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Service Learning: Discovering Effective Communication Strategies by Emphasizing the Community's Perspective

Elizabeth Oppe
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**SERVICE LEARNING: DISCOVERING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES BY EMPHASIZING THE COMMUNITY'S PERSPECTIVE**

**A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Communication of
Ohio University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

**By
Elizabeth Oppe
November 2001**

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**This dissertation has been approved
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**“The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it,
but what they become by it.”**

- John Ruskin

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CHAPTER ONE: RATIONALE

Introduction

Service learning is a broadly defined term that may encompass a spectrum of projects and course work ranging from acts of charity to activism for social change. “The aim of service learning is always to heighten awareness in our communities that we have the capacity to both learn from and serve each other...and work toward a more just and egalitarian society” (<http://www.invcoll.pdx.edu/ic.htm>). Another description of service learning from Brevard Community College’s The Power (1994) explains that, for many community organizations, students augment service delivery, meet crucial human needs, and provide a basis for future citizen support. The Power depicts community service as an opportunity for students to enrich and apply classroom knowledge; explore careers or majors; develop civic and cultural literacy; improve citizenship and develop occupational skills; enhance personal growth and self-image; establish job links; and foster a concern for social problems. This introduction to community service leads to a sense of social responsibility and commitment to public and human service. Although the researcher will discuss service learning in explicit detail in Chapter Two, a brief sketch is warranted here to introduce the reader to the concept.

While there is still much discussion in the field about what actually constitutes service learning, Kraft & Swadener (1994) believe that perhaps the most widely accepted definition is given by the Corporation for National and Community Service. They describe a service learning program as one that provides educational experiences:

- a. **Under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community;**
- b. **That are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity;**
- c. **That provides a student with opportunities to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and**
- d. **That enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others.**

Service learning, as The Power (1994) illustrates, also encompasses the use of knowledge with a historical understanding or appreciation of social, economic and environmental implications as well as moral and ethical ramifications of people's actions. Knowing the implication of the student's actions on the service recipient is crucial to the success of service learning. A partnership needs to exist between the participating students of the educational institution and the service recipient.

The goal of service learning is to benefit both the community and the corresponding and collaborating educational institution. The attainment of this goal requires the learner to be engaged directly with other people, both those providing services and those being served. As already mentioned, this engagement will heighten

the awareness in our communities of an existing capacity to both learn from and serve each other and work together toward a more just and egalitarian society.

Through service learning, both the community and the concurring educational institution benefit. Ward (1997) describes service learning as an extension of education beyond the walls of the classroom that can profit all parties involved – the university, the students, and the populations served. For example, Ward announced that Simmons College in Boston sought to build stronger relationships between the educational institution and the greater Boston community through action-oriented and participatory school-community partnerships.

Service Learning Guidelines

Overall, to make sure that a service learning project benefits all parties, an outline of guiding principles may be accommodating. Applegate and Morreale (1998) discuss several guidelines to be used when incorporating service learning in a course. First of all, an assessment of impact and outcomes of service learning needs to be conducted. Service learning initiatives must demonstrate that rigorous criteria for learning are in place and that the quality of service is high. The assessment of service learning activities, in regard to both community impact and expected student outcomes, is crucial to their success and continued support.

Second, a service learning project has to be based on a true sense of partnership with the community. Applegate & Morreale (1998) argue that, if faculty or students see their service as the informed bringing wisdom to the unwashed masses, then an opportunity for learning from community members is lost, and the partnership is doomed for failure. Successful partnerships are based on mutual

respect of and admiration for the abilities and assets already acquired by the partners. Additionally, Applegate & Morreale (1998) explain that faculty and students need to keep the dual goals of enhanced individual learning and the support of moral and civic values at the forefront of their activities.

Service learning programs can be advantageous to the service recipients if they are conducted properly and the students, or service providers, understand and take responsibility for their actions while in this particular role. For example, information on the Learn and Serve Program through The Corporation for National Service's home page (<http://www.cns.gov/>) describes literacy programs designed to teach younger children to read and programs that distribute food to the homeless. Furthermore, programs in violence and crime prevention, immigration assistance, promoting the right to vote, substance abuse, and poverty may meet critical societal needs. It is important to remember that students need to be held accountable for their actions.

Service Learning Paradigm

It is essential that the requests of the community agencies be addressed and outlined in a new paradigm. Furco (1996) explains the faults of the old paradigm by stating, "While strong intentions to benefit the recipients of the service are evident, the focus of field education programs tends to be on maximizing the student's field of learning"(p. 5). Maybach (1996) believes that the goals of a new paradigm of service learning should include how to responsibly investigate what the individuals in a community define their needs to be. The paradigm should include ways to be involved in service through a mutually empowering relationship with a diverse

group of people, strategies for caring with and about people, and methods of addressing the root causes as well as the symptoms of need (Maybach, 1996). In addition, Maybach (1996) suggests a focus on interactive reflection, engagement in continuing dialogue at the service site, accountability for growth of all individuals in the service relationship, an inclusive approach to the definitions of terms, and the removal of the provider/recipient roles.

This new service learning paradigm should aspire to the needs of the service recipient instead of only focusing on the growth of the individual student service providers. Again, Furco (1996) supports this view by stating that “However, the program’s primary focus is still on the students’ learning and their overall benefit” (p. 5). Previous research by Ehrlich (1996) expands on the experiential pedagogy of service learning and explains how research has been focused on the educational institutions and the student’s perspective of the service learning experience. Students are often taught the value of providing service to one’s community; however, the effects of the service provided to the service recipients are rarely researched. Additional support of this concept is given from Exley, Johnson and Johnson (1996), who believe that an assessment of the effects of service learning needs to occur if service learning is going to become more than just another passing fad in higher education. Futhermore, Exley, Johnson and Johnson (1996) explain that qualitative data would tell more about the unique impact that service learning has on individual participants.

The term “partners in service” should be used and is outlined by Jenkins (1996) which explains that in order to develop an empowered community, the

college and community should see themselves as equal stakeholders willing to share, learn, and grow from each other. Jenkins (1996) goes on to state, "As the partnership strengthens, the delineation of 'them' and 'those' will slowly disappear, and the partners can link their resources to create exciting and challenging programs in which each plays an equal part" (p. 46). Emphasis should be on the mutual respect for individual strengths and weaknesses that each partner can bring to the service relationship. Prominent issues for the service learning partners include emphasizing cooperation and supporting the equal role each should play in the service design and accomplishment of the community project in which they are engaged. Reinforcing the equal concern for positive outcomes and the well being of the other service partners should also be of the utmost interest.

Service Learning Agenda

With an agenda of service through cooperation, service learning can become a powerful tool for educators and agency coordinators. These service learning educators and agency coordinators have the potential to help all members of society realize their own strengths and weaknesses as well as to identify the abilities of others. A partnership is then established which guides the relationship of the provider and recipient. The focus is to have a mutually respectful and beneficial relationship between and among the partners.

Programmatic evaluation offers the key to such a relationship by asking the appropriate questions to the service learning recipients, information may be obtained to make necessary modifications to service programs. If service learning is designed to enhance learning outcomes while addressing community needs, it is

imperative to actually explain the needs of the community. Evaluating the benefits that the actual service provided to the service recipient and examining what role communication played could prove to be vitally important to future service learning projects. Honnet and Poulson's (1989) Principles of Good Practice For Combining Service and Learning, given in Appendix F, mentions the importance of allowing those with needs to define those needs; however, examining what role communication played was not outlined or revealed.

Methods for Investigating Service Learning

This study will adopt a qualitative methodological approach, including open-ended questionnaires and interview studies. Detailed descriptions of interactions, observed behaviors and direct quotations from recipients about their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs will be examined. Consequently, a qualitative thematic analysis method of assessment will be used. In summary, qualitative ratings of the extent to which service projects meet the needs, expectations and benefits to the community will be established.

In the researcher's opinion, research agendas concerning service learning projects should investigate the effectiveness of the service provider's responsibility and role to the service recipient. As Jenkins (1996) pointed out in her research, the service learning program in which she was involved held a roundtable discussion to address the needs of the community. Jenkins (1996) goes on to describe the tutors, mentees, corporate partners, community service staff, and the cluster coordinator that met together to reflect on the successes and concerns of the service learning program. In the present study, interviews will be conducted to outline the impact of

the service. Any pre-interaction assessment questions should reflect the service recipient's impression of their agency before the service learning interaction and initial approach. Also, the state of affairs of the agency should be examined, along with the agency's expectations. In the post-interaction questions, the assessment of the provider's actions, behaviors and communication skills will be evaluated, along with the provider's impact on the agency.

An overall assessment of the community agency, as described by The International Partnership for Service-Learning (a not-for-profit organization founded in 1982 that serves colleges, universities, service agencies and related organizations around the world), would be appropriate to focus on the service agency's mission, history, governance, staff, clientele, and effectiveness. This information was found at the International Partnership for Service-Learning's home page, (<http://www.studyabroad.com/psl.about.html>).

The study can be delimited by comparing the services provided by a particular college to the surrounding area community agencies. Evaluating how the provider met the recipient's expectations and needs may uncover any effective communication strategies used throughout the partnership. Written, verbal, nonverbal, formal meetings, informal meetings, e-mail, and telephone conversations are all methods of communication that may enhance the experience for the service learning partners. Moreover, finding out which partners communicated more frequently and how they communicated should also prove to be beneficial in aiding future service learning projects.

Purpose of Study

The rationale of this study is to inquire about the service learning experience provided to the agency and community and assess the potential communicative strategies exhibited. The partnership between the service learning recipient and provider should generally prove favorable for both parties. Expectations are obliged to be met that will allow a favorable experience to be bestowed upon the agency and community.

Furthermore, a mutually rewarding relationship between the provider and recipient should exist during the service learning project. In fact, it is described on the International Partnership for Service-Learning's (IPS-L) homepage (<http://www.studyabroad.com/psl.about.html>) that the student and recipient relationship may prove to be so beneficial that many students may stay connected with their agencies after the program and willingly continue their established friendships by helping in various ways. Some have returned after graduation to work at their agency in a professional capacity. This is the type of relationship and partnership that needs to exist between the service learning provider and recipient. Being able to establish this relationship may mean that the service project is fulfilling the expectations of the agency and community.

Concern for the welfare of the institution and more importantly, its students, has been identified as the focal point of service learning research thus far. For example, Schine (1997) explains that service learning is a significant element in the educational process at all levels – school, college, and beyond. It has more to do with becoming a mature adult than any academic exercise and it is at least the equal of

academic effort in building an understanding of others, the capacity to be an effective citizen, and the promise of leading a balanced life in an increasingly complex world. The beneficial element provided to the students is the underlying concern, which prompts this interrogation of the service learning experience for the community. The service recipient's expectations and final outcome analysis of the service project has not been examined in detail.

Service learning courses should focus on investigating the needs of the individuals in the surrounding urban or rural community who are the service recipients. This investigation involves the students becoming culturally aware of the agency's environment. Gonsalves, Olsen, and Reilly (1996) speak of providing quality service to the school community and also being interested in enhancing cross-cultural knowledge and sensitivity in all service participants. The integration of students into the organization's culture is a process which needs to be addressed when considering the overall impact of the service provided by the students.

The effects of service on those previously or currently in service recipient roles will be evaluated. The interpersonal communicative processes carried out between the service partners for the duration of their project will be reflected upon. A common theme of communication strategies will be discovered that will benefit any future service learning projects.

Research Questions

In general, to promote the feasibility of high quality service, the following research questions will be addressed in this study.

RQ1: How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions benefit the service recipients?

RQ2: How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions meet the needs and expectations of the service recipients?

RQ3: How were the service recipient's needs and expectations communicated to the students and educational institutions?

RQ4: What communication strategies were used in providing the needed service?

Summary

The research conducted in this study will evaluate if the service provided via service learning partnerships responds to an actual community need that is recognized by the community. The service should be designed to achieve significant benefits for the students and the community. All partners should benefit from the project and contribute to its planning.

The development of this study will be given by depicting the components of each chapter. The first chapter has given an overview of the intentions and agenda of this service learning study. Chapter Two will provide a literature review that will summarize how knowing the history and original purpose of service learning will prove to be useful to all parties involved. Moreover, having the guiding principles and sequential steps for a service learning experience outlined in advance should establish and demonstrate a productive and advantageous project.

The third chapter will discuss the methodological approach used in this study, which will be qualitative in nature. Open-ended questionnaires, structured

interviews, documentation analysis and a thematic analysis of the data will lead to an assessment of the findings in Chapter Four. An overall conclusion will be given in Chapter Five that will outline what communication strategies have proven to be effective in service learning projects by meeting the community's expectations and needs. Sigmon (1979) promoted this availing element of service learning by describing it as "reciprocal learning" that occurs only when both the providers and recipients of service profit from the activities. This further substantiated the aspect that after all, during a service learning partnership, the same goal is in mind for both the service provider and the service recipient: a mutually beneficial relationship and experience.

Directory of Terms

Service learning recipient – community agency and members receiving service

Service learning provider – students of institutions providing service

Service learning project – students providing recognized and needed service to community agency for college course credit

Community agency – organization or group in the local area having interests in common

Community based organization – another name for community agency

Communication strategies – to convey, impart, or converse the skill employment and coordination of service learning tactics between and among the partners

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When conducting a service learning project, Ehrlich (1996) points out that the concern for the welfare of the educational institution, and more importantly, its students, has been identified as the focal point of service learning research thus far. Furthermore, the pedagogical experience of the student has been examined; however, the service recipient's experience needs to be further addressed. Communicating the service recipient's or community based organization's perception of the service learning project should enable educational institutions to provide more beneficial services in the future.

In this chapter, the history of service learning, along with its agenda, will be discussed, so that the importance of a mutually beneficial partnership will be established for the reader. Moreover, the procedural steps that outline a service learning project and standards of conduct are provided. The communication of this information should allow a productive service learning experience to be had by all parties involved.

By providing the service learning procedural steps, the reader should be able to contrive what, when, and how certain communicative interactions can result in productive service learning experiences. Furthermore, the researcher proposes that effective communication strategies will be discovered during the course of this study that could be integrated into the procedural steps and organization of a service learning project. After all, a common denominator among all service learning projects is communication. The communication aspect between service learning

partners helps to fulfill the expectations of the individuals involved in the relationship and enables them to define it as being successful.

History

In a report, A Brief History of Service Learning, Morton (1999) describes that the current representation of service learning was invented sometime in the middle 1960's and first appeared, as nearly as we can tell, in a 1967 report by the Manpower Development Project of Oak Ridge Associated Universities. The report described a program that recruited students and faculty to work on tasks defined by the community organizations in the Tributary Area Development Regions of the Tennessee Valley Authority. From this initial report, found on the Invisible College's home page (<http://www.invcol.pdx.edu/ic.htm>), came the current understanding of service learning and the importance of a mutually beneficial partnership.

An analysis by Kraft and Swadener (1994) gives a summary of the most current history of service learning and describes the decade of the nineties to be a time with strong communitarian and service overtones. President Bush's Points of Light campaign in 1990, the Congressional passage of the National and Community Service Act in 1990, and President Clinton's National Service Trust Act of 1993, were preceded by a small group of college and university presidents in 1985 who founded the national Campus Compact.

President Bush's Points of Light campaign, explained in more detail on the foundation's home page (<http://www.pointsoflight.org/>), denotes that strong service learning partnerships can accomplish work together that would be difficult or impossible to accomplish alone. These partnerships built a shared sense of

commitment and responsibility throughout the community and ensured that everyone who was touched by the service was represented in the leadership, planning, and implementation of the project. Avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts among agencies and offering opportunities for people to learn from each other and share resources are two primary goals. Contributing to rebuilding healthy, caring communities was and still is the focal point.

Throughout the 1980's, state and local boards of education and hundreds of schools across the country began service learning programs or requiring community service for graduation. The decline in volunteerism on college campuses was halted as a growing number of young adults again found meaning in giving back to their communities.

Kraft and Swadener (1994) go on to explain that while volunteerism has a long and honorable history in American society, community service has often come to mean a court ordered sentence for misdemeanors. Civic or citizenship education have theoretically been part of the school social studies curriculum for a century, but with increasing youth violence and other social pathologies, it has received increased attention in recent years. During the nineties, there was a growing acceptance of and coalescence around the concepts of service learning.

Dimensions

Once again, from the Invisible College's home page, Morton (1999) explains that one dimension of service learning's history is grounded in emerging understandings of service, from the local and church-based charity of the eighteenth century to the institutional and increasingly social scientific forms of human services evidenced in the asylums of the 1830's and the settlement houses of the late

nineteenth century. These examples suffice as prototypes of many of the community organizations in which most of our students serve. Morton (1999) goes on to describe that the second dimension takes shape in the learning and organizational development theories of Kurt Lewin in the late 1940's. The website (http://www.hbdarticles.com/m0341/1_33/34831/16/pr/article.jhtml) gives further information on Lewin, who authored Resolving Social Conflict, a book that explores issues of social identity and marginality. Herbert and McNeil (1986) described Lewin, who composed articles on psychosocial problems of minority groups. Also, it was Lewin who articulated an educational theory later made popular in service learning by David Kolb, a theory of experiential learning that defines the cognitive processes of learning.

Additionally, it was Lewin's insight that contributed, in part, to Robert Greenleaf's ideas concerning servant leadership. The web site (<http://www.fluidpowerjournal.com/1999%20issues/02SystemIntegrator/art...ServantLeaders.ht>) and May and Trosky (1989) detailed the work of Robert Greenleaf and described him as the originator of the concept of servant leadership. Greenleaf noticed, while working at AT&T, that the most successful managers kept in their vision the long-term development of their team members. They used daily challenges as opportunities to develop the judgment and decision-making capacity of everyone around them. From this perceptive observation, Greenleaf refined his leadership development process.

Furthermore, linking these otherwise disparate histories is a third dimension of service learning - the appearance of the term "community service" in the

vernacular language of the United States at some point in the post-war 1940's. Morton (1999) goes on to explain that the phrase "community service" does not show up in the writing of Jane Addams or John Dewey for example; or in the writings of Dorothy Day prior to 1950. To give the reader more insight into this history, Jane Addams received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. The web site (http://home.pacbell.net/whainc/tmp_addams.htm) explains that Addams was given the award not only for playing a significant role by lending a helping hand in worldwide disarmament following World War I, but also for her plans to found settlement houses. Addams (1949) described her experiences at Hull House, which was founded in 1889 in Chicago Illinois. Furthermore, Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker with Peter Maurin in 1933.

A detailed biography of Dorothy Day is given on the web site (<http://www.catholicworker.com/ddaybio.htm>) and from Bowden (1977) which described the Catholic Worker as a paper to publicize Catholic social teaching and promote steps to bring about the peaceful transformation of society. The paper didn't merely complain, but called on its readers to make personal responses. The editors personally got the chance to put their principles into practice by giving shelter to those homeless people who knocked on their door. The Catholic Worker became a national movement and by 1936 there were thirty-three houses spread across the country.

What drew these various dimensions together into the construct of service learning in 1967, it can be argued, is the emergence between 1850 and 1950 of a culture of consumption. A culture was mandated which made the consumption of

surplus the fundamental economic problem. This culture replaced the citizen with the consumer, and life meaning with lifestyle, leading people into lives that were experienced as increasingly complex, fragmented and inauthentic.

Development

Koulish (1998) elaborates on the significance of assessing the effectiveness of the community impact of service learning. Koulish (1998) expands the definition of community by adding an experiential process of participation and by introducing learning-based definitions (service learning). This experiential approach to community resembles what K'Meyer (1996) terms the "intentional community." Following K'Meyer, the intentional community consists of a group of people who by choice form a partnership through which they share geographic (neighborhoods) or virtual (the Web) space. Community participants are grounded in a commitment to engage in candid dialogue and common experience in forgoing a common understanding of the collaboration's origins, purpose, development, and group life.

