Last spring semester, I taught Psychology 433 which focused on Children's Learning and Cognitive Development through the lens of a detailed study of children's literacy development. In the first four weeks of the course, we studied cognitive theories and models of the skilled reading process, as well as developmental changes in reading skills. In the next eight weeks, students continued to meet for class twice weekly to learn about reading comprehension and reading interventions, and began reading collaboratively with a neighborhood student at a JEP school twice weekly for one hour. We also discussed the students' observations of their children both in the class as a group, and individually on one occasion with the instructor.

The student's initial goals were to build rapport with the child, diagnose areas of reading difficulty (e.g., decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) and make a plan for addressing the difficulties, which was approved by the instructor. Students also gave a pretest (e.g., a test of word recognition, reading rate and comprehension) within the first two weeks of their assignment. In the last 5-6 weeks of the JEP assignment, students worked on the areas of difficulties using scientifically tested reading instruction principles and methods and ended with a final assessment of the student’s progress compared to pretest scores. In addition, each student arranged to work on a small book with the child, illustrated and written by the child, and re-drafted at least once by the child based on feedback and editing suggestions from the mentor. Children kept these books to show their teachers and parents.

After finishing the 8-week JEP assignment, students delivered an oral report describing their main "diagnoses" of the child's instructional needs, described their interventions, and supplied highlights of what they found. In addition, they turned in a more detailed term paper reporting their analysis of the child's strengths and weaknesses. 

Continued on page 8
How To Develop A Service-Learning Project

What to consider when creating a service-learning component for your course.

Service-learning: A definition

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

- Learn & Serve America
- National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

Service-learning:

At the core of service-learning is the principle that community service can be connected to classroom learning in such a way that service is more informed by theoretical and conceptual understanding and learning is more informed by the realities of the world.

Characteristics of service-learning:

- Service projects are part of a course; students get academic credit for their service work in the community
- Service projects relate in some way to the content of the course
- Service projects should be meaningful to the student and beneficial to the organization
- Service projects are usually limited in scope (e.g., 2-3 hours per week or 15-20 hours per semester)

What service-learning is not:

- An internship: Service-learning differs from internships, which typically require students to spend more time on site (e.g., 10 hours per week or even up to 40 hours per week during the summer). Internships may or may not have a connection to an academic course.
- Regular volunteerism: Service-learning students differ from other volunteers in that the latter group usually has no educational requirements connected to the community service work.

Types of Service-Learning

Direct Service:

Service-learning students who do direct service typically work on-site at an organization for 2-3 hours per week. The service typically offers students a taste of the core operations of an organization and contributes to its central mission.

Project-based Service-Learning:

This approach involves students, often working in teams, serving organizations as pre-professional “consultants.” The students work with agency staff to identify a problem and apply discipline-specific knowledge and skills to suggest possible solutions, usually with a written report as the “deliverable.”

Community-Based Action Research:

This approach involves students using a wide range of research methodologies to examine important community issues. In some cases, community organizations and/or their clients are involved in various steps of the research process, such as developing the research question(s), identifying the appropriate methodology(ies), collecting and analyzing the data, and interpreting the results.
What follows is a list of questions to consider when developing a service-learning partnership. Faculty can use this tool to think through course design issues. It also serves as a useful guide for communication with JEP staff and/or community partners.

Begin by thinking about the goals for your course—what do you want your students to learn? What might students learn in a community context that they are unlikely to learn in a classroom?

