

## Implementing Community Service Learning through Archaeological Practice

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*The Anthropology Department at Western Michigan University has sponsored an annual archaeological field school since the mid-1970s. Over the past decade, students have worked with community and government organizations, learning to apply archaeological methods to real world problems to preserve and interpret significant heritage sites. They come to see historical knowledge as subject to political controversy - a valuable civics lesson that emerges from the realization that the community consists of multiple audiences with different visions and interpretations of history. Engaged archaeology promotes civic involvement and moves beyond the rhetoric of serving the public good that characterizes conventional archaeological training and scholarship. Examples of collaborative research drawn from partnerships with several public and private agencies illustrate the benefits of this approach for learning and service.*

### Archaeology and Service-Learning

The mantra of public archaeologists in the 1970s was the need to preserve the past for the future by managing the archaeological record, a nonrenewable resource (McGimsey, 1972). It is more than a little ironic that for a field that embraces the rhetoric of serving a public good, demonstrated civic engagement and public service are so scant. Archaeologists seldom think of their practice or its teaching as service-learning, even though they provide a service and have been employing experiential learning techniques for decades. Students are frequently told that fieldwork will provide them with a better understanding of the problems that archaeologists face in the real world more than countless hours of classroom study. There is no substitute for the experience of laying out a grid, finding an artifact, or puzzling over a soil stain on a hot afternoon. Despite the history of archaeological pedagogy, the field has been slow to adopt an explicit model of community service learning in its goals and design. The preservation and interpretation of the archaeological record is usually adequate justification for the work that archaeologists do. Yet some archaeologists recognize that practice involves more than just preservation for academic or scholarly purposes; it provides the opportunity for student engagement in the archaeological enterprise—an entry point into an inherently political process. By involving communities in archaeological projects, archaeologists can also build public support for their work and enhance the quality of archaeological research

(Derry & Malloy, 2003). This article examines the impulses moving the teaching of archaeology toward service-learning, and how recent archaeological practice at one large Midwestern, student-centered, research university has benefited from these efforts. The archaeology program at Western Michigan University is in many ways a microcosm of broader national trends. In employing this program as a lens to examine archaeological teaching and practice, this article also examines whether service-learning is welcome in archaeology and the possible benefits that could result if the field more fully embraced this pedagogical approach.

### A Primer in Archaeological Practice and Pedagogy

Archaeology in the Americanist tradition is a subdiscipline of anthropology that focuses on the material remains of (past) human activities (i.e., the archaeological record) as a means of writing particular histories and constructing general theories about the human condition and long-term social change. As with many areas of the social sciences, archaeology has experienced significant epistemological, theoretical, and methodological changes over the past several decades (Moore & Keene, 1983; Patterson, 1995; Trigger, 1989). While internal forces have clearly transformed the field, significant external forces have also impacted archaeology. Perhaps paramount among these has been federal legislation mandating that the archaeological record be investigated with taxpayers' dollars if it is threatened by public construction projects that have a potentially adverse impact. In essence,

archaeology aims to serve a public good by protecting and investigating significant sites, so that collective American history can be recorded before the material evidence is destroyed. One result of the emergence of “public archaeology” is the recognition that archaeologists are accountable to the public—those who directly or indirectly pay archaeologists’ salaries (McGimsey, 1972; Watkins, Goldstein, Vitelli, & Jenkins, 1995).

Compliance with legislation has led to a complete restructuring of the labor pool and employment opportunities in archaeology (Paynter, 1983; Schuldenrein & Altschul, 2000; Zeder, 1997). Whereas most jobs were in academia and museums prior to 1970, these positions constitute a small minority open to practicing archaeologists today. Most practitioners are employed by government agencies, or in the field of cultural resource management, working in compliance with legislation to conserve the archaeological record for future generations as part of our national heritage. This contrasts with earlier work driven by research questions that were seldom developed explicitly in the public interest.