Service learning, defined as a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities for integrating this experience with academic curriculum (Jacoby, 1996), serves as a catalyst for nurturing the intentional community. Service learning fosters the intentional community through William Heard Kilpatrick's (1918) premise that student learning is most valued and enduring when grounded within "wholehearted, purposeful activity in a social environment" (p. 330).

John Dewey (1916) argued that human beings possess a natural urge to operate to the limit of their capacity – in short, to learn. Koulish (1998) inquisitively asks, but learning toward what end? What type of learning do citizens need in the community? Koulish (1998) goes on to explain that as the plethora of recent literature on civic disengagement suggests, the extent to which college students fail to be driven by the urge for civic involvement, and conduct themselves in terms of it, is the extent to which formal education fails to deliver on its fundamental mission.

Furthermore, John Dewey experimented with forms of pedagogy designed to transform the adverse and pacifying effects of the traditional classroom (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Kolb, 1984). Dewey (1916) recognized that education is fundamentally about values, or “the ends for the sake of which man acts” (p. 16). An essential feature of education is the experience of being exposed to and eventually mastering what one thought was impossible or irrelevant. The student must experience the relevance of what he or she is being solicited to know for the development of a meaningful, productive, and lucrative life (Koulish, 1998).

Service learning consists of various instructional methods that link community service and academic study so that each strengthens the other. As already discussed, Ehrlich (1996) argues that the basic theory of service learning is emphatically implied through Dewey’s work, which implores that the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is key to learning. In other words, students learn best by opening the doors and windows of experience.

Community service and experiential pedagogy, as explained by the Invisible College’s web site (<http://www.invcoll.pdx.edu/ic.htm>), combine in service learning

as a way to re-integrate fragmented knowledge, relationships and caring into an integrated whole. From this perspective, it is the effort toward integration and wholeness that historically grounds service learning and gives it its meaning and energy.

This emphasis on pedagogy focuses attention and research toward the educational institutions and the student's perspective of service learning. Service learning is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience. Many service learning organizations have been established to promote the linking of community service and academic study.

Service Learning Organizations

Service programs and agencies increase campus-wide participation in community and public service and promote service learning as a valued component of higher education. Because of this, faculty members are trained in skills needed to develop effective service learning opportunities. Just as an example, from the Campus Outreach Opportunity League's (COOL) home page (<http://www.cool2serve.org/main.htm>) and from Kobrin and Nadelman's (1997) Service Counts: Revitalizing Literacy Efforts in American Higher Education, it is reported that the members aim to mobilize and connect students of all backgrounds to lead a movement that increases participation in our communities, promotes activism, and fosters the civic and social responsibility necessary to build a just society. The service learning organizations, described below, from the Western Region Campus Compact Consortium to the International Partnership for Service-

Learning, exemplify the partnership that should be established between the educational institution, its students, and the community agencies.

Learn and Serve America's Western Region Campus Compact Consortium, as described on its home page (<http://www.ac.wvu.edu/wrccc/>), is a four-state coalition of ninety-two college and university Presidents and Chancellors that seek to increase campus-wide participation in community and public service and to integrate service-learning as a valued component of higher education. The members of the consortium are committed to enhancing student and institutional responsibility, citizenship, leadership and awareness of community assets and issues, while reinvigorating higher education's concern for improving the quality of life in our society. The Western Region Campus Compact Consortium serves as a liaison and consultant among both the campuses and community based organizations interested in forming partnerships toward positive community, faculty, student, staff, administration, and program development.

The Invisible College's home page explains in detail that the Campus Compact's Project on Integrating Service with Academic Study (ISAS), which is also in Kobrin and Nadelman's (1997) Service Counts: Revitalizing Literacy Efforts in American Higher Education, convened a group of sixty faculty members from across the country and became the "Invisible College". The Invisible College, an ever-expanding circle of educators, fosters and promotes community service learning as an effective educational tool. The Invisible College recognizes the transforming power of service learning to involve the academy as a responsible and inclusive member of the diverse community. These faculty and other educators

strive, in various institutions and positions, to integrate learning and service in the diverse communities in which they work and live.

The IUPUI (Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis) Office of Service Learning's web site (<http://www.psyynix.iupui.edu/servhom.htm>) describes the service learning opportunities available to both faculty and students. The Office of Service Learning assists faculty with the design, implementation, and assessment of service learning courses. The Office of Service Learning offers faculty workshops, provides support to faculty for curricular development, and identifies community service opportunities. The Office of Service Learning assists students in identifying service learning courses and provides scholarships to support the continued involvement of students in voluntary service to the local community.

The American Association of Community Colleges' (AACC) web site (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/services/serviceclearinghouse.htm>) explains that the association began a service learning initiative in 1994 with a grant from the Corporation for National Service, an organization described by Kobrin and Nadelman (1997) to strengthen the service learning infrastructure within and across community colleges, and to help train faculty members in skills needed to develop effective service learning opportunities. The AACC helped develop campus-based programs that became a nucleus for a growing community college service learning network. AACC named 15 community colleges to participate in the "Broadening Horizons through Service Learning" project.

The Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's web site (<http://www.cns.gov/learn/about/index.html>) and Kobrin and Nadelman (1997)

describe the comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education (school-based), as well as community-based initiatives. One program outlined, and previously mentioned, is the Points of Light Foundation which was founded in 1990 and provides information on over 500 volunteer centers and is the central hub for community-based service learning initiatives across the country. The foundation staff involves community agencies with schools, as well as develops strong community connections among and between community agencies.

The center for the clearinghouse is located at the University of Minnesota, Department of Work, Community, and Family Education (WCFE), with collaboration from a consortium of twelve other institutions and organizations. The mission of WCFE, as detailed on its web site (<http://wcfе.coled.umn.edu/>), is to improve theory and practice and to prepare professionals concerned with education and training that enable youth and adults to carry out responsibilities of their vocations in the workplace, the family, and the community.

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), located in Raleigh, NC, is a membership association and national resource-center that promotes experience-based approaches to teaching and learning. For over 25 years, as explained on NSEE's home page (<http://www.nsee.org/>) and by Kobrin and Nadelman (1997), the best practices for effectively integrating experience into educational programs have been developed. NSEE works with educators, businesses, and community leaders in the shared belief that students' full learning

potential can most effectively be tapped through experience-based education programs.

To explain experiential education in more detail from NSEE's web site, it encompasses a wide range of teaching and learning methods that engage the learner actively in whatever is being learned. Examples include: internships, service-learning, school-to-work, career development, cooperative education, cross-cultural education, action research, leadership development, adventure and outdoor education, and active learning in the classroom. As a philosophy, experiential education asserts that the development of knowledge and the acquisition of skills belong as partners in education, where each can transform the other.

The American Association of Higher Education's (AAHE) Service Learning Project web site (<http://aahe.org/service.srv-lrn.htm>) explains that the association consists of a two-part initiative dedicated to the integration of service learning across the disciplines. AAHE sees its primary role as a facilitator and resource for those whose work brings them into more direct contact with teaching faculty. AAHE aims to ultimately strengthen the educational infrastructure supporting service learning in higher education.

According to the Campus Compact's National Center for Community College's web site (<http://www.compact.org>), Campus Compact is a membership organization that supports a burgeoning level of community service activity among students, faculty, and administration on over 500 college and university campuses across the country. Another campus organization, founded in 1984, the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), as explained on its home page

(<http://www.cool2serve.org/main.htm>), is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the education and empowerment of college students to strengthen our nation through community service. COOL aims to mobilize and connect students of all backgrounds to lead a movement that increases participation in our communities, promotes activism, and fosters the civic and social responsibility necessary to build a just society.

The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH), located in San Francisco, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to foster health-promoting partnerships between communities and educational institutions. The partnership's web site (<http://futurehealth.ucsf.edu/ccph.html>) explains that creating healthier communities and overcoming complex societal problems requires collaborative solutions which bring communities and institutions together as equal partners and builds upon the assets, strengths, and capacities of each. As an organization, members strive to develop collaborative relationships with other organizations.

The International Partnership for Service-Learning, founded in 1982, is an incorporated not-for-profit organization serving colleges, universities, service agencies and related organizations around the world by fostering programs that link community service and academic study. International Partnership service programs, as described by the Learn and Serve America's home page (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/initiatives.SERVICE/resource.htm>) are unique in their combination of formal academic study and substantive, hands-on community service. Examples of partnerships with agencies from the community include schools, orphanages, health care and education institutions, recreational centers,

and community development projects. As previously mentioned many students stay connected with their agencies after the program, continuing friendships and helping in various ways. Some have returned after graduation to work at their agency in a professional capacity.

Student Benefits

A student can benefit from taking a service learning class because it provides an opportunity to be actively involved in the learning process. Service learning offers a way to develop personal competencies and leadership skills through service to others. As students participate in meeting community needs, they explore educational and career choices and create positive community connections. Service learning is not intended to require more work than a regular course; however, it is important to note that it is a different type of work than a traditional course. Service learning provides students with an opportunity to engage in active learning, which often leads to greater involvement and a more fulfilling educational experience.

A real world experience is made possible for the students and causes a more fulfilling educational experience. The students are able to actually apply their classroom knowledge of course objectives to community projects outside the university environment. The students get exposure to new environments or cultures they would not see if they were not involved in service learning projects.

In more specific detail, students at each of the Corporation for National Service grantee colleges consistently reported that service learning enhanced their understanding of course material, and increased their awareness of community

needs and their ability to make a difference in their local communities (<http://www.cns.gov/joining/indix.html>). Once again, concentration on the provider's service learning experience contributes to the focus on the student's interest and benefit. The vast majority of service learners enthusiastically recommend service learning to their peers as well as to faculty who have yet to incorporate the instructional methodology.

Morreale & Droge (1998) examined literature surveying the attainments of service learning in the communication field. These attainments also seem to benefit the student participants. Morreale & Droge (1998) explained that in classrooms across the country, communication faculties are incorporating a new form of pedagogy into their courses. This service learning pedagogy involves a strong use of communication and interpersonal skills including literacy (writing, reading, speaking and listening) and various technical skills.

Morreale & Droge (1998) then focus on giving examples of service learning projects by explaining that in a communication research class at the University of Utah, students conducted focus groups for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society. In a public relations seminar at La Salle University, students developed a public information campaign for the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. In a communication and social change course at Eastern New Mexico State University, students worked with a local sexual trauma and recovery organization to plan the agency's annual Take Back the Night event.

Consequently, more student benefits are made apparent when surveying the historical purpose of service learning, which has an oratorical tradition. The impact

of service learning is pronounced when students participate in thoughtfully organized community and public service projects in which they meet the needs of a particular community or public. Service learning helps foster civic responsibility and critical examination of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. Its emphasis on civic education ties service learning to the communication field's tradition of preparing students for public deliberation and a role in public life (Morreale & Droge, 1998).

Educational historian Bruce Kimball (1992) argues that the ideal of unselfish service was brought to the professions by the ministry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kimball (1992) focuses on the development of professions and the very meaning of professionalism. It would benefit any student to know the historical reference of professionalism. Furthermore, training students for civic involvement represents what Kimball (1992) calls the "oratorical" tradition in higher education. This notion is traceable to the rhetorical tradition of Quintilian and Socrates in Bizzell & Herzberg (1990), and demonstrates that linking community service and academic studies is not new to the communication field.

Another noteworthy benefit to students is the overwhelming popularity of service learning in the last several years across the nation. Service learning has become so prominent that edited books and journals devoted to this topic are now being published. Furthermore, the 1st Annual National Conference on Service Learning Research is being held in Berkeley, CA in October 2001. As the popularity of this pedagogy spreads, the student requirements and experience for service learning will become more prevalent.

Communication and Service Learning

In furthering the discussion of the historical aspect of service learning and its link to the communication field, Appelgate and Morreale (1998) speak of the development of communication studies by explaining that from the work of the ancient Greek rhetoricians, to the influential writings of John Dewey and the pragmatists, to contemporary theories, the discipline has embraced a dual focus on understanding the practice of communication and improving it. Appelgate and Morreale (1998) explain that communication is the primary practice through which the individual and the community collaboratively develop or fragment. A special reflexive relationship exists between the study of communication as the means for constructing social reality and service learning as pedagogy designed to enhance social life and communities.

In continuing the communication aspect, Whitham (1983) believes that because service-learning programs are people-oriented, they place great emphasis on individualizing experiences for program participants. The typical program is thus very flexible, and no two individuals' experiences of it will be exactly the same. Under these circumstances, standardized measures that employ a single scale to measure effects are not likely to reveal significant individual changes. In addition, Whitham (1983) adds that service learning programs are complex partnerships that rely on communication among the partners for their success. Evaluation methods that are consistent with, and contribute to, promoting such dialogue are most easily woven into the fabric of these programs. Therefore, those in the communication field must also be aware of the reflexive way that communication itself is the

practice through which individual learning and civic engagement takes place (Applegate & Morreale, 1998).

Relative Communicative Aspects

From the aforementioned information, a strong connection between service learning and communication has been revealed. The expectations, needs and benefits of the service recipients should be unveiled. The needs of the community agencies and how these needs were communicated to the service providers, the students of the educational institution, should be addressed to promote an effective service learning project. Moreover, how the expectations of the service recipients or community agencies were communicated and met by the service providers is the underlying reason for this study.

Because of the expressed importance of meeting expectations and fulfilling obligations, two theories from the communication field help to outline this study and the issues and questions addressed. These are the expectancy violation theory and the uncertainty reduction theory. These two theories will be explained. Burgoon & Hale (1988; Burgoon, 1993) developed the expectancy violation theory which is used in the present study to determine if the targeted expectations and benefits of the service recipients were met. Evaluations of each partner's communicative ability could then be made from the retrieved information.

In further detail, Burgoon and Hale's (1988) Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT), examines how nonverbal messages are structured. The theory advances that when communicative norms are violated; the violation may be perceived either favorably or unfavorably, depending on the perception that the receiver has of the

violation. Violating another's expectations may be a strategy used over that of conforming to another's expectations. The EVT theory suggests that people have expectations about the behaviors (both verbal and nonverbal) of others. The interest lies in the resulting impact that these deviations have on the interaction process.

To help the reader understand the blending of the EVT theory with the proposed study, the assumptions of EVT should be mentioned. Human interaction is driven by expectations. Expectations are defined as the cognition and behaviors that we anticipate in conversations with others. These expectations include nonverbal and verbal behaviors. Burgoon and Hale (1988) identified two types of expectations. The first is preinteractional expectations, which refer to a communicator's ability to carry out an interaction. And the second, interactional expectations refer to a person's ability to carry out the interaction itself. Maintaining appropriate conversational distance and listening are examples of such expectancies. One's cultural background has a strong influence on the expectations of appropriate behaviors that are established. Furthermore, the expectations for human behavior are learned. People learn their expectations for appropriate behaviors from the culture at large and from individuals in the various social institutions in that culture. Burgoon and Hale (1988) point out the importance of recognizing the influence of our prior knowledge of others, our relational history with them, and our expectations for interactions.

As with any other theory, there is a critique of Burgoon and Hale's (1988) EVT theory stating that EVT has been praised for its clarity and practicality, as well as helping to explain the relationship between behavior and cognition. Critics of

the theory have questioned the principles guiding EVT. One example is the initial lack of acknowledgement of the role of culture in the development of expectations for behavior. This statement addresses the researcher's interest in further communication studies of acclimating service providers to the service recipient's culture and how this integration effects the service learning project.

The second communication theory, Berger & Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory can be connected to this service learning study by emphasizing the importance of reducing the uncertainty between the service learning partners. This theory creates a very rational structure to explain interaction behavior between strangers who are entering a relationship by positing a common drive that directs the performances of such relationship members. Moved by the need to reduce uncertainty between them, the relationship members work to develop a predictable pattern of information exchange. As already suggested, parties involved in any service learning project need to communicate their expectations clearly to one another so that there is not a scope of perplexity or confusion. If the expectations of the parties are not communicated, it is possible that an effective or productive relationship between the service recipient and the service provider will not come into existence. Once more, if the expectations of the parties are not communicated, uncertainty concerning the planning and overall outcome of a service learning project may flourish.

To further address the understanding of the uncertainty reduction theory for the reader, the following description is provided. The uncertainty reduction theory suggests that when strangers meet, their primary focus is on reducing their levels of

uncertainty in the situation. Their levels of uncertainty are located in both behavioral and cognitive realms (Berger & Calebrese, 1975). That is, they may be unsure of how to behave (or how the other person will behave), and they may also be unsure what they think of the other and what the other person thinks of them. Further, people's uncertainty is both at an individual level and relational level. People are highly motivated to use communication to reduce their uncertainty according to this theory.

Originally called "Initial Interaction Theory," Berger and Calebrese (1975) developed the theory to explain how communication is used to reduce the level of uncertainty between people engaging in initial interactions. A primary goal of persons in initial interactions is to increase their ability to make predictions about one another in order to explain the outcomes of the interaction. Prediction is defined as "the ability to define behavioral options likely to be chosen from a range of possible options available to oneself or to a relational partner." Explanation is defined as "attempts to interpret the meaning of past actions in a relationship." As already mentioned, later revisions of the initial theory identified two types of uncertainty: cognitive and behavioral. Cognitive uncertainty refers to the uncertainty associated with beliefs and attitudes that we hold. Behavioral uncertainty refers to the ability of an individual to predict behavior in a certain situation.

The uncertainty reduction theory and the expectancy violation theory have been discussed to associate communication with service learning projects. The significance of identifying, communicating and then meeting expectations of service

recipients in a service learning project is of prominent concern in this study. Other authors have touched upon the importance of expectations in their research. Their writings will now be focused upon and discussed to endorse the importance of meeting expectations and reducing uncertainty in a service learning partnership.

Gudykunst & Kim (1997) explain that communication expectations involve individuals' anticipations, predictions, or beliefs about how relational parties are likely to interact with each other. Fisher & Adams (1994) believe that individuals derive such communication expectations from "the past history of the interaction patterns that have been enacted by the participants" (p. 377). In short, Jackson (1964) states that "people who interact develop expectations about each others' behavior, not only in the sense that they are able to predict the regularities, but also in the sense that they develop preferences about how others should behave under certain circumstances" (p. 225). Berger (1997) explains that the essential argument is that expectations influence behavior no matter what the specific context because expectations are powerful motivators or "primers" toward goal accomplishment. Moreover, Weick (1979) adds that expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies.

The instructor in the service learning project needs to realize that the service providers, the students, are not only trying to fulfill the expectations for their college credit, but also fulfill the expectations and needs of the community agency. Because of this twofold responsibility, students need communicated to them their requirements to complete and pass the class, not only from the instructor's viewpoint, but also the agency's viewpoint. As already mentioned and realized, a traditional classroom setting may not be in place that allows time for the elimination

of confusion, therefore the importance of communication and understanding from and among all parties is emphasized.

Service Learning Research

Understanding the development and history of service learning, along with the educational and civic guidelines of conducting a program should produce a successful and favorable experience that will be had by all participants. This study emphasizes the service recipient's perspective of their service learning occurrence. The importance of the service recipient's viewpoint and suggestions are accentuated from already composed or conducted research. For example, educators at all levels reported that well-designed and implemented service-learning activities can help address unmet community needs while simultaneously providing students the opportunity to gain academic knowledge and skills (Root, 1997).

In addition, Anderson (1998) claims that service-learning may be described as both a philosophy of education and an instructional method. As a philosophy of education, service learning reflects the belief that education should develop social responsibility and prepare students to be involved citizens in democratic life. As an instructional method, service learning involves a blending of service activities with the academic curriculum in order to address real community needs while students learn through active engagement.

Furthermore, Furco (1996) affirms the importance of this study by implying that service learning involves blending the key elements of community service and internships so both service providers and the service recipients benefit. These benefits result from a dual focus on the service being provided and the learning that

will occur. Specifically, Furco (1996) states, "Service learning programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring" (p. 1). A mutually beneficial relationship of the service learning participants is once again being promoted.