- What type(s) of service-learning assignment would best serve the learning objectives of the course?
- Do these projects lend themselves to individual or group work?
- What is the anticipated course enrollment?
- Will the service component be required or optional? How much credit will be assigned to the service component? How will the work be assessed?
- What kind of pre-service training or orientation will be provided for the students—and who will provide it? What information about the course and/or project needs to be included in that training?
- What special parameters are required of the service-learning assignment (e.g., direct contact with a Spanish-speaking population, ability to practice specific skills)? Are there any prerequisites for the course?
- How will the instructor incorporate the students’ community experiences into classroom activities (e.g., reflection exercises, course assignments)?
- How will the students’ work at the site benefit the organization?
- What are the intended short- and long-term goals of the service-learning project for the students?
- How will the instructor facilitate the delivery of research findings and final reports to the community partner after the service-learning project ends?
- What mechanisms will you use to keep track of student work (e.g., time sheets, attendance slips, sign-in logs, etc.)?
- What mechanisms will you use for communicating problems to community partners?
- How else could the organization contribute to the course and vice versa (e.g., supply guest lectures, facilitate access to other university resources, offer pro bono assistance to organization)?
- What other kinds of assistance could the university provide to help build organizational capacity for service-learning?

This tool was developed by Susan Harris & Melissa Gaeke using feedback from the participants of a USC Community Based Learning Collaborative workshop in April 2009.
A Powerful and Purposeful Partnership

Advice for community-based organizations on how to best work with JEP.

BY LYDIA CINCORE TEMPLETON, ESQ.

The Children Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) is a nationally-recognized agency that has been providing after-school academic intervention and support services to foster youth and urban youth since 1999. Currently, the agency serves approximately 4,000 unduplicated foster and at-risk youth in after-school and weekend programs at 27 school-based sites in the Montebello, Los Angeles and Compton Unified School Districts. The agency was founded to prevent foster and at-risk youth from experiencing the negative outcomes associated with emancipation and low academic achievement, including school drop-out, incarceration, unemployment and homelessness. CYFC has proven itself as a well-respected leader in the battle to transform urban education in Los Angeles by leveraging resources from the business, volunteer, government, education, faith and community sectors and combining them into a powerful collaborative force to guide, affirm and support children at serious risk for drop-out and academic failure.

Since 2002, CYFC has received over 600 service-learners from the USC Joint Educational Project. Before the first students came to work with us, Ms. Tammara Anderson, (JEP’s Executive Director) and her stellar team, assessed our agency to determine if we met their standards for partnership. Because the JEP staff was methodical in preparing CYFC to be service-learning partners, our agency was ready for the inaugural project after two months of planning. The USC students placed with us served as tutors for Project Advance, CYFC’s individualized and innovative tutoring program.

During that first year, five JEP students tutored twenty-five foster youth at one community site. We credit JEP with playing a major role in our expansion to serving over 4,000 students in twenty-seven sites daily. JEP students have made an incredible difference in the effectiveness of our tutoring program, playing a pivotal role in our success of achieving at least a 96% graduation rate each year. For service-learning volunteers to have a quality, meaningful and impactful experience, community based organizations must understand that JEP students are not traditional volunteers. They are different because their community service is linked to their coursework. In addition, community based organizations must plan for service-learners. Thus, orientation, training and project planning must be designed for the service-learning experience. JEP students made a positive and significant impact in the life of our agency. In order to produce effective results and to maximize the learning benefits for the youth which have the opportunity to work with the JEP students, we believe the planning guidelines outlined on the next page will be helpful to other community-based organizations.
Eight weeks of service can make an impact if the following tips are considered in the community-based organization's planning process:

1. Designate a liaison, or site coordinator from your agency, to work with JEP.

2. Conduct a powerful and brief orientation about the agency’s mission and vision.

3. Design a project or assignment that connects with the academic coursework for the service-learning students.

4. Educate agency staff and volunteers about the role service-learners play in fulfilling the mission of your organization.

5. Develop and communicate reasonable expectations.

6. Share critical policies with students (e.g. mandated reporting, suspected child abuse, etc.).

7. Plan your service-learning project with JEP staff to ensure that the goals and objectives of the experience are achieved.

8. Resist using JEP students for administrative and mundane tasks.

9. Ensure that JEP students are recognized as a distinct pool of volunteers supporting your agency to meet its mission and purpose.

