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ABSTRACT

Some undergraduate programs in social work require students to volunteer with a local human service agency as part of their introductory course. In one of our two studies reported here, we found that approximately half of the programs in the U.S. include a required volunteer component. In most instances, this volunteer service helps identify the most appropriate candidates for the social work program. Little, however, is known about the impact of the volunteer service itself on the students. In our second study, we used a matched-pairs pre-test–post-test group design to test the impact of this volunteer service on personal responsibility, social responsibility, and liking people. We found no significant changes due to the volunteer service . In addition, we analyzed students' written evaluations of their volunteer service. This analysis revealed significant individual gains. Based on the frequent use of required volunteer service in undergraduate social work programs and on our findings, we propose that the Council on Social Work Education further study and standardize the use of volunteering in introductory to social work courses in BSW programs.

Student Volunteer Service: Should It Be Required in Introductory Undergraduate Social Work Courses?

Ram A. Cnaan, PhD and Diane Metzendorf, DSW

INTRODUCTION

In the United States approximately 400 baccalaureate programs offer degrees in social work. Typically, students who choose social work as their majors have taken a variety of liberal arts courses. The gatekeeper course to the social work program is generally a course entitled "Introduction to Social Work." The purpose of this course is to familiarize undergraduates with the roles and nature of the social work profession (CSWE, 1988). In some programs students who enroll in this course are required to volunteer once a week with a human service agency for at least one semester. Reflecting on our own personal experience in working with students, we realized that there is no theory or empirical data to support this volunteer requirement. We also found that this vol-unteer service is not regulated by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). Consequently, there are few data available on how often this educational approach is used, how it is implemented, and what impact, if any, the volunteer service has on the students. The purpose of this study was to examine these issues.

It is important to distinguish between field practice and required volunteer service. Field practice, which is required in all social work programs as a component of practice courses, may best be described as an apprenticeship within the context of a core course. In field practice, students serve from one to three days a week in a human service agency under field supervision. Field practice and mandatory volunteer service require that students provide time and unpaid labor to human

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service agencies as a means of advancing their social work skills. One major difference between the two is that no qualified field instructor supervises the work of the student volunteers. They are on their own and expected to learn by themselves. The other difference is that student field practice is highly regulated by CSWE as to time and content, whereas student volunteer service is totally unregulated.

In this article, we review the literature on volunteering and social work in general and on student volunteering in particular. We then describe two separate empirical studies that we carried out to test our hypotheses. One was a random survey of one-tenth of all accredited baccalaureate programs in social work (BSW). The other was a field study to assess the impact of volunteering on students in one baccalaureate program. The latter included an analysis of the students' evaluations of their volunteer component. Finally, we report our findings and discuss their implications.

SOCIAL WORK AND VOLUNTEERISM

Social work as a profession had its origins in the work of middle-class women volunteers (Lubove, 1965). As social work grew into a powerful and cohesive profession, the use of volunteers decreased (Becker, 1964). Although tensions often exist between professional social workers and volunteers in human service organizations (Cnaan, 1990; Schwartz, 1984), social workers and social work educators often serve as volunteers (Parker, 1991; Parker and Newman, 1990) and continue to do so upon retirement (Friedman, 1988). Thus, the spirit of volunteerism is very strong among social workers.

As Brudney (1990) and Schilling, Schinke, and Weatherly (1988) have noted, budget cuts have forced many human service organizations to rely more heavily on direct service volunteers. In 1977, Trost found that professional social workers were neither positive nor negative in their overall view of volunteers. Trost also found that social workers who had both direct professional contact with volunteers and previous personal experience as volunteers rated volunteers as helpful in general and assessed their use of volunteers as very positive. Thus, lack of personal and/or professional exposure to volunteerism increased the likelihood of professional hostility towards volunteers in human service organizations. Furthermore, as Haeuser and Schwartz (1980) have pointed out, there are no courses to teach social workers how to manage or work with volunteers, which may explain the tension between professional social workers and volunteers. One way in which future social workers can gain first-hand knowledge on volunteering is through a baccalaureate program that requires one semester of volunteer service.

In a recent essay advocating the use of volunteers as direct service givers, Ambrosino (1992) wrote: "Most social work students have had at least one volunteer service prior to entering a social work program. The more varied the experiences, the more likely the student is to have a realistic viewpoint of the social work profession" (p. 180). However, as we have pointed out, little if anything is known as to what the scope, specific goals, and structure of this required service should be.

Interestingly, the boundaries between social workers and volunteers in the United Kingdom are less marked. In the 1968 report of the Seebohm Committee, which changed the nature of social service provision in the United Kingdom, it was recommended that volunteers be enlisted to assist professional workers. In *Social Work and Volunteers*, Holme and Maizels (1978) noted for the U.K. that: "Social work today relies on a work force of paid and unpaid labour—the 'professionals' and the 'volunteers.'" Still, they found that the number of volunteers used by social workers in the United Kingdom was not high. One explanation is that, while the British social service system favors the use of volunteers, the system's professional workers have been slow to use them. According to Holmes and Maizels,

social workers who do use volunteers do so mainly to befriend a client, to carry out practical tasks, or when special skills are required. Only 26.13 percent of the social workers reported direct use of volunteers, primarily in working with the elderly and people with physical disabilities. The remainder used volunteers only indirectly (through other agencies or through the client's social network).

VOLUNTEERISM AS A REQUIREMENT

The history of social work relationships with volunteer work is based on a free choice of individuals to volunteer their time and services. However volunteering can also be mandatory and a civic responsibility. According to Kelen (1992):

> Examples of obligations to personal service are obligations for military service [in Rome and many other countries], to serve in courts and on juries, to maintain roads and bridges, work on a dike or in a mine [especially in Communist countries], and all sorts of compulsory service for corporate purposes which are found in various types of organizations. (p. 19)

Kelen cites many examples from ancient Greece and Rome where donations (such as financing a public feast) or service was mandatory for certain elite groups. His own ideas on volunteering as mandatory work came from his years in Hungary. For Kelen, the most conspicuous phenomenon in East European voluntarism is the obligatory or *apoditic* nature of voluntary work. In the former Soviet countries, compulsory volunteerism was referred to as "Subbotnik work," namely Saturday work. This suggests that "volunteering in the world can also take the shape of forced labor" (p. 39).

A less pessimistic view of mandatory volunteering is offered by Adams (1987 and 1992) who had observed that our society is characterized by the "American imperative to volunteer." One such example is court-ordered community service. In this legal and social phenomenon, judges sentence certain defendants to community service rather than to a prison term. Thus the convicted individuals are forced to volunteer or else go to jail. Other examples of this pressure to volunteer include pro bono service as a criterion for corporate promotion (Wuthnow, 1991), the growing call for mandatory community service by students still in high school and after graduation through the National Community Service Act as championed by President Clinton. It is our contention that mandatory volunteer service in undergraduate programs as a means for entry into social work is only one facet of this growing call for civic responsibility and the "imperative to volunteer."

UNDERGRADUATE VOLUNTEERS

Serow, Ciechalski and Daye (1990), who reported on a large sample of undergraduates, found that personal aims, rather than concern for society and the needy, motivated most students to volunteer. Students viewed community volunteer service as a means of acquiring and demonstrating competence. Fitch (1987) found that student volunteers did not differ from nonvolunteers in socio-demographic characteristics and that their motivations were a mix of both egoism and altruism. This finding was supported by Fagan (1992). He also found that "Volunteers tended to be good students who were more interested in making a positive social and moral contribution to society" (p. 5).