Additionally, Eyler & Giles (1999) believe that the community voice needs to be heard. Moreover, Sigmon (1996) suggests that both community needs and community participation in decision making get short shrift in service learning. Using the community as a laboratory rather than working with the community on jointly useful projects may stunt the development of partnerships that offer continuous benefits to both parties. It may also ironically make it more difficult to create situations for learners that facilitate learning, critical thinking, and perspective transformation. According to Eyler & Giles (1999), one student observed, "I've learned that my goals are not what I should be working for there. If I am going to be of service to them; then I need to hear what their goals are, not my own"(p. 179).

Students who reported that their service met needs identified by community members were less likely to report that their class was intellectually stimulating (Eyler & Giles, 1999). There may be a tension between doing what a community group plans and wants done and meeting student interest and learning needs. In genuine partnerships, students and community members may work and plan together. When students simply complete tasks identified by community groups,

they may feel less engaged than when doing tasks they have chosen themselves or chosen to fulfill a particular academic goal. Students who are serving the community through completing a community wish list by picking up trash, painting a shelter, or stuffing envelopes for a mailing may not find the work well connected to their individual academic interests. Awareness of this possible outcome should alert practitioners to build joint planning into community projects. This study will focus on both the service agent's role and the instructor's role in communicating the value of the learning experience to the student. The involvement of these partners and their communication process to the students will be assessed.

Conrad and Hedin (1987) believe that all service learning programs need to monitor such things as where students volunteer, how often they attend, the quality of their work, the kind of supervision the site provides, and whether the students are being given enough or too much responsibility. Having basic information about how the program is functioning is critical for its long-term health and success.

Monitoring the community service program involves keeping track of what individual students do. It includes gathering other information, as well, such as how effective the coordinator was in organizing, running, and publicizing the program, how successful the host agencies were in developing appropriate jobs for the students and how receptive the community was to the youth.

In addition, Lipka (1997) outlines that a complete and rich database can and should exist in service learning education. From this database, knowledge can be generated to judge the effectiveness of individual projects and to influence the conduct and training of educators. The generation of this knowledge requires

practitioners and social scientists to make systematic and deliberate plans at the inception of a project to ascertain the short-term and long-term effects of their money, work, and emotional investment. To paraphrase an old saying, any service learning project worth doing is worth evaluating and researching well. The intent of this research study was to contribute to the aforementioned database by expanding the knowledge to include the agency's communicative role in the service learning experience.

For the reader, an actual service learning project will now be illustrated. Miller (1996) describes a service learning component in the SEAMS (Science, Engineering, Architecture, Mathematics, & Computer Science) disciplines by explaining that the waters of Clear Lake, located on Brevard Community College's (BCC) Cocoa campus; have long been utilized by both the students and the general public for a variety of activities. However, over the last three decades, water flow to the lake has been greatly altered. Furthermore, the lake had not been tested to determine whether or not it was safe for human use.

Joel Ostroff, associate professor of microbiology at BCC, realized the potential risk to students and local residents. He decided to offer a service learning component to his microbiology class in order to scientifically test the safety of Clear Lake's water. In addition, several environmental science professors encouraged students from their classes to participate in the study of flora and fauna around the lake.

Participation in the service learning program was optional. Those students who chose to participate were required to provide a minimum of twenty service

hours at the lake, a final reflection paper indicating their overall impression of the experience and to attend a mandatory two-hour group reflection meeting. Students who fulfilled these requirements received ten percent added to their total test score. With this incentive, all thirty students in Dr. Ostroff's microbiology course decided to participate.

The BCC students were divided into teams of four or five and each team was assigned two or three students from the DRIVE (Deeds and Recreation Invalidate Violence Everywhere) Program. DRIVE takes at-risk students from the local area and gives them opportunities they would not otherwise have. A total of ten DRIVE students participated in the program.

Dr. Ostroff trained the BCC students in the use and maintenance of all equipment and demonstrated sampling, testing and laboratory techniques. Each team was responsible for collection and analysis of their water samples as well as documentation of all relevant data. Samples were tested for pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrates, phosphates, E. coli and total coliforms.

After final analysis of all data, it was determined that Clear Lake was highly polluted with bacteria. Although the lake was still safe for most animals and plants, it was deemed "unsafe" for humans. As a direct result of these findings, the college no longer holds school events that encourage swimming.

Professor Ostraff plans to continue this study in the future. All data acquired throughout this project were documented, graphed and permanently recorded on computer disk. As this project becomes a permanent part of the microbiology

course, the repeated monitoring of these chemical levels will provide an ongoing history of the lake's vitality.

The positive effects of optional service learning on his students are particularly encouraging to Dr. Ostroff. He believes that mandatory service learning detracts from the potential benefits. However, he discovered that most students get very excited about the project once they decide to involve themselves and that this motivates them to work even harder in class.

Shortcomings in Service Learning Partnerships

The Points of Light Foundation (1990) published **A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning**, which outlines shortcomings in service learning partnerships. These shortcomings involved immediately getting everyone together to talk about forming a collaborative. While the intentions are good, the result can be frustrating and nonproductive if the organizations are not ready for that level of partnership. Being ready consists of all service participants planning in advance for the project. In the end, if planning does not occur in advance, all that the partners may have is a collaborative on paper, which may not be effective in achieving its goals.

Additionally, **A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning** explained that energy is put into forming an organized structure without creating a common vision of what the two parties hope to accomplish. No one in the partnership is willing to take a leadership role. People become involved in the partnership because of a position they hold rather than a commitment that they have. **Partnerships are formed between organizations that**

have seriously conflicting values. Organizations maintain hidden agendas that are not addressed. Moreover, partners may abuse power and control others.

Consequently, the importance of establishing an overall plan and individual objectives for all involved partners is supported from this information.

Koulish (1998) also unveils a shortcoming by demonstrating that the most important feature to assess with regard to building an intentional community concerns the successful synergy created by the collaboration while each partner also achieves its own institutional objectives. Unfortunately, the literature remains sparse with regard to effective and appropriate evaluation tools to measure the success of these projects. Part of the problem is the inherent limitation of quantitative methods to assess such intangibles as “synergetic collaborations,” or the value added to each institution’s objectives by combining students and community partners.

Other observable shortcomings include making a service learning project mandatory for the service providers, the students, and not focusing on the importance of listening to the service recipients to obtain valuable feedback to enhance future service learning endeavors. If a service learning project is made mandatory by the educational institution or the instructor, some drawbacks or shortcomings may occur throughout the process. Most notably, a natural blending between the service providers and their interests and the service recipients and their needs may not occur. If a service provider is placed with a service recipient in which they have no interest, negative interactions could possibly occur during the service learning experience.

Feedback from the service recipients, the partners receiving the service, will allow an evaluative process to occur for service learning projects. Not including the element of feedback from the service recipients means that the providers are not listening to the recipients. The recipients need to have their voices heard concerning their needs and expectations from the service learning project. More importantly, focusing on the relationships developed during the experience and the resulting projects could prove to be valuable for evaluating future service learning ventures.

Avoiding the Shortcomings

The Points of Light Foundation's (1990) **A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning** also outlines that the first aspect of avoiding service learning partnership shortcomings is to decide which type of partnership is going to be established, whether it is a cooperation, coordination, or collaboration. The second step is to jointly develop an action plan. The third step is to create joint systems for managing activities. A determination is warranted on how much communication is needed and on how it will be accomplished.

In continuing, the fourth step is to evaluate the activities by asking questions such as is there open and frequent enough communication? The fifth step is to renew the effort by taking time to talk about what's working and what's not. All and all, it seems that communication is the key. Moreover, significant consideration of integrating the effective communication strategies outlined by the service recipients into the service learning partner's orientation and training could prove to be very appropriate and complimentary for future service learning projects.

Achieving Quality in Service-Learning: Effective Management

When The Points of Light Foundation (1990) developed their resource **A Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning**, the foundation wanted to achieve quality in service learning by examining four distinctive steps. The first step is to clarify agency and faculty roles. Questions asked consist of such issues as meeting expectations, responsibilities, monitoring the results, documentation, discipline, partner's roles, problems, logistics and celebration. The second step is to set clear assignments and expectations in writing. Details about the job/project, learning outcomes, supervision, responsibilities, work site, time commitment, qualifications, and results need to be clarified.

The third step consists of scheduling and time commitments. Issues addressed are the school calendar and cycle, dividing larger tasks into smaller pieces, logistics, continuing a relationship after project completion, and establishing ongoing relationships with faculty. The fourth step is appropriate supervision that includes orientation and training, monitoring performance, taking time for checkups, and evaluating the overall experience. The instructor should determine how much supervision is needed and find the right supervisor.

The Ohio University Center for Community Service has also utilized a project planning worksheet that was developed through the Points of Light Foundation (1990). Throughout the worksheet, eight elements are addressed in which pre-planning needs to take place before the service learning project commences. These elements are management, youth involvement, service components, learning components, community support and involvement, resources,

tasks and timelines, and evaluation. By addressing these issues, a mutually beneficial relationship may be established throughout the service learning experience.

In June 1998, at the Invisible College National Gathering, suggestions for deepening sustainable partnerships in service learning were established. Highlights from these suggestions consisted of involving community partners in training, evaluation and reflection; nurturing relationships to foster partnerships, realizing that collaboratively designed research can lead to funding and that long-term research is needed. Some very substantial questions were asked. What is the morality of using people as a laboratory for student's learning? How do we create win/win partnerships? Are we doing service learning in a way that builds community-in institutions, among practitioners?

Service Learning Course Adaptation

Introduction

In continuing the discussion of the service learning process, The Eastern Michigan University Office of Academic Service Learning has compiled and published the Academic Service Learning Faculty Development Manual. In this manual, Stacey, Langer, & Rice (1997) provide a general overview and procedural list of service learning. The definition of service learning is given, along with a comparison to other volunteer activities and how to connect the course objectives with the service activities. An emphasis is put on student synthesis, detailing an experiential learning model, and highlighting the benefits to all involved service

learning parties. In conclusion, the twelve steps for the integration of service learning into a college course are explained.

Service Learning Definition

The National Youth Leadership Council of 1991 defines service learning as both a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning, personal growth and civic responsibility. Service learning is an instructional method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community. Service learning is an instructional method that is integrated into the student's academic curriculum or provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity.

Student Opportunities

Service learning also provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities. The National and Community Service Act of 1990 states that service learning enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps foster the development of a sense of caring for others. Fenstermacher (1990) believes that the goal is to blend service and learning goals and activities in such a way that the two reinforce each other and produce a greater impact than either could produce alone.

Service Learning vs. Volunteer Activities

It is important to distinguish academic service learning from other volunteer activities performed by students on college campuses. Academic service learning only refers to those service activities designed to promote the learning of key concepts or skills taught in college courses or programs. Academic service learning, therefore, is not sending students out to work in a volunteer program where there is no clear conceptual link between what students do in the community and what is taught in the course. It is not offering extra credit for four hours of volunteer service at the end of a term. The experience a student gains in the service activity, regardless of where it is performed, must clarify and enhance an understanding of course goals and objectives.

Required community service is a learning activity, which is an integral part of mastering course concepts. The clearer the connection drawn between the community services and course content the stronger the commitment of the students. Academic service learning consists of curricular activities. Community service consists of co-curricular activities. Community service involves volunteerism, special recognition, required service by a club, and required service as a condition for graduation.

Academic Service Learning vs. Professional Development

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 declares that service learning must meet a real community or school need, be integrated into the student's academic program and provide time for structured reflection. Sometimes the distinction between academic service learning and professional development

needs to be outlined and understood by participating members of the service learning project. Professional development does provide a service and the students do learn, so how does it differ? Stacey, Langer, and Rice (1997) explain that they differ in who determines the need. In academic service learning, the community agency in conjunction with the faculty member identifies the need, while in professional development, the faculty member identifies the need.

Secondly, Stacey, Langer, and Rice (1997) illustrate that they differ in regard to who benefits from the community service activity. When students perform community service (volunteerism), the recipients of the service are the primary beneficiaries. When students perform professional development, it is the students who are the primary beneficiaries. However, when students perform academic service learning, both the students and recipients benefit and both their needs are met.

Critical Elements of Academic Service Learning

The critical elements of academic service learning consist of a meaningful service to the community; a clearly conceptualized connection between course objectives and service activities; and structured opportunities for students to synthesize and derive new meaning from their experiences as they relate those experiences to course goals and objectives (Stacey, Langer, and Rice, 1997). Meaningful service to the community means that the services provided must meet a need identified by the community agency, not the instructor or students. The instructor does not tell the community agency what problems need to be solved or

what work needs to be done; instead the instructor listens to the issues identified by the community agency.

Connecting Course Objectives and Service Activities

A clear connection between course objectives and service activities means that the services provided must enhance course content. Stacey, Langer, and Rice (1997) believe that students should not be asked to provide community service without a clear connection to course content. Without the connection to course content, students would be performing volunteerism, not academic service learning.

Students Synthesize Experiences

Structured opportunities for students to synthesize and derive new meaning from their experiences as they relate those experiences to course objectives means the students are engaged in structured synthesis. The students relate their community service experience to course content. In the synthesis process, the students should be able to articulate how the service performed, clarified, reinforced, or illustrated course concepts.

In regards to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, academic service learning provides a concrete experience that, paired with critical synthesis of how the service relates to key course ideas, can stimulate conceptual growth and learning in college students. Academic service learning is a way of learning through experience in which students gain and apply academic skills by addressing community needs and social problems. Kolb (1984) provides a useful framework for integrating the experience and synthesizing elements of academic service learning in

the “Experiential Learning Model”, which is given for the reader in Appendix G as Table 1.

Traditional vs. Community Service Learning

Academic service learning provides students with an experience different from that of a traditional learning environment. Howard (1993) identifies and distinguishes these differences by categorizing traditional and community service learning. Howard’s ideas are given for the reader in Appendix G as Table 2.

Benefits to the Community and the University

The benefits to the community and the university cannot be underestimated. For years, communities have invited their local colleges to become more actively involved in the everyday activities of the community. Academic service learning automatically provides this link and commitment. Stacey, Langer and Rice (1997) list the benefits for the community agency and university. Students contribute to community development and renewal. Recipients benefit from direct aid. Agencies receive an infusion of creativity and enthusiasm from college students. Students become more invested in the community and see the range and depth of services performed. And finally, the community and university build links.

Service Learning Procedural Steps

First Step

Evaluating Teaching Style

After the need and interest for a service learning experience have been determined, the next step is to adapt a course to include academic service learning. Twelve steps for integrating academic service learning into a college course will now be discussed. The first step entails evaluating teaching style.

The instructor has less control of the material learned each day because students will bring experiences to share and to relate to course content. Students become a resource in the classroom and the instructor needs to recognize that fact and draw upon it. The instructor is no longer the sole expert who imparts knowledge but rather a facilitator who draws information out from the students.

Howard (1993) identified ten principles of good practice concerning academic service learning pedagogy. These principles can serve as a worthwhile checklist for an instructor who is considering implementing academic service learning in a course. These principles are given in Appendix G as Table 3.

Second Step

Identify Course Goals and Objectives

The second step identifies the course goals and objectives. The course goals are the knowledge and understanding provided to the students. The course objectives are the skills learned. And mentioned last is the development of student attitudes.

Third Step

Academic Service Learning Setting

The third step is exploring academic service learning. There are at least three ways an academic service learning component might look in a course; two methods require students to go to an agency, the other can be accomplished in the college setting. The on site, or at agency project, could be short-term and have weekly commitments. The in-class, or college setting project, will be completed & presented to the agency.

Short-term Project

During the short-term project, students go to the agency one to three times and provide a short-term service. For example: cleaning up a river, assisting with a building project, or facilitating a special weekend community project. While these activities can be useful, their short duration makes it hard for students to gain a sense of the community agency's purpose and the needs and resources of those served by the agency.

Weekly Commitments

Regarding weekly commitments, students commit to visit the agency for two or three hours a week for a period of six or more weeks. The extended time period and the multiple visits allow the students to have a greater variety of experiences and to gain a deeper sense of the mission and clientele of the agency.

Service Learning College Setting

Not all service must be provided on-site. Students may perform service for an agency as a course project by designing brochures and newsletters, conducting surveys, analyzing data, preparing reports, interviewing participants, preparing data-bases, or auditing/evaluating financial records. The agency contact person usually comes to the class, explains the needs, provides the data or materials, consults with groups as they perform the tasks, and then attends the final class session where the projects and results are presented.

Organizing the Service Learning Project

Regarding how an academic service learning project can be conducted, the following questions may help stimulate some ideas for an academic service learning experience. Could the students teach what they have learned to others? Could the

results of your students' efforts be a contribution to someone? Could the classroom instruction be used to address a real concern? Could the skills learned be used to help people in another setting?

Fourth Step

Form Community Agency Relationship

Stacey, Langer, and Rice (1997) describe the fourth step as forming a relationship with a community agency. The most important decision that impacts the success of an academic service learning experience is the selection of the service learning partner(s). Whether the students will be going regularly to an agency or providing a product as part of their class work, the instructor will want to make sure there is a good fit between course goals for student learning and the opportunities offered by the agency. Potential resources for contacts may include the university's or college's office of academic service learning, the local United Way, the yellow pages, social service agencies, hospitals, schools, governmental agencies, nursing homes, group homes, child-care centers, neighborhood organizations, churches, police precincts, the local Chamber of Commerce, community councils, and university services.

Items Discussed with Community Agency Representative

Items to be discussed with the community agency representative upon initial contact, as described by Stacey, Langer, and Rice (1997), consist of explaining the goals for student learning, the agency's goals, resources and needs, and the type of service the students are to provide (on-site or product/short-term or long-term commitment). Also clarified will be the amount of time per week per student that

will be provided, the academic calendar (holidays, breaks, and vacations), the student availability and compatibility with the agency's hours, and the capabilities and limitations of the students. Furthermore, discussions will be held on how the students' orientation will be conducted, how supervision will be handled, issues of liability, desired outcomes, roles and expectations, how problems will be handled, and how contact back and forth will be made.

Agency Claims Resources and Needs

It is also vital that the agency representative clearly articulate their resources and needs. Stacey, Langer and Rice (1997) explain that agency resources might include: types of volunteer services, orientation and training programs, supervision, opportunities to reflect on services, co-teaching, and provision of teachable moments. Agency needs might include, but are not limited to the tasks to be performed, scheduling issues, and people power.

Criteria for Choosing an Academic Service Learning Site

Littlefield (1995) proposed the following criteria, adapted from Augsburg College, for choosing an academic service learning site. The site must be doing work that is connected to the course in ways that will be obvious to students. Whenever possible, students should have direct contact with client populations or constituency groups with which the organization regularly interacts. The work students do should have some clear connection to the main purposes of the organization. While some of the work may be generally clerical in nature, it should not be consistently repetitious or boring for long periods.

Furthermore, the site supervisor should be present when students are there, to directly oversee their work. The site supervisor and professor should do advanced planning so students have assigned activities throughout their time at the site. The site supervisor should be willing to assist with the orientation and training activities. And, the site should be accessible to all students.

Two other options consist of allowing students to find their own community agency, perhaps one close to his or her home. Also, the university's Office of Academic Service Learning could make the link with an agency, assign students to the agency, and do the orientation.

Fifth Step

Revising Course Requirements

The fifth step is revising course requirements. Questions and concerns which need to be addressed consist of will the academic service learning component be required or optional? How many hours of academic service learning will be required? To answer this question, unless the course has been described as requiring a certain number of hours in a community agency, it is wise to keep the time requirement fairly close to what might be normally required for a course project or assignment (twelve to twenty hours). A common format is for students to perform services for one to two hours per week for ten to twelve weeks. This is just an example and the actual time commitment may vary from project to project. Furthermore, when determining the required time commitment, it is useful to keep in mind the agency's needs and the student population.

Another question is how will the connection be made between the service activity and the course content covered in class? When an academic service-learning

component is integrated into a course, there must be a commitment to allocate class time to discuss what students are seeing, feeling, and thinking about that experience – in short, to synthesize their experience. How will the academic service learning component be evaluated? A general rule is not to evaluate the academic service-learning experience itself, but to evaluate what learning students take away from the experience. The instructor could construct an assignment that allows the student to demonstrate what was learned from the hours spent doing service work. This assignment could include written or oral analyses of how the course concepts relate to the experiences gained working for the agency.

