

**Introduction to the IJOA second special issue:**  
**“Scripting the Next Wave of Exigent Issues for Service-Learning  
In Our Unscripted Future:  
When Technology, Globalism, and Community Engagement Collide”**

***CHARGING FORWARD INTO THE UNSCRIPTED FUTURE:  
FOLLOWING THE SCRIPT OF INTERCONNECTED ACTION***

By Amy L. Kenworthy & Laurie N. DiPadova-Stocks

**Abstract**

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to provide a context for the compilation of articles and commentaries included in this *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* special issue on “Scripting the next wave of exigent issues for service-learning in our unscripted future: When technology, globalism, and community engagement collide”.

Design/methodology/approach: The authors of this paper are the guest editors for the special issue. As such, in this paper, they provide a brief history of why the special issue was created and how it serves as an extension to the first special issue (Volume 17, Number 1, 2009).

Findings: There are five articles and six commentary pieces included in this special issue. Each raises a charge, or challenge, to the reader in terms of moving forward with service-learning in our uncertain, complex, and highly unscripted environments.

Practical implications: The practical implications of this paper are those that relate to future research and practice in the service-learning domain. This is contextualized as part

of our collective challenge as we move forward in a world where local, regional, national, and international connectedness intersects with social, economic, and technological pressures.

Originality/value: As the introduction, this paper is unique in that it provides an overview of the contents for the entire special issue.

Keywords: service-learning, educational challenges, globalization

Paper type: Viewpoint

There is no doubt that we are living in extraordinary times. As was pointed out in the first special issue, a multitude of changes in globalization and technology has made the world increasingly interconnected where what happens to some of us affects us all (DiPadova-Stocks and Kenworthy, 2009).

Thanks to the wonders of technology, it is possible and increasingly affordable for everyone around the world to witness an event in real time—on gadgets as small as their handheld phones. Demonstrating our small and now highly interconnected world and its associated political consequences is the recent press that was given to the meeting between U.S. President Barak Obama and Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama on February 18, 2010. Pictures of the meeting were instantly broadcast in real time around the globe, garnering worldwide publicity in a matter of minutes. This event, taking place in Washington D.C., was watched by people on every corner of the planet, socially and politically fueling what many have termed the already strained relations between the U.S. and China (Weisman and Canaves, 2010).

This very interconnection makes the world—our world—stunning in its complexity, with many more variables to weigh and consider than at anytime the past. The resulting uncertainty is palpable. Reflecting the uncertainties of the unpredictable and potentially catastrophic global economic crisis of 2008, we quoted then-Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson’s article in the New York Times as he wrote: “There is no playbook for responding to turmoil we have never faced” (Paulson, 2008).

Ian Goldin, former vice-president of the World Bank and currently Director of the James Martin 21<sup>st</sup> Century School at the University of Oxford, remarking on changes wrought by unparalleled globalization accompanying accelerated technology (with advances in biotechnology, computing, and nano-technology, to name a few), asserts that “Humanity is at the crossroads.” The crossroads of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the intersection of enhanced global systemic and local risk (from pandemics to climate migrants to terrorism to instability in political and financial systems) with remarkable opportunity: the opportunity to overcome local and global poverty, to eradicate diseases which have plagued the world, and to bring about staggering development around the globe (Goldin, 2009).

As uncertainty sets in, scripts are outdated and playbooks are fading. This uncertainty is acutely felt at local, regional, national, and global levels. Globally we have experienced economic upheaval from which we are yet to steady ourselves. In the United States alone, the economic crisis is manifest in high unemployment, shrinking tax-bases and accompanying lower levels of public services, record-breaking numbers of home foreclosures, neighborhoods with abandoned homes, and record national debt. The U.S. real estate market which finds its fuel in a growing middle class, is now seeing its difficulties clearly keyed to the nation’s rapidly shrinking demographics in that economic stratum.

The U.S. is not alone. Economically, the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) has shifted the landscapes of most, if not all, of the world’s economies, with predicted ripple effects we

have yet to see. Socially, the world has become smaller, with technological advances facilitating new forms of global communication and information sharing (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, FriendFeed, GoogleWave). Facebook, a social networking website, celebrated its sixth anniversary on February 4, 2010, announcing that it had 400 million users online that week alone (Zuckerberg, 2010). We are now living under what people are calling “the cloud”, the abbreviated term for cloud computing, representing the trend toward housing data and applications on servers external to desktops making the applications available from anywhere in the world. These economic and social changes have intersected – creating an environment rife with complexity, unpredictability, and uncertainty.

So what does higher education have to with it? Everything. The outcome of the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends entirely on marshalling our collective best thinking--the intellectual capital of the world--and the subsequent decisions and judgments emerging from that thinking.