In light of the call for national community service (Eberly, 1988) it is interesting to note that approximately half of all students reported that they perform some type of volunteer work, but most gave, on average, little time to their volunteer work (Fagan, 1992). Social work undergraduate programs that require volunteer service may contribute to that high percentage of student volunteers and is clearly in line with the trend for national community service. Student volunteers may volunteer on their own, as a response to a call from agencies or groups, or as a substitute for an academic credit (Bojar, 1989; Cooley, Singer, and Irvin,

1989; Redfering and Biasco, 1982). In social work programs, the required volunteer service, be it volunteer service or field practice, is a required assignment necessary for passing a key course.

Volunteering in college has a long-term impact on people's lives. For example, Schram (1985), in a survey of Michigan State University graduates who had been student volunteers, found that an overwhelming majority (95.4%) reported that they had gained new skills by volunteering. Of these, 85% reported using these skills in their paid employment. Peterson (1975) found that volunteer service contributes to ego development, moral development, and self-actualization. Hobfoll (1980) found that student volunteers became more empathic towards needy people and more favorable towards black ghetto children and welfare recipients. Students who volunteered in psychiatric settings (Price and Larson, 1982) or in services to developmentally disabled individuals (Fox and Rotatori, 1986) became more sympathetic towards them.

In sum, the literature appears to indicate that whatever their motive in volunteering, be it helping others or advancing themselves, students gained skills and attitudes that were congruent with ethical and social work values.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Social work students are sometimes required to volunteer at least once a week in a local human service agency as a condition of entry into a specific social work program. It is unclear whether this required service benefits the student or whether it changes the students' attitudes towards social responsibility, personal responsibility, and the people they serve. The purpose of our study was to examine these issues as well as the frequency of this practice in social work programs.

As the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) does not regulate mandatory volunteer service in introductory social work courses, our first task was to determine the frequency of its use. Specifically we asked:

(1) What percent of schools have a volunteer component in the introductory course? (2) What is the mean number of volunteer hours per week that these schools require? (3) Who selects the agency where the volunteer service is to be performed: the student or the school? (4) What are the key goals of this volunteer component?

Given the assumption that one semester of required volunteer service is common in introductory social work courses, we would expect that students who performed such service would be more responsible and people-oriented at the end of the semester in comparison with non-volunteer students. We have chosen these two issues as many studies showed that volunteer service among young people is related to improved personal and social responsibilities (Brendtro, 1985; Conrad and Hedin, 1981; Hamilton and Fenzel, 1988; Saurman and Nash, 1980) and as interest in close proximity with other people is a desired characteristic for future social workers, a greater sense of compassion was found among student volunteers as compared with student non-volunteers (Knapp and Holzberg, 1964).

Our hypotheses were as follows: (1) Students who had a semester of volunteer work would score higher on social responsibility compared to their score prior to the experience and compared with students who did not volunteer. (2) Similarly, they would score higher on personal responsibility compared to their score prior to the experience and compared with students who did not volunteer. (3) They would score higher on liking people scale (LPS) compared to their score prior to the experience and compared with students who did not volunteer.

Finally, we would expect that students who were required to volunteer would assess the experience individually, some viewing it as an enriching experience, others, as a waste of time and energy.

METHODS

Procedure. Our study was based on two empirical investigations: (1) a telephone

survey of a random sample of social work baccalaureate programs, and (2) a matched-pairs pre-test–post-test group design that tested the impact of required volunteer work on personal responsibility, social responsibility, and liking people. In addition, we analyzed the students' written evaluations of their volunteer service.

In the first investigation, we selected every tenth school from the CSWE's list of accredited baccalaureate programs. Because the programs were listed alphabetically by state (which were also listed alphabetically), we were assured that our selection of programs would be random. During the 1991 Fall semester we conducted a phone interview with the director/chair of each program in our sample. Each interview lasted between five and ten minutes on average.

In the second investigation, students in an introductory social work course were asked to complete the research instrument within the first two weeks of the 1991 Fall semester. One of the course requirements was that the students would volunteer with a local human service agency. The students were also asked to give the instrument to a friend who had not previously taken this course, nor had volunteered with any organization during the study period.

Two weeks before the end of the semester, the same students and their friends were asked to complete the same set of instruments. In addition to this matched-pairs pre-test–post-test design, we also asked the student volunteers for a written evaluation of the impact the volunteer service had on them.

Respondents. For the first investigation, we contacted 38 programs in 31 states which represented all geographical regions of the United States. For the second investigation, we studied 35 undergraduates enrolled in an introductory social work course at a state university. This university is part of the state higher education system and is located in a suburban area about 30 miles south of a large major metropolitan area. The majority of the students were white women under the age of 22. Most had declared as their major social work or a related field such as criminal justice, psychology and public health nursing. The majority had neither volunteered before nor been assisted by a volunteer.

The students' friends, who served as a comparison group, were not enrolled in nor had they previously taken this course. They were matched on age, gender, education, and place of living (on- or off-campus). In addition, we found that the socio-demographic characteristics of the student population and the comparison group were similar.

Instruments. For the first investigation, we used a one-page questionnaire. The questions were factual and, if possible, closed-ended. They served to guarantee uniformity in the telephone interviews.

For the second investigation we used a three-part self-administered questionnaire. The first section consisted of basic socio-demographic information. The second section consisted of 21 questions regarding social and personal responsibility. Students were asked to rate each item on a 4-point scale that provided a potential full-scale score of 21 to 84. This scale, developed by Conrad and Hedin (1981), was also used by Hamilton and Fenzel (1988). The rated item assessed the extent to which the students regarded a particular facet of personal or social responsibility as characteristic of themselves.

In our analysis, we also used two sub-scales that we considered relevant to the students' volunteer services. One (Social Responsibility sub-scale) assessed respondents' attitudes toward society's obligations to meet the needs of others. The other (Personal Responsibility sub-scale) assessed respondents' perceptions of their personal responsibility, competence, efficacy, and performance ability toward others in need. In our sample the full scale demonstrated a good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .84) as did two sub-scales of attitudes towards social responsibility (alpha = .80) and personal responsibility (alpha = .76).

The third section of the questionnaire consisted of the liking people scale (LPS). Developed by Filsinger (1981), this 15-item scale measures positive interpersonal orientation and detects tendencies for social isolation, shyness, and anti-social behavior. In our sample the reliability of LPS was high (alpha = .82).

Finally, we used a course evaluation form to determine how the 35 students who participated in the required volunteer service viewed the experience. The section of the form that we used was the students' answers to the open-ended question: "Describe the impact that the volunteer service had on your attitude."

FINDINGS

Of the 38 social work baccalaureate programs in our sample, 18 reported that their introductory course had a required volunteer component. Two others reported their introductory course as a social welfare course. The second course which was used as a gatekeeper was a social work course that required volunteer service. Two other programs reported that they had previously had a volunteer requirement, but had dropped it because the program had grown in size and it was no longer feasible. Thus, 52.6 percent of the programs in our sample currently require students to volunteer. Only one program director whom we contacted said that "required volunteering" is a contradictory term and thus they do not use it.

