

How Mandatory Volunteering Prepares Future Volunteers in Adult Literacy

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Abstract

Mandatory volunteering is a pedagogical approach that puts a requirement within the curriculum for students to accumulate some credit hours while providing service in the community. It is aimed at improving practical learning, linking colleges with the community, and as presented in this study, acting as a breeding programme for future volunteers. The purpose of the study was to make an analysis of how a mandatory volunteering programme could be used to prepare future volunteers for adult literacy programmes. Based on the experiential learning model, this study adopted a case study design in which a single case was followed and deeply analysed and discussed. Adoption of case study was aimed at understanding, from the individual student, the psychological and practical features that make a successful volunteering experience. It was found out that the crucial factors for an effective volunteering experience were: having an experience full of inequalities and challenges; a positive reflection of the experience; an intellectual ability to advance a situated theorisation, and ability to redesign a plan of action based on new theorisation; and an internal drive to implement the redesigned plan of action. It is concluded that under such conditions, a mandatory volunteering can be a springboard to future volunteering behaviour. The study proposes a simple adult literacy volunteering model that can be adopted for use in other contexts as well as for further studies.

Keywords: Mandatory volunteering; experiential learning, adult literacy, case study, Tanzania

Introduction

Mandatory volunteering is a pedagogical approach that puts a requirement within the curriculum for students to accumulate some credit hours while providing service in the community (Liu, 2015; Yang, 2017). It is geared at improving practical learning, linking colleges with the community, and as presented in this study, acting as a breeding programme for future volunteers. Its use in adult literacy is well documented. Historically, there have been attempts to engage volunteers in literacy campaigns for both children and adult programmes.

In America, for example, the role of literacy volunteers was recognised especially due to policy changes on the national level through the National Literacy Act of 1991 that allowed volunteer literacy programmes access to public funds previously not available to community-based organisations (Freer, 1993). A study conducted in America, discovered that volunteer workers accounted for 43 percent of staff working in adult education programmes; mostly concentrating in CBOs (Tamassia, et al., 2007). Ho (2017) studied one English as Second Language (ESL) programme, and noted that the classes were taught by volunteers. A more recent study by Colman (2021) revealed that non-profit organisations engaging in adult education relied entirely on volunteers as teachers.

In the eastern African region, especially Tanzania and Ethiopia, there were once large-scale adult literacy campaigns that, according to Carr-Hill (2005), are now not functioning; partly or mostly, because of difficulty in sustaining a volunteer programme on such a large scale (p.65). In Uganda the Functional Adult Literacy Programme that was launched in the 1990s relies on volunteers as facilitators (Carr-Hill, 2005). In Kenya, the education for the Samburu shepherd boys and girls programme is run by volunteers from the community (Carr-Hill, 2005). In Tanzania, it is not that there are no adult literacy programmes; what looks different is the absence of the literacy campaigns that existed during the adult education revolution era (Bhalalusesa, 2020) between 1971 and 1981. Otherwise, the adult literacy approach adopted since early 1990s is the programme approach for targeted adult populations, as opposed to ‘everyone should join the campaign’ approach. Since 1993 Tanzania has launched different adult literacy programmes including ICBAE (1993), COBET (1999) and IPOSA (2019). Another important matter to note is that most of the ‘volunteers’ in Tanzania are actually school teachers on the government payroll who have to negotiate their workload so as

to balance teaching in school and working in the adult literacy programmes. This is a lot to the school teachers who are already overwhelmed with teaching and paperwork in schools.

According Sandlin and St.Clair (2005) volunteers have played an essential role in adult literacy for decades yet in some ways they remain silent partners. Scholars have explored the possibilities of taking deliberate steps to inculcate among children and the youths the likelihood of being volunteers in the future. This at the same time becomes an opportunity for schools and colleges to demonstrate their link to the community. As a result, high schools and colleges across the world have tended to put a requirement for students to volunteer in the community as a requirement for some academic credits.

In 2021, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in Tanzania reviewed its diploma and degree programmes to have, among other changes, a semester for student mandatory volunteering that was integrated in the curricula. The goal was to link the institute to the community and at the same time improve learning outcomes among students. This is a presentation of study made on the experience that demonstrates how students could be deployed in adult literacy initiatives as a requirement for them to obtain credits, demonstrate the link between education institutions and the community, and develop interest in volunteering.