Student attendance and journals could account for five percent of the course grade; the final project could account for fifteen percent of the grade. The grading criteria for the final project could include the extent to which students use the theory and practical ideas from the course to explain their experience in academic service learning.

Because of the new addendum of a service learning component, changes will have to occur within the course assignments and syllabus. What deletions or adjustments will have to be made in the course? How will the course syllabus be adapted? Suggestions for adaptations to the course syllabus are outlined in Appendix G, Table 4.

Sixth Step

Planning Service Learning Logistics

Step six is planning logistics. Issues such as transportation, scheduling, monitoring student time and work, liability issues, and making a clear link to the academic course all need to be addressed. Students should arrange for their own

transportation. The students will need to coordinate their schedules with the needs of the agency, and the agency needs to know when to expect students for help.

Service Learning Management

A time record form is a useful tool for documenting student hours and should be signed by the site supervisor at the end of each visit. When addressing the liability issues, the instructor needs to act in a preventative manner and take time to clarify rules and expectations so students are prepared for any “foreseeable” danger. The instructor needs to be aware of possible risks, and plan for them. Also, the instructor needs to make sure there is a clear relationship between the academic service learning experience and the course goals and objectives.

Seventh Step

Designing Meaningful Collaborative Service Activities

The seventh step is designing meaningful collaborative service activities. Elements to make academic service learning work include three criteria. First, have a meaningful collaboratively designed service. Second, have an adequate orientation and training. And third, have a structured student reflection.

Checklist

A checklist for a meaningful collaboratively designed service would consist of asking if the academic service-learning experiences are designed around genuine community needs. Is the service work engaging, challenging, related to key course goals, and meaningful to the students? Are the agency site supervisors and professors significantly involved in defining and designing the academic service-learning experience? Are the agency site supervisors knowledgeable of and

committed to the course goals and willing to work in a partnership to achieve them?
And, do the agency site supervisors work effectively with the students (willing to assist, train, and supervise students)?

Eighth Step

Student Orientation and Training

Step eight is conducting student orientation and training. Adequate orientation and training implies that staff and students should be sufficiently prepared for the tasks they will perform. Topics covered in an orientation session should incorporate the history, mission, structure, and location of the service sites, the background and description of the individuals to be served, and the social, political, and economic issues related to the service site setting.

In addition, responsibilities such as task assignments, expectations, and role definitions should be discussed. The protocol/professionalism aspects of policies, procedures, dress, manners, and punctuality will need to be covered. Furthermore, client courtesy regarding the behavior and attitudes toward recipients of service, problem-solving around difficult situations that may arise, and record keeping, supervision, and accountability should be discussed. The Alpena Volunteer Center (1990) addressed the issue of a student's rights in Table 5 and a student's responsibilities in Table 6. These tables are given for the reader in Appendix G.

Ninth Step

Student's Critical Synthesis

The ninth step engages students in critical synthesis. Cairn & Kielsmeier (1991) explain several ideas for promoting students' critical synthesis of their experiences. They are categorized as class activities or as graded course

assignments, recognizing that one may not be totally separate from the other. The class activities would include student journals, small-group sharing, large-group sharing, group problem-solving, individual conference w/teacher, and sharing of projects. The graded assignments would consist of a paper, a classroom presentation, a case study/history/ethnography, a multimedia presentation, a presentation to a policy-making body, and/or products created for an agency (survey study, training manual, data base, brochure).

Tips for leading classroom discussions are comprised of asking open-ended questions rather than “yes/no” or factual questions. “Priming the pump” before selecting students to respond. Higher-level and open-ended questions require a significant amount of time for students to prepare an answer. Avoiding judging the content of student remarks. Skillful discussion leaders avoid giving evaluative feedback on the students’ ideas, as this puts students in the mode of trying to please the teacher, rather than thinking for themselves. And, not always calling on the same people to participate.

As for student journals, students should write their journals as soon as possible after their academic service learning experiences. This assures that their memories and perceptions are fresh and have the most detail. Moreover, the purpose of their journal writing should be clearly defined. Students should follow a specific format that is explained and modeled in class.

Some key questions that might guide journal writing are what am I seeing? How am I reacting to this? What experiences or beliefs have I had that prompt me to respond this way? What key ideas in the course are becoming more real for me as

I consider what I am seeing and experiencing? If I am practicing a skill or strategy, how did it go? What worked and why? What did not work and why? What do I need to work on? What reactions, problems, or questions do I need to let my professor know about?

The product for on-site academic service-learning projects may be a report, a case study (ethnography), a demonstration, a play, a video or multimedia presentation, or a panel discussion. For in-class academic service-learning projects, the products designed for the agency may be the culminating project (survey, survey results, brochures, newsletter, database).

Ideas for Promoting Critical Synthesis

Cairn (1993) describes the following ideas for promoting critical synthesis, which are from the National Youth Leadership Council. Schedule regular time periods for discussion and other reflection activities. Integrate times for reflective techniques throughout the experience. Allow for spontaneous reflection at the time that issues arise. These “teachable moments” often create the most profound learning. Offer students options for responding. Link reflection with other reading, writing, discussion, and assignments so students can relate service experience to academic skills. And when students go on-site to provide services to agencies, it is important that the site supervisor be available to assist with student questions, orientation, and supervision.

Tenth Step

Assessing Student Learning

Step ten is assessing student learning. When grading student projects (oral and written), the important question becomes how does the instructor communicate

the criteria to the students? Explaining the grading criteria before the project begins and revisiting it before the project is completed will be beneficial. Ask students to brainstorm what an “A” project would look like and to work as a group to narrow down those characteristics into a rubric for grading.

Criteria might consist of addressing all the required questions. Using theories and practical ideas from the course and textbook to give meaning to the experience students had while engaged in academic service learning could prove to be beneficial. Demonstrating a sensitivity and willingness to communicate with those less fortunate or different from one’s self would be educational. And using correct spelling, organization, and grammar skills would be necessary.

Journals are usually very personal and should represent honest impressions and feelings about the student’s academic service-learning experience. Therefore, most professors do not grade them or if they are graded do not grade on spelling or grammar. If they are graded, one might look for the student’s attempt to link key course concepts with their experience as they complete their academic service learning activities. As always, students should be given a clear format and an explanation of how credit will be awarded for the journals. It is an excellent idea to give students a written example of a good journal entry and point out to students what makes it a good entry.

Krupar (1994) also proposes how to assess student learning by conducting an evaluation of student performance which focuses on the individual goals set by each student at the outset of the course. These individual goals are shared and discussed during the first week of the course. Each student presents his/her method of

demonstrating attainment of those goals. Suggested evidence of such may range from diaries, portfolios, dossiers of experiences, notebooks, video programs, etc.

The criterion for the evaluation is based on the degree to which the goals of the student were achieved/demonstrated in the chosen project and the medium by which it was displayed. In addition, students' participation in the growth of the class (i. e. quality of activity in discussion, such as raising/answering of questions, the searching for explanations, or the challenging of existing theory) will also be graded. Four individuals could evaluate the learning experience and the student's performance accountability. An assessment could come from the student's evaluation of his/her learning performance; the instructor's evaluation of the student's learning performance; an evaluation from the field supervisor of cooperative service and the class's assessment of the student's efforts to build community and share expertise with that community. Requiring students to invest in the responsibility of evaluating their individual and group learning performance increases the students' commitment to the program and insures responsible participation and accountability.

Eleventh Step

Celebrating Accomplishments

The eleventh step is celebrating accomplishments. Gifts, certificates, parties, ceremonies, and other acts of care, appreciation, and recognition are an important part of any successful academic service learning experience. Some type of celebration or closure event with the students and the recipients should be held. Celebrate the students' accomplishments with certificates, buttons, a party, press release, photo sessions, or a letter from the agency. Send a thank-you letter and

certificate of recognition to the site supervisor and/or agency representative. Have a formal presentation of project(s) to agency representative(s). Meet with the site supervisor and/or community representative to celebrate, share evaluation results, and plan needed revisions.

It is beneficial to build an ongoing relationship with the agency. The site supervisor or community representative is an excellent source of information about how to improve the academic service-learning experience for the participants in the future. And lastly, have the learning experiences and student responses published if possible.

Twelfth Step

Evaluating Program Success

Step twelve is evaluating program success. An assessment of the service learning experience is required to enable more effective and constructive projects to occur in the future for all involved parties. Once again, the end result should be an established mutually beneficial relationship and experience.

To accomplish this assessment, a study should be conducted that will answer the proposed questions the researcher is asking. Either a quantitative or qualitative methodology will be chosen to effectively answer the anticipated questions. Next, implementation of the study will occur through the allotted stages of designing the data collection instruments, deciding if the data will be collected from all participants or just a representative sample, designing the collection procedures, and then analyzing and reporting the findings.

Deweese and McGill (1998) state, "An institutional self-assessment inventory can be a useful tool to examine the climate for service-learning, identify gaps in

services, and determine the future goals and directions of service-learning at that institution” (p. 23). Specifically, Dewees and McGill (1998) add that an inventory can reveal many aspects of an institution’s commitment to service learning including the community partnership development. Furthermore, employing an institutional assessment inventory for service learning establishes a baseline measure as a yardstick for the progress and future of service learning pedagogy.

Summarizing an Academic Service Learning Course

To conclude and summarize the academic service learning course, during the first weeks of class, academic service learning needs to be discussed when introducing the course syllabus. A pre-experience survey needs to be administered. This will give an instructor a baseline of the students’ attitudes toward academic service learning. Also, the students should sign a contract representing the commitment bestowed upon the students, agency representative, and faculty member. The contract should clearly articulate the tasks, expectations and professional demeanor anticipated from everyone. Students should document their time at the community site by turning in a time record form. Orientation should be conducted that explains what the students will be doing and when. Issues of confidentiality and professional ethics should also be discussed. Lastly, a deadline should be set for the service activity to begin.

During the quarter or semester, reflection activities should be conducted and feedback should be given on journals and other assignments. A mid-quarter/semester course evaluation should be given to obtain information about any changes that should be made to facilitate student learning in the academic service

learning experience. Clarification and clear guidelines should be made for the grading criteria and before the final projects are due. A post-experience survey should be administered. The time record forms should be collected. And a celebration should take place that recognizes the students' accomplishments with certificates, buttons, a party, press release, photo session, or a letter from the agency.

After the course, a thank-you letter and certificate of recognition should be sent to the site supervisor. A meeting should be conducted with the site supervisor to share evaluation results and to plan needed revisions. This should establish and build an ongoing relationship with the agency. Lastly, the instructor should assess and then write about their learning and the students' responses to the academic service learning experience.

Service Learning Opportunities in Southeastern Ohio

The Center for Community Service at Ohio University, in conjunction with Rural Action, has outlined opportunities to establish several service learning programs in the surrounding community. For example, the Tobacco Cessation Program through the Athens City-County Health Department needed to survey and assess the use of tobacco products in Athens County and then develop a marketing plan for tobacco cessation programs in the county. Also, the Raccoon Creek Improvement Committee (RCIC) through the Vinton County Soil and Water Conservation Office has worked to improve the health of Raccoon Creek and its watershed since the late 1980's. RCIC members focus on developing strong partnerships with the watershed residents, communities within the watershed, local

businesses, and government agencies involved with the day to day management of our natural resources.

Other examples consist of Rural Action's Safe Pest Control Program and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Athens County. The Safe Pest Control Program provides education and guidance for up to twelve southeastern Ohio school districts to adopt safer pest control methods, or integrated pest management (IPM). Big Brothers Big Sisters of Athens County organize, under professional direction, mature and responsible adult volunteers who will provide a wholesome one-to-one relationship with a six to sixteen year old child from Athens County. Most children come from single-parent families and would benefit from additional adult companionship, guidance and understanding.

Another possible service learning opportunity includes Rural Action's Arts & Heritage Project. The Arts & Heritage Project coordinates the arts corridor project, which is establishing murals in a corridor in Appalachian Ohio that links isolated former mining towns together. Linked to the mural corridor are several projects related to heritage of the area by documenting public art, underground railroad sites, and archeological sites that include long lost communities and grave sites.

The Community Inclusion Project through the Arts worked with Ohio University's School of Music to share songs and music with ATCO (a sheltered workshop in Athens) participants that ended with a performance event at the end of the quarter. Their vision was to develop a quarter-long experience for ATCO participants that would bring in School of Music students one quarter, School of Art

(Art Education) students another quarter, and School of Dance students a third quarter every year. The end of quarter events would be open to the public and take place at the Kennedy Museum, a performance space in the School of Music, or in the School of Dance.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Women's Business Resource Program (WBRP) of Southeastern Ohio provide support to new and existing business owners in Athens, Hocking, Meigs and Perry Counties. These organizations provide free individual consulting on various business topics, low cost seminars and workshops, a reference library and resource referral services. In addition, the Women's Business Resource Program focuses on providing networking opportunities for women business owners through monthly business luncheons and an annual trade fair. WBRP is also providing outreach to low income women in rural communities by organizing groups of women business owners and designing programs which are specific to their needs. Service learning opportunities consist of conducting social research studies, marketing studies and the implementation of management information systems.

Community Food Initiatives is a membership based non-profit dedicated to increasing personal and community self-reliance through food production, preparation and preservation. Gardening Angels offer direct mentoring or tutoring for participants of the project, most of whom are low and fixed income residents of Athens County. Service learning opportunities consist of video and photography documentation, outreach support to increase a presence in the larger community, publicity, and web site development.

The previously mentioned agencies in Southeastern Ohio provide Ohio University with opportunities to establish service learning partnerships and programs in the immediately surrounding area of the educational institution. The community seems to care for its members and has always maintained a relationship with the local university. Community agencies have opened their doors to the university students not only to profit from their patronization; but, also to promote the element of goodwill throughout the surrounding community.

Summary

The reader has been given an outline of the history, development, and dimensions of service learning. Several examples of prominent service learning organizations around the country were given that described their purposes and functions. Additionally, benefits bestowed upon students involved in service learning projects were illustrated.

The communication aspect of service learning was highlighted by explaining already conducted research and by also emphasizing the theories being addressed in this study. Additionally, because of the importance in understanding the pedagogy of service learning, an example of a service learning project was given.

Overall, shortcomings in service learning partnerships were listed, along with how to achieve quality in overcoming these issues or problems. Lastly, service learning opportunities in the surrounding area of Southeastern Ohio were discussed to give the reader an idea of the breadth of service learning occurrences in which the researcher had access.

CHAPTER THREE – METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline my research goals and, once again, state the research questions that were the underlying guidelines for this investigation. Next, I discuss in detail the qualitative methods I chose (interviews, questionnaires, documentation analysis, case studies and thematic analysis). A rationale is then given to support why this particular methodology was useful for this study. A description of the location of the partner institution and the research study's population is then outlined.

Research Goals

The primary research goal was to assess the service learning experience to determine if the program was beneficial to the service recipients. More specifically, the assessment will firmly establish if programs meet the needs and expectations of service recipients. Secondly, the research pursued the communication strategies used by the participants during the project; especially because communication is central to instructional environments, such as a service learning project. These strategies might include any written communication, verbal communication, or nonverbal communication that assisted in the planning and management of the service learning project.

A third research goal of this study was to identify agency recipients' perceptions of the shortcomings of service learning. Identification of perceived shortcomings will enable future service learning experiences to overcome these factors to enhance the overall learning experience. Throughout the service learning

experience, shortcomings can and will occur that take away from the project's beneficial elements. Examples of potential variables may include a lack of concern for the community and a lack of intellectual stimulation for the students. Realizing these shortcomings before entering into a service learning project may eliminate, to some extent, the probability of occurrence. Furthermore, establishing a fourth research goal to identify agency recipients' perceptions of the effective managerial aspects involved and conducted in service learning should help to convey any already existing productive strategies.

To summarize the research goals, the research conducted in this study will evaluate if the service responds to an actual community need that was recognized by the community. The service should be designed to achieve significant benefits for the community. Moreover, all partners should benefit from the project and contribute to its planning, not just the institution and students. In other words, the community's voice needs to be heard. In meeting the research goals, I have identified four specific research questions, each of which I already mentioned at the end of Chapter One. However, I will briefly summarize each of the research questions here:

RQ1: How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions benefit the service recipients?

RQ2: How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions meet the needs and expectations of the service recipients?

RQ3: How were the service recipient's needs and expectations communicated to the students and educational institutions?

RQ4: What communication strategies were used in providing the needed service?

Rationale for Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Whitham (1983) reported that the Center for Lifelong Education at Ball State University relied exclusively on open-ended interviews to assess the impact of student volunteers on community agencies. The Joint Educational Project at the University of Southern California was concerned with participants' perceptions of their service-learning experiences and therefore, relied almost exclusively on face-to-face data collection methods.

The aforementioned examples of data collection indicate how the use of qualitative research methods was effective for compiling service learning information. Therefore, the previously mentioned studies reported by Whitham (1983) supports the use of interviews and questionnaires in this service learning study. Furthermore, by asking the service recipients to reflect upon the service provider's actions and behaviors, as well as their communication messages, the type of relationship or partnership that was established would become prevalent. The type of relationship formulated impacts the outcome of the service learning project. Many nonverbal gestures and verbal messages provided by the service recipient while explaining their service learning experience will help the researcher to determine if the service recipient's expectations and needs were met.

In the current study, the researcher collected data by conducting interviews with six service recipients that had at least two or more service learning experiences. Also a questionnaire was mailed to eight other service recipients who did not have as

much experience in the service learning realm. After collecting the data, a thematic analysis was made of the retrieved information that unveiled the effective communication strategies.

Data Collection

A qualitative approach has been selected, which was prompted by the research questions to be asked while conducting the study. When designing the research instruments, a combination of personal structured interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documentation were chosen. The research goal was to complete a case study exploring the results of service learning projects for five or six service learning recipients in the surrounding Athens community who participated in projects conducted by Ohio University students.

A case study approach was chosen to obtain a rich database of the service recipient's experience throughout a service learning project. A rich database is one that provides in depth or detailed information from the service recipients and their various and diversified experiences. The sample and participants chosen exemplified these aspects for the study. The Director of Community Service provided the compiled information that dictated which service recipients in the surrounding area had this kind of involvement with service learning. Eight agencies were identified for the researcher ATCO, Athens Parks and Recreation, Federal Hocking Middle School, Good Works, Integrated Acres, ILGARD, Red Cross, and Rural Action. Moreover, the database will assist in the construction of effective management strategies for service learning, especially communication strategies.

The rationale for selecting case studies has previously been mentioned and concentrates on the attainment of a rich database from the service recipient's perspective. Case studies will focus on six service recipients who have been identified by M. Graybill (personal communication, February 23, 2001), Director of Ohio University's Center for Community Service. Ms. Graybill identified active and involved service learning recipients by either their involvement in at least two or more service projects for extended periods of time, with the extended periods of time ranging from two or three years because of the acceptance of grant funding, or by their evolving door of participating service learning students from quarter to quarter and year to year. Thus, community partners who have had the most at stake were chosen because they had committed themselves to the service learning experience. Because of their multiple service learning experiences, these recipients had a background that enabled them to provide a basis of comparison for effective and ineffective communication strategies associated with successful service learning experiences.

The data collection procedures consisted of conducting personal structured interviews containing open-ended questions. The structured questions asked during the interviews are given in Appendix A. While directing the interviews; observations taken during the on-site visit were also recorded through field notes. Furthermore, the collection of documentation at the service learning site was completed to provide support for the interviews and observations. Examples of this documentation might be student projects or presentations conducted at the site or student time record forms. In addition, the service recipients may keep records or journals that could

have been collected and reviewed. These types of documentation may emphasize the reasons why or why not the service recipients had an advantageous experience that met their needs and fulfilled their expectations. The compilation of the previously stated data formed the six service recipient case studies.