Changes in the demands on archaeologists have not yet led to a shift in how archaeologists are being trained, leading some to see this disparity as a crisis in the field (Bender & Smith, 2000). But even before this crisis was recognized, some early voices called for archaeologists to make their work relevant by producing information that mattered beyond the academy (Ford, 1973; Fritz, 1973). These concerns were followed by a litany of critical archaeologists who pointed out that archaeological practice and interpretations are embedded in social and political structures, and serve to create and reproduce those structures (Gero, Lacy, & Blakey, 1983). Of course, archaeology was never politically neutral; it always had ideological consequences as well as practical applications. The political dimensions of archaeology became fully realized with the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990 that accords some Native American sites a new level of protection and requires that descendant communities be consulted whenever ancestral human remains are encountered (Powell, Garza, & Hendricks, 1993). Various other marginalized groups with a vested interest in archaeological interpretations also became more vocal in the 1990s. A good example is the dialogue begun by African Americans over human remains recovered from the African Burial Ground in New York City (LaRoche & Blakey, 1997).

Despite this change in climate, it is still not uncommon to train students to conduct archaeology in pursuit of esoteric knowledge, putatively in

the service of writing histories, with little public input, and often in relative secrecy. For example, students typically might be led into the field (often the woods) after a landowner’s permission is obtained. They might dig almost uninterrupted for six weeks only to re-emerge from the field and retreat to the lab with bags of goodies (i.e., artifacts), specialized samples, and other archaeological data (e.g., notes, drawings, and photographs). Information generated from these materials eventually makes its way to conference papers, theses, and dissertations where it is generally accessible only to the archaeological intelligentsia. Seldom do the public (or even the landowner) learn or benefit from the study and its findings. The sensitivity of site location information and perceived problems of looting make archaeologists reluctant to invite the public to see where they are working and what they are doing. Finally, the researcher usually determines the research questions chosen for study and sites selected for excavation. It is no wonder the public remains uninvolved, even if they are interested. A wide gulf often separates the public’s perceptions of archaeological work from actual practice, as indicated by the popular image of Indiana Jones. The idea that non-archaeologists should benefit directly from university instruction is inconsistent with professional attempts to isolate the archaeological endeavor.

Though this may be a caricature of archaeological practice, in reality archaeology is never conducted in a vacuum because it affects many people including taxpayers, landowners, and descendant communities (Wood & Powell, 1993). Thus, it would seem that archaeology should indeed have a service component. Furthermore, archaeology has many applied dimensions that deal with real-world concerns and offers the potential to build bridges beyond the academy (Downum & Price, 1999). In other words, archaeological practice ought to be right at home with service-learning.

### An Archaeologist Looks at Community Service Learning

Given the mission of higher education, it is surprising that graduate study in anthropology typically offers little explicit instruction in the teaching of anthropology—one generally learns by imitating one’s professors and then by doing. Thus, pedagogical styles in anthropology and their effectiveness remain under-examined (but see Kottak, White, Furlow, & Rice, 1997; Rice & McCurdy, 2002). What is clear is that many subfields of anthropology, particularly archaeology, have relied on experiential learning. Because archaeological

training is inherently experiential and because archaeology professes to offer a public service, there would seem to be a natural affinity between service-learning and archaeology.

As with many nascent fields, there has been considerable debate over the definition, goals, methods, outcomes, and means of evaluating service-learning (Crews, 2002, pp. vii-ix). It is perhaps less important what our activities are called than what we share in substance (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, pp. 210-211). For the purposes of this discussion, I define service-learning as “an educational activity, program, or curriculum that seeks to promote student learning through experiences associated with volunteerism or community service” (Schine, 1997, p. iv). The defining features of such a program include service provided to a community in response to a need, active reflection, improved student academic learning, and advancements in student commitment to civic participation (Howard, 2003, p. 3).