While student volunteering is a common phenomenon there is little knowledge as to how students participate in such programmes in a way that they develop a volunteering spirit. The conditions under which mandatory volunteering promotes volunteerism in adult literacy has not featured in most literature. It is also narrowly known as to whether getting involved in a mandatory volunteering is actually related to triggering creativity for going beyond the requirement of the volunteering programme. The purpose of the study was to make an analysis of how the student volunteering programme could be used to prepare future volunteers, with a view to making recommendations for further improvement and possible adoption elsewhere. The study was guided by four research questions:

- i) How did the student experience teaching literacy?
- ii) What was the student's reflection of the experience?
- iii) What was the student's understanding of the adult literacy experience?
- iv) How was the student to conduct adult literacy in a better way?

Literature review

This study was conducted in order to understand the process of developing competences on volunteerism among students. It was guided by the Experiential Learning Theory, which emanates from the concept of learning by doing, or experiential education. This is the process of actively engaging students in an experience that will have real consequences, that is embedded in the curriculum. Tyler (1949) maintained that learning occurs “through the active behavior of the student; it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does” (p.63). Gencel et al. (2021) have observed that Experiential Learning Theory was influenced by many studies, including those of James, Dewey, Follet, Lewin, Piaget, Vygotsky, Jung, Rogers and Freire; and was theorised in a holistic and concrete model by Kolb (1984). Experiential Learning Theory explains learning as a process in which experiences are transformed into knowledge. Everyone has concrete experiences as a natural result of their interactions with other individuals and their environments. Individuals reflect these experiences in different ways. Reflective observations are effective for individuals to reach abstract notions, principles, and generalisations. The generalisations at issue guide individuals in their later experiences and learning. Hereby, this process continues in the form of a cycle, new experiences are gained, and these experiences play a directive role in later learning. The main idea in experiential learning is that learning is a holistic phenomenon and a process based on experience.

In experiential learning, students are first immersed in action and then are asked to reflect on their experience. Thus, experiential education places major importance on the knowledge of learners derived from a good deal of experiential learning (practice-to-theory approach) (Eraut, 1994). Students make discoveries and experiment with knowledge themselves instead of exclusively hearing or reading about the experiences of others (Kolb & Lewis, 1986). Students also reflect on their experiences, thus developing new skills, new attitudes, and new theories or ways of thinking, particularly by testing and refining that knowledge in socio-constructivist interaction with each other and with mentors who accompany them in their learning.

The essence of experiential learning is not for students to get opportunity to apply what they learnt in classroom; it is rather extending classroom to the field. According to Eraut (2008) there is no guarantee of transfer of knowledge from

college to school classroom or even from one classroom to another. Experiential learning is an opportunity to experience and reflect before coming up with abstract generalisations for further implementation (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning, in different formats, also provides students the chance to learn acceptable professional behaviours, as students begin to develop professional identities in their fields (Sisselman-Borgia & Torino, 2017).

The experiential learning theory maps the progression in learning based on experience from concrete experience stage to active experimentation. It is an appropriate model in studying individual case tracing the changes in thinking throughout the learning process. At the concrete experience phase the learner experiences a new reality that triggers his/her thinking when reflecting on the experience. The reflection phase is probably the most crucial phenomenon in this theory, since it leads to abstract conceptualisation, meaning that, the learning cycle advances into theorising the experience, drawing a plan of action based on the theorisation; and the final phase, experimenting the redesigned plan of action. Similar to the ideas of Schon (1983), it assumes that there is a process of reflection in action (during action) that is as equally importantly linked to learning as reflection on action (after action) that happens at the end of the cycle. The model puts a disclaimer that the cycle may have to be repeated several times for an effective learning to happen. What the model does not show is that learning does not have to wait until the whole cycle is complete. The model also does not provide escape routes in case the cycle is incomplete, like for example, if the learning does not go beyond the first phase.

College students are usually enrolled for a specific period of time to be spent on campus, and only briefly, in field for practical training before they graduate. They expect to be prepared for passing their examinations and receive good academic results. Hence generally college students have this expectation that the college will improve their abilities to the level of achieving their academic goals. On the contrary, the altered expectations theory proposes making students expect something more than simply pass their final examinations; they need to expect to teach what they learn. Nestojko et al., (2014) conducted experiments among students and found out that participants expecting to teach out-performed participants expecting a test. They concluded that instilling an expectation to teach had potential to increase learning efficiency at home and in the classroom.