Programs in our sample that used a volunteer component reported different homegrown standards as to what was expected in the volunteer service and its role in the students' education. The expected number of hours per semester ranged from 20 to 48. In most schools (90%), students were permitted to choose the human service agency for their volunteer work. Half of the programs asked faculty either to provide suggestions or to approve the student's choice. Overall, we identified three common objectives for the volunteer service: (1) to test the students' capacity and suitability for the profession; (2) to familiarize students with the agency environment; and (3) to get to know the students informally and assess their professional interests. Only a few programs also used this service as a means to introduce students to the use of the professional self, provide students with working experience with people, and support conceptual learning with practice. None of the programs or schools published accounts as to how this service was performed or its outcomes.

To test each of our hypotheses regarding the impact of the volunteer service on one group of students, we employed both the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test with a Scheffe test and a t-test at the .05 level. The ANOVA used for each hypothesis included the following four levels: pre-experimental group, post-experimental group, pre-comparison group, post-comparison group. The t-test was used when the pre-score of each group (experimental and comparison) was subtracted from the post-score. The comparison was made on the difference only.

To test our hypothesis, that student volunteers would score higher on social responsibility as compared to their score prior to the service and as compared with non-volunteer students, we used both statistics. While the t-test revealed insignificant differences, the ANOVA revealed significant differences. When we used the Scheffe test, we found that, at the end of the volunteer service, student volunteers (mean = 3.26) scored higher than did student non-volunteers (mean = 3.06). This finding should be interpreted with caution as the measure of social responsibility among student volunteers increased only slightly (from mean = 3.24) during the study time, while that of the student non-volunteers decreased (from mean = 3.12). Contrary to our hypothesis, scores for the volunteer group were not significantly higher at the end of the semester as compared with their scores prior to their volunteer work, although a slight increase in social responsibility was detected.

To test our second hypothesis that volunteers would score higher on personal

responsibility as compared to their score prior to the service and as compared to student non-volunteers, we used both statistics. We found no significant differences in either case. To test our third hypothesis that volunteers would score higher on liking people as compared to their score prior to the service and as compared with student non-volunteers, we employed both ANOVA and t-test. Again we found no significant differences.

From the analysis of the student volunteers' evaluations, however, a much more positive picture emerged. Of the 35 students, 31 reported that the volunteer service was positive. Two students reported a negative experience, both noting their disappointment at having to work with a certain client population. Two other students reported themselves as neutral about the service.

Many students reported that they had learned something new and positive about the population with which they worked. For example, one student wrote: "My work at [Nursing Home] made me realize how open and receptive the elderly actually are to the youth." Another positive outcome was learning to be open-minded towards differences. As one student wrote: "Before I started my volunteer work I wasn't too thrilled with the idea of working with children.... I thought all they did was cry, scream, and make trouble. I was wrong. ..."A third positive outcome was increased appreciation of clients' struggles with certain social problems. One student reported: "These experiences showed me just how hard life is for an addicted person." A fourth positive outcome was a personal moral commitment. This was reported most often by students who had worked in jails or with substances abusers. They noted that they did not want to be like their clients. As one student wrote: "I know now that I will never drink and drive or commit any other misdemeanors." The final positive outcome was the student's reaffirmation of his or her commitment to social work. As one student noted: "The one thing that I know is that

this is the type of work that I want to be a part of."

Finally, in a follow-up with some of the students we found that they had continued to volunteer with the same agency even after the semester was over. In a few cases it was part of their contract with the agency (such as a school that requires a commitment for the year). In many other cases students continued their involvement with the agency because they enjoyed the experience. Prolonged non-credit student volunteer work in cases where the experience was a positive one is quite common among student volunteers (Cooley, Singer, and Irvin, 1989).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Social work as a profession has a unique relationship to volunteerism. The profession which grew from the work of middle-class women volunteers has become more skill- and knowledge-oriented over time. Tasks once performed by volunteers are now performed by professional workers. The literature suggests a resentment between social workers and volunteers, yet many social workers willingly serve as volunteers. In this article we have addressed a neglected aspect of the relationship between social work and volunteering, namely, required volunteer service as part of the baccalaureate social work program. We also showed that the idea of compulsory volunteerism is neither new nor currently unique to social work education.

Our findings indicate that over half of the social work baccalaureate programs in a random sample had a volunteer requirement, generally in the introductory or "gatekeeper" course, while in a few programs it is attached to the second course. As common as this practice is, it is interesting to note that each program set its own standards and regulations. Overall, we found that students were expected to provide 20 – 48 hours per semester of direct service to individual(s) within a human service agency. The goals were varied, but most centered on the need to prepare students for the profession and to

screen out those not suited for social work. Despite the frequency of this practice, there are no systematic reports about its implementation or evaluation. It may be that those programs which use this practice are satisfied with it and assume its usefulness. Considering that more than half of the programs in our sample had a volunteer component and found it helpful, it is surprising that the Council on Social Work Education has yet to adopt any guidelines regarding this practice.

As there are no published reports on the impact of volunteer service on social work undergraduate students, the second part of our study was designed to assess the impact of volunteering. We focused on one undergraduate program and compared 35 pairs of students: volunteers and non-volunteers. We found no significant differences regarding personal responsibility and liking people. Regarding social responsibility, we found some different post-experience, but the data were very inconclusive. The fact that our hypotheses regarding the impact of volunteering were not supported may, in part, be attributed to the three scales we selected for this study. Our analysis of the student volunteers' assessment indicated that volunteering positively influenced their attitudes towards client populations such as the mentally ill, children, developmentally disabled, and substance abusers. It should be noted that such positive attitudinal changes have been reported in the literature for students working with these populations regardless of social work affiliation (Fox and Rotatori, 1986; Hobfoll, 1980; Price and Larson, 1982). We found in the students' evaluation a commitment to serving people in need and a willingness to be open to human differences.

From the students' written evaluation we can also assess what makes a required volunteer service in an introductory social work course a good experience. The characteristics are: (a) a supportive agency, (b) use of the volunteer service to examine and identify one's own attitudes and values, (c) use of the experience to review one's understanding of social problems and human needs, (d) use of the experience to apply and better understand conceptual knowledge generated in lectures and in reading, (e) opportunity to develop interpersonal contacts with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and (f) a clarification of one's personal commitment to help others and genuine interest in pursuing social work education. The experience can be very positive and educational even for students who decide that social work is not for them. The latter, if given a good experience, can develop appreciation for people in need and learn to be more accepting of differences.

Social workers are often accused of being hostile to volunteers and unwilling to use them in human service agencies (Schwartz, 1984). It has been recommended that one way to deal with this problem is to familiarize social workers with the role of volunteers and to demonstrate that volunteers can contribute to the welfare of others (Trost, 1977). The volunteer service within undergraduate school social work education is one means of helping future social workers understand the role of volunteers. It is not yet clear just how long that experience should last, but, as our findings indicate, the experience itself enables student volunteers to learn, gain, and contribute at the same time.

Volunteering in baccalaureate social work programs comes from the tradition of the friendly visitor (Becker, 1964). The volunteer component is demanding as students do not receive any credit for their work and faculty find themselves spending many hours advising and monitoring the students' volunteer service. Some schools find this cost to be negligible compared with the educational merits. Some schools have never considered this option while others have dropped it as too costly. This creates a paradox for baccalaureate social work education. If the volunteer component is helpful, then all students should benefit from it. If it is not helpful, then it should be banned. Whatever the case, CSWE should initiate a study commission to examine this practice

and assess its merit as a means to regulating this common practice. Such a commission should also pay attention to the ethical and moral issues involved in a mandatory volunteer component.