The roots of service-learning lie in the land grant colleges of the 19th century (Liu, 1999). The contemporary expression of the movement emerged in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the reform critics of higher education who “noted a gap between traditional curricular content and society’s needs for new competencies for workers and citizens” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, pp. 12-13). Unlike classroom learning, real-world learning is generally more cooperative or communal than individualistic, accomplished by addressing genuine problems in complex settings rather than isolation, and involves specific contextualized rather than abstract knowledge (Eyler & Giles, p. 9). Many service-learning proponents agree that it is intellectually engaging for students to come to terms with conflicting perspectives and take a position, no matter how tentative (Eyler & Giles, p. 118). Proponents also see social change as the ultimate goal of service-learning, or at least the education of students who will be agents of change (Eyler & Giles, p. 131). Such an educational milieu empowers students, teachers, and their community partners (see Miller, 1997).

In sum, service-learning students meet real community needs, learn how formal learning connects with real-world experiences, often reflect on the nature of the service and the learning, and document learning and change through evaluative processes (Shumer, 2003, p. 149). These criteria can be used to assess the degree to which the archaeology program at Western Michigan University fulfills the goals of service-learning and the directions that it might take to strengthen its effectiveness in providing service and learning. By casting archaeology in this new mold, we have the

opportunity to reintegrate archaeological theory and practice. Working with the community foregrounds particular histories and underscores the idea that meanings are actively contested by multiple audiences. At the same time, contested histories complicate the notion of what is meant by community. Conducting archaeology from a service-learning perspective creates a synergy that leads to greater reflexivity anthropologists can use to illuminate the questions we ask, evidence we collect, and interpretations we propose.

### Archaeological Practice at Western Michigan University

In fall 1992, I was hired in the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University (WMU) to teach courses in archaeological theory, method, and the archaeology of complex societies in eastern North America. I was not asked to develop a program in service-learning (in fact, I had never even heard of service-learning), though I was charged with teaching students how to conduct archaeology by putting theory into practice. My most recent research had focused on the emergence of social inequality in ancient Native American cultures of central Arkansas, so I decided to bring the 1994 WMU archaeological field school to that region to continue this work. Before leaving for the field, and after returning, I began receiving inquiries from private individuals, community groups, and government agencies in southwest Michigan asking me if I would be interested in helping them solve their archaeological problems. I soon realized that I could teach students about archaeological field techniques right in my own backyard, and tailor these projects to my research interests. In addition, there was the potential to financially support students and report preparation to disseminate the information within the discipline and beyond. Community and governmental organizations were willing to provide funding to match the University’s resource commitment.

Subsequent field schools that I have directed (1996, 1998, 2000) and co-directed (2001, 2002) and several other projects that I am currently pursuing involve experiential learning and have a strong service-learning component. I began to think of this work as service-learning when I started talking with service-learning practitioners who described what their approach entailed. The research and teaching I conduct is different from a conventional field school or public archaeology program because it emphasizes research problems that emanate from a segment of the community, and a learning experience for students who are

committed to helping solve the problems. Students are prepared through an introductory archaeology course and an orientation that emphasizes the theories, methods, and goals of the project; our relationship with the community sponsor or partner; and discussions of critical theory and the historical contingency of archaeological interpretations. As students gain more experience, they are able to assume greater responsibility in the project. Although I design the research strategy in consultation with the sponsor, students are required to select some aspect of the research project to work on independently. They are encouraged to conduct archival research, interview knowledgeable consultants, and examine museum specimens as appropriate for their research. This allows them to become a “resident expert” in their selected topic and reinforces the idea that knowledge lies in more sources than the professor. Next, I discuss and begin to evaluate a few of these projects, suggesting ways to improve these projects’ effects on students, faculty, our “student-centered research university,” and communities.