Similar studies have tended to yield similar findings. For example, Guerrero and Wiley (2021) conducted experiments to test whether effect would be seen when learning outcomes were measured using questions testing memory for the text and questions testing comprehension from the text, and the experiments explored whether effects would be seen for a text written below grade level versus at an appropriate grade level. Across both experiments, results supported that expecting to teach improved learning outcomes even at a delay, and it improved both memory and comprehension.

Mandatory volunteering is a perfect psychological setting for altered expectations. Not only do students expect to teach, they actually teach in the field. Volunteering is much more than mere altered expectations or practical training or even internship. It is an activity, formal or informal, which is conducted by choice in an unpaid manner to benefit another person, group, or organisation (Wilson, 2000). It is a freely chosen activity, performed for the benefit of others without the right to remuneration (Činčalová & Černá, 2021). Motivations for volunteering can be various. According to Moore, et al (2014) the strongest motives for volunteering are values (doing good to community) and understanding (opportunity to learn). Volunteering is also a form of moral engagement in which young people engender a sense of duty and responsibility for others. Navickas, et al. (2016) confirmed that volunteering has a positive impact on students' life quality in that it can help young people control their stress, build their independence, find new friends, improve their communication skills and teamwork, win work experience and reduce awareness of new tasks and situations. Volunteering can contribute to students' employability due to new experiences and its benefits in terms of job opportunities.

According to Yang (2017), not every volunteer experience is beneficial. Yang (2017) found no evidence that "compulsory volunteerism" increased altruism. According to Morse (2015) volunteering is generally thought of as a selfless, positive act; however, there are situations in which volunteers may actually do more harm than good. These situations include volunteers establishing and then quickly breaking relationships (short term service), not understanding the communities they are working with, and imposing their vision of what is right and wrong on the community instead of working with them to better understand their needs (Rhodes, et al, 2009). Indeed, there are those who think that mandatory volunteering is

an oxymoron, which potentially undermines the inherent purpose of mandatory volunteering, devalues the experience of all people involved, and overruns the capacity of education and training institutions to provide well-structured volunteer programmes. This is probably the reason for having preparations for volunteering. Despite the negative aspects of mandatory volunteering to students, it is clear that the practice has much more advantages. Henney, et al. (2017) posed a very interesting question: *What happens when you require people to “do good?”*. They went on to conduct research, only to discover a disconnect between what participants “think” when asked about their hypothetical views about mandatory volunteering, versus their actual attitudes after having been engaged in mandated service for a class. Interestingly, although negative perceptions existed when participants thought about being forced to volunteer, after actually volunteering, the vast majority were very supportive of the experience. They concluded that the experience of mandatory volunteerism did not have a negative impact on future volunteer intentions.

Morris (1992) highlighted the importance of linking students to the community, after observing that America’s youths were not learning the important lessons that come from personal responsibility, social and political awareness, and community obligation. This was supported further by Andersen (1998) who observed that integrating service-learning was associated with positive youth outcomes, including civic engagement, the ethic of service, civic attitudes, a sense of belonging, acceptance of diversity, competence and self-esteem, and protection against risky behaviour. A more recent study by Llenares and Deocarís (2019) showed that the students who participated regularly in volunteer activities possessed significantly higher measures of graduate attributes relating to professional competence, communication skills, and social and ethical responsibility compared to non-regular and first-time volunteers.

A study in Singapore by Chong (2019) revealed that students who had participated in a required volunteering programme felt that their service experience introduced them to the idea of serving and provided them a platform for subsequent volunteering. Likewise, the study among university students in Kenya by Odongo (2018) indicated that the required community service programme made a change in participants’ lives and influenced their attitudes towards being sensitive to people with need, and that it was also likely to make them more

philanthropic and affect positive social change. However, from the emic point of view, it is not clear as to how volunteerism is developed and nurtured.

The reviewed literature has some gaps. While student volunteering is commonly used worldwide, it is unclear how volunteerism is developed among students. Most volunteer programmes by schools and colleges have been on linking the institutions and the community with a hope to instil the volunteering spirit without much attempt to analyse the conditions under which students can acquire volunteerism competences. Another gap in literature is how mandatory volunteering can stimulate the spirit of working beyond the requirement. Given the nature of mandatory volunteering, participants would naturally tend to work at the bare minimum of the requirement, due to the fact that the activity is taken involuntarily. Literature is silent on how such tendency can be addressed. Additionally, the literature falls short as far as establishing the conditions favourable in making mandatory volunteering in adult literacy successful.