The impact of the volunteer requirement on the curriculum and social work programs needs further examination. For example, non-traditional students such as foreign students with minimal proficiency in English, or students with physical disabilities may have difficulty locating an agency that will accept them as volunteers. In situations such as these, the volunteer requirement, if not coordinated and guaranteed by the social work program, can put extra burden on students. Social work programs should also monitor the length of the student's commitment to the agency. In some cases, the agency requires a long-term commitment such as a full academic year. This puts students who do not know how to search for a suitable agency nor how to bargain for reasonable terms of service at a disadvantage. To cope with this problem, some social work programs draw up a contract between the faculty member, the agency representative, and the student. Such contracts specify the expectations and requirements, thereby protecting the student.

A key issue in required volunteer service is guaranteeing that the volunteer service will be compatible with the student's education objectives. Most instructors do not supervise the actual volunteer work but are expected to assess its applicability to the content of the course. For example, instructors could: (a) visit the agency where the student is volunteering, (b) meet with each student a few times a semester to discuss the volunteer service, (c) ask students to keep a weekly log as to their volunteer work, (d) ask students at the end of the semester to write a detailed evaluation of their experience, (e) incorporate students' experiences into class discussions (for example, discussing a conceptual issue as is applied to their volunteer work), and (f) incorporate issues from the volunteer service into final assignments (usually term papers).

The student volunteer service, though time-consuming, is a way to link social work programs with the field and with social service agencies that otherwise are not part of the social work network. Furthermore, the student volunteers provide a valuable service to the community through the social work program. These hours of required volunteer service can be tallied and included as part of the program's community service in its annual report. Finally, given the increasing commitment of many colleges and universities to local community service, social work can be a major player in spearheading institutional initiatives that bridge academe and community.

Several important implications for volunteer administrators can be drawn from this study. First, schools of social work should be viewed as a potential source for recruiting seasonal volunteers. Wherever there are undergraduate schools of social work, volunteer administrators may link up with them to guarantee a steady stream of reliable volunteers. As student volunteers must satisfy academic requirements while volunteering, their commitment of time and period of stay is above average. Administrators of volunteer programs should consider students (volunteering at the organization) as members of the total volunteer team. As students wish to learn and apply their volunteer experience to classroom requirements and discussions, they will be willing to invest in the agency even if for a limited duration. Thus, students should be encouraged to participate in any training, meetings and staff/volunteer gatherings offered by the organization. Students reported that their most positive experience occurred when they sensed a supportive agency. Thus, they will begin to possess a sense of commitment and dedication for themselves as part of the volunteer team.

However, one finding from this study indicates that students who volunteer as required for a social work introductory course may discontinue volunteering upon

completion of the course. Volunteer administrators can encourage students to return when time permits, acknowledging to the student the valuable contribution that s/he has made to the organization through his/her participation. In a situation where the student has found that the work is not appropriate for him/her, the volunteer administrator can support this decision but can also suggest there may be other opportunities for this student to provide service. Furthermore, in agencies where their schedules differ from that of the student's academic year, such as elementary schools, recreational programs, and residential care units, the volunteer administrator may contract with the student, ahead of time, a longer period of volunteer service to avoid disruption in the program. In these instances, the volunteer coordinator may wish to involve the relevant social work faculty so that all parties will agree with the practice and will support it.

The three-way contract between the student, volunteer coordinator, and faculty member is an advisable practice. Often, students find that they do not meet the expectations of either the agency or the college; having a written contract and a channel of communication may avoid future problems and misunderstanding. Volunteer administrators should insist that faculty will meet with agency personnel, see the premises, meet clients, and be familiar with what their students are experiencing.

Finally, volunteer administrators who have found student volunteering to be a valuable experience for the organization may want to contact the practice instructors at schools of social work to suggest a formal relationship, such as a student volunteer unit or assist in opening the door for field placements.

The impact of the volunteer service on undergraduate social work students and on the many agencies in which they volunteer needs further study. Research issues should include the effect of the volunteer service on the decision to become a social worker, skills gained through volunteering, improper use of volunteers by some agencies, how best to use seasonal volunteers who are motivated by academic requirements, the accessibility of a proper volunteer service for non-traditional students (such as those with disabilities or of non-English speaking origin), decisions to specialize in areas of first volunteer service, use of the volunteer service in classroom teaching, and the supervision and training of undergraduate social work students, to name but a few.

AUTHORS' NOTE
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Legal Considerations for Volunteers and Staff

Norman D. Long, EdD

What obligations for tort liability do volunteers have in connection with a public service program? In general, volunteers aren't aware of the serious nature of tort. Being aware of such information can help protect the rights and interests of the volunteers who assist youth, and at the same time develop reasonable self-protection against the liability involved in public service programs.

DEFINITION OF TORT

Tort is defined as a civil wrong, outside a contract, committed by one person against another. Liability is a broad legal term including almost every type of hazard or responsibility, both absolute and contingent. A court action that allows legal recourse against someone who causes injury is a tort suit. Whether the wrong is seen as unintentional, negligent or deliberate may have little bearing. In a tort suit, the defendant may have to pay for: medical bills, lost earnings, damages for pain and suffering, replacement of damaged property, and punitive damages that may include both compensation and punishment.

CAUSE-OF-INJURY QUESTION

Receiving personal injury, doesn't always guarantee collection for damages. The courts must first decide the cause of injury. In making such a determination, five questions are usually asked by the courts:

1. Was there an accident in which a person was injured?
2. Did another individual have a duty to care for the injured person?
3. Did the other individual fail to exercise that duty?
4. Was the failure to exercise that duty the main cause of the injury?
5. Was the accident foreseeable?

If it can be shown that carelessness was the direct cause of the injury, then the defendant may be liable.

TEN COMPONENTS

The nature of tort liability consists of 10 components:

1. Due care.
2. Physical defects (inspection of premises).
3. Instruction and supervision.
4. First aid and medical treatment.
5. Foreseeability.
6. Causation.
7. Defamation (slander and libel).
8. Assault and battery.
9. Contributory negligence.
10. Notice of claim (statute of limitations).

DUE CARE

Before liability can be attributed to a volunteer (defendant), a determination must be made to see if the defendant exercised due care. Whether the defendant foresaw a potential problem, or should have seen the potential of a problem, and tried to prevent it, must be established. That is, did the person exercise sufficient foresight and take appropriate measures to prevent the accident? If a defendant failed to exercise such care, and if the failure was the main cause of the injury, then the plaintiff—the one bringing the tort suit—may recover damages.

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Being informed and aware of tort liability enhances the credibility of youth professionals and their volunteers and potentially diminishes the number of accidents.

What constitutes due care and adequate supervision depends on the circumstances surrounding the incident, such as: (1) the number and age of the clientele, (2) the activity in which the clientele was engaged, (3) the duration of the supervision, (4) the ease of providing some alternative means of supervision, and (5) the extent to which written and implemented guidelines were used.

In the case of minors, the courts have held that the following care of duty was reasonable and prudent: The duty to exercise ordinary care with a minor child would be properly measured by what a person of the same age, capacity, intelligence, and experience would have done under the same or similar circumstances, or the failure to do so.

Youth professionals and volunteer leaders are expected to exercise a reasonable degree of care to prevent such an accident or injury from occurring. Traditionally, the standard of care that one owes another has been judged as that which any reasonable person would exercise under similar circumstances. Determination of the standard of reasonableness is established by the court.

PHYSICAL DEFECTS

Although youth professionals and volunteers can't ensure the safety of another from physical injury, they can be expected to inspect the premises, note any dangerous conditions, and take the necessary steps to correct any physical defects.

