

# Exploring Students' Feelings in The Initial Phase of a Community-Based Research Service-Learning Course: A Qualitative Approach Using Content Analysis

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## Abstract

The emotional experience of situations and interactions with other people play an important role in teaching and learning processes and interact with cognitive as well as motivational and intentional factors in the acquisition of knowledge. In our qualitative investigation, we looked at the experiences of participants in the initial phase of a community-based research service-learning project that dealt with issues of social inequality, poverty and homelessness. We were particularly interested in the affective processes in the project's planning phase and during the first meetings between community partners, homeless people and the participating students. After completing the course, we conducted guided qualitative online interviews with the course participants. The interviews were fully transcribed verbatim. We then coded and analyzed the data using qualitative content analysis approach. It became apparent that the students were particularly anxious and apprehensive about working with vulnerable groups of people. This manifested itself in uncertainty, nervousness, fears and negative feelings. Regarding the collaboration with the community partners, the emotional situation varied among the students in the initial phase. We conclude that students' fears, anxieties, and uncertainties in the planning phase of a service-learning or community-based research project should be taken seriously. A relaxed and positive atmosphere at the first meetings can be viewed as particularly important for project progression and the students' future learning success.

**Keywords:** community-based research; emotion; service-learning; sentiment; student