The methods of contacting my research participants consisted of an initial telephone call in which I introduced myself and explained the reasons why I was calling. Six participants agreed to an interview that would be at their convenience and as early as possible and occurring at their agency's site, if at all possible. Once arriving at the agency's site for the interview, I once again, introduced myself, explained the consent form, and asked them for their permission to audiotape our conversation, and then proceeded with the interview. It took approximately an hour to go through the twenty questions and retrieve any documentation that was available.

Also, observations were made while on site, and field notes were taken on any activity. Because the researcher went to the service recipient's physical location for four out of the six interviews, observations were made concerning members of the organization and the service providers and the interaction occurring between the two. Interviews were conducted at only four of the six agency locations because two members could not get access to the office because their service learning projects had occurred several quarters ago. The environment concerning the activity level, noise level, and organization level was also noted. In case any further correspondence was needed, I asked for the participants' e-mail addresses. The researcher will destroy the tapes at the conclusion of the study. Furthermore, at the

end of my research, I will provide the results of the study to the research participants.

When considering the mailed out questionnaires, which is provided for the reader in Appendix B, included in the packet was an introductory letter with my signature, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) consent form, the questionnaire, and a stamped/self-addressed envelope. I asked that the consent form and questionnaire be returned in a given time period. Once again, I reiterated that the results of the study would be provided to all of the research participants.

Questionnaires were not mailed out to the service providers of the service learning projects because the researcher wanted to focus on the service recipient's position. The service recipient represents the community in the partnership. The researcher wanted to uncover the voice of the service recipient to obtain the community's perspective of service learning.

The questionnaire was mailed to the remaining group of active service learning recipients who had experienced diverse service learning projects. These recipients were asked to complete and return the questionnaire by mail. These recipients were less involved in service learning; with possibly only one or two experiences to reflect upon that only lasted for a quarter each. Eight surveys were distributed to these recipients and only two were returned. The twenty-five question survey consisted mostly of open-ended questions and is provided in Appendix B. The collected data provided very little additional support for the interview data, only a few comments were used that could aid in modifying the service learning requirement to make it more beneficial for the community agencies and to also

highlight the communication strategies utilized during the projects. The site supervisor and community agency were able to comment on how helpful the students were who provided services and how to make the service learning program stronger.

Furthermore, documenting community benefits needed to be established in order to determine the effects of the students' work on the agency. These benefits provided useful testimony to those who are new to service learning, and especially to those who might fund future efforts. The National Youth Leadership Council (1991) expresses various ideas for documenting the community outcomes which include recording total hours served, recording all services achieved, collecting student products, and interviewing the clients of the agency to determine the value of service provided to them.

Surveys

Survey researchers seek to describe or to explain people's current attitudes, opinions, thoughts, and perhaps, reports of behavior surrounding an issue or event. As explained by Fink and Kosecoff (1985), a survey is a method of collecting information from people about their ideas, feelings, plans, beliefs, and social, educational, and financial background. It usually takes the form of questionnaires and interviews. Surveys are most appropriate when information should come directly from people. Survey researchers try to obtain the needed attitudinal information systematically and efficiently. The two basic data collection methods used in this study were structured personal interviews and mailed questionnaires.

Interviews

Intensive interviews are used as qualitative techniques (answering why and how come questions) by which information can be gathered for several research methods including case studies (Rubin, Rubin & Piele, 1996). Interviews allow for one-to-one contact between the researcher and the respondent for longer periods of time. Structured interviews have a schedule of questions and the question order is prepared in advance. They do, however, allow flexibility to follow up and probe reasons for certain attitudes and responses. Open-ended questions, though more time consuming to complete for the community agency supervisor, provide a more in-depth and complex understanding of the students' provided service. The structured personal interviews for this study should be conducted at the placement site of the service recipient, if available.

The Location: Service Learning at Ohio University

I chose to investigate the experiences of service recipients involved in projects with students from Ohio University. The service recipients conducted their work in Athens, Ohio and surrounding communities. These service recipients could provide the researcher with a rich database and were part of a convenience sample. A rich database could be built on the information provided from these service recipients because of their diverse and numerous experiences over several quarters or possibly even years of conducting service learning projects with Ohio University. Frey, Botan, Friedman & Kreps (1991) explain that in a convenience sample or accidental sample, subjects are selected nonrandomly simply because they are available. Furthermore, Rubin, Rubin & Piele (1996) describe nonprobability sampling or

nonrandom sampling as not permitting generalization, but it is valuable for studying particular groups of people.

The Ohio University Center for Community Service (OUCCS) serves as a coordinating center to bring together interested service agencies and classes that can provide assistance. Appendix D includes the list of the various service recipients or agencies as provided to the researcher by OUCCS. The classes that have participated in service learning projects are given in Appendix C, which is restricted to those classes that have reported their service projects to the OUCCS. Described below are OUCCS's purpose, mission and history that were obtained through M. Graybill (personal communication, September 6, 2000).

Ohio University has already developed and implemented an alliance with the surrounding community establishing a service learning partnership. The OUCCS works in association with the campus and community providing service opportunities that benefit the community, foster mutual learning and prepare students responsible for citizenship. In order to accomplish this mission, the Center will encourage and support curricular, co-curricular, and community initiatives, promote reflection and scholarship as means for achieving growth and learning through service, and endeavor to meet community needs as identified by community members.

Through five program areas, annual events, and publications, the Center serves as a connecting point for students, faculty, staff, community members, and community-based organizations interested in volunteering and community service. The five programs described and explained by M. Graybill (personal

communication, September 6, 2000), Director of OUCCS, were volunteer mobilization, U-CAN, service learning, AmeriCorps, and community/summer service corps. The volunteer mobilization has the Center refer students as volunteers for positions and projects that contribute to the well being of the community and the sustainable development of the region. Over 120 community organizations offer opportunities for student involvement.

The University – Community Action Network (UCAN) is an alliance of service-focused student groups such as Habitat for Humanity, Circle K, Alpha Phi Omega, student professional organizations, and Ohio University’s fraternities and sororities. UCAN provides a forum for students and community organizations to share information and develop service projects. The Center for Community Service works with faculty and community organizations to develop partnerships that incorporate community service into curriculum and agency work. Consultation is provided to individual faculty and community organizations to facilitate the Service-Learning Network and share resources including training, materials and information. Partners in this effort are the Center for Teaching Excellence, and Rural Action Inc.

The OUCCS provides leadership to Ohio AppalCORPS, an AmeriCorps national service program. Ohio AppalCORPS is a collaboration that works in Appalachian Ohio (Appal) and “Combines Our Resources to Promote School Success” (CORPS). The program collaborates with fifteen college and university campuses and over thirty-five schools. Thirty-six full time mentors tutor elementary students to improve their reading skills and counsel middle and high school youth to

go on to higher education. Partners in this endeavor are the Governors Community Service Council and the Corporation for National Service.

The last program area has the OUCCS working with the Office of Student Financial Aid to place interested Federal Work-Study students in appropriate off-campus community service settings in which they provide meaningful support to the agencies' social mission. Approximately one hundred students a year are placed in positions with forty community organizations.

History of Service Learning at Ohio University

A brief history of the service-learning at Ohio University, as explained by M. Graybill (personal communication, September 6, 2000), will be outlined to provide an understanding of how individual faculty and departments have incorporated service-learning into courses, curricula and programs. This history also explains why the researcher chose Ohio University to conduct service learning research. A decade dedicated to educating staff, faculty, and surrounding community members on service learning represents the commitment this educational institution has made to this pedagogy.

In the summer of 1992, a faculty/staff team attended the weeklong "Institute on Integrating Service with Academic Study" at Brown University and the former Ohio University Volunteer Center was redefined as the Center for Community Service. In 1993, a daylong symposium on "Integrating Service with Academic Study" was hosted by Ohio University and attracted faculty from around Ohio. This was funded by a grant from Ohio Campus Compact and the Corporation for National Service.

In 1994, external grants were obtained through the federal Service America program and the Corporation for National Service. Also, site visits were conducted with more than 50 agencies and organizations in the Athens community for the purposes of assessing service needs, receptivity to service-learning placements, and suitability for service-learning placements. A partnership was established with Rural Action, Inc. and a weeklong seminar was held with keynote speaker Dr. Ed Zlatkowski.

Throughout 1995 and 1996, courses were evaluated and revised, the Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) was developed, and the Faculty Service-Learning Network (FSLN) was formed. In 1997, the Regional SEAMS Faculty Symposium was held at Ohio University and the Learn & Serve Ohio University program proposal was funded by the Corporation for National Service, and a partnership was established with Hocking College to pursue cooperative service-learning activities between two and four year institutions. For example, the Monday Creek Project incorporated ILGARD, Ohio University and Hocking College in a cooperative service-learning activity. A full-time program coordinator was hired in 1998 to carry out the activities of the Learn & Serve grant that enabled the next steps in development of service learning at Ohio University.

Description of the Population

The specific service learning recipients in Athens, Ohio that were chosen for the personal structured interviews in this study included:

- ATCO Inc.
- Athens Parks and Recreation
- Federal Hocking Middle School
- ILGARD/Monday Creek

- **Integration Acres**
- **Red Cross**
- **Rural Action**

These seven agencies were selected from a list of fourteen agencies (given in Appendix D) that have participated in service learning projects with Ohio University. Merle Graybill, director of the OUCCS, selected these agencies based on their extensive experience with service learning projects. Criteria for service recipient selection included: (1) The agency must have had more than two experiences with service learning projects with Ohio University students; and (2) The service provided to the agencies was selected to represent diversity in terms of the variety of academic classes performing the service (i.e., education classes, communication classes, engineering classes).

Seven agencies were selected for initial contact in hopes of obtaining permission from a minimum of five agencies to explore. The six agencies that participated in the actual study were ATCO Inc., Athens Parks and Recreation, ILGARD/ Monday Creek, Integration Acres, Red Cross, and Rural Action. Case studies were developed from data collected. Interviews were conducted that addressed the service learning projects. Any materials or documentation used for the student orientation and training into the community agency was also collected. A description of each participant and the service learning projects in which they were involved will now be given for the reader.

ATCO Inc.

ATCO Adult Services is a department of the Athens County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. ATCO, Inc. is a non-profit corporation

that provides employment and training to eligible individuals with developmental disabilities. ATCO Inc.'s mission statement is to ensure the availability of quality programs and services that support adults with developmental disabilities so that they may achieve increased capabilities to live, work, and participate in community life.

The students, or service providers, helped ATCO to broaden the services that are provided to the clientele. Students brought their expertise and enthusiasm for different activities into ATCO. Some of these examples were student skills involving healthcare, gardening, construction/maintenance work, dance and art.

The service learning documentation available at ATCO consisted of ATCO sheets, agency contracts, and a project list for all the students. The director goes through the agency's orientation packet with small groups of students as they are integrated into the organization. Also, as part of the orientation, each individual client, and his or her disability was explained to the students. Furthermore, the director actually completed student evaluation sheets on the service learning projects for the professors.

Also worth mentioning were the observations made during the researcher's guided tour. The ATCO agency is a highly active organization in which the clientele are constantly busy with projects. The organization was very orderly and every staff member or client knew their place and purpose. A variety of activities were occurring which included art projects, making pens, and recycling.

Athens Parks and Recreation

The mission of the Athens Parks and Recreation Department is to improve the quality of life of all Athens and surrounding residents through comprehensive programs, activities, and facilities that encourage health, fitness, cultural, recreational, educational, and social opportunities in the community. The Athens Parks and Recreation Department constructed the Athens Community Center, which is a new facility that will offer the residents of Athens and surrounding communities new activities and programs. These activities consist of, but are not exclusive to programs in fitness, youth sports, childcare, gardening, arts and crafts, music and dance, and martial arts. Currently, more than approximately thirty different groups or agencies benefit from this new building.

The most recent service learning project for the Athens Parks and Recreation director was a marketing survey or plan for the newly constructed community center. However, in the past, another marketing survey was handled to obtain information on the entire city of Athens. In the current project, the staff has actually used some of the marketing plans that were presented by the service learning students. Moreover, the director was able to keep all six of the marketing plans, which served as the only available documentation.

The researcher's guided tour of the Athens Community Center explained why a student would want to market this new facility and everything that it has to offer. A very hectic schedule is kept for all the activity rooms, meeting rooms and basketball courts. The environment was bustling with activity.

ILGARD/Monday Creek

The Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development (ILGARD – Ohio University), and Hocking College partnered in July 1997 with the primary goal of developing a service learning collaborative between the two institutions to meet the following objectives: (1) develop faculty through service learning, (2) create common community service-learning projects, (3) assess student learning, faculty skills, institutional expectations, and community improvement, and (4) develop and disseminate resources that might highlight the benefits of service-learning for the institute and community.

ILGARD created opportunities in support of the restoration of the Monday Creek Watershed Project. This project developed a pilot volunteer stream-monitoring program to collect and identify benthic macro invertebrates from the streams of the Monday Creek Watershed. The goal of the project was to involve students and local community volunteers in the collection and identification of macro invertebrates.

The service learning projects focused upon environmental work on the watershed and a museum that celebrated the railroad history of the Monday Creek area. The students were taken on a tour of the watershed and were told about the Monday Creek project. The acid mine drainage issue was explained, along with all the different problems with the macro invertebrates.

There was local and national publication of the projects. The increase in public relations also increased the federal and grant funding. The ILGARD staff

was able to voice their opinion on the service provided by the students. They had the opportunity to evaluate the service learning projects.

Integration Acres

Community Food Initiatives (CFI) is a membership based, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing personal and community self-reliance through food production, preparation and preservation. CFI promotes food production as an option for creating self-reliance and potential income, especially for those who would otherwise not have such opportunities for employment, by offering them opportunities to teach each other and build community.

The Gardening Angels Project is an outreach program offered by CFI that provides hands-on education and direct mentoring or tutoring for participants to meet basic needs and develop skills for economic empowerment. The project organizes diverse groups of people to work together to establish gardens and provide assistance in workshops, roto-tilling, seed, and fruit trees to those in need. The service learning providers were some of those diverse groups of people that helped with CFI and the Gardening Angels Project. The researcher found that documentation was at a minimum with these projects.

Red Cross

American Red Cross is not a government agency, although it is chartered by Congress to provide special services to members of the U. S. Armed Forces and to disaster victims. The American Red Cross collects six million units of blood every year to save countless lives. They respond to disasters wherever they occur by supplying funds, food, clothing, or shelter and meeting other emergency needs. The

American Red Cross teaches life saving skills, CPR, first aid, water safety, and health courses that enable millions of people to prevent and handle emergencies.

Service learning projects over the years at Red Cross have been in the areas of public relations, journalism, communication, and health service administration. The service learning students have provided office coverage, an increase of public awareness through the media, and volunteers for fund raising projects. The students had to complete a volunteer application and a code of conduct form that were used for documentation for the service learning providers. The service learning students are truly relied upon because activity at the center is always very busy with the scheduling of programs and handling of the emergencies.

Rural Action

Rural Action's Safe Pest Control Program provides education and guidance for up to twelve southeastern Ohio school districts to adopt safer pest control methods, or integrated pest management (IPM). IPM provides a safer, more effective alternative to pesticide spraying. IPM denies pests access to food, shelter, and water. IPM uses maintenance, sanitation, baits, and traps rather than pesticide sprays. The IPM program is advocated to the school district through brochures, flyers, presentations, and videos and these are the service learning projects in which the students worked.

Service Learning Questionnaire Participants

Good Works Homeless Shelter

Good Works, Inc. is a Christian, non-profit ministry providing shelter for the rural homeless, transitional housing and community development projects to the

homeless and others struggling with poverty in rural Southeastern Ohio. The service learning projects provided staffing for the organization and software programs, board game design, construction of a picnic shelter, fundraising, training, recruiting and volunteerism. The most important service project, as explained by the director, was having the students campaigning for the organization so the surrounding population could see the organization as educational and to help the population deal with the clients in a loving and compassionate way.

Ohio University Department of Social Medicine – Arthritis Program

The service learning project was to develop and administer an instrument to survey members of a coalition. Healthcare and marketing association students were contacted for the project. The director expressed her opinion that the faculty members needed to step forward and accept responsibilities for and show interest in the service learning project in which they were involved.

Data Analysis

The following provides an overview of the methods used to provide answers to particular research questions proposed in this study. After the interviews were conducted, the audiotapes were analyzed through transcription. Recurring words, ideas, and themes presented themselves by writing out the conversations. The observations made while on site provided an understanding of the communicative environment at the agency. Analysis of data provided the recurring words, ideas and themes. Thus, the results from the interviews, questionnaires, observations and any relative documentation were used to explore the particular research questions proposed in this study.

The first research question inquired into the benefits of the services provided by students and institutions to service recipients. Analysis of the research question, “How did services provided by the students and educational institutions benefit the service recipients?” was conducted by examining the responses in the interviews and questionnaires that clarified if the service learning project or final outcome was useful to the service recipient. More importantly, in at least two service learning instances of this study, being able to view the final project conveyed the results of the service learning experience. By viewing the final product, more could be learned about the actual service learning process. This was detailed for the researcher when a video, a final product, was watched with a service recipient and descriptions and explanations were given. Other examples of final outcomes were marketing plans and art projects. Also, having the service recipient explain the benefits from the experience proved to be valuable.

The second research question inquired about the needs and expectations of the service recipients. To explore the research question, “How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions meet the needs and expectations of the service recipients?” an analysis was made by examining responses to questions addressing the aforementioned issues and observing the final projects. The third and fourth research questions inquired about communication strategies employed by service recipients. Several questions in the interviews and questionnaires such as, “What forms of communication were proven to be effective while explaining your needs and expectations to the students?” referred to the use of

particular forms of communication such as written text, verbal, nonverbal, meetings, phone calls, and e-mail during the service learning experience.

This qualitative study focused on describing the experiences of a small number of community representatives or service recipients. As the data was read, key themes were recognized mostly through repetition, which characterized the service learning experiences. The report summarizes the findings and illustrates them with quotes and anecdotes from the data. Six cases that illustrate various aspects of or reactions to service learning were reported. For example, it was reported how one service recipient benefited greatly from the experience and how one gained very little. The value of a qualitative approach is that the details of the service learning projects can be communicated to all participants and modifications can be made to promote a more profitable project to future participants.

Thematic Analysis

Rubin, Rubin, & Piele (1996) describe qualitative research reports as inductive and interpretive and typically contain verbal descriptions of findings. Also, Lindlof (1995) suggests that if needed, a researcher "...can forgo being there as a participant and instead compile evidence about different sites and time periods through informant interviewing, document analysis, or other means" (p. 87).

Furthermore, ethnographic interviews have become a commonly used qualitative methodology for collecting data (Aronson, 1994). Once the information is gathered, researchers are faced with the decision on how to analyze the data. There are many ways to analyze informants' talk about their experiences (Mahrer, 1988; Spradley, 1979; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984), and thematic analysis is one such way.

From the conversations that are encouraged for the sake of researching a process, in this case, the service recipient's service learning experience, ideas emerge that can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behavior (Aronson, 1994).

The first step is to collect data. Audiotapes should be collected to study the talk of a session or of an ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). From the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences can be listed. This can come from direct quotes or paraphrasing common ideas.

The next step to a thematic analysis is to identify all data that relate to the already classified patterns. To continue the above example, the identified patterns are then expounded upon. All of the talk that fits under the specific pattern is identified and placed with the corresponding pattern.

The next step to a thematic analysis is to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes. Themes are identified as units derived from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings or folk sayings and proverbs" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989, p. 131). Themes are identified by "bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone" (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). Themes that emerge from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience. The "coherence of ideas rests with the analyst who has rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way when linked together" (Leininger, 1985, p. 60). Conatas (1992) reiterates this

point and states that the “interpretative approach should be considered as a distinct point of origination” (p.258).

When gathering sub-themes to obtain a comprehensive view of the information, patterns emerge. When patterns emerge it is best to obtain feedback from the informants about them. This can be done as the interview is taking place or by asking the informants to give feedback from the transcribed conversations. In the former, the interviewer uses the informants’ feedback to establish the next questions in the interview. In the latter, the interviewer transcribes the interview; and asks the informants to provide feedback that is then incorporated in the theme analysis. In the current study, the researcher tried to obtain feedback from the informants while the interview was taking place.