For example, negligence could be shown if an individual allowed a known hazard to exist without measures being taken to correct the hazard.

INSTRUCTION AND SUPERVISION

One of the most frequent causes of an accident is the failure of supervising personnel to instruct and supervise efficiently. Youth professionals and volunteers are expected to provide proper instruction and adequate supervision to prevent accidents and injuries.

When a person has been derelict in the instruction and/or supervision and it causes an accident, then the injured party may recover damages. However, if failure to instruct and/or supervise wasn't the main cause of an accident, there wouldn't be liability.

The two determining factors in assessing liability for adequate instruction and/or supervision are usually: (1) the danger level with which the individual has been working, and (2) the person's relative maturity in an unsupervised situation.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

The plea of "Good Samaritan" won't excuse a youth professional or a volunteer from liability as a result of giving medical attention when they should have recognized that the injury and proper treatment were beyond their skills. Due care in these circumstances would be to summon necessary help as quickly as possible. Depending on circumstances, medical attention might range from calling a nurse, a doctor, a first aid expert, or contacting a medical emergency unit. In any event, the child's parents or guardians should be promptly notified.

FORESEEABILITY

Foreseeability is defined as being aware of possible danger and taking appropriate measures to eliminate it. To be held liable for negligence, an individual must have been able to foresee the danger. Defendants often use absence of foreseeability as a defense in accident suits. To limit the opportunity for negligence under foreseeability, youth professionals and/or volunteers should report any known dangerous defects or hazardous situations to the proper authorities.

CAUSATION

Before a court can determine if a defendant is guilty of negligence, the court

must first establish the cause of the injury. In assessing the facts, the court places great responsibility on the plaintiff to prove that negligence was the main cause of the injury.

For one to be liable, the defendant's action must be both the cause in fact and the main cause of the plaintiff's misfortune. If other external circumstances contributed to the plaintiff's injury, the court often won't hold the defendant liable for damages.

An effective formula for determining cause of injury is:

1. Was the action in question the cause of the injury?
2. Would the injury have occurred if not for the negligent action?
3. Was there an intervening independent cause? If not, the action probably was the main cause.

If other circumstances did exist, the court must determine whether the injury could have been reasonably foreseen even if that specific cause hadn't occurred or if the cause itself was foreseeable. If the injury was predictable, the original action is considered the cause of the accident.

DEFAMATION—SLANDER AND LIBEL

Defamation is defined as communication about a person designed to harm the person's reputation. If written or printed, it is libel; if oral, it is slander. One can recover for damages under tort action for either libel or slander.

Statements to a third person that damage another's reputation may constitute defamation of character.

Youth professionals and volunteers generally haven't been liable for defamation provided remarks relate to the respective job description and are within the scope of their authority. Youth professionals and volunteers may be held liable for false and malicious statements made outside their scope of authority.

ASSAULT AND BATTERY

Assault and battery are two actions for which one may recover damages for. His-torically, assault and battery have been viewed as companion suits. However, they may be separate actions.

Assault involves an overt act designed to injure or give the appearance of injuring another person. The person to whom the assault was intended must have been placed in a position of peril or threatened harm. Assault may involve words, actions, or both. In contrast, *battery* is actual physical contact with another person. A suit for liability under assault and/or battery probably wouldn't exist unless there was proof of malice.

CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE

Negligence has been the most common tort. Negligence presumes a duty of care owed by one person to others, the breach of that duty, and the resulting damage or injury. The question of liability also arises where an injury or damage has been caused by an act of omission.

In a negligence suit, one of the defenses used is contributory negligence. Contributory negligence exists when the injured party's action or inaction in part caused the accident. In that case, the plaintiff can't collect from the defendant. The defendant, to prove contributory negligence, must show that: (1) the plaintiff violated his/her duty of due care and acted below the standard of a reasonable person, and (2) the plaintiff's lack of care was the main cause of the accident. One should note that circumstances play a crucial role in the determination of negligence.

> Tort is defined as a civil wrong, outside a contract, committed by one person against another (see definition on page 12).

In contributory negligence suits, the *assumption of the risk doctrine* and the *concept of the last clear chance* have been two important factors.

The assumption of the risk doctrine has been used in situations where one voluntarily exposed himself/herself to danger that the person was fully aware of. In such cases the plaintiff can't recover for

injuries sustained as a result of the exposure. For example, when a person attends a hockey game, the person assumes the risk of being hit by a puck, but doesn't assume the risk of a boiler explosion, although either injury could be sustained as a result of the person's exposure at the hockey game.

By contrast, the concept of the last clear chance means that even if the plaintiff were guilty of contributory negligence, the defendant would still be liable if the defendant could have saved the plaintiff, but failed to do so. The last clear chance has also been used as a direct defense—for example, when the plaintiff had a last clear chance to avoid an accident.

The term comparative negligence is used, but on a more limited basis than contributory negligence. In comparative negligence cases, liability for an accident is assigned by the court according to the degree of fault of both the plaintiff and the defendant.

NOTICE OF CLAIM

Most states have statutes that disallow a suit filed after a stated period of time has elapsed following an injury.

The late filing of claims hinges on two factors: (1) exempting a minor from the restricted period for filing, and (2) determining what constitutes a filing of a claim.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the information presented in this article has been to help develop an increased awareness regarding the serious nature of tort liability. Being informed and aware of tort liability can enhance the creditability of both youth professionals and volunteers, and it can diminish the number of accidents and injuries for the children being served as our clientele.

ABSTRACT

Homelessness in the United States is increasing and is the result of unemployment, deinstitutionalization, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, economic recession and state welfare reductions. Some local communities are addressing this problem by developing and implementing volunteer outreach programs for the homeless. This article describes a community outreach program staffed by student volunteers who provide services for this population. Recommendations and specific suggestions for the implementation of such a program are discussed.

Each student volunteer compiled a data sheet for each client that included demographics and the services requested. The information was generated from the students' client logs and compiled onto the data sheet. The data sheet also asked students to make recommendations for improving the program. Counts were tabulated into percentages which were derived from population characteristics and services requested.

Project Outreach: A Student Volunteer Referral Program for the Homeless

Anthony P. Halter, DSW

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is an increasing problem in the United States as the homeless population continues to grow. Hagen (1987) reported that homelessness was the result of unemployment, deinstitutionalization, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, economic changes and state welfare program reductions. During the 1980s, General Assistance reductions occurred in Pennsylvania, while Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma completely eliminated their General Assistance programs (Center on Social Welfare Policy, 1991). Recently, Michigan, Illinois, Kansas, and Ohio have reduced or discontinued their programs. Katz (1986) and Halter (1989) point out that such welfare changes result in larger numbers of homeless people. In some instances, local communities are addressing this problem by developing and implementing volunteer outreach programs for the homeless. For those communities with colleges or universities, the academic community can participate in these efforts by instituting

volunteer outreach programs. Dodge (1990) found that college students often choose academic majors that coincide with their concerns about their communities and the environment. Boston University's attempt to improve the Chelsea school system is a model of cooperation between secondary and higher education (Watkins, 1990). The purpose of this study is: (1) to outline the development and implementation of a volunteer community outreach program for the homeless, (2) to describe the services provided by this outreach program, and (3) to provide recommendations for the implementation of such a program.