Conceptual framework

The guiding conceptual framework is derived from experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). As summarised by McLeod (2017), Kolb's model views learning as a progression in a cycle involving four stages, namely: (1) **Concrete Experience** in which the learner encounters a concrete experience; be it a new experience or situation, or a reinterpretation of existing experience in the light of new concepts; (2) **Reflective Observation of the New Experience** in which the learner reflects on the new experience in the light of their existing knowledge, and of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding; (3) **Abstract Conceptualisation** in which reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept; and (4) **Active Experimentation** whereby the newly created or modified concepts give rise to experimentation, allowing the learner to apply the ideas to the world around him/her to see what happens. The conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

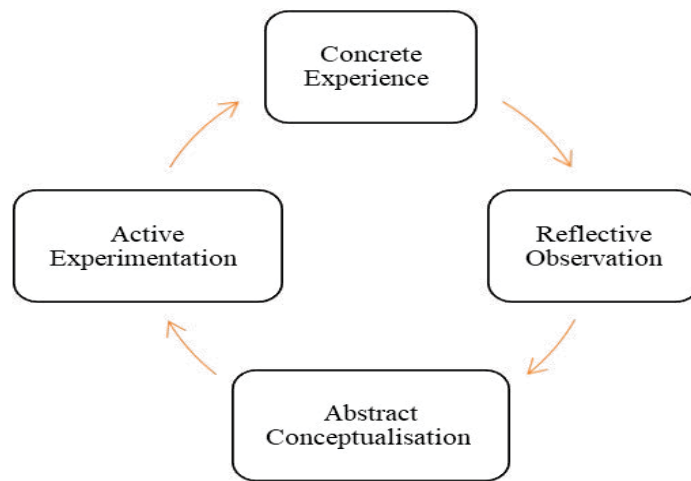


Figure1: Experiential Learning Cycle.

Source: Adapted from Kolb (1984).

Materials and Methods

This study used case study because it was aimed at understanding, from the individual student, the psychological and practical implications of volunteering to teach a literacy class. The use of case study, has sometimes been criticized as having limitations that makes it incapable of leading to generalising conclusions. One obvious criticism has been on its microscopic nature (use of single cases), which unfortunately does not disappear by simply increasing the number of cases (Yin, 2003). However, the reality is that educational research is no longer synonymous to quantitative studies. Although according to Yin (2003) even a single case can be used to generalise results provided it is well designed and analysed, it was not the intention of this case study to generalise its results. It was instead intended to be emulated and applied in similar settings. This study involved a single case of an IAE student who volunteered to be interviewed. The respondent was promised confidentiality and particularly anonymity.

Choosing the case in a case study is a very important aspect of an interpretive research. In case studies, cases are usually sampled based on criteria not randomly. A case could be typical, but most cases are either extreme, deviant or influential (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). The interest is to capture the uniqueness of the case that will make it a case of interest. This case was sampled from among

2158 students who were involved in the mandatory field teaching in adult literacy in the second semester of the year 2021/2022, at the Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania. In total, the students were able to establish 405 adult literacy centres countrywide with a total enrolment of 5777 adult learners. This means that on average five students shared one literacy centre; and each student taught about three adult learners. The criteria for selection of the case were successful establishment of a literacy centre in difficult location/circumstances; number of learners (30 or more); learner retention and impressive learner performance by the end of the field teaching. The selected case met all the criteria for inclusion in this study.

The fact that the study used a single case does not mean that it was the only case that was studied. In fact, in order to arrive at a single case, all other cases were analysed as well, so as to reach to inclusion of the sampled case, and exclusion of all the rest. A comprehensive field report recorded all the cases in terms of location, number of learners, curriculum content, unique features, number of students teaching in the centre, and retention and performance of the learners. The participant was interviewed at the end of the semester when she was requested to reveal her experiences, reflection, new understanding, and future plans. The study was designed to be explorative and grounded so as to generate deep insights from the participant. For data analysis, case description is used, whereby the case is presented before making analysis. However, the organisation of the case analysis is based on the Experiential Learning Model.

The participant

This is a case of a diploma student in her late 30s. She studies part time through the open and distance learning (ODL) mode, and continues to work as a primary school teacher. She single-handedly establishes a literacy centre in a pastoralist Masai community. The centre enrolls a group of Masai women (N=30) and men (N=5). All of them cannot read and write, and cannot speak fluent Kiswahili, because they have never been to school, and have lived a nomadic pastoralist life. The learners' ages range from 16 to 40.