The Joint Educational Project is making a difference in urban Los Angeles. CYFC is a proud partner and salutes JEP for being the vehicle that links University of Southern California students to meaningful service.

Do You Know Any Students Who Deserve To Be Recognized For Their Service?

Now is the time!

**Extraordinary Community Service Award**

A $1,000 cash award is provided to a graduating senior who offers outstanding service to the community.

**Grace Ford Salvatori Community Service Scholarship**

This $2,500 scholarship is given to up to six sophomores or juniors with majors in the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. It is based upon community service, academic performance, need, and civic leadership.

For more information please stop by the JEP House or go to our website at www.usc.edu/jep
New Staff Member Brings New Opportunities

*Introducing Alice Villaseñor, JEP’s Director of Humanities Initiatives.*

**By Dr. Alice Villaseñor**

As JEP’s newest professional staff member, I have a long history of sorts with USC’s community-based learning programs. I grew up hearing stories of how my father’s family benefited from programs offered through the USC Dental School’s Office of Community Health Programs after immigrating to Los Angeles from Mexico. Because I know the important and lasting effects of USC’s commitment to community members, I am thrilled to be working for JEP.

I became enchanted with JEP once I observed the positive impact the program had on my writing students’ abilities to grapple with contemporary social issues. While earning my PhD from USC’s English Department, I began working with JEP as a service-learning liaison in spring 2005. After taking some time off to write my dissertation, “Women Readers and the Victorian Jane Austen,” I returned to my graduate student JEP position in 2007.

In my new professional role this fall as JEP’s Director of Humanities Initiatives, I continue to work on service-learning curricula for humanities courses, including the new program I created for English literature majors in 2008. I also help to train our Program Assistants (the peer educators who train, monitor, and grade weekly reflective journals for over 1,200 service-learning students every semester).

My immediate goal is to start an interdisciplinary writing mentorship program linking USC undergraduates with college-bound high school students from the University Park campus neighborhood participating in USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) program. To this end, I designed a new course for USC’s Freshman Seminar Series, “JEP and the Neighborhood Academic Initiative: A (W)rite of Passage for USC Freshmen” (see box on page 10). While it is still in the early stages of development, I view this seminar as a unique opportunity for freshmen to help shape a new JEP program. I am also working towards creating new opportunities for upper-division humanities majors and graduate students.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**January 27**
32nd Street School Poetry Reading (6 to 8 p.m.)
Room TBA

**March 24-28**
21st Annual National Service-Learning Conference (San Jose, CA)

**March 31-April 2**
13th Annual Continuums of Service Conference (Portland, OR)

**April**
USC Readers Plus International Reading Festival
Date & location TBD

**April 7**
Borderless Diseases: a USC’s CBLC-hosted Event
Time & location TBD

**April 20**
USC’s Community Service Banquet (5:30 to 8 p.m.)
USC’s Town & Gown
*For more information on any of the above events, please go to JEP’s website, www.usc.edu/jep*
The British literature survey program is featured on the College video about JEP. This can be found on the JEP website (www.usc.edu/jep).

A USC College video about English 404: The Writer in the Community can be viewed at: http://college.usc.edu/videos/featured/80/the-writer-in-the-community/
and the progress of the child based on informal and formal assessments (e.g., short standardized and informal reading tests designed for each child).

The most common problems student mentors noted in 3rd-5th grade students were: a) reading accurately and fluently but without comprehension, b) weak vocabulary skills, and c) extremely weak writing skills. 1st-2nd grade students often needed instruction in more basic aspects of reading such as decoding, word recognition, and basic writing and reading comprehension.