THE HOMELESS AND THE
UNIVERSITY SETTING

Many of the homeless possess barriers to employment that make it difficult for them to find jobs. Prospective employers often perceive the lack of a permanent address as an indication of instability. Insufficiently clean or inappropriate clothing and poor personal hygiene create a nega-

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tive impression. Most shelters are able to provide only food and shelter and lack the resources for ancillary services that a volunteer program may offer. University or college communities often have significant homeless populations. According to one study (Segal, 1987), the causes are: (1) panhandling is easier since students are more sympathetic to homelessness than are working people, (2) it is easier to blend in with the student population, and (3) the availability of jobs increases during the summer when students are gone (Segal, 1987). One homeless person stated to a student volunteer: "I look like a student. As a matter of fact, I dress better than most students." Some of the homeless indicated that although they must compete with students for jobs during the school year, jobs are much easier to come by when the students leave. Because of the many difficulties faced by the homeless, students who volunteer to work in an outreach program can be exposed to a multitude of problems that offer a valuable and varied applied experience. Project Outreach is one such program.

A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS

Project Outreach, a referral service for the homeless in Champaign, Illinois, is staffed by student volunteers who provide information and case management services to the homeless. The program attempts to alleviate some of the problems of homelessness by providing assistance in completing social service forms and school applications, providing job and human service referrals and conducting job placement. Three primary goals are to provide (1) a referral service for the homeless, (2) a university-community linkage to assist the homeless, and (3) a volunteer experience for students that offers an applied educational opportunity. This program was implemented in 1987, and is a cooperative effort of the University of Illinois and a local shelter for homeless men. The program runs during the school year;

students meet with the homeless at the shelter three nights per week. Students assist in locating and securing services and resources for the homeless population and provide appropriate referrals. The program is administered by a salaried coordinator, and is staffed by eighteen student volunteers. Each student spends approximately thirty hours per semester working with the homeless.

The coordinator, usually a graduate student with volunteer experience at the shelter, is responsible for organizing and maintaining the program. This position may fulfill part of a course requirement. The coordinator is actively involved with the recruitment, training, and supervision of volunteers, scheduling and attending monthly meetings for Project Outreach members. Additional responsibilities include maintaining a close relationship with the mental health community to maximize the mental health services available for the homeless, as well as developing resource materials on housing, health, financial aid and employment. The coordinator operates under the responsibility of the shelter director.

An associate professor at the University of Illinois School of Social Work acts as advisor to Project Outreach. He advertises for and hires the coordinator for this volunteer program. He is also a member of the shelter steering committee and assists the coordinator in selecting the volunteers for the outreach program. The coordinator, who works approximately 15 hours per week, receives a salary which is funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Aid.

Volunteers provide such outreach services as making referrals for employment, health care and housing. They develop a thorough knowledge of the services and resources in the community, update a listing of available resources, and are responsible for attending scheduled shifts. In addition, some of the homeless guests at the shelter have stated that "It is nice to just talk to someone who is not in the same situation." Although most of the student

volunteers are undergraduate social work students, students from other disciplines also volunteer for the program.

METHODOLOGY

Each student volunteer compiled a data sheet on each client he or she interviewed. The data sheet included demographics of the homeless and the services requested. This information was generated from the students' client logs and compiled onto the data sheet by the student volunteers. Also, the data sheets asked for recommendations by the students. Responses were in check-list format. In addition, opportunity was given on the data sheet for the student volunteers to comment further about their recommendations in an open-ended format. Each volunteer had seen approximately forty clients. The data sheets covered three areas that included:

1) demographics of the homeless population in terms of age and race
2) needs of the homeless population
3) recommendations by the student volunteers to improve the program.

In regard to client problems and services needed by the homeless, student volunteers ranked the needs and provided a numerical count of those serviced. Eliminating duplication, 320 homeless individuals were assisted between 1990 to 1993. Counts were then tabulated into percentages which were derived from population characteristics and services requested.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

The student volunteer referral forms showed that sixteen percent of the homeless respondents were African-American, and eighty-four percent were Caucasian. Their ages ranged from 19 years to 74 years with the mean at 32 years. The findings indicate that seventy percent of the respondents seen by the student volunteers received some form of service, including housing, employment, education, training, health, mental health, welfare, or social security referral. Many of the homeless indicated they appreciated the outreach program merely because it gave them the opportunity to talk to those who were not homeless themselves.

NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS

The needs of the homeless people studied were complex and varied. The most urgent problems were:

1. Employment issues including difficulty in completing an application and obtaining a job, lack of skills and training, and competition with students for jobs. Sixty-one percent of the homeless were referred to employment agencies or human service programs that provide employment counseling. Of those who were referred to some form of job, thirty-two percent were already employed in jobs that did not pay wages adequate to pay rent.

2. Housing problems including lack of a security deposit, inaccessibility of telephones to call potential landlords, and utility hook-up. Facilities to house the homeless in small group homes were severely limited. Fifty-nine percent were referred to housing organizations and landlords who advertised single-room dwellings.

3. Health problems, including difficulty in getting prescriptions filled because of limited or no funds and completing the necessary medical paperwork. The homeless suffer from an unusually high frequency of acute upper respiratory diseases, skin ulcers and lice infestation, colitis, abrasions, lacerations, head injuries, hepatitis, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Thirty-two percent were referred to health providers.

4. Difficulty in obtaining public assistance or social insurance benefits for which they were eligible. Documents needed to determine eligibility were often lost when a person became homeless. Most requested assistance from student volunteers in completing applications for social security disability, public aid, food stamps and veterans' benefits. Fifty-two

percent needed assistance with completion of forms.

5. Many of the homeless lacked transportation to job interviews and human service agencies. Thirty-one percent lacked transportation to jobs outside the city.

6. Mental health problems including manic-depressive disorders. Individuals had difficulty obtaining medication and some in taking their medication. Twenty-nine percent of those interviewed requested some form of mental health service.

7. A simple need to interact on a personal level with someone at the shelter who was not also homeless. Often, just talking led to the development of trust so that the homeless person would be willing to discuss needed services. Fifty-nine percent indicated that they were glad just to have someone to talk to.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE OUTREACH PROGRAM BY THE STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

The student volunteers voiced a variety of recommendations to improve the program. These included:

1. Develop closer relationships with public agencies, local colleges, universities, churches, and the community. Concentrate efforts in the service areas of employment, housing, health and mental health, education and training development, completion of forms and further development of volunteers. Improve follow-up since most of what is presently done is strictly referral.

2. Advertise the coordinator's position and interview potential candidates prior to the commencement of the outreach program in the fall. Potential candidates can be interviewed by members of the community, staff at the shelter, and faculty of the school involved. Conduct interviews with student volunteer candidates from human service programs and other social science disciplines. Schedules and lists of names and phone numbers of all volunteers should be distributed two weeks prior to the shelter opening. Consider including the volun-

teer service as part of an applied experience in a course at the university or college. Outreach should operate two to three nights per week. The coordinator should be present on each night and should be accompanied by at least two volunteers.

3. Explore the shelters in the area and initiate contacts with them in order to determine their interest in having a student volunteer program. For shelter directors—explore volunteer opportunities for students in the community by contacting local community colleges, four-year colleges and universities.

4. Obtain financial or other support from community leaders to enhance the possibility of a student outreach program. These sources may include the United Way, the local town council, businesses and churches. Explore funding opportunities for paying a coordinator. Funds have come from the Illinois Department of Public Aid, and may be available from foundations and private organizations. In the Illinois program, the coordinator receives approximately $2400 for a six-month program and is expected to work fifteen hours per week.