#### Four Case Studies: Practicing Archaeology in the Community

In 1995, the Historical Society of Battle Creek (HSBC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and interpreting local history, contacted me to inquire if I was interested in conducting archaeological investigations at the house site of the city’s first school teacher, Warren B. Shepard. The Society, which saw itself as marginalized in a community that lived in the shadow of the history of the cereal industry, wanted to sponsor a dig to bring this locally important place to the public’s attention. Our work would also heighten the society’s visibility in the broader community, and demonstrate that there was more to Battle Creek history than just C. W. Post and the Kellogg brothers. The Society’s archivist assisted two of my students in collecting documentary information on the site and its occupants (Sayers & Lapham, 1996). This background research was conducted prior to a 10-week field season in 1996 at the site, supported in part by a generous grant from a local foundation. During the excavations, we held an open house that attracted nearly 200 local people, including neighbors and former residents of the house. We made meaningful connections with several of these individuals and gained valuable information about past land-use practices and changing attitudes toward the residents (Nassaney & Nickolai, 1999). Our final results consisted of an edited report on this National Register-eligible property authored by many of the students involved in the project

(Nassaney, 1998). We also established a long-term relationship with the HSBC. I served on their board of directors for five years and the Society frequently calls on University personnel for historical research assistance. The Society even established a student fellowship program to support research on specific topics of local interest for publication in their award-winning magazine, *Heritage Battle Creek* (e.g., Sayers, 1999).

As our work was being conducted, efforts were underway by Historic Adventist Village, Inc. to acquire properties in the neighborhood surrounding the home of James and Ellen G. White, just across town from the Shepard site. The Whites moved to Battle Creek in the 1850s and occupied the site for less than a decade. The house is an important pilgrimage site for Seventh Day Adventists because Ellen White experienced many divinely-inspired visions while living there that were fundamental to the foundation of their religious beliefs. The Adventists were restoring the home to its 1850s appearance and were interested in relocating landscape features and artifacts that the Whites used in daily life when they occupied the site. For many students in the field school, this was their first exposure to the tenets of Seventh Day Adventism. They learned about the direct connections between Ellen White, dietary reform, John Harvey Kellogg, and the rise of the cereal industry that still dominates Battle Creek’s economy (and historic consciousness). Even while under renovation, the site was a popular tourist destination for believers, and students met visitors from all over the world who came to see the Whites’ house. Students were struck that a site that seemed to have only local implications with its broken pottery sherds and rusty nails actually had global significance for people from the Caribbean, Germany, and southeast Asia. As it turned out, the Adventists were particularly interested in relocating the well that provided the Whites with their drinking water. When we were unable to find this water source, they unfortunately became somewhat disillusioned with the archaeology, even though our results support contemporary interpretations of Ellen White’s daily life and her prohibitions on consuming meat and tobacco (Nassaney, 1999; Nassaney, Rotman, Sayers, & Nickolai, 2001).

Another community group that we have partnered with is Support the Fort, Inc. (STF). Established in 1992, STF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to identifying and preserving the remains of Fort St. Joseph, an 18th century mission-garrison-trading post on the banks of the St. Joseph River in Niles, Michigan. This organization consists predominantly of a group of historical re-

enactors who sponsor an annual rendezvous, authorized by the city of Niles, held in a local public park. The event is an opportunity for the public to view historical reenactments, and for participants from throughout the region to meet and share their historical knowledge about Colonial life. STF is also committed to supporting reconstruction of the fort in Niles.

In planning for this reconstruction, a consultant advised STF to base the design on actual physical remains of the fort as revealed by archaeology. The STF leadership contacted me in 1997 to help them relocate and excavate the site. Archaeological information on the fort's location, size, and configuration, along with other architectural details, is essential for creating an accurate reconstruction because neither detailed maps nor adequate descriptions of the fort are known to exist.

In 1998, we conducted a survey, funded by the Michigan Humanities Council, to find the fort. Participants included WMU students and STF volunteers. We recovered various 18th century artifacts and animal bones from an area that seemed to coincide with the limited documentation on the site. We returned to the site with the 2002 field school and funding from STF to further investigate the site. We found definitive evidence of 18th century buildings and undisturbed artifact deposits confirming the location of the fort and the integrity of its remains (Nassaney & Cremin, 2002).