The next step is to build a valid argument for choosing the themes. This is done by reading the related literature. By referring back to the literature, the interviewer gains information that allows him or her to make inferences from the interview. Once the themes have been collected and the literature has been studied, the researcher is ready to formulate theme statements to develop a story line. When the literature is interwoven with the findings, the story that the interviewer constructs is one that stands with merit. A developed story line helps the reader to comprehend the process, understanding, and motivation of the interviewer.

This study will search for and analyze the recurring themes throughout the collected data. Clearly, I had a challenge to interpret the transcribed interviews and find the themes. How was I to determine what was important enough to discuss and

what was not? I needed signs, indications, manifestations, or symbols that I could eventually call “features of significance”(Love, 1994).

As I received the hand-written transcripts from the interviews, I read each one carefully and proceeded to key in the data. Where I noticed items of interest, I placed themal notes in the margin and started to make lists. These margin notes and lists served as building blocks for perceived themes. The researcher’s ideas, hunches, and interpretations were kept in a journal.

I chose several ways to voice the themes I heard in the interviews and read in the transcripts. As mentioned previously, utilizing several features of significance from Love (1994) that included repetition within and across interviews; levels and nature of affect; explicit and implicit interpretations; and serendipity identified the themes. In discussing these further, repetition within and across interviews clarifies the ideas, beliefs, concerns, and issues that are discussed repeatedly throughout the interview or/and are brought up at least once in an interview and are then again noted in other interviews. The levels and nature of affect includes emotion that is evident through nonverbal cues such as a sudden rise in vocal volume, change in facial expressions and other bodily content or theme. Explicit and implicit interpretations require connections between thoughts and activities and meanings ascribed to them whether they are obvious and direct or implied and metaphoric. And the last feature of significance is serendipity, which outlines behaviors and expressions of the participants that are different from what was expected, based upon my reading and understanding of service learning.

Summary

Collecting data from the community agencies that received service learning was the initial goal of this study. This data outlined, through evaluation and comparison, a common thread or critical incident method, for a successful and productive service learning project. The outcomes of this study distinguished what benefits and needs were met for the service recipients participating in the service learning projects. The findings will then be communicated back to the instructors, students and coordinators of the service learning programs.

In essence, the rationale of this study goes full circle by evaluating the student behavior and activity in the community agency, estimating the impact of service and then communicating that information back to the classroom for the instructor and students to assess. Follow through on a service learning project is imperative until it manifests as a successful product. Once again, to reiterate, the same goal is in mind for both the service provider and the service recipient: a mutually beneficial relationship and experience.

A descriptive detail of the research findings will be given by using the data collected from the interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The collection of information submitted answers the already stated research questions. An analysis of the data or an assessment of the research findings is given in Chapter Four, which leads to a discussion of these findings in Chapter Five. Also, in Chapter Five, an overall conclusion is given that outlines what communication strategies were proven to be effective in service learning projects by meeting the service recipient's expectations and needs.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the analyses described in Chapter Three. The chapter begins with a review of the purpose and overall findings of the study. Then, results of analysis are presented in relation to each research question. Several features of significance were utilized to identify the critical themes of the study, which are discussed throughout the chapter and highlighted at the end.

Purpose of Study and Overall Findings

My research goal was to capture and then release the voice of the service recipients in the community that were involved in service learning experiences. My interest in service learning and emphasizing the community's perspective comes from my background and experience of being in a family that owned an independent grocery store in a small community. Throughout this experience, the needs of the community were always emphasized, not only to promote a profitable business, but also because of the element of goodwill. As I reviewed the published literature on service learning, it soon became evident that the acquisition of information from the community agencies or service recipients seemed fairly untouched.

I soon realized that a significant element of service learning research was missing. I knew the research should summon the voices of the service recipients in the community by exploring the perspectives, meanings, understandings, descriptions, and interpretations that the service recipients brought forth. I have had no goal or particular hypothesis to prove or disprove as would be evident with

quantitative research methods. I merely wanted to hear the ways the service recipients managed the collaboration between the institution, the faculty, and the students to formulate an effective and efficient service learning experience to all involved parties. As with any collaboration and environment which emphasizes the aspects of team work, I was very anxious to unveil the communication strategies that produced a mutually beneficial relationship for all service learning partners.

The purpose of this study was to assess the service recipient's perspective of already conducted service learning experiences by recognizing the benefits bestowed upon the recipients, the needs and expectations of the recipients, and the effective communication strategies discovered by the service recipients. The results of analyses indicated that the benefits, needs, and expectations of service recipients were fulfilled in most cases, five out of six. As further reporting of the results revealed, problems or negative situations arising during service learning experiences can be effectively handled by appropriate and timely communication strategies. Also, having the service learning partners realize the importance of communicative interaction and organization before the project commences is imperative for future success.

Research Question One

The first research question was as follows: **RO1: How did services provided by the students and educational institutions benefit the service recipients?**

The research study participants answered research question one concerning the aspect of the benefits bestowed upon them. At least ten overall benefits were mentioned and discussed. The highlighted benefits specified that the service

recipients noticed the diversity of the study body participants, cultural awareness by all involved parties, the self-initiated internal evaluation or examination, agency publicity to the community, educational/learning experience for all involved parties, establishment of relationships, accomplishment of tasks/completed work, field work/real world experience for the students, functional uses of products for the recipients and an increase in availability of programming.

Student Diversity

The service recipients discussed how the students in the service learning experience gave them good ideas and provided an added and valuable perspective to the projects. The diversity of the student body participating in the service learning projects allowed the recipients to obtain different attitudes or viewpoints concerning the agency's issues, concerns, tasks, and responsibilities. The service learning project was enhanced with the diversity of the organization's staffing and lifted the spirits of the staff. The service recipients believed that the service learning experience could be a dynamic influence on the organization as students bring energy and a good outlook on life to projects. As one interviewee stated, "The experience was good for me because another perspective is very valuable." He then added, "The students have good ideas."

Cultural Awareness

It was further revealed that having a service learning program makes an organization gain culturally because it explores how people have blended together in the community, in other words, it examines the integration of cultures. Furthermore, a recipient went on to say, "The service learning experience also made

the students more comfortable being around people with disabilities. Now, because of this experience, when the students come across someone with disabilities in the future, they will hopefully know how to interact with them. Additionally, they will realize what people with disabilities have to offer.” Another recipient responded, “Having a service learning program makes you gain culturally. It looks at how things have blended together into the community and how that community is helping or not helping.”

Internal Evaluation

The service learning project required the organizations to examine themselves internally, and it forced them to explore different options to solve their problems or dilemmas. The organization’s goals were being evaluated when the service learning students were around. As one recipient commented, “A lot of what the students did for us, it required me to look at ourselves internally.”

Agency Publicity

The service was also deemed beneficial because of the publicity of the service activities in the community. As an example, a respondent stated, “Graduate students have gone on and their data is being used by the Army Corp of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey.” There was an increase in public relations and actual publications of some of the projects, which can also lead to an increase in federal or grant funding.

Educational Experience

In addition, the recipients realized that they were educating the students,

which in their minds meant that they were succeeding to some extent since they were also able to learn through the service learning process. The recipients believed that a student's full learning potential could most effectively be tapped through experience-based education programs. The recipients really wanted to try to help the students by serving a purpose for the students and giving them an educational experience. This is highlighted through a recipient's quote, "Maybe it will serve the purpose for the students and give them an educational experience or a learning experience."

Establishment of Relationships

Relationships with the students and other community members developed during the service learning projects. The recipients gained satisfaction from the projects because they believed they had impacted the student's lives in some way by whatever amount of time they had spent with the students. One respondent strongly divulged their opinion by stating:

It was beneficial because of some of the relationships that we developed with the students. You touched somebody on a personal level and they took it with them and continue it on to where they might be. You impacted their lives in some way by whatever amount of time you knew them and that was how I got the most satisfaction.

The service recipients had to establish relationships with the students and the community and needed to keep those relationships going.

Task Accomplishment/Work Completed

The community agencies or service recipients were able to get work completed by the service learning students that otherwise would not have been completed. As a director commented, "Our benefit was to get things done that we needed to get done". The same recipient later stated, "We benefit from these services because we get work done that we couldn't get done otherwise." Recipients obtained direct aid from the service providers. It was commented by another recipient, "The students produced a product that would serve my program."

Field Work/ Real World Experience

The students were also given the opportunity to have a meaningful and valuable work experience by learning different concepts and ideas in the topic areas of the organization's service that they wouldn't have learned in their classroom studies. Service learning provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own community. One respondent suggests, "Many times students learn things in the topic areas of our service that they wouldn't learn in their studies and it looks good on their resume."

The students gained field work or real world experience. It was believed by the service recipients that, if they were doing their jobs right, they were putting the students in real world experiences that would help launch the students' careers. The students were getting exposure to what the world was really like and hopefully they would take the skills that they had used along with them. A director commented, "It seems the students did get something out of this by working on this project. It was a real world experience for the students." Undoubtedly so, the service

recipients believed that the service learning experience would also look commendable on the students' resumes.

Functional Product Uses

The community agencies have made certain uses of the products completed during the service learning experience, whether it was a public relations document such as a flyer or a video, or help with an environmental project. A recipient explained, "I have made some good use of the flyers and products. It is something I really need." She went on, "The video has been shown and it has helped, not just schools, but what my project is about it has served its function at that level."

The quality of the product might have been disappointing for the service recipients, but they were still able to get some use out of the work completed because it served its function and the program in which the students were conducting service learning. Disappointing for the service recipients meant that the quality of the project was lower than what they had anticipated. A recipient commented, "Some of the work is disappointing, but it is still useful."

Increase in Program Availability

A great deal more programming and activities were made available to the organization's clients through the aid of the students. One service recipient spoke of this matter by stating, "The students brought their enthusiasm along with their able hands. They provided us with manpower, supervision and expertise in certain areas and skills. More or less, the students came in and taught their knowledge. We used the students and their service learning activities to broaden the life views of our clientele, to broaden their horizons. And as the client's horizons are broadened, they

become better self-advocates. As director, I believe that as people's experiences are broadened, they realize they have fuller lives. The service learning students provided us with this opportunity to give our clients fuller lives”.

Research Question Two

Research question two focused on the needs and expectations of the service recipients. **RQ2: How did the services provided by the students and educational institutions meet the needs and expectations of the service recipients?**

The needs and expectations were met by setting clear goals and advanced planning including establishing a management system. Additionally, making the students aware of performing high quality service and creating high quality projects was imperative, as well as, realizing the importance of the role of the professor.

Setting Clear Goals

In five out of six examples, the service recipient's needs and expectations were fulfilled. The organization's expectations were fulfilled because the students did what they actually said they were going to do. This may have occurred and their needs may have been met because clear goals were set for the service learning partners. One service recipient stated, “In most cases, needs were met by the students because we set clear goals.” If expectations were not clearly defined, or shifted during the project, then achieving the desired outcome was frustrating for the service recipients.

Planning/Management System

When a defined management style and system were developed to work with the students and promote an efficient service learning experience, then, especially in

recent years, expectations were fulfilled. One of the directors commented, "It has taken me sometime to develop my management style. My style is to lay out the job and allow the student to take their own path with the job."

The majority of the service recipients, five out of six, were well pleased. As one director commented:

My organization's staff and I actually went to the student presentations of the marketing plans. Furthermore, our marketing scheme was broadened and we have actually used some ideas that were laid out in the marketing plans. If the students had not have done the service learning project, our organization would not have the present answer to our marketing plans. The presentations helped us pick and choose what we could use.

Another director stated:

Definitely, our needs have been fulfilled! We are very fortunate to have a very large pool of students and I realize that it would be hard for me to do my job without them. I want to see good things happen to the people who are serving here. It is hard to say no to a student who wants to do a project.

Project Quality

Several negative instances were mentioned from a service recipient. That person argued:

I got work done that needed to be done; however, it wasn't to my standards, so it was frustrating. I couldn't do the work myself and I thought I had a good arrangement in which I had control of the quality of the product and I had people who were technically able to do what I needed done.

The same recipient went on to comment:

Concerning the video, I don't know how much it will be used. I am going to make much less use of it than I would have it if had been a high quality video. And if it had been a high quality video, it could have been shown nationally because there isn't any video out there.

Professor's Role

A negative experience was noted from a service recipient:

On the first service learning project my expectations were not fulfilled because the professor did not provide adequate supervision or support or even time on the equipment that the students needed to produce a good product. The professor had a lack of organization that affected the quality of the student's work.

Another recipient had a positive perspective of the professor, "The better planned projects uses the professors."

Research Question Three

The third research question started to uncover the communication methods used during the service learning experiences. RO3: How were the service recipient's needs and expectations communicated to the students and educational institutions?

With communication being the prominent issue in research question three, seven communication aspects were highlighted. These included meetings, teamwork, expectations, matching students with projects, forms of communication, professor's role and an on-site tour.

Meetings

The service recipients explained how a service learning project could be deemed successful if they just basically set down and talked with the students to see where they were coming from and to see what progress could be made from there. Even if this explanation sounds reasonably simple to manage, the results still proved to be frustrating for the service partners. In three of the six cases, as many of the organizational directors, staff members, and students that could attend a meeting, would set together and organize who would be responsible for the different parts of the project. The participant's responsibilities were clarified. From that point, the students were very much on their own and were very independent in the environment. However, informal, face-to-face meetings were conducted between students and staff members if and when it was needed.

Teamwork

All and all, the students become a team on their own by sharing the project and sharing their enthusiasm for the project. One director responded by stating, "We were all together and then we would do a lot of research at home and then would come back together with new information." The general consensus of the service recipients was that a lot could get done if you sit down and talk to someone one-to-one. One director recited, "We shared the projects and shared the enthusiasm in just ideas. We would set together, I will do this part and you will do that part. They became a team on their own."

Expectations

Another noteworthy and positive aspect was to know what the student's program expected from them before the students started at the organization. Knowing what would meet their professor's or department's expectations for the project would help the directors and staff members make assignments that would be beneficial to the organization and to the students as well. Burgoon and Hale's (1988) expectancy violation theory supports the notion of a communication strategy between the service learning partners to help fulfill the expectations of one another and therefore, be able to define whether or not their service learning project was successful.

Matching Students with Projects

Furthermore, blending the student's needs and individual personalities with the service recipient's needs could be constructive and determined by picking up on the manner in which the students communicated in their interviews. Because when an interview is conducted, the director or staff members try to realize if the student would be able to do what the organization wanted them to do. The students need to feel comfortable in the service they are providing to enable themselves to provide a good service to the agency and community.

Forms of Communication

Many of the service recipients used verbal and written communication to inform the students about their expectations. The service recipients also found that the job description or task assignment needed to be in writing for the students to accomplish a productive and completed project.

Classroom visits were conducted by at least three out of the six recipients interviewed in which they informed the students of the project. The students were briefed before the service recipient came into the classroom concerning exactly what the project was and what the organization's needs were, what the professor's needs were, and the overall expectations. The students learned from the service recipient exactly what the expectations were concerning the format and content. They went over the materials with the students and tried to narrow down any potential problems. The students needed to know what the service recipient expected out of them so they could fulfill their requests. Once again, the importance of Burgoon and Hale's (1988) expectancy violation theory is revealed. Individuals collaborating in a partnership need to be aware of each other's expectations throughout the partnership.

Professor's Role

Furthermore, five of the six recipients believed that the process of communication started by working out with the professor what the organization's needs were and determine if those needs could be met by the students. The best part of the communication was that the professor's expectations had to meet the service recipient's expectations, once again emphasizing the expectancy violation theory. Therefore, the students' grades depended on the service recipient's level of satisfaction with the product.

Furthermore, during the service learning experience, the recipients felt that the professor needed to find out the needs that were not being met by the students. The professor needed to know what the problems were and what the student

responsibilities were that needed to be addressed. A service recipient gave an example of these activities by stating, "The professor and I met three times to answer each other's questions and spell out exactly what each group would produce." Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory expresses the importance of having to eliminate uncertainty in a partnership to deem it successful.

On-site Tour

At least two service recipients took the students on a tour of the physical site of the service learning project and explained what the project was and what all the different problems were that they would soon embrace. This activity occurred to reduce uncertainty, especially for the students coming into the recipient's environment.

In further detail, these service recipients explained the concept and benefits of a guided tour for the students. They believed that a guided tour was a very effective way to introduce the students to the service recipient's environment. The recipients were also able to observe the students' nonverbal reactions as they were introduced to the new environment. Verbal communication between the students and staff members was very excessive during these guided tours. The impact of these tours provided the recipients with an overall perspective in determining if the students would be comfortable in the recipient's or agency's environment. One service recipient commented, "When I take the students through the initial on-site tour, it becomes apparent where they need to serve in our organization."

Conducting an on-site tour, the recipients thought, made the students sensitive to the community needs and better able to understand the community in

which they would be working. The students needed to understand from the beginning that they needed to respect the community members and show concern for their situation.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question discovers the effective communication strategies used between the partners during the service learning experience. **RQ4:**
What communication strategies were used in providing the needed service?

The importance of communication reduces uncertainty, enhances collaborative spirit, and facilitates accomplishment of goals. The critical communication strategies were identified as feedback, group meetings with all partners, instructor's expectations meeting the agency expectations, agency communicates satisfaction through impact on students' grades, and the student's motivational aspect or collaborative spirit.

Effective Listening Skills

Communication played a vital role between the service recipients and the service providers. The service recipients thought that students needed to be open and willing to listen. Also, the service recipients realized that they needed to listen willingly to the students. Listening is an acquired skill than takes physical and mental concentration to do effectively. These skills could be taught to the service learning partners.

Expectations

Right away, the perimeters of the service learning project had to be set by sitting down and talking about the communication goals and objectives. It was

found to be imperative to set clear and achievable objectives and goals for the service learning partners. Overall, the service recipients found out that a successful service learning experience consisted partly of communication and partly of being clear as to what was expected and what people were willing to take on and actually do. At this juncture, Burgoon and Hale's (1988) expectancy violation theory substantiates its relevance to this study as does Berger and Calebrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory. Reducing the service partners' uncertainty can be accomplished through communicating, acknowledging, and fulfilling the partners' expectations. This aspect goes right along with how the students need to follow up and actually do the things they made a commitment to do.

Forms of Communication

Various and effective forms of communication identified by the service recipients were the impromptu exchange of information, the use of e-mail, and telephone calls. The unplanned, impromptu or on the spot exchange of information verbally by all service learning partners were all found to be communication strategies. Comments on the use of e-mail from the service recipients included:

The instructor e-mailed me on what the schedule would be in working with the students. She also e-mailed me the flyer and the instruction sheet that she had given to the students so I could see what they were told about the project. Then, when we met, I gave her materials to give to the students. I had a packet put together by the time I met with the students. E-mail is becoming more predominant with the students. It is easier for them.

Furthermore, it was established that it was better to sit down and have each person report on their part of the project. A service recipient stated:

The most effective form of communication, undoubtedly, I have to say was the initial meeting and defining of the service learning project. All of the students who were partners were present except one. We were all together and then we would do a lot of research at home and then would come back with new information.

Communication Strategies

The lack of or break down in communication effected the entire experience, in fact one recipient said, "If you don't have good communication, you don't have a good service learning project." All of the research study participants believed that communication was crucial for a successful service learning project. One service recipient stated:

We used verbal, nonverbal, and written forms of communication to make sure that the students were all on the same page on what we wanted done and in reality, it took a long time. Communication was internal and it was also external with the other college students and to our community and departments. We had a lot of phone calls. The service learning students used face-to-face communication primarily and e-mail was secondary. Often times, their schedule wouldn't necessarily match up and so they would e-mail me and say we were out this Saturday and this went great and I just wanted to let you know. We scheduled meetings when we needed to.

The list of the communication strategies found to be effective for the service recipients is given for the reader in Table 7. The researcher decided to put this table within the text because of its prominent importance to this study.