5. Develop an informational manual that lists the services available for the homeless. When necessary, the student volunteer refers the homeless person to the appropriate agency and the contact person. Referral books should be updated bimonthly.

6. Develop a training program for volunteers that includes educational development in crisis intervention, familiarizing volunteers with the shelter surroundings and the population, defining the role of the volunteer as a professional, and clarifying the specific objectives of the program. Volunteers need information about the availability of employment, housing, health and mental health, education and training development programs, and familiarity with assisting in application completion (employment and agency).

7. Implement a traveling outreach team to link the homeless with available services. Often, the homeless are not found

in a shelter. This outreach program would reach a population that is normally without services.

8. Emphasize returning the homeless to a private residence and keeping those who are near-homeless from losing their homes. Such services may include starter or seed money to get people settled in a dwelling, as well as home maintenance and heating assistance. Develop contact with landlords and low and moderate income housing agencies in order to improve opportunities for stable housing for the homeless.

9. Provide opportunities for human service practitioners to be at the shelter in order to assist in the provision of services.

10. Explore opportunities for public transportation and shuttle buses for the homeless. Transportation could be used to provide access to job interviews, agency and health appointments, and housing.

CONCLUSION

The longer the individual is homeless, the more difficult it is for him or her to become independent. In addition, the longer the period of homelessness, the greater the need for services. A program staffed by student volunteers provides a service that is much needed in the community. Once one becomes homeless, there is increased difficulty to seek and find services. A volunteer referral system would lessen the difficulty. Such a system located in the shelter serves as a source of information for the homeless regarding job and training contacts, as well as other important topics. This service offers an excellent opportunity for students to become immersed in a situation that can provide beneficial hands-on experience to complement theoretical coursework. It also provides additional staff for the shelter at a time when volunteers are increasingly needed. The variety of problems experienced by the homeless will offer a solid introduction to many of the issues that students in the field will likely address in future careers.

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Providing Training and Support for Volunteers Who Teach

Ronald M. Jimmerson and Ronda Cordill

INTRODUCTION

Many volunteer organizations use volunteers as educators who help youth or older adults gain knowledge or skills. These volunteers need training and educational materials to assist them in their educator role. While there are guidelines for training volunteers (for example, Stenzel and Feeney, 1968; McAlea, 1980, and Islley and Niemi, 1981) and studies emphasizing the importance of training (Cook, Kiernan and Ott, 1986; Hass, 1979; Smith and Bigler, 1985; and Henderson, 1981), there has been little research conducted related to training volunteers as educators or how best to provide materials and support as they plan and conduct educational projects. Even 4-H (the largest youth organization in the US, which relies on 600,000 volunteer leaders to serve about 5 million members) has collected little systematic data on this issue. Part of the reason for this is that volunteer leader training for the 4-H club and the 4-H project leader is variable from state to state, and even from county to county in some states.

This lack of information leaves volunteer administrators with questions such as: what materials do volunteer leaders find most useful for facilitating educational projects? What content and formats are preferred? To whom do volunteer leaders turn for assistance? What are their sources of information, and how do they prefer to receive training and assistance and what are the barriers which keep volunteers from receiving adequate training? This article explores these questions and offers some suggestions based on a study of 4-H volunteer leaders in Washington State and a review of literature related to principles of adult learning.

APPROACH

There has been increasing research in recent years related to how adults learn. Much of this information is directly relevant to assisting volunteer leaders who help others learn. We briefly review relevant findings which offer a basis for developing guidelines for training and supporting volunteer leaders. These findings are then combined with the results of a survey of 220 randomly selected volunteer 4-H leaders in Washington State. Based on the findings from these two sources we present a set of guidelines to guide training and development of materials for volunteer leaders who teach others.

ADULT LEARNING

Research related to adult learning has progressed to the point where there is general agreement on some aspects of how and why adults learn. We reviewed the writings and research of several well-known adult educators, including Apps, 1988; Boyce, 1986, Brookfield, 1990; Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980; Coolican, 1974 and 1975; Cross, 1981; Houle, 1961; Knowles, 1975, 1978 and 1980; Knox, 1977 and 1986; Long, 1983, Mezirow, 1981; Penland, 1979; Rachel, 1983; and Tough, 1967 and 1971. Based on research reported by these writers we identified the following principles:

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1. Adults learn best when they are actively involved in the content, design, and evaluation of the learning process.

2. Learning is promoted when new information can be related to the adult's past experiences, current skills and roles, and future aspirations.

3. Adults are motivated to learn for many reasons, but learning is often secondary to family, job, and community commitments.

4. Adults have individual learning styles and preferences which must be considered in designing effective educational programs.

5. While adults enter educational programs at different levels of readiness, most can move from dependence on a teacher toward independent self-directed learning.

6. The more highly motivated the learner, the more effective are self-directed approaches to learning.

7. Almost all adults are involved in some self-directed learning activities, citing learning style, pace and time factors, and a desire to be in control of their own learning as reasons for this learning mode.

8. Adults pursuing self-directed learning projects utilize other people and books or other printed material as resources for learning.

9. Most adults can effectively teach others based on their personal life experiences, skills and education, but teaching skills can be greatly enhanced through training, support and appropriate teaching materials.

10. Adult learners are sensitive to failure and tend to learn best when they are in a safe, trusting and supportive environment.

TEACHING MATERIALS FOR VOLUNTEERS

While the above principles can be helpful in developing guidelines for training, there is very little information available related to the development of teaching materials for use by volunteers. There are some general guidelines for use of written materials for adult learning. For example, Knox, 1986, Joseph, 1981, and Brockett, 1984, suggest that printed materials should: (1) be well organized; (2) help the learner relate new ideas to past experiences; (3) be clearly written using familiar words, short sentences, active verbs, clear headings, short paragraphs and adequate white space; and (4) address the reader directly. These suggestions, however, offer little help in understanding what types of materials volunteers prefer to use as they lead projects designed to help others learn.

VOLUNTEER 4-H LEADERS' PREFERENCES

A sample of 220 4-H volunteer leaders in Washington state was surveyed to determine their practices and preferences regarding training and support (including materials) for teaching. The goal was to determine: (1) what information sources they use to lead a 4-H project, (2) which information sources they found most useful, and (3) the types of training they received and the training methods they preferred for learning about teaching.

VOLUNTEER CHARACTERISTICS

Before presenting our findings related to these goals it is important to share some of the characteristics of the volunteers we surveyed. Data from this study may relate to other volunteer programs to the extent that those programs utilize volunteers with similar characteristics. The volunteers we surveyed had the following characteristics:

- *Gender*: 84% were female, 16% were male.
- *Work:* 76% work outside the home (64% of these work full time).
- *Age:* 25% are under 36 years old, 54% are 36–45 years old, and 21% are over 45 years old.
- *Experience as a 4-H leader:* 15% had less than one year of experience, 33% had 1–3 years, 21% had 4–6 years, and 31% had over 6 years of experience.

- *Occupation:* 15% were educators, 7% were skilled workers, 23% were housewives, 15% were office workers, 15% were semi-skilled workers, 10% were business people, 11% were professionals, and 4% were farmers.
- *Education or leadership training:* 30% had a bachelor of education degree, 16% had another bachelor's degree, 28% attended some college, 26% participated in workshops only (no college).

These characteristics reflect profiles of volunteers found by other researchers in that our respondents were well educated, had a range of experience as volunteers, were middle class, covered a range of age groups, and had a higher percentage of women.