And higher education is changing. Technology, as one catalyst for change, has shifted almost every aspect of the educational environment. In fact, Harvard Business School Professor Clayton Christensen has stated his prediction that within the next decade, half of all kindergarten through high school students will attend school online (Stern, 2009). Information, databases, books, and academic journals are on the web in abundance. Many University libraries are reporting that circulation of printed material has decreased significantly in the past five years. These traditional shrines containing volumes of

collected knowledge are now remodeling themselves into high-tech learning centers. Google has entered into contracts with most large research libraries to digitize their collections. Many books in the public domain are now accessible on the web, easily read from the comfort of one's home. The United States Library of Congress is well on its way to digitizing its entire collection. One result of this herculean effort is that anyone anywhere today can view online Jefferson's first version of the Declaration of Independence, and the subsequent drafts with edits by John Adams and Benjamin Franklin.

Increasingly, virtual secondary schools are being established. Movements such as Free Education for Everyone, One Laptop Per Child, and even the 250,000 free downloadable University lectures available via iTunes U to every user of an iPod or iPhone, are making higher learning available to those who have never set foot on a campus. University professors in face to face classes are reporting the effects of technology, even if they do not use it in their teaching: students, armed with their handheld smart phones, can easily google points being made or data being discussed, and dispute them. "Dr. So-and So, it says right here that the Brookings Institution issued a report just yesterday which updates the report you are talking about!" Students and colleagues alike are now able to tweet about comments and points made from anyone in the room. As a result, the days of pure "chalk and talk" classroom-based interactions are long gone – our teaching environments and media have changed forever.

The technological, economic, and social pressures on the fabric of our educational practice are real. Calls for change in student learning outcomes include an increasing demand for skills that provide job-readiness for university graduates (Borchardt, 2009), skills that prepare students for global forces and an unprecedented growth in knowledge (Robson, 2009), skills that deepen students understanding and savvy with respect to technological innovation (Brown, 2000), skills related to the intersection and application of ethics and corporate social responsibility (Dizik, 2009), and practice-based skills that integrate cross-disciplinary content with real-world experiences (Cencigh-Albulario, 2009). Ironically, and yet consequently, these calls for change come at a time when change is rampant. One example of a nascent response to these demands is that in 2010, the 2nd International Symposium on Cross Sector Social Interactions in being held at Brunel Business School in London. The 2010 s symposium is titled: *Re-Imaging Partnerships for the Global Social Good*. In today's interconnected environment, cross sector partnerships aimed at community engaged development are becoming the norm, as is change.

So what again does higher education have to do with it? We assert: Everything. To claim otherwise is a failure to acknowledge the impact of what we do. We must graduate people who can deal productively with the increasing uncertainty around them, and to help others do the same - graduates who constantly learn new knowledge about situations from actual people in those situations. We must graduate people who have no doubt that they are responsible for taking what they learn from us and using it to make the world a better place for everyone.

Clearly, we no longer experience our world as predictable and static as we once might have done. Instead, it is fluid, chaotic, unpredictable, and highly interconnected. We live together and yet apart. Understanding the complexities of the social, cultural, economic, political and other domains of difference and embracing them as part of the rich fabric of the world we share is a central tenet of higher education today. Our students must be exposed to the world around them, learning from people themselves about the intricacies, challenges, and countless benefits of interaction with others through real-world community engagement programs. Service-learning makes possible this intense and lasting type of engagement and learning. As such, we argue that it no longer an optional teaching tool. Rather, it is a necessary component of all degree programs as it effectively targets an educational issue of relevance across the higher education sector – increasing students’ understanding of their roles as active and contributory members of their local, regional, national, and international communities.

In this second special issue of the *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, with its focus on issues related to the *application* of service-learning as a tool for moving forward into our shared and unscripted future, each of the authors in this issue raises a charge. They are individually and collectively charging us to action. They argue, as do we, that as members of our now global society, we can no longer sit idle, watching the events of the interconnected world of which we are all a part unfold around us. Our students, our colleagues, our institutions of higher education, and our local, regional, national, and international community partners demand more. We must accept these

charges to move forward together to shape our unscripted future, determined to make the world a better place for all.

Contributing to this special issue, we are fortunate to have a diverse and yet targeted set of five articles and six commentaries. In each of the articles we have included, the respective author(s) raises an issue critical to the development of our collective educational environment. They also put forth charges, with each charge embedded in a script for action. The theme of action resonates clearly through our unique set of commentaries. Our esteemed commentary authors come from all corners of the globe, from private and public organizations, representing academic, nonprofit, and industrial perspectives. Once again, we are extremely fortunate to have such a comprehensive and representative set of contributors to this issue. With all of the articles and commentary pieces in place, our overarching charge for readers is to consider, extend, and where appropriate embrace these scripts for action. We firmly believe that deliberate and considered action, targeted at developing the necessary skills for lifelong learning in an interconnected, global, uncertain, and unscripted environment, is our only option for moving forward together.