The community response to these findings has been overwhelming. The interest that elementary and secondary students have shown inspired us to offer a week-long high school field school during the 2002 field season. Providing University students the opportunity to work closely with high school students in conjunction with their own training blurs the lines between learning and teaching in a positive way. Everyone came away with a better sense of how history is derived from material evidence and how all of us can learn from each other. Presentations of our results at STF's annual meetings have drawn large crowds, as have the invitations we extended to the community to visit our excavations in Niles. A WMU student remarked that he was able to experience and observe firsthand the level of public interest in the work we were conducting.

Students have access to all of the artifacts and are conducting research to answer questions about life at the fort to assist in the historical details that interest the re-enactors. Public dissemination of the information recovered from the site is critical to the project's success, and students are involved in this aspect as well. Toward this end, we produced a documentary video of our discoveries available to the public ([www.wmubookstore.com/fsj.asp](http://www.wmubookstore.com/fsj.asp)), and

helped to design exhibits for local museums. In addition, two students are working with the Director of the Fort St. Joseph Museum and Niles area educators to develop a curriculum guide to accompany the video and artifact replicas for use in middle school classes. We are also working to bring more local elementary and secondary school students into the field. The accomplishments and long-term partnership forged between the city of Niles, the Fort St. Joseph Museum, STF, and WMU were recognized in 2003 as the first archaeology project to receive the Governor's Historic Preservation Award.

Various state agencies in Michigan are also interested in working with communities and students to preserve the state's archaeological heritage. In 2001, I was invited by the Office of the State Archaeologist to assist the Michigan Freedom Trails Program in identifying material evidence of 19th century Underground Railroad activities near the small town of Vandalia, Michigan. This program was working to meet National Park Service standards in designating and interpreting places that were associated with people who escaped bondage in the American South. We were asked to focus on an area of southwest Michigan where documentary sources and oral accounts suggested there had been a sizable community of African-Americans once known as Ramptown. The state provided support for background research, preliminary fieldwork, and report preparation; archaeologists under my guidance provided labor. We soon learned that although Ramptown had been abandoned in the late 19th century for unknown reasons, the area was resettled predominantly by African-Americans in the 20th century. Moreover, many of these contemporary African-American residents, as well as their White neighbors, had an avid interest in demonstrating that their predecessors struggled for freedom and social justice.

We consulted historical documents, read transcriptions of numerous interviews, met with landowners, and examined a small collection of artifacts before designing and implementing the fieldwork. Students in the 2002 field school conducted the walkover survey that led to the discovery of 12 sites, several of which appear to be associated with the houses of formerly-enslaved individuals. (We interpret these sites as the remains of mid-to-late 19th century domestic households based on the objects we collected. Their absence on the 1860 and 1872 plat maps suggests that they are most likely the homes of African-American tenants.) The results were extremely gratifying for many local citizens who had always believed that their African-American predecessors had sought freedom in Cass County, but were unable to

demonstrate their presence conclusively. It became clear to our students that the square nails, fragmentary plates, and broken glass had deep significance to many members of the community; this was more than just 19th century trash. Moreover, the students felt they had solved a real archaeological mystery given the paucity of evidence, documentary or otherwise, typically associated with clandestine activities such as the Underground Railroad.

These examples show how archaeology at WMU has been structured to enhance the learning opportunities for students by partnering with communities and providing a public service. Yet, to what extent do our activities fulfill the spirit of community service learning?

### From Experiential, Engaged Archaeology to Service-Learning

To address some of the concerns raised earlier in this paper, it is useful to evaluate the pedagogical approach we employed in our experiential archaeology in accordance with service-learning benchmarks. It is also beneficial to examine how practice has affected students, faculty, the University, and communities.

The projects examined in this study were conducted to meet real community needs. The needs range from raising awareness of heritage in the community to developing a heritage tourist destination and establishing a sense of place, identity, and belonging. Positive outcomes serve to increase the quality of life in a democratic, progressive society, which is consistent with the goals of higher education.