INFORMATION SOURCES USED

The volunteers rated materials developed for one of five project areas with which they were most involved as 4-H leaders. The project areas were: (1) horse projects, (2) livestock projects, (3) family living projects, (4) small animal projects, and (5) all other projects. They were asked how often they used various sources of information to lead their particular 4-H project. They rated each source on a five-point Likert scale where 1 = never and 5 = often. For ease of reporting, ratings of 1 or 2 are listed as "seldom," ratings of 3 are listed as "sometimes" and ratings of 4 or 5 are listed as "often." Table I summarizes the overall results showing the percent-

ages in each category and the mean score ratings.

It is interesting to note that respondents used their own experience more often than any other source of information. A relatively high percentage of volunteer leaders used member manuals, leader guides and optional member materials only "seldom" or "sometimes." Reasons given were that many of these materials, especially in the horse and livestock project areas, were outdated. Only use of member manuals and films varied significantly among the five project areas. Based on written comments, family living and small animal member manuals were used more frequently because of more up-to-date information and better format.

MOST USEFUL INFORMATION SOURCE

Leaders were asked to indicate how useful various information sources were in conducting a club or project meeting. They rated each source on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "not useful" and 5 = "very useful." For ease of reporting, ratings of 1 or 2 are listed as "not useful," ratings of 3 are listed as "somewhat useful," and ratings of 4 or 5 are listed as "very useful." Table II summarizes the percentages in each category and the mean scores.

Respondents indicate that resource people not employed by Cooperative Extension (4-H's sponsoring organization) were

**Table I: Sources of Information
Used to Lead 4-H Projects**

Information Source	How Often Used? (percent)			
	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Mean*
My Own Experience	3	11	87	4.4
Member Manual	17	26	57	3.6
Leaders Guide	31	25	44	3.3
Resource People	38	23	40	3.0
Optional Member Materials	39	29	32	2.9
Library Resource Books	59	17	24	2.4
Films, Videotapes, etc.	61	21	18	2.2

*Mean based on a 5-point scale where 1 = never and 5 = often

Table II: Usefulness of Information Sources for 4-H Projects

| | Usefulness (percent) | | | |
| | Not | Somewhat | Very | |
Information Source	Useful	Useful	Useful	Mean*
Resource People (outside Extension)	5	14	78	4.29
Member Manual	8	22	65	4.01
Extension Bulletin	13	19	57	4.01
Extension Personnel	14	21	54	3.96
Optional Member Materials	15	27	43	3.85
Leader Guide	15	25	53	3.80

*Mean based on a 5-point scale where 1 = not useful and 5 = very useful

the most useful information sources with 92% rating them as "somewhat" or "very useful." Other sources were ranked fairly evenly in usefulness with 78% to 87% rating these sources as "somewhat" or "very useful." These ratings are somewhat puzzling since over one-third indicated they did not use leader guides, resource people, or optional member materials (see Table I). These findings support Coolican's (1974 and 1975) and Penland's (1979) findings on self-directed learning which show that self-directed learners rely on their own skills and prefer to use people such as friends as their primary outside information source. Reading is the second choice for obtaining information for self-directed learners.

The lower ratings for optional member publications and leader's guides and comments from respondents indicate a need to evaluate these materials for currency of information, usefulness, readability, and format. To better understand what makes materials useful to leaders, they were asked to rate content and format they found most helpful in member manuals, leader guides and optional member publications. Following are the highest-rated items with the percentage rating each as "somewhat helpful" or "very helpful" in parentheses: basic information (94%), goals and objectives for project (88%), project ideas (87%), step-by-step lesson guides (84%), ideas for meetings (84%), and activity guides (82%).

TRAINING METHODS

The final goal was to assess methods used to train the 4-H volunteer leaders and determine the methods 4-H leaders preferred for leader training. The respondents indicated on a 5-point Likert scale how often they received training through various methods. A rating of 1 indicated a method was never used and a rating of 5 indicated a method was often used. For ease of reporting a rating of 1 or 2 is listed as "seldom," a rating of 3 is listed as "sometimes," and a rating of 4 or 5 is listed as "often." Table III shows percentages of each category and the percentage of leaders rating each as the preferred method.

The 4-H leaders indicated that booklets and pamphlets were used most often for their training (84% received training through this method "sometimes" or "often"). The other methods were used less frequently. When asked which method was most preferred only 11% selected books and pamphlets. Most respondents preferred clinics and workshops (27%), over one-on-one sessions with other leaders (18%), and training in professional groups on subject areas such as with breed associations (14%). Training through college classes or workshops was the least popular choice.

Training methods are important not only in getting needed information to the volunteer leader effectively, but also in simply reaching the volunteer leader. That is, many volunteers might not be able to attend training which requires time away

Table III: Frequency of Leader Training Methods

Training Method	% Trained by Method			
	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Prefer
Booklets or Pamphlets	16	29	55	11
Clinics or Workshops	34	21	45	27
1-1 With Other Leaders	29	30	41	18
Professional Groups	43	24	34	14
Videotapes or Films	53	26	21	8
Leader Training	58	26	15	9
College Class/Workshop	72	15	27	3
Classes With 4-H Faculty	72	18	11	9

from home and work. Of those we surveyed, 45% had no leader training. Over 52% had no training specific to the 4-H projects they led and 75% had less than five hours of training. In the written comments the leaders cited transportation, family and work conflicts as the primary reasons why they don't attend leader training. The leaders felt that training is very important to help them learn a variety of things related to leading a 4-H project.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the literature review and our survey of volunteer leaders we recommend the following in providing training and materials for volunteers who teach.

1. Training is needed and desired by volunteer leaders. While adult volunteers have much to offer based on their training and life experiences, their skill in teaching others can be enhanced by appropriate training and support.

2. Volunteer leaders appear to share the characteristics of self-directed learners. They prefer training in one-to-one or small group settings. They most often seek out accessible friends or acquaintances as resources for needed information. This suggests that volunteer administrators consider building networks of accessible resource people which volunteers can seek out when information or assistance is needed. Another option is to set up mentoring systems.

3. Because volunteers have different levels of training and experience and be-

cause they vary in their learning styles, it is important to offer a variety of training and support approaches.

4. While volunteers appear to prefer direct contact with trainers or information providers, there is a need to provide good reference and support materials which they can use in planning and teaching others. Volunteers we surveyed used materials when they were available and when the materials were well-organized and up-to-date.

5. Training programs need to be planned in collaboration with the volunteers. Like all adults, volunteers learn better when they are actively involved in the content, design, and evaluation of the training. This ensures the training is directly relevant to their needs. It also ensures that the content and format are compatible with volunteers' learning styles and that they are accessible and timely.

6. In general it is essential to develop a cooperative collegial atmosphere for training and support. Volunteers need to operate in a trusting environment where they feel like equal partners in a shared goal. Such an environment can help volunteers move from learners who feel dependent on trainers to more self-directed learners.

7. As with the group we surveyed, many volunteer organizations have some turnover in volunteers resulting in fairly high numbers of volunteers with little or no experience. This suggests the need for developing at least some aspects of training which are reusable and cost effective. In doing this it is essential, however, to make certain that the methods

or materials do, indeed, meet the needs of each successive group being trained.

In summary, training and support of volunteers who teach others is critical to effective volunteer programs. While there are, obviously, no recipes which guarantee success, we believe that volunteer administrators who follow these guidelines are moving in the right direction.

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