In our first article, Joy Beatty's "For *which* future?: exploring the implicit futures of service-learning", begins with a comprehensive review of the historical development of service-learning and then transitions into a discussion of the link between the service-learning script and traditional educational paradigms. Beatty then challenges readers to examine their underlying assumptions about students' learning goals. She argues that

there should be an explicit and targeted link made between one of the three models of service-learning – professional, civic engagement, or social change – and the scripts used to prepare students for their implicit futures. Her charge is directed at faculty. We are to look inward and through reflection, self-awareness, disciplinary grounding, and strategic course design, work carefully to align our service-learning practice with our overarching learning goals.

The second article, Hrivnak and Sherman’s “The power of nascency: realizing the potential of service-learning in an unscripted future” article provides a thorough overview of the environmental challenges and resultant educational priorities inherent in our unscripted present and future. The authors present a provocative and informative analysis of the parallels between the intricacies and benefits of using service-learning as a tool for developing students’ personal and professional skills and the strengths of approaching service-learning practice from a nascent beginner’s perspective. One of the underlying yet powerful messages implicit in this article is a firm recognition of the pervasive and limiting biases associated with expertise. Expertise often facilitates prediction and restriction, whereas nascent approaches offer faculty a ‘tabula rosa’ of sorts – encouraging exploration, innovation, and discovery in terms of curricular design and educational outcomes. These authors charge us with the daunting task of releasing our dependencies on notions of expertise alone and embracing the unknowns relevant knowledge-creation of service-learning. Their intentions are “that in some small way, this article may encourage faculty... to continue to pursue innovation in teaching as we collectively move forward to enter our unscripted future” (p.XX of this special issue).

In the next article, “Service-eLearning: educating today’s learners for an unscripted future”, authors Dailey-Hebert and Donnelly-Sallee explore the personal characteristics and educational preferences of today’s generation of “millennial” learners. They argue that the intersection of service-learning and eLearning practices provide millennial learners with a platform for enhanced knowledge acquisition through an interconnected and cross-disciplinary approach to learning. As they aptly state “to effectively adapt to the new generation of learners, educators must integrate emergent technologies that better reflect and respond to the role of technology as a *learning tool* and a *way of learning* in students’ daily lives” (p.XX of this special issue). Using the three principles of inclusion, reflection, and sustainability, these authors provide a template for connecting technologically-based tools with experiential and community-based projects. Their charge for faculty is to systematically leverage both eLearning and service-learning to create “adisciplinary” learning experiences for students as we move into an unscripted, community-oriented, and technologically-dependent future.

The Cress, Yamashita, Duarte, Burns article titled “A transnational comparison of service-learning as a tool for leadership development” investigates differences between U.S. and non-U.S. students’ perceptions of leadership learning outcomes related to the use of transformational versus traditional teaching methodologies. Using data from students enrolled in over 150 service-learning courses at a large metropolitan U.S. university, the authors found that *traditional* teaching techniques (e.g., multiple choice exams, extensive lecturing) were either not significantly related to leadership learning

outcomes or negatively related to students' perceptions of learning. Alternatively, *transformational* teaching techniques (e.g., reflective journals, readings on women/gender issues) were significantly and positively related to students' perceived learning. Based on these findings, the authors put forth yet another charge for faculty in today's unscripted higher education environment – when using service-learning as a tool to enhance student learning outcomes, it is not enough to simply add a project into an existing traditionally-structured course, rather, we should work to structurally embed transformational teaching tools into our projects, courses, and larger program-level curricula if we are to fully maximize opportunities for reflection, interpretation, synthesis, and future action.

In the final article of the issue, “Moving forward together in sustainable, effective, and partnership-oriented ways: connecting universities and communities through global leadership service projects” Hogner and Kenworthy provide an overview of the literature on effective and sustainable university-community partnership practices. They then draw implications for faculty engaged in service-learning design and implementation activities, including a series of actions that practitioners can use to nurture and grow productive partnerships. As a form of “walking the talk” of sustainable partnering, they provide a case study of a model international partnership program run through Florida International University called the Global Leadership Service Project (GLSP). The GLSP is described and contextualized as an organically changing, reciprocally-based, and partner designed model for international service-learning. Through the presentation of the GLSP model, coupled with the list of tools for designing successful partnership programs, Hogner and

Kenworthy are raising a charge to faculty – to move forward in today’s uncertain environment will require a determined, thoughtful, and inclusive approach to the design and development of service-learning projects... every membership group that is part of the partnership (i.e., students, university, and community) must be involved as an equal member at every project stage.