Table 7
Communication Strategies

| |
|---|
| <u>Expectations</u> |
| • Most effective communication: Initial meeting and defining of product/expectations |
| • Set clear and achievable project goals and objectives |
| • Instructor's expectations had to meet agency expectations |
| • Set clear partner expectations |
| <u>Meetings</u> |
| • Face to face meeting with students in classroom before project commences |
| • Group meetings more effective when all partners can be present |
| • Meet with professor often and regularly |
| <u>Skills/ Tools</u> |
| • Agency enabled to communicate satisfaction of service through an impact on student grades |
| • Continuous evaluation by professor and recipient of service project as it commences |
| • Effective listening skills for all partners |
| <u>Interactions</u> |
| • Informative discussion with students throughout and at end of experience |
| • Unplanned, impromptu or on the spot verbal exchange of information |
| • Verbal, nonverbal, written forms of communication all essential |
| • Student e-mail messages more prominent than telephone calls |

Feedback

A lack of feedback existed during the service learning partnerships.

Negative aspects mentioned by the service recipients were, “There wasn’t any communication with the professor. My e-mails to the professor were never answered. My phone calls to the professor were never answered. The students reported that the professor never had time to meet with them to get feedback.”

Another service recipient explained, “I kind of told the students what we needed to do and I wanted to see what they did and they dropped the ball and I think phone calls were less successful because we couldn’t reach each other.”

In combating the problems that can and do arise, the service recipients tell the students that, if they are ever assigned to do something that they really don’t like, they need to please let the staff know and they will just find something else for the student to do. Moreover, if the students are not having a good experience, they are going to have to initiate the communication to the recipient. The student is the one who should realize first that they feel uncomfortable or uneasy about their assignment. One service recipient responded by commenting, “I try to personally deal with the students who have a problem or dilemma. I ask them how we can make this a better experience for them.” The service recipients also realized that probably what would have helped the professor and them more would have been contacting each other more often. A recipient commented, “Just obtaining information from the professor, like the course syllabus and course content was not enough, it helped, but it wasn’t enough.”

Group Meetings with Partners

Also, once during the quarter, the staff of one of the service recipients was assigned to go to the student's classroom for face-to-face meetings. This was how most of the important information and communication was passed. At the end of the quarter, the professor gave the organization a copy of all of the presentations and discussed concerns and issues. Also when the presentations were conducted, informative discussions were held with the students. One of the service recipients commented:

I met with the students one time during the quarter, about fifty minutes, explaining to them our project. And then they were able to call me throughout the quarter. I had other telephone calls from the professor after that, but not really that much with the students.

The most effective meetings were when all service learning partners could meet at once. The students needed to get a background into what all the service recipient's needs were, what the content of the project was, and to have the chance to ask questions. These meetings were effective when the whole staff was in attendance. They could all be in one place, at one time. It was important.

Instructor's Expectations meeting Agency Expectations

The instructor has to have communication interaction with the service recipient before the project commences to do advanced planning. This planning will entail matching the objectives of the course and the expectations that he or she has of their students with what the service recipient would like for the students to provide to their agency. The agency needs to define their needs and discuss these

with the instructor to have their expectations known and fulfilled by the service providers, the students. The instructor acts as the liaison between the students and the agency.

Impact on Students' Grades

The community agency communicates satisfaction of service through having an impact on the students' grades. One recipient confirmed, "The professors need to let the service recipients effect the grades in some positive way to give the experience some kind of validity. When I actually did complain about those students, it all fell back on me when I felt it was their fault." The recipient needs to have the opportunity to evaluate the provider's efforts at the service recipient's site. It was commented, "Service recipients need to have a say in how the students are doing. There needs to be some kind of quality control measure." Furthermore, another recipient quoted, "I didn't get to have input enough to say that what they were doing wasn't going to work."

Student's Collaborative Spirit

The service recipients commented on the amount of enthusiasm that needs to be bestowed upon the students, "You have to be a cheerleader for the students and I learned how to be enthusiastic." The recipients seemed to really enjoy the one to one ratio of working with the students by remarking, "The one to one interaction with students lets me share what I have learned over my years of work." In addition, the recipients believed that they needed to make the students feel that what they were doing was worthwhile. For example, one recipient observed, "If the students

believed that the service learning project was worthwhile, then the students became more excited and enthusiastic.”

When the students themselves asked a lot of questions, it showed their interest in the project. It also helped when the students were given merit and credibility for what they were doing. The service recipients tried to make it a more enjoyable experience for the students so all of the service partners would gain more enthusiasm and motivation for the project. The general consensus was that when the project was more enjoyable, it made the experience easier and then it was easier to educate the students.

Once again, the students have to play a role in how effective the service learning experience is for them. It was commented, “I tell the students to pick something they will enjoy because I want them to be enthusiastic and motivated toward our clients. The students that are thoroughly enjoying what they are doing, it is going to show in how they interact with others.”

Themes

Student Diversity

Diversified personalities and skills among the students benefited all the service recipients. The large variety of ideas, opinions, experiences and life skills added to the organization’s environment. The students helped to provide supervision and expertise in new areas. One service recipient quoted:

I really do believe that as people’s experiences broaden, they realize they have fuller lives and I think that the service learning students provide us with this. My goal is to broaden the experiences for the people here. It makes the

students more comfortable being around people with disabilities. Hopefully, when they come across someone with disabilities, they will know how to interact towards them. The students will realize what people with disabilities have to offer. The service learning experience forces me to look at what I am doing at the agency and what I am trying to achieve.

Matching Students with Projects

Matching student's skills and personalities with service projects was found to be imperative to the success of the service learning project. A director remarked, "I pick up on the manner in which the students communicate in their interviews. When you do an interview, you are figuring out if they will be able to do what you want them to do." If a student is comfortable with their assignment or task, the work usually will get completed. If the student is uneasy, procrastination usually occurs. Furthermore, the same recipient commented:

I tell the students to pick something they will enjoy because I want them to be enthusiastic and motivated toward our clients. The students that are thoroughly enjoying what they are doing, it is going to show in how they interact with others. When I take the students through the initial on-site tour, it becomes apparent where they need to serve in our organization.

Establishment of Relationships

Service learning projects build relationships among all involved partners. The students get exposure to community members outside the university environment. One coordinator responded, "Communication requires trust and openness between the partners and the students and I worked hard to communicate.

The students kept in touch and made the changes I suggested to the project product.” The clients of the community agencies get expertise from the students that they could not get otherwise. Also, the staff members at the community agencies obtain friendships by working on the service learning projects with the students. As one recipient commented, “You touched somebody on a personal level and they took it with them and continue it on to where they might be.”

It was also noted by some service recipients that things went well in the service learning projects when the students “keyed in” with some of the organizational members or staff. A service recipient explained, “A nice feeling came up when people were enjoying their work and getting more done and that’s a part of communication that we never think about. People sharing their personal happenings seemed to make for a better atmosphere with the organizational members and staff.” This recipient was referring to the importance of establishing relationships during the service learning experience.

Cultural Awareness

The cross cultural aspect of any service learning project was apparent. The diversity of the student body with their upbringing, experiences, and various skills adds to the culture of the community agencies. The clients of the agencies obtain exposure of these diversified students and reap the benefits. As one recipient said, “The service learning projects broaden the horizons of all involved parties.” Also, the students are introduced to environments in the community and surrounding area that they would not see if they were not involved in service learning projects. One service learning coordinator confirmed, “Having a service learning program

makes you gain culturally. It looks at how things have blended together into the community and how the community is helping or not helping. It looks at the aspect of the integration of cultures.”

Field Work/Real World Experience

A real world experience is made possible for the students through the service learning projects. The students are able to actually apply their classroom knowledge and then some. As stated, “Many times students learn things in the topic areas of our service that they wouldn’t learn in their studies and it looks good on their resume.” Another statement from a recipient, “It helped our students with a more valuable experience.” In continuing with recipient comments, “I give the professor a lot of credit. You can tell she is really interested in these kids and their education. When they get out into the real world, they really do have a firm grip on it.”

Planning/Management System

If a service learning project had clear objectives and a format of a plan set before the project actually commenced, all parties had a successful experience. The needs and expectations of the community agency and professor were addressed and communicated to the students, which helped the students during the project. A service learning coordinator confirmed, “The process of communication started by working out with the instructor that my needs could be met with her students. There could have been more planning on the organization’s part and we could have devoted more time to the project. More evaluation was needed as the project progressed.” Service recipients affirmed that the departments with pre-organized

structures for service learning always provide a better overall experience for the students.

Professor's Role

The professor's commitment or lack of commitment to the service learning project played a tremendous role in the outcome of the project. The professor needs to be aware of the needs, expectations, problems, and responsibilities of their role during the service learning experience. A director for a local organization stated, "The meetings with the professor prior to the project and the continued correspondence throughout the project showed characteristics of maturity, accountability, and consistency on the professor's part."

The professors have a definitive communicative responsibility to the project. Furthermore, they actually act as a liaison. One recipient stated, "The professors should get involved, understand, and be trained and responsible, and have a sense of obligation." It was often commented that the better-planned projects used the professors. The communication that the service recipients had with the professor allowed the students to make the necessary adjustments for the organization and what they were requesting. For example, one professor was given the needed information and then handed it to and discussed it with the students. Furthermore, telephone calls were conducted with the professor and then that information was passed on to the students.

One service recipient went into detail in explaining her initial contact with the professor and then went on to comment on the continued communicative

relationship that existed between them during the service learning project. She stated:

I sensed the professor was organized and we had a series of exchanges where I promised materials. We had a long conversation and the first two contacts were by phone. Then we met face to face before the quarter started. Then I met with the students early in the quarter in which they were doing the service learning project. The professor kept in touch various times and was responsible to schedules. The first step was talking with the professor and learning what the schedule would be and taking things from the professor's point of view. The professor and I talked a long time during the first phone call and then we talked again to sharpen the point of exactly what the products were that the students could contribute. Then the professor looked at my material to see what kind of things I had and how the products would fit into the course's framework. The professor's expectations and needs, what the students were going to be asked to do, and the whole process was discussed before the project even got started. It was positive to meet and plan out our strategy. Meeting face to face also was a positive.

Effective Students

The more productive or effective students were more responsible and were not going to waste anybody's time. The recipients explained how these students were more solid and mature, encouraging, receptive and participated fully. The service recipient got more work accomplished when they had effective students in service learning, with an effective student being defined as mature, accountable, and

consistent. They had immense skills that complimented one another. A service recipient reported, “We had some really good students and most of the students I had working on the project were prospects for graduate school or law school. They were really quality students.”

The students who proved to have a successful and effective service learning project from the service recipient’s perspective had good quality communication and organizational skills such as being prompt and focused and willing to meet regularly. These students were very communicative and smart, as one recipient commented, “Right away they ran with the program with their tenacity and skills”.

Summary

This chapter has reported the results of this study by answering the four research questions presented in Chapter One. Also, the purpose of this study, as well as overall findings, was reported. The recognizable themes were introduced and briefly explained to the reader. The next chapter will attempt to explain the results of the study. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research will also be offered.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of the results reported in the previous chapter. The discussion begins by interpreting the results of the research questions proposed for the study. Strategies for effective management of service learning projects are then reviewed. Limitations of the present study are addressed, followed by a discussion of future research directions.

Research Question One

The benefits bestowed upon the service recipients during a service learning project could be categorized into various themes. Included in these themes were the ability to receive a different perspective from the students while examining and evaluating the agency's status and being able to establish ongoing relationships with the students. In addition, other themes were being able to get work completed by the students that otherwise wouldn't be completed, while educating and offering them a real world experience. What's more, the recipients gained more available programming because of the increased assistance from the students. And most importantly, service learning was able to provide an instrumental experience to all involved parties.

The initial responses to the first research question were somewhat surprising to the researcher. Concern and focus on the students' involvement in the project was their immediate response. The service recipients spoke of how educating the students, in turn, projected a beneficial element to the agencies or organizations because the students provided valuable and innovative ideas and perspectives for

the service recipients. Additionally, the integration of the students into the agency or organization's culture required the service recipients to evaluate their programs and examine themselves internally. It forced them to explore different and various options in solving their dilemmas or concerns.

Because of the involvement with the service learning projects, the service recipients received an increase in public relations to the community. This can lead to an increase in the agency's element of goodwill or reputation in the community and an increase in federal or grant funding. These described benefits accentuate the overwhelming importance of a mutually beneficial service learning partnership.

Research Question Two

Meeting the needs and expectations of the service recipients was vitally important in establishing a productive service learning experience. The service recipients established the importance of communication up front. Having the agency's goals and expectations written out and defined helped in explaining them to the students.

Along with the goals and expectations, came the need for some type of structured system to serve as a guide or standard for the service learning experience. In addition, the importance of the service recipients being able to give feedback to the professor on the performance and conduct of the students was strongly communicated. The element of feedback had an immense effect upon the service learning project.

It should also be noted that it might be a viable option in the future to have the service recipients evaluate the professors involved in the service learning

projects. If negative responses are received, inquiring about and analyzing suggestions from the service recipients that might include effective steps or alternatives to overcome these obstacles could prove to enhance any future service learning project.

Research Question Three

The importance of communication was highlighted in the third question. How the service recipients chose to communicate their needs and expectations was focused upon. The prominent answer was a very basic communication element, just sit down and talk to the students, one on one and face to face. The suggestions of having informal meetings and promoting the concept of teamwork were mentioned.

The crucial recommendations consisted of having a positive relationship with the professor by promoting active communication even before the project commenced and knowing what the students' professor expected from the students. This would enable the service recipient to assign tasks that would benefit both the students and themselves.

Also mentioned was a classroom visitation by the service recipient and an opportunity for the students to tour the facilities of the service recipient. The students would be introduced to the environment and culture in which they would be integrated. The students should have the chance to ask any questions or state any concerns up front with the service recipient. As with any relationship in which an individual is involved, the existence or nonexistence of communication will dictate and establish the amount of trust being expressed in the relationship. This should

lead to the outcome of the relationship in determining whether it will be positive or negative.

Research Question Four

The role that communication played throughout the service learning project was discussed in question four by focusing on the communication strategies. The importance of actually setting communication goals and objectives for the service learning project is vital for the existence of a productive service learning experience. This entails establishing effective methods of communication such as group meetings when all the partners could be in attendance, classroom visits by the service recipient, impromptu conversations with the students and perpetual correspondence with the professor and students entailing e-mail and telephone calls.

Key elements of effective communication such as being capable and willing to listen and being forthright with one's thoughts are required between the partners of a service learning project for a successful and fruitful experience. Moreover, the establishment of a relationship built on trust and communication is recommended between the service recipient, students and professor, just as it should be in any learning environment.

The service recipients went on to explain the explicit characteristics displayed by the students who promoted and made possible an effective and successful service learning experience. Characteristics such as being respectful, committed, trustworthy, reliable and dependable were referred to and the overall skills needed and mentioned were good quality communication and organizational skills.

The importance of the role of the professor in the service learning project was hugely discussed. Both positive and negative aspects of the actions of the professor were shared with the researcher. The conclusion was that the professor can either “make or break” the service learning project by either taking responsibilities for their actions and fulfilling their duties and commitments or deciding not to play an active role in the learning experience.

The results of analysis have been discussed and explanations provided. There are several notions that can be drawn from the findings. These notions consist of providing feedback into the service learning experience, using a structured system for the service learning experience and building relationships between and among the service partners with effective communication strategies. These three notions will now be explained in more detail.

The professor needs to let the service recipient give feedback that will be exposed to the students in the classroom. This could entail letting the service recipients affect the grades in some positive way to give the experience validity, otherwise stated, there needs to be some kind of quality control measurement. Somehow, having an impact on the students’ grades would be helpful in establishing respect in the service provider and service recipient relationship and hopefully the whole program. The previously mentioned aspect could be the beginning of having the service partners realize that continuous evaluation as the service learning project progresses is necessary for the fulfillment of both partners’ needs and expectations.

The benefits of service learning are going both ways, to the service recipients and to the students. Basically the service learning experience for the student is going to depend on what time they have on their schedule and their interests. Remember that the students have a positive experience with service learning when they learn. Students have the opportunity to have fun and have a successful learning experience. Most agencies that have experienced service learning are organizations that are constantly changing and growing, along with their service learning students. The service recipients get work completed that otherwise would not get accomplished. The same goal is in mind for all the service learning participants: a mutually beneficial and respectful partnership.

Research Discoveries Formulating Effective Service Learning Management

The overall emphasis from the study's verified themes identified helpful hints for future service learning partners. Describing and better managing what the projects would be like from the beginning was found to be imperative. In most cases, it was a success where there was a clear objective. It is recommended that the staff be involved with the students and the professor and that a set system be in place to evaluate the service learning projects.

This structured system for service learning should serve as a guide and standard, such as the twelve steps of integrating service learning into the classroom previously mentioned in Chapter Two. The steps that need to be focused on are forming a community agency relationship, revising course requirements, planning service learning logistics and management, conducting student orientation and training, student's critical synthesis, and assessing student learning. The service

recipient is an excellent source of information about how to improve the service learning experience for future participants.

In continuing this discussion in more detail, Stacey, Langer and Rice's (1997) Academic Service Learning Faculty Development Manual lists the twelve steps for integrating academic service learning into a college course. As previously mentioned, concentrating on the explicit structure of some of these steps could prove to be fruitful for service learning partners. From this study, the service recipients reinforced the importance of an orientation and training program that will allow the agency to clearly articulate their resources and needs.

Moreover, the instructor needs to act in a preventative manner and take time to clarify rules and expectations so students are prepared for any foreseeable danger. Also, the instructor needs to make sure there is a clear relationship between the service learning experience and the course goals and objectives. Also, the instructor needs to define a clear relationship. The current study reiterated the importance of the professor's role and the level of commitment that needs to be established by the professor to the project. Consequently, the professor will act as a liaison between the students and service recipient. Additionally, the site supervisor needs to be knowledgeable and committed to the course goals and willing to work in a partnership to achieve them, emphasizing the mutually respectful and beneficial relationship that this study articulates over and over again.

Adequate student orientation and training implies that staff and students should be sufficiently prepared for the tasks they will perform. In addition, responsibilities such as assignments, expectations, and role definitions should be

discussed. Furthermore, it is important that the site supervisor be available to assist with student questions, orientation, and supervision. How the service recipients in the study stressed the importance of pre-planning and establishing clear goals and objectives is highlighted by this step.

In assessing student learning, the instructor needs to communicate the grading criteria to the students. The grading criteria needs to be explained before the project begins and the criteria should be revisited before the project is completed. This is the time that the service recipient's emphasis on the grading criteria could be integrated. Remember that the current study proposed that the service recipients have the opportunity to evaluate the students' service for their agency's service learning experience and project.

Krupar (1994) also proposes how to assess student learning by conducting an evaluation of student performance with focuses on the individual goals set by each student at the outset of the course. These individual goals are shared and discussed and each student presents the method of demonstrating the attainment of these goals. The researcher proposes that a structured evaluation could be established that is based on the business field's management by objectives (MBO). By using this proposal, the agency's goals are matched with the individual learner's goals.

Celebrating accomplishments is imperative for motivational aspects. The instructor needs to meet with the site supervisor to celebrate, share evaluation results, and plan needed revisions. It is beneficial to build an ongoing relationship with the agency. The site supervisor is an excellent source of information about how to improve the service learning experience for the participants in the future. Once

again, the professor's role and building relationships, which are themes of the current study, are being emphasized.

The researcher's study has contributed to already conducted research. For example, the Points of Light Foundation holds that a strong service learning partnership could accomplish work together that would be difficult or impossible to accomplish alone. John Dewey (1916) explains that an essential feature of education is the experience of being exposed to and eventually mastering what one thought was impossible or irrelevant.

The service learning projects offered opportunities for people to learn from each other and share their assets and resources. The service recipients commented more than once on how they were able to get work accomplished that would not have otherwise been completed. The recipients also realized right away that the students in the service learning projects contributed to their own educational experiences.

Appelgate and Morreale (1998), who explain that communication is the primary practice through which the individual and the community collaboratively develop or fragment, support the purpose of my study. They go on to say that there is a special reflexive relationship between the study of communication as the means for constructing social reality and service learning as a pedagogy designed to enhance social life and communities.