The case

The student has to travel a considerable distance away from her workplace, to a different district to establish an adult literacy centre. The centre is established in

a Masai community which is isolated from other villages and from social services, including schools. It turns out that most Masai children cannot attend school due to isolation. There is an abandoned two-roomed school building in the community. A development partner constructed the building some years back for the community to have a school facility for the children, but it was abandoned since the district education authorities were lagging in bringing teachers and learning facilities. The building becomes a perfect location for the literacy centre.

She convinces some fellow IAE students to join her, but they refuse because it is too far to travel to the Masai community, and would add cost. They instead opt for nearby locations within their reach. The student requests the district education officials to support her mission, but there is no support. In fact, she is told the community in question does not exist in the mapping of the district. She resolves into doing it single-handedly. She looks for a Masai person with some schooling, and finds a young Masai girl who has recently completed secondary education and asks her to be her interpreter as she begins talking to the Masai elders about mobilising for establishment of a literacy centre in the community. The idea is supported, and this is how the centre is established.

The learners agree in acquiring literacy skills, prevocational skills (sewing, embroidery, shoe-making) and life skills. By the end of the volunteering period, 31 out of 35 learners are successfully able to read and write, sew, make shoes and belts, do embroidery and decorate the Masai attire. They are also aware of the importance of education for their children. In fact, they have already faced the district officials for the latter to bring teachers so that their children can go to school within the community.

The group plans to turn the literacy class into an income generating group so that they can work together to find solutions to the community problems. They intend to continue sewing and shoe making as a business. They are eager to open a utility kiosk that will also sale some school facilities for their school-attending children. This is aimed at addressing lack of a shopping centre in the community. They are also planning to establish a joint project for purchasing goats and sheep, and selling them at a profitable price during market days. They are sure of getting capital by convincing the men to allow them have at least one goat from each of their families.

The student is not satisfied. With the help of her Masai assistant, she has established another group for the Masai young adults who could not go to school for them to join schooling through non formal education. Her bigger plan is to move to different Masai communities around, that have the same kind of problems. She says she has learned that it would be more efficient to train and engage Masai young men and women who have been to school to do the classroom facilitation while she continues working as a teacher, and progressing with her studies by distance learning; and periodically do monitoring. She plans to pay the volunteers some token from her own salary; three volunteers, to begin with. She confirms that her perspective of adult literacy has changed ever since she was involved in the literacy volunteering semester.

Results

Student's experience

There are two major ways to explain the experience that the student had during the field semester. The first one is that the student experienced hardship in establishing the literacy centre. At a glance, the harsh conditions may have impact on whether or not to continue with establishing and running an adult literacy centre in such a community. The second way to explain the experience is the observed social inequalities in the community. It is clear that the student's experience was really challenging, although, despite all the odds, she was successful in establishing a literacy centre in such a hard-to-reach community. The level of passion to the job did not get affected by the kind of obstacles she faced. From this case, it could be observed that social inequalities and a challenging experience could be a motivating factor to wanting to volunteer. In other words, social inequalities and challenges could trigger a strong desire to volunteer, and to do more than providing literacy skills.

Student's reflection of the experience

The student realised that the location of the community was a setback to both her ability to travel on daily basis, and for the community members to access social services, including school. There was a language barrier since she could not speak the Masai language nor could the Masai speak fluent Kiswahili. She reflected on setbacks emanating from male domination that prohibited females from owning resources including the animals that they kept in the family. She reflected on the reality that the community did not have a school, with most children not attending

school. She also had to come to terms with the neglect from the district officials and from fellow students. The student figured out on a situation in which her role became something more than that of literacy teacher. Furthermore, she had to deal with the fact that more similar communities around were in the same plight of illiteracy and isolation. The case shows a considerable level of professionalism in the student in that she was determined to face the challenges than run from them. The challenges were turned into an opportunity for introducing change. This case demonstrates the power of having a positive reflection of the experience, an attitude crucial for fostering a volunteering spirit.

Student's interpretation of the experience

Realisation of the issues at hand made the student to think more creatively, especially on possible ways to address the experienced hurdles. The student was intelligent enough to adopt an integrated adult education through which teaching of literacy, prevocational and life skills was possible. She deployed para-professionals that she had recruited locally. Additionally, she went on to establish an alternative education pathway for illiterate young adults. This case demonstrates that in order to have a sound theorisation of the experience some intellectual ability is required that will not only recognise the importance of experience in improving the existing adult education theories, but also the manner in which the theories can be shaped based on situated learning.