Our commentators had similar, yet more succinct and directed, calls for action.

Sue Faerman, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Distinguished Teaching Professor of Public Administration and Policy at the University and Albany-SUNY, takes a different approach. Noting our increasingly diverse and contradictory environment, her perspective is firmly grounded in the paradoxical and yet critical notion that leaders must be skilled at followership and followers need to engage in leadership. Just as service-learning is entrenched in the idea of reciprocity, so too, she argues, are the two sides of the leadership/followership coin. She challenges us to use students’ service-learning experiences as platforms for both student learning regarding collaborative problem-solving and other intricacies of leadership and skill development in terms of leadership capacity. Her charge is based in the notion that we must all, leaders and followers alike, learn to “expect the unexpected” (p.XX in this special issue).

Julie Giuliani, the Executive Dean of the Virtual College at Florida State College, raises questions related to the efficacy of our current teaching practices as we collectively enter the digital age. As a nascent and overall response to these questions, she argues that our most pressing educational challenge is to design course structures where students can

“take charge” of their learning, thus stimulating deep intellectual thought. One way to do this is to leverage the intersection between service-learning and technology. Her charge to us is to use technology to free students from the traditional space and time rigidity inherent in most educational practices and to blend that freedom with exposure to social issues through community engaged projects. We should create environments where our students are empowered take on the role of teachers in the context of an uncertain global context – according to Dr. Giuliani, that is one of our greatest challenges as educators and service-learning is one of our greatest assets to facilitate it taking place.

Senior Executive in Residence at the University of Nebraska Omaha and former Executive Director of the American Society for Public Administration, Mary Hamilton, draws our attention to the work of Harlan Cleveland, an educator-diplomat-creative thinker, as she challenges us to embed programs and practices into our educational programs that aim to develop students’ abilities to “get-it-all-together”. She asserts that service-learning projects are teaching tools that will develop “world citizen” skills in our students via their immersion in the often chaotic and ambiguous realities of community-based environments. She emphasizes the need for students to experience reality as part of their educational programs and charges us to make that happen.

Dean and Professor of Management in The Peter J. Tobin College of Business at St. John’s University, Steve Papamarcos, a long time friend (as you will see in his commentary) and highly esteemed colleague of ours, holds nothing back in his frank and passionate commentary. His charge to us is to stay focused on that which many of us

know to be true... as he so passionately and aptly states based on his own experiences using service-learning for 15 years, “the service-learning experience *transform(s)* students’ lives” (p.XX in this issue). We agree. Service-learning is transformational when carefully and strategically aligned with courses and designed using many of the tips described by the authors in this special issue. Dean Papamarcos presents a succinct yet exceptionally compelling call for action – use service-learning and it will positively change people’s lives.

The Hon. Warwick Smith, AM, Chairman of the Advisory Board of Australian Capital Equity Group of Companies (ACE), Chairman of E\*TRADE Limited, and Chairman of the Australian New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ Ltd) for the State of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory, provides an optimistic, economically-oriented, and forward-thinking view of our current condition, with the caveat that the only thing we know about what lies in front of us is that our future will include rampant and continuous change. He affirms that service-learning is a tool for equipping students with skills to not only confront but also strategically process and positively move forward through such change. His charge is straightforward – we are to embed service-learning into university programs as a tool for increasing students’ abilities to embrace change as an opportunity to learn, develop, and move forward into the continuously unscripted future.

In our final commentary, Don Wise, a Fellow at the Hauptmann School for Public Affairs and Co-Director of The Coro Kansas City Leadership program, calls for an increase in the depth, breadth, and frequency of what he has termed “community conversations.” His

overarching message is about bringing together, in reciprocal and informed ways, members of the public, private, and non-profit sectors of our communities to learn from one another. He believes that community planning processes and their resultant outcomes should be inclusive of all community members – students and faculty alike. His charge for us is to begin a dialogue of engagement and to use service-learning as a platform for that dialogue... with the end goal of producing sustainable and sustained, positive change outcome-oriented university-community partnerships.

We will conclude this introduction with the same statement and representative belief as we shared in the introduction to the 2009 special issue. As we hope this special issue will demonstrate, we believe, as do the authors of the articles and commentary pieces included here, that “service-learning is uniquely positioned to transform the educational landscape in ways that mirror and address the demands placed upon all of us, collectively, as we move forward into our unscripted future together.” (DiPadova-Stocks and Kenworthy, 2009, p.8).

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