Students experienced how formal learning connects with real-world situations. Archaeology is more than merely an academic exercise; it has implications for people on a daily basis as they live and interact with surroundings created in the past. One student reflected by writing:

More than anything, I learned that archaeology is not some elitist discipline subject only to the whims of academic professionals, hidden away in the recesses of the college library. Rather, it is a profession closely linked with public support, and local residents are curious about its discoveries.

Students working in the field also come to appreciate the difference between “logic and logistics,” as one of my mentors, Bob Paynter, would often say. For example, while it may have been logical to survey systematically the agricultural fields in Cass County, farmers’ planting schedules required that we move around the county and work more opportunistically. Students understood that the real world is not as pre-

dictable or orderly as the classroom or laboratory.

Student learning also took other forms that may not have occurred in the classroom. Field settings involve more cooperative learning. Students are often paired up for the day and expected to interact in the exchange of information as they make observations, keep records, and reflect on their findings. Efforts to standardize this learning and facilitate reflection is incorporated into daily practice as we schedule regular visits to each other’s excavations and have students explain their findings to others in the group. This also allows them to make comparisons across the site, providing them with the “big picture.” Students learn to work with others; this often leads to a healthy division of labor whereby students can perform the tasks with which they are most comfortable, but only after they have been exposed to the full range of activities. For instance, when a pair of students draw a plan view or profile of their excavations, one typically provides the measurements while the other does the actual drawing. Both participate in the activity but each “learns” it in a slightly different way, often reinforcing previously acquired skill patterns.

Differences in abilities and learning styles also lead to an appreciation of diversity. While most students who take the field school are a fairly homogeneous age group, the projects we have conducted bring students into contact with older populations, as well as people of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Of course, mere exposure may only reinforce stereotypes. For instance, several students commented on the plight of the elderly in the Vandalia community center, where bathroom facilities were made available to us during the Ramptown survey. These circumstances provided an opportunity for students to confront the meaning of diversity, and challenge the idea that the elderly have little place in a youth-centered society, or at least raise the issue of why this is the case. The diversity that anthropologists regularly confront can be used to foster a sense of tolerance by which students are able to see their common humanity with people different from themselves (Eyler & Giles, 1999). In an engaged archaeology, there are at least two opportunities for this to occur. Students may see others in the community as vastly different from themselves, yet they share a common interest in the past. People of different ages, racial backgrounds, and religious beliefs were as excited as we were about our discoveries. Students may also see the people in history as similar to themselves; for instance, it would not be unreasonable for students to identify with people of a different time, place, and race who risked their lives for liberty. This would also provide an opportunity to

discuss how liberties in our contemporary world are constantly being redefined. Likewise, students may see parallels between fur traders on the frontier and their own efforts to establish a household in a new location away from family and friends. Although I only heard snippets of such conversations, they indicate profitable directions for discussion and reflection that I aim to encourage and facilitate more explicitly in the future.

These learning opportunities are significantly different from those in the classroom. It is difficult for students to dismiss history as a curiosity or diversion when they are doing engaged work at a place such as Ramptown (Art Keene, personal communication, May 15, 2004). Students are actively involved with people genuinely concerned with the story and how it gets told, and so they are much more likely to see how history is connected to social relations, and how relationships are created and reproduced. As interest in the project increases with larger numbers of potentially competing groups, the process becomes more complex. Students may come to take sides and begin to identify with particular constituencies, which leads them to think about ways to promote certain political agendas and question how they work and why they fail.

As students do archaeology in partnership with communities, engage diverse people from the public, and actively reflect on the process, they are likely to construct much more complex and nuanced histories. They may also frame their own role in the process with much more humility and responsibility. For example, some students wondered about the implications of the animal bones found at the home of James and Ellen White, knowing that they promoted and practiced vegetarianism. They began to ask how these data could be accommodated by the documentary sources and how we would tell the Adventists if the remains were dated to the period when the Whites occupied the site. The result is a history that is sensitive to segments of the community, and perhaps simultaneously contested by others.