Student's plans for better practice of adult literacy

Having achieved a considerable amount of success in theorising and trying out especially on possible solutions, the student had even better and bigger plans of transforming literacy classes into income generating groups; lobbying for establishment of a primary school in the community; mounting a wider intervention involving more para-professionals reaching more communities. The case portrays the centrality of an internal drive to implement the redesigned plan of action. This is contrary to expecting external support. The student did not need some external forces to drive implementation of the plans, most probably because she had already experienced difficulties in relying on others when she was struggling to establish the literacy centre. She went on to implement the plans trusting the power of the group. This was made possible through some creativity. Using the Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, the learning progression can be summarised as tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: Progression in Learning to Volunteer

Stages	What Happens in Theory	What Happens in the Case
Concrete experience	Learner encounters a concrete experience	The student is involved in establishing and facilitating in an adult literacy centre in a hard-to-reach community with little support from the district authorities and from colleagues.
Reflective observation	Learner reflects on the new experience in the light of their existing knowledge	(i) There is language barrier between the student and the community (ii) It is a male-dominated world (iii) Learners need more than reading and writing skills (iv) Most children in the community aren't able to attend school due to isolation (v) There are more communities with same problems of illiteracy and isolation
Abstract conceptualisation	Rise of a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept	(i) Adoption of integrated adult education through which teaching of literacy, prevocational and life skills is possible (ii) Use of para-professionals recruited locally (iii) Establishment of an alternative education pathway for illiterate young adults
Active experimentation	Learner applies the ideas to the world around him/her to see what happens	(i) Transforming literacy classes into income generating groups (ii) Lobbying for establishment of a primary school in the community (iii) Wider intervention involving more para-professionals reaching more communities

Source: Author 2022

Discussion

How did the student experience teaching literacy?

Adult literacy teaching experience, according to the case, is not as easy as it sounds. The experience has much hurdles even at preliminary moments of establishing the learning centre. To some learners this could be the beginning and the end of the experiential learning journey; which is otherwise supposed to be continuous to the next levels (McLeod, 2017). At least through the case, we understand that mandatory volunteering was received positively by the students, as part of their training. It also reveals that student volunteering programmes could be a mere stimulant to students who are ready to do good to the community (Henney, et al., 2017). This finding is very encouraging since it goes against the 'oxymoronic studies' (Yang, 2017; Morse, 2015; Rhodes, et al, 2009). We witness how the student is enthusiastic in reaching the real people who are neglected, against all

the odds of lack of support, male domination, language barrier and ridicule from some fellow students who saw her as trying to play the hero. This case shows that challenging experiences play a motivating factor on the making of volunteerism.

What was the student's reflection of the experience?

This is an issue of reflective observation. It is at this stage when the learner (in this case the student) tries to put meaning to the experiences he/she has had. This case shows how important this stage is because it sets precedence to the remaining stages; and it could be the end of learning process, which would lead to incomplete cycle of the experiential learning (McLeod, 2017). The student understands the level of difficulty in working with the Masai community before she could even establish the learning centre. She makes reflection and interprets the experience of language barrier, male-domination, need for more than reading and writing skills, lack of school facility and existence of more communities with same problems of illiteracy and isolation. This realisation pushes her into finding solutions to the identified realities. The case demonstrates the power of having a positive reflection of the experience, an attitude crucial for fostering a volunteering spirit. According to Boud, et al (1994) it is crucial to avoid negative feelings, particularly about oneself, because they can form major barriers towards learning, by distorting perceptions, leading to false interpretations of events, and can undermine the will to persist; instead, positive feelings and emotions can greatly enhance the learning process, and can keep the learner on the task and can provide a stimulus for new learning.

What was the student's understanding of the adult literacy after experience?

