Eddins (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing faculty development in service-learning/community engagement: Exploring intersections, frameworks, and models of practice* (pp. 241–261). Stylus.

Blouin, D. D., & Perry, E. M. (2009). Whom does service learning really serve? Community-based organizations' perspectives on service learning. *Teaching Sociology, 37*(2), 120–135. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X0903700201

Boeije, H. B. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. Sage.

Cooper, L., & Orrell, J. (2016). University and community engagement: Towards a partnership based on deliberate reciprocity. In F. Trede & C. McEwan (Eds.), *Educating the deliberate professional: Preparing for future practices* (pp. 107–123). Springer International.

Darby, A. N., Ward-Johnson, F., & Cobb, T. (2016). The unrecognized co-educator in academic service-learning: Community partners' perspectives on college students serving diverse client populations. *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement, 7*(1), 3–15.

Dostilio, L. D., Harrison, B., Brackmann, S. M., Kliewer, B. W., Edwards, K. E., & Clayton, P. H. (2012). Reciprocity: Saying what we mean and meaning what we say. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 19*(1), 17–33. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3239521.0019.102

George-Paschal, L., Hawkins, A., & Graybeal, L. (2019). Investigating the overlapping experiences and impacts of service-learning: Juxtaposing perspectives of students, faculty, and community partners. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 25*(2). https://doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0025.203

Hammersley, L. (2012). Community-based service-learning: Partnerships of reciprocal exchange? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 14*(3), 171–184.

Henry, S. E., & Breyfogle, M. L. (2006). Toward a new framework of "server" and "served": De(and re)constructing reciprocity in service-learning pedagogy. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 18*(1), 27–35.

Jacoby, B. (2015). Review essay: Taking campus–community partnerships to the next level through border-crossing and democratic engagement [Review of the book *Engaging in social partnerships: Democratic practices for campus–community partnerships*, by N. Z. Keith]. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 22*(1), 140–147. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/engaging-in-social-partnerships-democratic-practices-for.pdf?c=mjcsl;idno=3239521.0022.122;format=pdf

Miron, D., & Moely, B. E. (2006). Community agency voice and benefit in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 12*(2), 27–37. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3239521.0012.203

Sandy, M., & Holland, B. A. (2006). Different worlds and common ground: Community partner perspectives on campus–community partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 13*(1), 30–43. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3239521.0013.103

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2000). Community-centered service learning: Moving from doing for to doing with. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 43*(5), 767–780. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027640021955586

Worrall, L. (2007). Asking the community: A case study of community partner perspectives. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 14*(1), 5–17. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3239521.0014.101