A unique feature of the course was that I, the instructor, spent one hour a week mentoring a JEP fourth grader. This enabled me to fine-tune the weekly instructions, and to use examples of the child’s work to illustrate key facets of reading development. Working with a child led me to completely revise my initial plans for the course. In addition, this hands-on instructor experience was invaluable in many ways in communicating with my students. The USC students learned a great deal by alternating between theory and research on reading and intense work with actual student reading. The major difference between this course and past JEP assignments I have given in my classes was that students became quite knowledgeable about reading processes in children. By the end of the semester, they were gaining an appreciation for the various aspects of reading, how they develop in children, and what kinds of interventions might be effective.

When this course is taught in the future, I plan to include more material on writing, as we were unprepared to deal with the magnitude of written composition problems faced by most students.

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**How to Become Involved with the 2010 Census**

**Are You Looking for a Unique Volunteer Activity for Yourself or Your Students?**

Every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution, our nation conducts a census — an effort to count every person living in the United States. This requires years of planning and more than a half million temporary workers. The key to this endeavor is having every household fill out and mail back a completed census form. Participation is critical, as the results determine how Congress is apportioned and how more than $300 billion in federal funds are distributed annually to state, local, and tribal areas.

One way to help ensure that everyone is counted is to form a Complete Count Committee or join a team that has already been created. These Committees will help the Census Bureau’s efforts to ensure an accurate count and distribution of funds for schools, roads and elderly care, and other vital services. As a result, these committees help inform local residents — including those historically hard to reach in census counts — of the importance of responding to the census. In part because of the committees’ efforts, the response rate for Census 2000 increased for the first time in 30 years and the undercount of those historically missed during a decennial census was reduced.

In 2010, we need even more of these committees to help educate and inform our increasingly diverse nation. Complete Count Committees can start now to create awareness within their communities about the upcoming 2010 Census. They can donate space for testing and training temporary census workers, publicize recruiting efforts and obtain endorsements from local leaders. They can conduct census rallies or parades, media luncheons, and interfaith breakfasts and weekend events as we get closer to Census Day.

**For more information about Complete Count Committees, contact Lynne Choy Uyeda at the Los Angeles Regional Census Center**

(818) 717-5824 or Lynette.choy.uyeda-gin@census.gov
The 2009 Skirball Public Service Internship

Internship gives service-learning students an opportunity for a more in-depth experience.

By Dr. Susan C. Harris

Every summer, JEP manages the Skirball Public Service Internship program for undergraduate service-learning students. These interns spend 20 hours per week for 10 weeks at a non-profit organization with which they worked as a service-learning student during the prior academic year. The purpose of the program is to give the students a deeper understanding of the operations of urban non-profit organizations and to encourage them to consider future paid or volunteer involvement in the public service sector.

The program began in 2002 with a grant from the Flora Hewlett Foundation. Initially, the program was an option only for the students enrolled in PPD 372: Public Service in an Urban Setting, a course developed by Professor Richard Sundeen in response to student demand for more service-learning course options at USC. Over the years, the program has received funding from the California Community Foundation, the USC Office of Student Affairs and, most recently, the Skirball Foundation. The funding allows us to pay the interns for their work and to provide the host organization with a modest stipend to cover the costs of training and supervising the interns. Beginning in 2008, the program became available to all JEP students with service-learning assignments at one of our non-profit community partners.

Four interns participated in the Summer 2009 program. Ka Po Chan, a senior majoring in International Relations and Business Administration, who during the 2008-09 academic year worked for JEP as a Program Assistant for Peace Games, a non-profit organization that teaches peacemaking skills to school children. For his internship, Thomas developed a training module for JEP service-learning students. In addition, he helped Peace Games staff to operationalize the organization's new strategic plan and develop strategies for expanding the program to other schools. Esther Lo and Kimberly McVicker both served as tutors at the Good Shepherd Shelter—a long-term residential facility for battered women and their children—as part of their SOCI 369: Family in a Changing Society course. Esther is a senior Psychology major and plans to pursue her Master of Social Work degree. Kimberly is a senior Biology major and pre-pharmacy student. Esther and Kimberly worked with staff over the summer to develop a comprehensive tutoring curriculum to teach the adult residents about budgeting, parenting, and computers, among other topics. In addition, they were able to work with the shelter's Mental Health Coordinator to facilitate weekly “coping skills” groups with the children.