This is to do with abstract conceptualisation. It is about theorising on possible ways to address the real issues emanating from the experience (McLeod, 2017). The student opts for adoption of integrated adult education whereby teaching of literacy, prevocational and life skills is possible. She has to have a training programme that takes care of not only the reading and writing but also equally important issues of gender, income generation and importance of education to the children. She also opts for use of para-professionals who are recruited locally, for two reasons: first as interpreters and secondly as para-professionals in adult education who can more efficiently reach other similar communities if they are

well trained and motivated. The student recognises that illiteracy will persist if there is no schooling of some kind when there is no formal schooling. Hence, she establishes an alternative education pathway for illiterate younger adults. This case demonstrates how experience can lead to situated learning. Situated learning theory states that every idea and human action is a generalisation, adapted to the ongoing environment; it is founded on the belief that what people learn, see, and do is situated in their role as a member of a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

How was the student to conduct adult literacy in a better way?

This is to do with active experimentation. The student plans transforming literacy classes into income generating groups; lobbying for establishment of a primary school in the community; and launching a wider intervention involving more para-professionals reaching more communities. At this level the student's thinking has already developed into that of a community social entrepreneur (Eslahchi & Osman, 2021). It is a finding in this case study that internal drive to implement the adult literacy is key. This finding is probably the major explaining factor to success and failure of adult learning programmes in the community. Internal drive begins with the change agent and is strengthened by the power of group.

Using the Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, the study has analysed the student mandatory volunteering journey and followed along the progression from concrete experience to active experimentation. The study has shared an influential case of a student volunteer who was successful in surpassing what was expected of her. The case makes it possible to draw some conclusions regarding mandatory volunteering on such issues as the progression in developing volunteerism; the stimulants to going beyond the expectations; and most importantly, the conditions for successful mandatory volunteering in adult literacy. Other adult education systems may find this case study useful especially in setting conditions favourable for students to volunteer in a way that promotes the likelihood of volunteering in the future.

It is the conclusion of the study that experiencing inequalities and challenging conditions in the field may actually be a motivating factor; that, a positive mindset in reflecting on the experience could be a key to progression in learning; that, it takes some intellectual capacity to theorise the reflected experiences and be

able to design a plan of action based on the theorisation; and that, it requires one to have an internal drive to want to implement the designed plan of action. Hence, under such conditions, mandatory volunteering can act as a springboard for volunteering sooner or later. This case demonstrates how soon this has been possible. The passion to volunteer is so high that nothing can stop the student from extending a hand of service. This is a case study using a single case, and for that matter, its aim is limited to demonstrating the practice of mandatory volunteering for possible adoption in similar contexts. Figure 2 presents a model for student volunteering in adult literacy, that could be adopted for use in similar contexts, and as reference point for further studies.

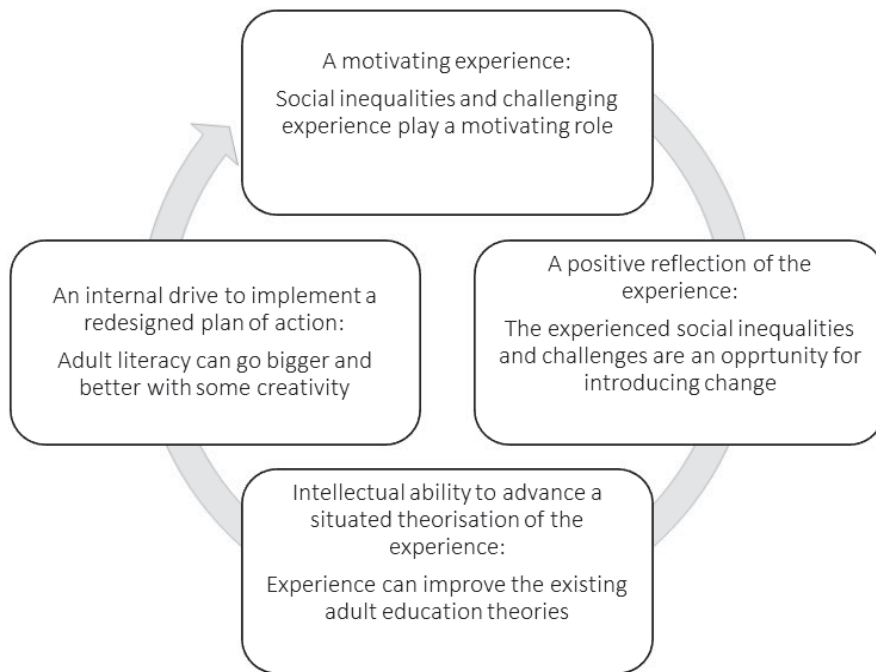


Figure 2: Experiential Learning Model for Student Volunteering in Adult Literacy
Source: Author's Adaptation of the Kolb Experiential Learning Model

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