In outlining the communicative perspective of the study, Burgoon and Hale's (1988) expectancy violation theory suggests that people have expectations about the behaviors of others. This aspect was evident in this study; in fact, meeting

expectations was one of the research questions. Additionally, one of my research goals was to inquire about the resulting impact that these communicative interactive deviations have on the service learning process. Burgoon and Hale (1988) identified two types of expectations and this study really focuses on both by evaluating if the communication of expectations attributed to the meeting of expectations. The preinteractional expectations refer to a communicator's ability to carry out an interaction and the interactional expectations refer to a person's ability to carry out the interaction itself.

Berger and Calabrese's (1975) uncertainty reduction theory suggests that when strangers meet, their primary focus is on reducing their levels of uncertainty in the situation. Furthermore, people are highly motivated to use communication to reduce their uncertainty according to this theory. Therefore, reducing uncertainty hopefully will only enhance the chances of the agency obtaining any stated goals. Moreover, Berger (1997) explains that an essential argument of this theory is that expectations are powerful motivators or "primers" toward goal accomplishment.

Once again, previously conducted research on service learning supports my study and its findings. For example, it was reported by Root (1997) that educators at all levels thought that well-designed and implemented service-learning activities can help address unmet community needs while simultaneously providing students the opportunity to gain academic knowledge and skills. Additionally, Furco (1996) affirms the importance of this study by implying that service learning involves blending the key elements of community service and internships so both service providers and service recipients benefit. Furco (1996) explains that service learning

programs are distinguished from other approaches to experiential education by their intention to equally benefit the provider and recipient as well as to ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring. Furco's affirmation supports the recurring statement throughout my study concerning a mutually respectful and beneficial service learning partnership.

Already conducted research suspects that the impact of service learning is pronounced when students participate in thoughtfully organized community and public service projects in which they meet the needs of a particular community or public. My study tried to enhance the community's perspective of a service learning experience and uncover any effective communication strategies. A personal goal of the researcher is to apply the study's findings and positively impact any service learning experience communicatively. The next section will present limitations of this study and implications for future research.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Limitations

One of the study's limitations yields the issue that not all service learning programs throughout the nation are the same. There are differences among various institutions and programs. Even the service learning experiences from agency to agency may be different. Because each program may not have the exact same set of standards and guidelines, comparing programs may be difficult. Furthermore, the agencies that received the service and the service provided varied depending upon the very nature of the agency and their particular needs.

Additionally, access to service learning programs may be limited because of time and distance constraints. The proximity and availability of service learning

recipients who had at least three or more service learning experiences was difficult to find. Also, their willingness to participate in the study because of their time constraints played a vital role in the study.

Another suggestion would be to alter or revise some of the research questions. In addressing the first research question, each recipient's perception of the definition of benefit may have been quite unique because their service learning experience was unique in its own way. The issue with the second research question deals with the service recipients being able to recognize their own needs and identify their expectations even before the project commenced. Therefore it is assumed that a self-assessed evaluation of the agency's needs has already taken place from the supervisor and clientele. Consequently, it's almost as if the community agency needs to do preparatory work for their service learning experience.

From this discussion two more problems arise. First, how can the expectations be defined, evaluated, and then measured? Evidently, a succinct outline of the service recipient's expectations of the service provider is of the utmost importance. And how the service recipient outlines these expectations needs to be addressed. Secondly, the definition of a benefit or a mutually beneficial effect needs to be clearly stated. Beneficial service would be service conducive to personal or social well being. This entitles the agencies to receive advantage or useful aid for their programs from the service providers. Expectations of the agency and community include anticipating or looking forward to the occurrences that are considered probable. In other words, it is certain that things will improve. However, for improvement to commence, the agency needs to define and then communicate

their requirements and expectations of the students and the corresponding or collaborating institutions before service is initiated.

In addition, the documentation available from the service recipients was limiting because all that was offered was an agency contract available for the service recipients to sign and a project list provided for all the students. Also, what documentation is available may not represent the difficulty experienced during the service learning project. What's more, the service that was contracted to occur may not actually be what transpired because of unexpected issues that arose during the experience.

Prospective Research Implications

Further research analysis of this study may lend itself to a more cultural communication aspect because of the integration of the service providers into the culture of the participating service recipients. Therefore, using Lindlof's (1995) description of culture codes as "organized packages of knowledge used by the people in a particular scene in their performance of acts or roles" (p. 86) could prove to be beneficial. These codes would constitute and regulate different sorts of conduct, such as procedural, occupational, interactional, political, aesthetic, and technical conduct. They range widely in the extent to which they are required for entry into a role as opposed to simple expectations for the good order of a situation. Similarly codes may be tacit (what everyone should know intuitively) or explicit and codified (what particular persons should be prepared to explain and apply in a given moment).

The aforementioned analysis of cultural codes from Lindlof (1995) explains how examining cultural codes involves studying the entry into a new role and the possible expectations of being in that role. This information could then be applied during the training and orientation sessions or steps conducted in service learning projects. The service providers or students could truly benefit from a future study on cultural communication because their integration into the community agency may be simplified. Therefore, a mutually beneficial service learning experience and final product could be feasible for all involved parties.

The cultural perspective is evident and abundantly profound in the study. How the service learning students are introduced into the community agency's culture could be assessed and then evaluated by using Lindlof's (1995) codes of conduct. If the students experienced a smooth and comfortable integration into the new culture, did it have an impact on the overall outcome of the service learning experience? The integration of students into the organization's culture is a process that needs to be addressed when considering the overall impact of the service provided.

One's cultural background has a strong influence on the expectations of appropriate behaviors that are established. People learn their expectations for appropriate behaviors from the culture at large and from individuals in the various and social institutions in that culture. Future research implications should concentrate on the cultural aspect of service learning by evaluating how the service providers are being introduced and then integrated into the service recipient's environment. Therefore, the researcher proposes that a participant observer

method of inquiry could be used in understanding the integration of students into the community's culture to find out what's working and effective.

Elements of diversity such as our race, religion, socio-economic status, and educational status mold us into the human beings that we are and differentiate us from one another. The service learning experience for the students not only provides them with additional content for their course objectives and goals, it accentuates a student's awareness of the "real world" which of course would include exposure to diversity. Through service learning, students obtain an education that they can not receive in the classroom.

Summary

The rationale of this study was to inquire about the service learning experience provided to the agency and community. The partnership between the service learning recipient and provider should generally prove favorable for both parties. Expectations needed to be met and a beneficial experience needed to be bestowed upon the agency and community. The concern for the welfare of the community was the underlying reason that prompted this interrogation and examination of the service learning experience from the service recipient's perspective.

Furthermore, a constructive relationship between the provider and recipient should exist during the service learning project. Being able to establish this relationship meant that the service project was fulfilling the expectations of the agency and community. Service learning programs can be beneficial to the service recipients if they are conducted properly and the students understand and take

responsibility for their actions while performing the service provider's role.

Students are sometimes encouraged to engage in service provision without a clear understanding of how their service affects the communities around them. Without this clear understanding of the needs of the individuals in the community, the effects of service learning projects may indeed be viewed as unpleasant by the very individuals whose lives the service was intended to enhance, despite the best of good intentions.

Discovering effective communication strategies that were detected in this study and highlighted in Chapter Four has uncovered the managerial and organizational skills that must be in place for a productive and successful service learning experience. The discovered communication strategies need to be integrated into the orientation and training that occurs with the service learning partners before the project commences. The organization and planning of the experience before the project actually begins is of prominent importance to the success of service learning in the future.

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Appendix A - Service Recipient Structured Interview Questions

- 1. Describe the service experience.**

- 2. Did you (service recipient or community agency) benefit from the experience?**

- 3. How can it be determined if the service was beneficial?**

- 4. Were your (the recipient's) expectations fulfilled? How?**

- 5. Was the recognized need from the community agency fulfilled or met by the service providers? How?**

- 6. What role did communication play between the service provider and the service recipient? How did this effect the intended service?**

- 7. What forms of communication (written, verbal, nonverbal) were proven to be effective while explaining your (service recipients') needs and expectations to the students (service providers)?**

- 8. What forms of communication (written, verbal, nonverbal) were proven to be effective for the students (service providers) and educational institutions when communicating with you (service recipient)?**

- 9. What was the final outcome of the service project?**

- 10. What did the service learning experience actually do for you (the service recipient)?**

11. What do you (the agency representative/supervisor) and recipient of service believe should be changed/modified to make the service learning project better or more productive next time?

12. If the agency was having problems during the service learning project, was it because of communication issues? If so, what were they?

13. Did the service project operate efficiently and effectively? If so, how? What role did communication play?

14. Was a constructive relationship established between the students providing service and your agency? If so, please explain the role communication played in establishing this relationship.

15. Please explain if you think all partners benefited from the service learning project? And also, was the service designed to achieve significant benefits for the community agency?

16. How does a more fulfilling educational experience for the student mean a more beneficial and effective experience for the service recipient?

17. How receptive was the instructor and educational institution to your (service recipient/agency's) contribution to the student's learning?

18. How comfortable were the students with their assignments? How could you tell? How did this effect the service provided?

19. What role do you think communication played in the students' ease of adjustment into your agency?

20. How did the service experience effect your organization's culture?

Appendix B - Service Recipient Questionnaire

1. Please check the types of service learning projects in which your agency was involved?

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> business | <input type="checkbox"/> environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> other (explain) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public relations | <input type="checkbox"/> communication | |

2. How did the services provided by the students (service providers) and educational institution meet the expectations of your agency?

3. How did the services provided by the students (service providers) and educational institution meet the needs of your agency?

4. How did the services provided by the students (service providers) and educational institution benefit your agency?

5. What role (vital/important or uncritical/unessential) did communication play between the students (service providers) and your agency? How did this effect the intended service?

6. What forms of communication (written, verbal, nonverbal, meetings, phone calls, e-mail, etc.) were proven to be effective while explaining your (service recipients') needs and expectations to the students (service providers)?

7. What forms of communication (written, verbal, nonverbal, meetings, phone calls, e-mail, etc.) were proven to be effective for the students (service providers) and educational institutions when communicating with you (service recipient)?

8. Was a constructive or beneficial relationship established between the students providing service and your agency? If so, please explain the role communication played in establishing this relationship.

9. Did you feel an alliance was established with the faculty member of the educational institution? Explain why or why not?

10. In your opinion, how did the students demonstrate responsibility for their actions while providing the service?

11. In your opinion, how did the faculty member demonstrate responsibility for the quality of service provided?

12. Who was responsible for keeping the students on task? What methods of communication (written, verbal, nonverbal, meetings, phone calls, e-mail, etc.) were used?

13. Was the agency required to complete any paperwork or documentation on the students (service providers)? If so, what did it consist of and how useful was this process?

14. What was the final outcome of the service project?

15. Did the service project operate efficiently and effectively? If so, how? What role did communication play?

16. If the agency was having problems during the service learning project, was it because of communication issues?

17. How receptive was the faculty member and institution to the agency's contribution to the students' learning?

- 18. Who initiated your service learning project?**

- 19. What length of time was allotted for your service learning project? How did this effect the service provided?**

- 20. Were the same students involved with your agency for more than one quarter?**

- 21. How comfortable were the students with their assignments? How could you tell? How did this effect the service provided?**

- 22. What role do you think communication played in the students' ease of adjustment into your agency?**

- 23. How did the service experience effect your organization's culture?**

- 24. List all of the partners that contributed to the service learning project (students, faculty, other agencies, etc.)**

- 25. What do you (the agency representative/supervisor) and recipient of service believe should be changed/modified to make the service learning project better or more productive next time?**

Appendix C – Service Learning Courses

Business management
Civil engineering
Dance
Teacher education
Curriculum & instruction
Writing
Geology
Human & consumer sciences
Health sciences
Hazardous materials testing
Interpersonal communication
Hearing and speech sciences
Journalism
Marketing
Nursing
Philosophy
Political science
Physical therapy
Recreation and sports science
Social work
Telecommunications
Theatre

Appendix D – Service Learning Recipients

ATCO Inc.
Athens Parks and Recreation
Athens Recycling
Big Brothers & Big Sisters
CAP (Child Assault Prevention)
Federal Hocking Middle School
Good Works
HAVAR
ILGARD/Monday Creek
Integration Acres
Raccoon Creek Watershed
Red Cross
Rural Action
Ohio University Dept. of Social Medicine – Arthritis Program

Appendix E - Abbreviations

AACC – American Association of Community Colleges

AAHE – American Association of Higher Education

AppalCORPS – Appalachian Ohio Combines Our Resources to Promote School Success

BCC – Brevard Community College

CCPH – Community – Campus Partnerships for Health

COOL - Campus Outreach Opportunity League

DRIVE – Deeds and Recreation Invalidate Violence Everywhere

FAB – Faculty Advisory Board

FSLN – Faculty Service Learning Network

IPM – Integrated Pest Management

IPS-L – International Partnership for Service-Learning

IUPUI – Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis

NSEE – National Society for Experiential Education

OUCCS – Ohio University Center for Community Service

RCIC – Raccoon Creek Improvement Committee

SBDC – Small Business Development Center

SEAMS – Science, Engineering, Architecture, Mathematics & Computer Science

UCAN – University Community Action Network

WBRP – Women’s Business Resource Program

WCFE – University of Minnesota Dept. of Work, Community, & Family Education

WEBS – Women, Education, Business and Support

**Appendix F – Honnet and Poulson’s Principles of Good Practice in
Combining Service and Learning**

An effective and sustained program:

- 1. Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good.**
- 2. Provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience.**
- 3. Articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved.**
- 4. Allows for those with needs to define those needs.**
- 5. Clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved.**
- 6. Matches service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances.**
- 7. Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment.**
- 8. Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals.**
- 9. Insures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interest of all involved.**
- 10. Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.**

Honnet, E. P. and Poulson, S. J. (1989). Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning. Wingspread Special Report. Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, Inc.

Appendix G - Tables
Table 1
Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

| |
|---|
| A concrete experience is doing something for someone in a community agency. |
| Reflective observation is observing and analyzing. (What happened? What did we see, hear, smell, think, and feel as we helped others?) |
| Abstract conceptualizing is forming theories or explanations for why events happened as they did. (How do our service experiences fit with what we have learned in class? What can we learn from this experience?) |
| Active experimentation is to take further action. (How will this experience and our understanding of it affect our future actions?) |

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential education: Experiences as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Table 2
Howard's Traditional vs. Community Service Learning

| <u>Traditional learning</u> | <u>Community service learning</u> |
|--|--|
| Theory | Theory & experience |
| Other's knowledge | Personal knowledge |
| Spectators | Participants |
| Individual learning | Corporate learning |
| Distinction – teacher & learner | Distinction – blurred |
| Answers | Questions & answers |
| Certainty of outcomes | Uncertainty of outcomes |
| Homogeneous outcomes | Heterogeneous outcomes |
| Avoiding ignorance | Ignorance as a resource |
| Objective epistemology | Connected/feminist epistemology |

Howard, J. (1993). *Community service learning in the curriculum*. In J. Howard (Eds.), *Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service learning* (pp. 3-14). Ann Arbor, MI: OCSL Press, University of Michigan.

Table 3
Service Learning Pedagogy Good Practice Principles

| |
|---|
| Principle 1: Academic credit is for learning, not for service. |
| Principle 2: Do not compromise academic rigor. |
| Principle 3: Set learning goals for students. |
| Principle 4: Establish criteria for the selection of community placements. |
| Principle 5: Provide educationally sound mechanisms to harvest community learning. |
| Principle 6: Provide supports for students to learn to harvest the community learning. |
| Principle 7: Minimize the distinction between the student's community learning role and the classroom learning role. |
| Principle 8: Re-think the faculty instructional role. |
| Principle 9: Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes. |
| Principle 10: Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course. |

Howard, J. (1993). Community service learning in the curriculum. In J. Howard (Eds.), Praxis I: A faculty casebook on community service learning (pp. 3-14). Ann Arbor, MI: OCSL Press, University of Michigan.

Table 4
Service Learning
Course Syllabus Adaptations

| |
|---|
| 1. Incorporate academic service learning into the course's goals and objectives. |
| 2. Describe in detail the academic service-learning requirements and related classroom activities and assignments. |
| a) Classroom-based activities and assignments |
| b) Activities at the academic service learning site including student, instructor, and agency responsibilities and anticipated time commitment |
| c) Students keep a journal, which serves as the basis for many classroom activities |
| 3. Describe how the academic service learning experience will be evaluated. |
| a) Students must generate some product or documentation that illustrates what meaning they have gained from the experience as connected to course content. |
| b) It is important to clarify with students early in the semester the grading criteria. |
| 4. Specify the contribution of the academic service learning component to the course grade. (twenty to twenty-five percent or more) |
| 5. Include a calendar of academic service learning events. |

Stacey, K., Langer, G., & Rice, D. L. (1997). Academic Service-Learning Faculty Development Manual. Eastern Michigan University Office of Academic Service-Learning.

Table 5
Student Rights

| |
|---|
| To be treated as a co-worker. |
| To be carefully interviewed and carefully assigned. |
| To know as much as possible about agency organization, policy, people, programs and activities. |
| To receive orientation, training and ongoing supervision for the job expected. |
| To receive sound guidance and direction. |
| To have a variety of field experiences. |
| To pursue leadership roles. |
| To voice opinions and to have ideas included in the planning of programs, activities and curriculum. |
| To do meaningful and satisfying work. |
| To be evaluated and to receive letters of commendation based on service completed. |

Alpena Volunteer Center (1990). The service-learning center: Faculty guide.
Alpens, MI: Alpena Community College.

Table 6
Student Responsibilities

| |
|---|
| To be open and honest at your site from the beginning. |
| To understand commitments of time and tasks and to fulfill them. |
| To participate in evaluation when asked to do so. |
| To share thoughts and feelings with staff, including making learning objectives clear to the people with whom you'll be working. |
| To respect confidentiality. |
| To seek honest feedback. |
| To serve as ambassadors of goodwill for the project. |
| To be effective advocates for change when it is needed. |
| To enter into service with enthusiasm and commitment. |
| To serve in a manner which preserves the reputation and integrity of the university and the agency. |

Alpena Volunteer Center (1990). The service-learning center: Faculty guide.
Alpens, MI: Alpena Community College.

**OPPE, ELIZABETH ANN. Ph.D. November, 2001
Interpersonal Communication**

**Service Learning: Discovering Effective Communication Strategies by
Emphasizing the Community's Perspective. (159 pp.)**

Director of Dissertation: Candice Thomas-Maddox

Inquiry about the service learning experience provided to the agency and community is necessary for a mutually beneficial relationship to exist between the service learning partners. Expectations need to be met and a constructive experience needs to be bestowed upon the service provider and service recipient.

The concern for the welfare of the community was the underlying reason that prompted this interrogation and examination of the service learning experience from the service recipient's perspective. Collecting data from the community agencies that received service was pertinent. Through evaluation and comparison, a common thread for a successful and productive service learning project was outlined.

Service learning programs can be beneficial to the service recipients if they are conducted properly and the students understand and take responsibility for their actions while performing the service provider's role. Students are sometimes encouraged to engage in service provision without a clear understanding of how their service affects the communities around them. Without this clear understanding of the needs of the individuals in the community, the effects of service

learning projects may indeed be viewed as unpleasant by the very individuals whose lives the service was intended to enhance, despite the best of good intentions.

By discovering effective communication strategies, the managerial and organizational skills that must be in place for a productive and successful service learning experience were uncovered. The communication strategies need to be integrated into the orientation and training that occurs with the service learning partners before the project commences. Organization and planning of service learning before the project actually begins is of prominent importance to the instructors, students and coordinators of service learning programs.

In essence, the rationale of this proposal goes full circle by evaluating the student behavior and activity in the community agency and then communicating the information back to the classroom for the instructor and students to assess. Follow through on a service learning project is imperative until it manifests as a successful product. The same goal is in mind for both the service provider and the service recipient: a mutually beneficial relationship and experience.

Approved: _____