Students gain new levels of understanding after they return from the field because they are better equipped intellectually to grasp complex issues and can think critically about issues of objectivity, ownership, power, and resistance. They begin to move from “knowing what” to “knowing how” and they gain a personal stake in the subject matter (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 68). When I recount the results of our field studies to students in subsequent classes, those who participated in the projects have a much deeper and subtler understanding of the topic at hand. Typically, their eyes light up when they share their experiences; their comments and body language implicitly say, “I know that place and what it took to obtain those

results. I’ve been there and I’ve done that!”

While this is admittedly true of experiential learning in general, students involved in service-learning often have a different stake in the outcome. They know there are no right answers and alternative interpretations have real implications for different publics. In a review of this article, Art Keene (personal communication, May 15, 2004) remarked that this recognition brings with it a responsibility that is not always easy to shoulder. Furthermore, once they recognize that there are indeed multiple publics with conflicting visions, the issue of defining what service is becomes much murkier. In Keene’s experience with service-learning and cultural anthropology, his students often discover that the interests of the community-based organizations which they serve are not always congruent with the interests of the clients that the organizations serve. It leads students to interrogate their own roles in an ongoing social dynamic and challenges them to problematize social change in more complex and meaningful ways. Who is the community anyway? What are the interests of different folk, where do they converge or diverge, and why? How does this make me rethink how I thought the world worked?

My students know we only excavated a sample of the site, we all made different observations for a variety of reasons, and further analysis and excavation may challenge us to rethink our initial interpretations. I encourage students to “think out loud” as we visit each other’s excavations or as they describe and interpret the context of their findings. They benefit by proposing multiple working hypotheses and validating what they see by testing their observations against information obtained from further excavation, revisiting the archives, or talking with local consultants. Some are able “to accept uncertainty and complexity as the way of the world,” whereas those who think that archaeological problems in the field have right and wrong answers usually feel helpless when the right answers are hard to come by (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 100). Those who pose the most questions are usually the ones who are gaining positive insights into the process of learning (see Waldstein, 2003, p. 37). These students are also the ones who see that the answers are shifting and contingent—they lie in multiple data sources and no one has a monopoly on the truth, not even the professor.

Ideally students should be encouraged to reflect on the nature of the service and the learning. As an archaeologist who practices a conservation ethic—a service to future generations—it is incumbent upon me to challenge students to think about why sites are threatened, how they can be protected, and whose stories get preserved in the process. For

example, we wanted public attention and interest in our work at Fort St. Joseph, yet we realized that the site could then be subject to looting. It was a local collector who originally brought the location of the site to our attention, after all. Discussions of ethical issues about ownership of the past, access, and control are also in the forefront of the service-learning experience.

The scatters of artifacts we identified as the remains of Ramptown had been ignored for many years. Why are some sites more important than others and why was Ramptown attracting attention all of a sudden? These questions force students to confront how power is exercised in decisions about heritage preservation. We also emphasize the dissemination of research results to the public. Normally at least one student would volunteer to discuss our activities and findings with the public, even though all of the students are expected to be able to serve in the role of spokesperson. We also emphasize that the work we do is conducted with the public's permission and authorization, and the public has the right to know what we are doing and learning. Communicating our findings with the public was itself a learning experience. This proved to be particularly gratifying for one student who wrote:

Relationships with the community challenged me to think in less abstract terms about the research. Ultimately, the experiences involved with communicating potentially boring academic interests to non-specialists made me think about how our work can impact the public. This is one reward that I would not have gained in a more traditional research (classroom) situation.