Over the years, interns have learned a great deal from their experiences. While service-learning provides a brief introduction to the community, these internship teach students about the day-to-day operations of a non-profit organization. The deliberate link between the service-learning course and the summer internship offers an additional opportunity for students to strengthen the academic outcomes of the course, as well.

Ka Po describes the benefits of her internship:

[From] a student perspective, working in A Place Called Home (APCH) has two main benefits. First of all, it helps me to learn and...
understand more about my society, especially the poor situation [of] working families in Los Angeles. From my Sociology 169 class, I have learned there was a large unequal income distribution in the United States. But it was just a general idea and I don’t know the influence of it. By working in APCH, I personally experienced how this situation affects the kids from poor families. . .

Secondly, I have learned how to write a grant. I wrote 5-6 letters of inquiry and 2 proposals for APCH. By grant writing, I have learned the budget, organizational structure, and the programs at APCH. I understand how a non-profit organization runs its daily activities and what is the best way to promote an organization. Grant writing is important in a non-profit organization because grant income is one of the main income sources. I appreciate [that] I have an opportunity to learn about it.

As a result of her experiences, Ka Po changed her career goals; she now wants to use her business administration degree and skills to benefit a non-profit (vs. a for-profit) organization.

Similarly, Kimberly McVicker notes how her experiences at Good Shepherd Shelter shaped her career goals:

While the connection between pharmacy studies and an internship at Good Shepherd Shelter may not be immediately apparent, I believe that the two can, and do, indeed complement one another. Public health and community counseling are two aspects of the field of pharmacy that particularly interest me. Ensuring the rehabilitation and emotional healing of domestic violence victims, the central focus of Good Shepherd, is a serious matter of public health and its consequences on mothers and children.

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The CBLC Networking Web-group

Please join the USC Community-Based Learning Collaborative (CBLC) group on the University Park Family (UPF) website!

The UPF site is a resource for friends of the University Park neighborhood to read and share information about issues of interest to the community. The CBLC group is intended for UPF users who support students in service-learning and other community-based learning projects. It is a dynamic and easily accessible space through which members of the CBLC can connect with one another and learn about upcoming opportunities for students and community organizations.

To join the Community-Based Learning Collaborative Group on the University Park Family Website, please follow this two-step process:

1. Go to http://www.universityparkfamily.com/. Find the box in the upper right hand corner that says “Welcome to University Park Family - serving USC and Expo Park neighborhoods.”
   a. If you are not yet a member of UPF, click “Sign Up.” Follow the instructions to become a member.
   b. If you are already a member UPF, click “Sign In.”
1. Once you have become a member of UPF and signed in, click on “Groups” to request membership in the CBLC group. After the administrator approves your request, you will have complete access to the CBLC group’s homepage.

Invite your colleagues and neighbors to join, too, to build the network and to insure its success!
JEP STAFF

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Tina Koneazny - Associate Director Administration & Educational Outreach
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Anna Whitmey - GEOG, SOCI, EDHP P.A.
Presenting a New 2-Unit JEP Course:
A (W)rite of Passage for USC Freshmen
FSEM 101: 34620R/Spring 2010, Wednesdays 3-4:50

The first few weeks will be spent discussing texts (anthropological studies and American literature) that feature education as a rite of passage. The class will then venture together through a common rite of passage for USC freshmen: the Joint Educational Project. The class will mentor high school students participating in USC’s Neighborhood Academic Initiative (http://www.usc.edu/ext-relations/nai) to improve their writing skills in preparation for college coursework.

Freshmen are the ideal mentors for NAI students as the students are preparing to apply to colleges, an important rite of passage USC freshmen have just successfully completed!