In the future, I would encourage my students to spend more time reflecting on the service. In most instances, we did not distinguish between our research design for the fieldwork and the questions the community wanted answered; we presented these as unitary concerns. One student remarked that as we moved toward addressing community concerns and disseminating information, the community began to appreciate academic issues; thus, our work provides a potential bridge between community and academic interests. More attention should be placed on why the community has turned to archaeology and what the community expects archaeologists to deliver. For example, in hindsight I wish that I had had a more open conversation with the members of the Historic Adventist Village about what they wanted from the archaeology. They may have come to better appreciate the limitations of archaeology and we may have obtained a better understanding of how they thought archaeol-

ogy could contribute to their reconstruction efforts. If this type of engagement does not take place, then we may be merely using the community as a laboratory rather than working with the community on a mutually beneficial project. Archaeologists could be accused of what some have called "guerilla research" and labeled "intellectual carpetbaggers" or "scientific SWAT teams." In this approach, researchers swoop into a community, find out its wants/needs, collect the data, and carry the information back to the laboratory for theses and other scholarly research aimed at tenure and promotion.

An area we have explored the least is how to evaluate the learning process. There is currently a substantial body of literature that examines how service-learning should be assessed to justify it as a better form of pedagogy (e.g., Billig & Waterman, 2003; Eyer & Giles, 1999). While I have concentrated on service-learning's benefits to students, it is also important to examine its impact on faculty, the university, and communities. For faculty, it takes considerable effort to negotiate and maintain the partnerships service-learning requires. Perhaps this is because this model requires an investment in the community and other new behaviors that have not been part of conventional archaeological practice nor rewarded in tenure and promotion decisions. However, it becomes easier to sustain this work style over time. For example, positive representation of our work is leading to new opportunities as other groups and agencies become interested in establishing a working relationship with an archaeologist. Citizens come to see a university as more than just a large, detached bureaucratic entity; personal connections are used to form alliances that can often transcend the project that initially led to the partnership. Members of the community also begin to perceive the university as a place where there are tremendous resources that are potentially accessible. This often leads to employment opportunities that are mutually beneficial, as community agencies hire students with whom they have already worked. It is most difficult to assess the impact of service-learning on the University. This generally takes the form of stronger town-gown relationships and a sense that higher education has a place outside of the ivory tower in putting theory into practice. It might also make the University more accessible to community members when viewed in this light.

Archaeologists have made their own arguments for an engaged or public archaeology, but these generally ignore the context of learning. Do students learn archaeology better when they are engaged in service-learning? This is a legitimate question and one that should be addressed before



service-learning becomes the standard for training archaeologists in the field. An evaluation of service-learning in archaeology is dependent on pedagogical goals. If the goal of an archaeological field school is merely to teach students how to dig lots of excavation units efficiently, maintain straight profile walls, and keep good notes, a service-learning model is unnecessary. We have the data to make this judgment—years of course evaluations and field notes that allow us to reconstruct our sites in the laboratory. However, if we truly embrace an anthropological, public archaeology relevant to contemporary concerns that extend beyond the academy, we will need to collect different types of data to evaluate the benefits of service-learning methods as they are applied in archaeology. These data will take the form of student reflections on their experiences, their praxis within and beyond the university, and community reactions to the archaeological enterprise. If archaeology aims to be more than an esoteric pursuit, it would be well served to adopt an explicit service-learning model whenever students are involved.

Suffice it to say that whether or not archaeologists come to fully embrace service-learning in the future, an archaeology sensitive to the needs of the public and descendant communities will be preferable to an archaeology that is not. An archaeology that places students in real-world settings, charges them with making decisions under proper supervision, and delivers practical results will be more effective than one that does not. And an archaeology that teaches our students to be critical thinkers and show compassion for the human condition, while encouraging them to link theory with practice, will better prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century. It is incumbent upon anthropologists to empower the next generation to be agents of change who can collectively make the world a better place in which to live. Service-learning would seem to be a good step in that direction. While it may appear to be a radical departure from conventional archaeological practice, this approach is the logical outgrowth of theoretical developments in the field over the past 30 years. It also will have important implications for developing the discipline by raising its visibility in the public eye and attracting students who genuinely want to put theory into practice. Student involvement in archaeology in collaboration with the community is a partnership model of practice in service-learning that archaeology programs and other subdisciplines of anthropology might well want to emulate.

#### Note

Western Michigan University's College of Arts and

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